



# FIFTH GRADE



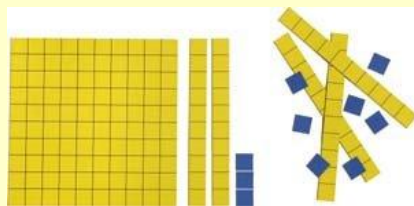
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Fifth Grade Curriculum  
January 2011

## Fifth Grade Curriculum Newsletter

### Math

The fifth grade students are working hard in math. We have just begun our unit on division. This unit reinforces the concepts we covered throughout the past month in multiplication. Long division is a challenging concept that should be practiced both in school and at home. We will be using manipulatives like base-ten blocks to help students understand what it means to divide quantities. Please be sure that the students are showing their work to compute the answers.



### Social Studies

During social studies we are culmination our unit on westward expansion and the Gold Rush. We have been reading aloud from non-fiction books, using the textbooks, and watching videos. The students will be writing journal entries from the point of view of pioneers that traveled along the Oregon Trail. It's amazing to think how far people traveled for more land and a chance at striking it rich! At the end of the month we will be going to York College for a play about this time period.

### Science

In science we will be investigating flippers systems. The system has several parts that work together; the flipper base, the flip stick, a cork, and a craft stick to push down with. We will be observing the behaviors of catapults to measure the height and distance an object can travel. We will also be connecting math with science by creating two-coordinate graphs to display the results of our experiments. Please also be sure that your children are working on their Science Fair experiments at home. They completed assignment is due on Monday, January 24, 2011.

### Reader and Writer's Workshop

In January we will be launching fantasy book clubs. Fantasy book clubs will promote the students ability to think and talk about the increasingly complicated plots and themes in their novels. Since fantasy novels are inherently complex, readers will benefit from the intellectual support of book club conversations, learning to use their book club buddies to build collaborative interpretations. The book clubs will begin with the discussion of main characters' problems and progress through the month tackling complex plots together, towards the end of this month they will discuss issues such as power, friendship, good and evil and tragedy. We want to explicitly teach clubs to linger at significant or poignant moments in texts to actively interpret what the story might really be about. Most fantasy stories teach lessons about human morality or social justice.

We will be writing realistic fiction stories. Students will create a world, bring characters to life, and let a drama unfold as they write their fiction stories. To write fiction stories writers need to pay attention to the moments and issues in their lives, letting everything provoke ideas for stories. Writers will be shown how to gather story ideas in their writer's notebook. We will teach our students how fiction writers get ideas for their stories. Students might imagine writing about characters like themselves, or about situations and troubles they experience daily. We will teach students to reread their notebooks to collect story ideas. Any one idea can spark scores of others; it will be enjoyable for children to fill their notebooks with all kinds of possible stories. They will learn to write about focused events, start with dialogue or small action, and rely on storytelling rather than merely summarizing and commenting on the event. Everything they learned then must be transferred to this fiction unit, only now they will write two scenes rather than just one, and they will need to use those two scenes to capture an entire storyline ( a character wants something , encounters trouble, finds a way to preserve or to learn or to grow.) Once writers have a story idea in mind, they can rehearse for that story idea by thinking about the plot, about the setting or about the characters. They will write drafts, revise, edit and then have a writing celebration for their realistic fiction stories.