



## First Grade Newsletter ~ January 2012

Welcome back and Happy New Year. Hopefully everyone had a wonderful holiday break. We are looking forward to spring and the new growth it brings for our students. They are working hard and becoming independent readers, authors, problem solvers, and scientists!

### **LITERACY**

We are beginning our non-fiction unit. The children have begun reading, writing, and sharing “*How To*” books. The students will also be reading and learning about the text features of non-fiction books (*table of contents, index, glossary, photos, and diagrams*). They will have an opportunity to use non-fiction books to research and learn about an animal of their choice and will write a non-fiction book about that animal using many of the text features they have learned. Their books will include facts about what the animal looks like, where it lives, what it eats, how the animal grows and changes, and how it protects itself.

### **READING COMPREHENSION**

Please continue to read every day with your child. Take time during and after the story to make sure your child understands what they are reading. Talk about the characters, setting, events, problem and solution. Help your child retell the story in order using characters’ names and vocabulary from the story. Make connections to the story: “*This reminds me of.....*” Discuss the theme or “big idea” of the story: “*Why do you think the author wrote this book?*” “*What is the author trying to tell us?*”

### **PHONICS**

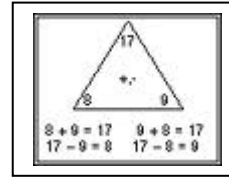
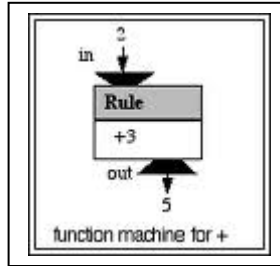
Phonics is a very important component of the literacy program. Recognizing and understanding language patterns in words, will help children figure out how to read new words. We have been working on blends (tr, cl, str), short and long vowel sounds (tap, tape), digraphs (sh, th), and verb endings (ed, ing). The weekly spelling and word work assignments will reinforce the language patterns we are studying in school. Please continue to study and review the high frequency words.

### **WRITING**

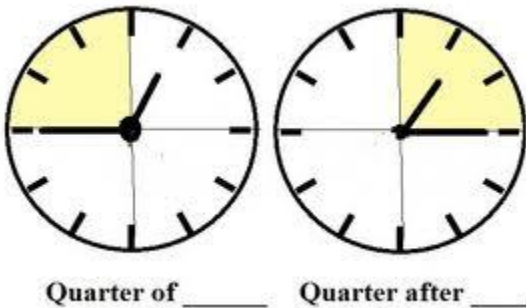
The students participate in Writer’s Workshop every day. In addition to the non-fiction writing mentioned earlier, the students will continue to write stories, journal entries, poetry, and “Weekend News.” When writing with your child, remind them to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences and punctuation at the end of sentences.

## MATH

In our upcoming units we will investigate place value concepts for tens and ones, use addition and subtraction facts to solve problems, and investigate range and middle value when looking at data. (e.g. For the numbers 2,5,7,10 & 13, the range would be 2-13 and the middle value would be 7). We will continue our work with measurement and will introduce centimeters. The children will continue to identify and count coins including dimes and quarters. They will create and solve number stories. The math reference book will be introduced as a resource for students. They will use this book to learn about new routines, games and activities. We will also introduce new routines such as “What’s My Rule” and “Fact Triangles.”



At the end of Unit 5 the students will take a midterm test on the material they have learned since the beginning of the year. Please continue to review time to the quarter hour and identifying and counting dimes, nickels and pennies.



Please read the family letters and home links on the daily homework assignment. These pages describe what your child is learning and suggest fun and easy math activities for you to do at home.

## SOCIAL STUDIES:

We will read biographies about President George Washington and President Abraham Lincoln. We will discuss and learn new relevant vocabulary pertaining to the qualities of leadership such as *determination, courage, and honesty*.

## SCIENCE:

Our next unit of study is Balance and Motion. The children will learn by doing hands-on experiments throughout the unit. They will discuss what happened during these investigations, learn new vocabulary, make predictions, and record observations in science journals.

### **HANDWRITING:**

The children are continuing to learn to correctly form upper and lower case letters and numbers. Please remind your child to start letters and numbers at the top, write on the lines, and put spaces between words.

### **CHARACTER EDUCATION:**

The students and staff at Toquam School are working on developing and maintaining good character by learning and using a new character word each week. These words are the “bonus” words on your child’s weekly spelling assignment. Please discuss and use these words at home to help reinforce this important school initiative. The words for January and February are: *respect, tolerance, caring, empathy and compassion*. We are using different read alouds to teach children how to be respectful to develop character. Some books that may be helpful for you to read at home are: Manners by Alikei, Snow Goose by Paul Gallico, and The Emperor and the Kite by Jane Yolen.

### **HELPFUL HINTS:**

- Please have your child read daily.
- Visit the library on the weekends or after school and read a book together.
- Be positive and encourage your child.
- Get a notebook so your child can draw and write at home.
- Watch a television program together and discuss the show:
  - Who were the characters?
  - Where did the show take place?
  - What was the problem in the show?
  - How was the problem solved?
  - What did the show remind you of? (connections)
- Practice math facts while waiting in a restaurant or in the car.
- Count real coins. Play “store” together.
- Play “Top It”. This is a card game. Player one turns over a card. Then player two turns over a card. Whoever has the bigger number keeps the cards. Repeat this.
- Check your child’s homework but do not complete it for them.
- Spend time together and enjoy them!

### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

January 17 <sup>th</sup> –February 13 <sup>th</sup>	DRA2 Testing
Monday, January 30 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Post Office begins
Wednesday, February 15 <sup>th</sup>	1:20 Dismissal for Staff Development
February 20 – 24 <sup>th</sup>	Winter Recess ~ No School

Your child is very important to us. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. (203) 977-4556

Thank you for all of your support.  
The First Grade Team