

# 5<sup>th</sup> Grade News

Greetings, 5<sup>th</sup> grade families! We hope this newsletter finds you in good spirits about the school year and your child's progress thus far. It has been our pleasure getting to know your child as both a scholar and a human being. Seeing your child's smile each day is a joy and a privilege.

We are well into the exciting work of our fifth-grade curriculum. At our parent-teacher conferences, we will share the work your child has been doing. Below you will find the highlights of our coming studies for the next several weeks. We hope that both you and your child will find this preview helpful. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact us through a note or a phone call to the school (977-4556).

Sincerely,  
Ms. Davis  
Ms. Hall  
Mrs. Martin  
Mrs. Mobarik

**Math:** We continue to use the *Everyday Math* program, which focuses on the “why” of mathematics as much as the “how to” of it. We have just started a new unit on division. This unit includes the following: 1) using multiplication and division facts for division with 1-digit divisors, 2) understanding the partial-quotient algorithm, 3) recognizing decimal places to the thousandths, 4) writing division number stories, 5) estimating, 6) interpreting remainders, and 7) solving for a given variable.

Some of the ways that skills & concepts are presented in *Everyday Math* might be different from the way you learned them. Your child has a *Student Reference Book*, which s/he can bring home as needed. This book explains vocabulary and shows how different skills in *Everyday Math* are taught. This book can help unlock some of the mystery you might feel about how your child is being taught to solve equations. The family letter also provides great information about what is being learned in each unit.

## **Parent Tip #1**

*It is extremely important that you continue to help your child practice the multiplication facts (through 12 x 12) at home. Here are some facts about the facts:*

- *There are 66 multiplication facts from 2's – 12's.*
- *There are 45 facts from 2's – 10's.*

- *Most children either know their 2's, 5's, and 10's or can figure them out quickly. That leaves just 36 facts to learn.*
- *If your child picks just 2 of these facts to learn and practice each day for 5 minutes, s/he can master all of the facts in a short 3 weeks.*
- *If your child wants to go more slowly and commits to learn and practice 1 fact a day for 5 minutes, s/he will know all the basic facts before February.*

### **Parent Tip #2**

*To prepare for a math test, your child should study. S/he should treat a math test like a spelling test or a science test. S/he should memorize all of the new vocabulary terms in the unit. Then s/he can make up questions similar to those done in class and solve them. An adult (family member or teacher) should check over the completed work to ensure accuracy. If one type of problem is particularly difficult, your child should ask for extra help.*

### **Parent Tip #3**

*We use the math skills your child is studying at school on a regular basis. Point them out as you spend time with him/her. When you come across numbers, ask your child to say them out loud. Take your child to the supermarket and ask him/her to estimate the total cost of your items. Will the exact cost be a little more than the estimate or a little less? The more your child practices math skills in different settings, the easier they will become.*

**Reading:** We are using the Reader's Workshop model to conduct an author study of Roald Dahl. The whole class begins each lesson together to learn about specific strategies for comprehending, interpreting, responding to, or appreciating fantasy texts. Then the class breaks into smaller groups to apply these strategies while reading one of five different Roald Dahl books (The BFG, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Danny the Champion of the World, Matilda, or The Witches). When the groups come back together at the end of each lesson, students discuss the similarities found in Dahl's works. Students also talk about how they are using the reading strategies we are studying. This unit focuses on discussing books through oral and written discussion.

Our next unit will focus on expository (explanatory) texts. Students will practice identifying main ideas and supporting details to create summaries of texts. They will also work to respond to questions by including sufficient, relevant details from the text and adding personal insight. Scholars will use the attached "Reading

Response Scoring” & “Improving Reading Responses: Adding INSIGHT” sheets to facilitate journal response writing.

### **REMINDER**

*Please be sure your child is completing his/her 30 minutes of pleasure reading for homework everyday.*

#### **Parent Tip #4**

*If your child does not like to read, make the nightly 30 minutes of reading homework a team effort: 1) Be sure the book is interesting to your child and at a just-right level, not too easy or too hard. In a typical chapter book, this means that between 1-5 words per page are unfamiliar to your child. 2) Set aside a time when you and your child can read together. Many families find it nice to read right before bedtime. 3) Take turns reading to each other. Read a page or two to your child, and ask him/her questions about what you read. Then let your child read to you and ask you questions. Children will particularly enjoy hearing you answer the types of questions they're expected to answer in school. 4) Make connections between the book you are reading and other books/movies and events you or s/he has experienced.*

#### **Parent Tip #5**

*Help your child practice answering questions with specific, relevant details and added insight. Your child will benefit from listening to your modeling and practicing the crucial skill of responding him/herself. An added benefit is that you and your child will truly get to learn more about each other's lives:*

*When you ask how his/her day was, probe beyond the response of, “Fine.” Challenge your child to answer the question with at least 2 details and insight. Then let your child ask you the same question and judge how well you incorporate details and insight in your own response.*

*During the commercial break of a television show, discuss the characters' actions and motivations. Make predictions and support your thinking. Give the characters report-card grades for categories like “Observes rules” and “Is considerate of others and their ideas, feelings, and opinions.” Then cite specific details from the episode to justify your decisions.*



## Comprehension Strand Questions



**Here are some sample questions to ask about what you read or see in life.**

### A. Initial Understanding

1. What important lesson does \_\_\_\_\_ learn? Use examples from the story to support your answer.
2. What is \_\_\_\_\_'s main problem in the story?
2. Where does this story take place? Use details from the story to support your answer.
3. How does \_\_\_\_\_ change in the story? Use details from the story to explain your answer.
3. Explain why \_\_\_\_\_ (a situation from the story) happens. Use information from the story to support your answer.
4. What will \_\_\_\_\_ **probably** do next?

### B. Developing Interpretation

1. Compare and contrast 2 characters in the story (tell what's similar and what's different).
2. Choose an important passage in the story. Why is important? Why do you think the author included this passage?
3. What kind of person is \_\_\_\_\_? Use details from the story to support your answer.

### C. Making Reader/Text Connections

1. If you met \_\_\_\_\_, what questions would you ask? What might \_\_\_\_\_'s answers be? Include details from the story to support your answers.
2. Which part was most interesting/surprising? Why?
2. What advice would you give \_\_\_\_\_? Use details from the story to support your answer.

### D. Examining the Content and Structure

1. Imagery is the use of words that make the reader imagine what the characters see, hear, taste, touch, or smell. What words/phrases from the story help you \_\_\_\_\_? How do they do this?
  1. A simile is a comparison of unlike things using "as" or "like." Choose a simile from the story and explain why the author used that simile.
  2. Using the information in the story, write a paragraph that could have appeared in \_\_\_\_\_'s journal.
  3. Why do you think the author chose to write about \_\_\_\_\_?
3. How are your customs the same or different from \_\_\_\_\_ in the story?
3. How did \_\_\_\_\_'s beliefs guide his/her actions?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

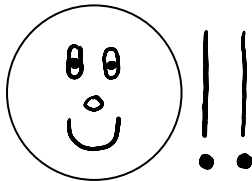
# Reading Response Scoring

## Reading Response Guidelines

- **Restate** the question.
- **Answer** the question.
- Include at least **2 specific details** from the text.
- Add **INSIGHT**.

**4**

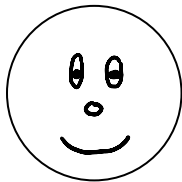
ADVANCED



*Correctly follows the Reading Response Guidelines (including thoughtful insight), and shows a strong understanding of the text.*

**3**

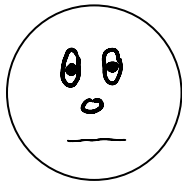
PROFICIENT



*Correctly follows the Reading Response Guidelines, and shows an understanding of the text.*

**2**

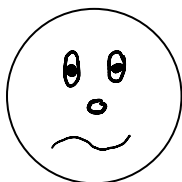
PARTIALLY  
PROFICIENT



*Follows only some of the Reading Response Guidelines, or does not show full understanding of the text.*

**1**

DOES NOT  
MEET  
STANDARD



*Does not follow the Reading Response Guidelines, or does not show understanding of the text.*

# Improving Reading Responses: Adding **INSIGHT**

When teachers tell you to add insight to your writing, here's what you can do...

**-Make a strong connection.**

*This reminds me of...*

**-Tell how you feel about a character, situation, or story.**

*I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_ because...*

**-Tell what you would have done if you were the character.**

*If I were the main character, I would have \_\_\_\_\_ because...*

**-Make an opinion and explain it.**

*I think \_\_\_\_\_ because...*

**-Read between the lines.**

*I can tell that...*

**-Explain how your thinking has changed.**

*At first I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I know...*

**-Ask a question and try to answer it.**

*I wonder \_\_\_\_\_.*

**-Explain why something is important.**

*It was important for \_\_\_\_\_ because it showed...*

**Writing:** We are using the Writer’s Workshop model to create fantasy stories. The whole class begins each lesson together to learn about specific strategies for developing an interesting and coherent fantasy. Students look at the work of Roald Dahl and watch teacher modeling to see the strategies in use. Then students practice these planning, drafting, and revision strategies as they write their own stories. Sometimes students work with a partner to discuss ideas or receive feedback. Sometimes students work in a small group with the teacher to hone a particular skill. When the class comes back together at the end of each lesson, students share their writing and discuss how their writing process is going.

Our next unit will focus on expository (explanatory) writing, particularly how to write a 5-paragraph essay. Students will practice planning an essay by identifying 3 main ideas about a given topic and developing supporting details that can create rich paragraphs. Then students will write an introduction paragraph, three main idea paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. We will emphasize the use of strong organization, descriptive supporting details, and interesting vocabulary.

### **Parent Tip #6**

*When your child talks to you about his/her day, encourage the use of supporting details to help you visualize each scene. The following questions will elicit greater imagery: Who was there? What part of the room were you in? What sounds did you hear? What was going on in the background? What shapes did you see? What colors did you notice? What was the mood in the room? Were you sitting or standing? What time of day was it? Did you enjoy yourself? Why or why not? If your child says, “Science was fun today,” s/he should support the statement with at least three details that made it fun. Elaborating in daily conversation will help your child be a more descriptive writer.*

**Social Studies:** We enjoyed our field trip to the Hartford this week. It was exciting to see aspects of Connecticut history and how our state government works. And our visit with Governor Malloy was a particular thrill.

We will continue studying the U.S. Constitution and our system of federal government. We hope that by the end of this unit, each scholar will have respect and admiration for the U.S. Constitution, and an understanding of how it spells out the powers and responsibilities of both the government and “We, the People.”

Our next unit will focus on how the United States grew rapidly in the few decades after its founding during a period known as the Westward Movement. We will try to answer the following key questions:

- 1) What motivated people to “go west?”

- 2) What was life like for a pioneer moving west?
- 3) What kinds of cooperation and conflicts occurred because of the westward movement?

### **Parent Tip #7**

*Discuss with your child the role of government in our lives. As you watch TV and read newspapers, talk about whether or not you support the work our government is doing. Talk to your child about current events involving the economy, basic tax policy, and our troops in Afghanistan. How do these issues relate to our constitutional rights and responsibilities? What can you do besides voting to try to affect the laws that get passed? This type of dialogue will stretch your child's thinking and facilitate greater citizenship.*

**Science:** Our next unit is all about sound. Through readings and hands-on investigations and readings, scholars will examine the following: 1) What sound is and how it travels through different types of matter, 2) Pitch, 3) How the length and thickness of sound-producing objects affects pitch, and 4) Sound absorption and reflection (echoing). Students will also learn about the structure & function of the human ear.

### **Parent Tip #8**

*Encourage your child to use the scientific method as often as possible:*

1. *Ask a question and do some background research.*
2. *Form a hypothesis/prediction.*
3. *Plan an experiment.*
4. *Conduct an experiment to collect data*
5. *Draw conclusions.*

## Important Dates

Fri., 12/2		Report Cards Distributed
Sun., 12/4		California Pizza Kitchen Fundraiser
Mon.-Fri., 12/5-12/9		Book Fair
Tue., 12/6	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Parent-Teacher Conferences
Wed., 12/7	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Parent-Teacher Conferences
Thu., 12/8	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Parent-Teacher Conferences
Wed., 12/14	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Staff Development
Thu., 11/19		PTO meeting
Fri., 12/23	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Holiday Recess
Mon.-Mon., 12/26-1/2		<b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Holiday Recess

**Monday, 1/3/12**

**BACK TO SCHOOL!!!**

Wed., 1/11	1:20 P.M.	<b>EARLY DISMISSAL:</b> Staff Development
Mon., 1/16		<b>NO SCHOOL:</b> Martin Luther King Day
Thu., 1/19	A.M.	PTO Meeting