



8-3 TEAM NEWS

English Language Arts

In the coming months, eighth grade writers will explore the world of reporting in our curriculum titled “Investigative Journalism.” We will begin by honing our skills of observation, working hard to capture life’s little dramas that surround us. We move forward by digging deeper into the underlying issues that may be hidden in those little dramas. To support our young journalists, you can encourage your children to capture little moments on their phones through pictures or texts messages, and then write more about it when they get home. The end goal of these activities is to create a narrative style news article that incorporates some research and investigation. Students will even learn the skills of interviewing and surveying people to gather evidence for their stories. This would be a great time to watch the news with your child and to discuss some current events in our world.

On the reading side of class, your scholars will be reading literary nonfiction in order to develop an appreciation for longer forms of journalism. Students will read both print and digital forms of journalism, including articles and books. In addition, students will explore multimedia sources such as podcasts, documentaries and hybrid forms of narrative nonfiction which include text and video. Students will continue to read their independent reading books of choice. You should see your child reading at least thirty minutes every day to develop the stamina and reading habits they will need in high school. Trailblazers, share the details about the book you are reading with your family today!

Math

Algebra

In the month of December, Algebra students will be learning about Unit 6: Inequalities. This includes one step, two step, multi-step, and compound inequalities. We will then apply our knowledge to writing inequalities from context and graphs. All Algebra students will be taking the Semester 1 Final Exam on December 18th and 19th. The Final Exam is worth 15% of their overall grade and cannot be retaken. Students will be provided with a study guide to help prepare for the final. The final will cover all units taught this semester. I encourage students to go back through the Google Sites of all the units and re-watch any videos or re-work any exit slips, class work or homework worksheets. There are plenty of extra resources on the Google Sites for the students to use to prepare for the test.

Reminder that your decision whether your student will take Algebra for High School credit is due at the end of the semester, please refer to the emails I have sent for the tinyurl link to make your decision.

When we return in January, we will start on Unit 7: Systems of Inequalities. We will graph a single inequality from any form and determine if points on the boundary line should be included in the solution set and shade the appropriate side. We will graph multiple linear inequalities to determine the overlapping solution set. We will interpret a graph where overlapping solutions sets are shown and where only the final overlapping solution is shown. We will determine if an ordered pair is in the solutions set of systems of inequalities written algebraically and graphically. We will write inequalities from a graph where only final overlapping solution set and full shading of each inequality is shown.

Math 8

As we begin the wintery month of December, the Trailblazer mathematicians will be using context and real world situations and figuring out how to represent these situations as functions. We will still be exploring situations through tables, graphs and equations, so make sure your student has plenty of graph paper!

When we return in January, students will be applying their knowledge of linear functions to our Statistics Unit. Students will be working with and understanding scatter plots as well as drawing lines of best fit and writing equations for those lines.

Students should be completing all homework – mostly using Google Sites - and coming to class with the appropriate materials (math notebook, pencils, and a calculator). Homework is given on a daily basis and completion is extremely important to be completed. Please encourage your child to be responsible, to complete homework and to study for tests.

Lastly, students are reminded that they can retake Unit tests after they have completed the extra practice (found at the end of the unit's Google Site) and test corrections (which can be done during AR time or after school). If you have any questions about the process, parents and students are encouraged to contact me.

Social Studies

Our Young Historians are completing their study of the American Revolution and the struggles the first American citizens had to endure to secure their blessings of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We have investigated how colonial taxation without Parliamentary representation, as well as a series of other grievances against the King, prompted patriots to declare independence from Great Britain. Our historians have explored key battles of the Revolutionary War, met Founding Fathers and Patriot leaders, debated the views of colonial Loyalists and Patriots, and examined and used the Declaration of Independence as a primary source document.

Building upon this knowledge, we will move forward to better develop a deeper understanding of how a young United States of America grew from thirteen independent colonies into a cohesive nation. The road from infancy to powerful country was not easy or without obstacles. The Articles of Confederation provided the framework for our nation's first system of government; yet it no longer is in effect. We will explore how the U.S. Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation, how our federal government is structured, and how the Bill of Rights protects our liberties in the past and today. January will take us into the presidential administrations of Washington, Adams and Jefferson as our Young Historians discover how the nation expanded and grew socially, politically and economically.

Science

We will spend the beginning and middle of Winter learning about the History of Life and Geology of Planet Earth. Throughout this unit we will include why it is important for new discoveries and ideas to be questioned and how scientific concepts become accepted theory. This is part of our continuing effort to ensure that our students are not only capable and curious, but also critical consumers of information - learning to tell fact from fiction.

Beginning at the end of November and into December and January, we will be learning about the age of Earth and the events that led up to the present. Students will be creating a model of the geological timeline to help put those events in perspective. We will also learn about how we know this and the discoveries that have happened over the last hundred years or so.

We now know that the Earth's surface has moved and continues to move! Even though Alfred Wegener did not have all the evidence, he realized that the continents were moving almost one hundred years ago. As technology improved, information became available that proved Wegener's hypothesis of continental drift to be true. We will learn that forces beneath Earth's surface are causing a slow, but steady, movement of Earth's outer layer. These forces are what caused the ancient supercontinent of Pangaea to break up and are the reason our continents are located where they are today. Students will be able to explain how the convection currents in Earth's mantle move the tectonic plates that cover its surface. In January, we will study the effects of this movement. We will find out how moving plates created the Himalayas and the deep trenches and mountain ranges at the bottom of the world's oceans and cause volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. In addition to learning about the natural hazards caused by plate tectonics, students will explore our impact on the cycling of materials through plate tectonics and the rock cycle.