

Grade 1/2 March Newsletter

Dear Parents:

March is almost here! It is time for spring, March Break, and St. Patrick's Day. I'm pleased to report that the students continue to produce some terrific work. They're trying to focus on their new learning goals based on their report cards that went home in February.

With the change to warmer weather later in March, boots or outdoor shoes are a good idea, as the field may be very muddy. Please send an extra pair of socks in your child's backpack just in case. Remember to listen to the weather report in the morning to be sure that your child is appropriately dressed for the outdoor breaks.

The home reading program is going well too. Thank you so much for taking the time to read with your child! After your child has finished reading to you, get him/her to retell and make connections to the story. This will help to reinforce what he/she has read. This is helpful for reading development, as well as an enjoyable and special time with your child. Thank you for your help with this!

Language



In Language, the Grade 1 students just finished our TLCP on letter writing. The focus is now on adding more details to written work. Some students still feel very comfortable with the "I like ..." and "I see ..." sentences, and it is important that they start to vary the sentence types that they use in their writing. Give your child lots of opportunities to write at home, and encourage your child to add details to his/her written work. Your child can:

1) Write a letter or postcard to a friend or family member. You may want to check out the Bill Atkinson PhotoCard Lite App for the iPad and iPod Touch. Using this app, your child can even create and email a postcard too.

2) Write a story to share with your family, or to bring to school, and share with the class. Your child can even illustrate this story too. You may also want to check out the StoryPatch App for the iPad and iPod Touch. This app helps students develop their stories, and for more reluctant writers, helps make them more eager to write. Stories are great because they naturally get students to add more details to their writing. Encourage your child to even tell you the story orally first and then write it down. You'll be amazed by what he/she can do!

3) Write a favourite recipe to share with the class. Over March Break, students sometimes bake at home with their parents or grandparents. Encourage your child to pick a recipe that he/she enjoys, and make a list of the ingredients and write out the steps too. If you want to email me (aviva.dunsiger@hwdsb.on.ca) the recipe, I'm happy to add it to the website too. Then your child can feel like he/she is writing for a real audience as well!

In Grade 2, the students are continuing the TLCP on letter writing. Many of the students remember the conventions of a letter (i.e., date at the top, a greeting, a body, a closing, and

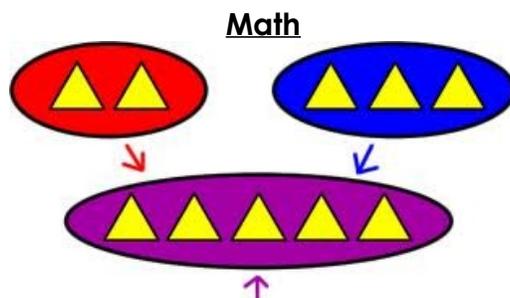
a signature), but they need to work on adding more details to their letters. Here are some things that your child can do at home to help with this:

1) Write a letter or postcard to a friend or family member. You may want to check out the Bill Atkinson PhotoCard Lite App for the iPad and iPod Touch. Using this app, your child can even create and email a postcard too.

2) Write a letter to go in mom or dad's lunchbox for work. Get your child some fancy paper to use that he/she might enjoy, and then after reading the letter, write your child back too. Asking some questions in both letters will really help facilitate a dialogue between parents and children.

3) Write a letter to me over the March Break. I'd love to hear about your March Break adventures. Your child can always email me (aviva.dunsiger@hwdsb.on.ca), and I'm happy to write him/her back, or your child can write a letter on his/her blog too (<http://kidblog.org/missdsclass2>).

If you have some good letter writing activities that you've tried with your child at home, please share them with me (aviva.dunsiger@hwdsb.on.ca), and I'm happy to share them with the rest of the class too.



Both the Grade 1 and the Grade 2 students are working on addition. The Grade 1 students are learning how to use mental math strategies (e.g., counting on) to solve addition problems. When solving addition problems, I have the students use the language to tell me what they did (e.g., if solving the problem $5 + 7 = \underline{\quad}$, I would have them say or write, first I start at 5, then I count on 7, and then I get 12). See if your child can do this at home too when solving addition problems.

The Grade 2 students are learning how to solve addition problems with and without regrouping. They are using the ones and tens blocks to help them with this. I have also showed them a temporary way to represent their answer in written form, and then, as the month goes on, I'll show them how to transition to the more traditional way. Here's an example of what I've shown the students to do:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 35 \\
 + 18 \\
 \hline
 4\text{ (1)}3 \\
 4+1=5 \\
 \hline
 53
 \end{array}$$

35 + 18 is the question.

- 1) Draw a line down the middle to separate the tens and ones.
- 2) Add both sides (doing the right-hand side first).
- 3) Students know that two-digits cannot stay on the right-hand side.
- 4) Circle the 10's digit, draw an arrow and move it over.
- 5) Then add the 10's digit onto the other 10's digit that's already on the left-hand side (e.g., $4+1=5$).
- 6) This numeral then goes with the numeral on the right-hand side to make the answer (i.e., 53).

This format helps the students understand what they're doing and why they're doing it.

When trying some addition with regrouping problems at home, it would be great if you could try out this format too.

For both Grade 1 and Grade 2 students, you can write your own addition problems for them to try, or you can use some iPod Touch and iPad Apps too. PopMath Lite and Math Drills are two fantastic apps that will help the students practice their addition facts but have fun as well!

Science and Social Studies



The Grade 1 students are just finishing their Science Unit on Energy, and the Grade 2 students are continuing to work on their Science Unit on The Water Cycle. Talk to your child about what he/she is learning in class. Your child may want to even share what he/she has learned through a blog post or a story.

Both the Grade 1 and Grade 2 students are also starting a Social Studies unit on Community. We began this unit with a Today'sMeet Room, where we got to talk to a Grade 3 class in Charlottesville, Virginia. This class looked at the specific expectations for community for both grade levels, and they created questions for the students to answer based on these expectations. This was a great way for the students to compare communities, and also help define "community" too. When you are out over March Break, talk to your child about the people and places in the community. If you go away, compare the community you are visiting with your community back at home. *What's the same, and what's different?* These comparisons will help us a lot as we continue our unit on "community."

Sharing Topics



Thank you to everyone that helped make our radio commercials so successful. Students did a great job at "selling" the various items that they brought in. They quickly became aware of the techniques that advertisers use to sell items too.

Through this activity, students realized how much the "visual" matters too: *seeing the item, also helps to sell it.* This month, we are going to create videos and "television commercials."

For the two weeks prior to March Break students are going to use the document camera to make a video in **common craft style**. With common craft videos, students need to draw the objects that they are using on white paper, and cut them out. Then they move these objects around as they talk about them. Here's an example of a common craft video that a Grade 1 student in Kathy Cassidy's class (in Saskatchewan) created: http://classblogmeister.com/blog.php?blog_id=1289528&mode=comment&user_id=&referrer_id= I will put the link to this video on the Grade 1/2 Website as well. During the last full week in February, the class will also make a common craft video together to help the students understand what they need to do. I will add a link to our completed video on the website too.

Here are the topics for our Common Craft videos:

[February 28th – March 4th: Things I Like and Things I Don't Like](#)

[March 7th – March 11th: What Uses Energy and What I Can Do To Conserve Energy \(Grade 1\); What Uses Water and What Uses Air \(Grade 2\)](#)

Then for the two weeks after March Break, the students can create television commercials. They can bring in favourite items from home and try to "sell" these items to the class. Students can talk about why they like these items, and why others would want to buy them. Depending on the size of the item, students can either use the Document Camera and the SMART Board to record their commercial, or they can use the Digital Camera to record their commercial. These completed commercials will go on our Group Blog (<http://grade1.litcircuits.com>).

Since television is a "visual" media, students will not be able to read notes while they present. I would suggest having them practice their commercial at home, so that they know what they want to say. During the first couple of weeks in March, we will make some television commercials as a class, and I will post the links on the Grade 1/2 Website, so that you can see some examples with your children.

[March 21st-25th – The television commercial can be on a topic/object of your choice.](#)

[March 28th-April 1st \(Since April 1st is a PA Day, students can do their commercials on March 31st\) – The television commercial can be on a topic/object of your choice.](#)

Thank you for your help with these different Show and Tell topics! I'm hoping that by having students work on presenting in various ways to an audience, they will be even more comfortable with doing so when we prepare for Primary Poetry Presentations later on in the year!

Aviva Dunsiger