



Mrs. Taht's Fourth Grade Newsflash

What's the "News"???

We have started using a variety of non-fiction texts and media to help improve our reading and comprehension of non-fiction material.

First, our **subscription to Time for Kids** allows us to receive the "kid-version" of Time each week. The magazine highlights one main article, and includes a variety of other news-worthy articles that are appealing and interesting to kids. We use this magazine in a couple different ways. One way is to **practice comprehension strategies** such as recalling details (going back into an article to retrieve an answer), determining a main idea or an author's purpose (this requires inference skills), and determining the difference between fact and opinion. We also use the magazine to **practice expository writing**. Once or twice a month, students are given a "prompt" to respond to, which includes using the magazine to respond to the question, and to practice the strategy of "citing evidence from the text".

Next, we have been using an **on-line news website** for kids called www.newsela.com. Students have a username and password to access this site (it's the same as i-Ready). I **assign an article for the kids to read**, and then **I assign them a writing task** (similar to TFK above). The coolest feature of this website is that it allows me to assign different reading levels for the articles (i.e. one kid could read it at a 4th GL while another could read the same article at a 6th GL. As we progress through the year, I plan to assign one of these NF items each week, and will rotate the writing tasks between the two medias.



Next four weeks at a glance...



- 10/5 Story Vines to Buddies 1:50-2:25
- 10/5-10/9 One Book read Say Something
- 10/7 CUTeach Lesson #1 - sports equipment
- 10/12 No School - PD day for teachers
- 10/13 Eco-Cycle in class presentations to prepare for field trip (no math classes)
Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-8:00
- 10/14 Math class @ 8:15-9:15
CSF performance & anti-bullying workshops: Twelfth Night 12:30-2:30
- 10/15 Field Trip: Thorne Nature Experience
9:00-2:00 No Math Class
- 10/15 Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-8:00
- 10/19 Field Trip: Eco-Cycle Growing Green Tour 9:00-2:00 No Math class
- 10/21 Parent/Teacher Conferences 3:00-8:00
- 10/28 CUTeach Lesson #2 - TBA
- 10/30 Parade & Parties-Times TBA
- 11/6 End of trimester - AR Goal Target date

Conferences

If you haven't done so already, please use the Sign Up Genius link to schedule a fall conference. Also, please take a few minutes to complete a short questionnaire about your child (sent via email on 9/18 & attached today), and return it as soon as possible. I'll use these to help in my preparation for our conference. Thank you!

Check out our new learning goals....

Reading	Read to Self – working toward those AR goals by 11/6 Fantasy Book Groups – our first “book clubs” begin 10/5; Focus on reading comprehension strategies, literary elements, vocabulary (using context clues & background knowledge to decipher unknown words)
Writing	Journal writing – Fantasy or Memoir (personal narratives) brainstorming & drafting Focus on building ideas for story writing (both fiction and nonfiction)
Language	Spelling: “Spelling by Pattern”: Unit 4 = homonyms with long /e/ patterns; unit 5 = spelling patterns for long/i/ DLI = Subject + predicate = complete sentence; Plural nouns (add s or es); Capitalization of organizations & products
Math (4th gr)	Unit 2 – Multiplication – double digit multiplication using area models, algorithms, other strategies
Science	Life Science Unit – living things similarities, differences, structures, adaptations, seeds & plants

Book Clubs - Fantasy Genre

We will wrap up our folktale, legend, and myth unit with a sharing of our story vines to our buddies on Monday, 10/5. We will then begin a fantasy genre unit of study. As a whole class, we will read a short and enjoyable tale by Cynthia Rylant titled The Van Gogh Café. We'll then form small groups for book clubs. I will do a book talk on a variety of titles within the fantasy genre, and students will choose the book they most want to read and discuss in a reading group. Our reading groups look different than in previous years. We do not have the literacy help that is allotted to the primary grades, and our students are becoming more independent. To meet these needs, we structure the book clubs in a different way. Students will meet in their book club twice during the week (either Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday). At the first group meeting, they will be introduced to the book they've chosen, and will be assigned pages to read and a written task. These written tasks will focus on the following comprehension strategies: questioning, summarizing, and building vocabulary. Students will learn to use their time productively in class to complete the assigned readings on their own and the written tasks. When they meet as a group for the following meeting, we will devote our time to reviewing the assigned reading and tasks, and discussing various literary elements within the text. I like to call these “book clubs” instead of “reading groups” because they truly mirror what our adult book clubs look and sound like (well, without the wine, of course!) These are an introduction to teaching students how to be independent with their reading discussions.

Life Science

After studying the Geography of Colorado, we have begun looking at our first science unit, with a focus on Life Science. We'll study the **similarities and differences in living things**. We'll take a look at genetic codes, and begin to build an understanding of the basics of DNA. We'll analyze various **adaptations** of plants and animals in order to understand their relationship to the environments they live in. We'll study **seeds and plants**. We'll be growing various seeds in class, and hope to produce a mini garden for part of our study. Additionally, we'll compare and contrast the **interactions and interdependence between and among living and nonliving components of ecosystems**. We'll also take a look at **fossils**, to study prehistoric environments, as well as provide information about organisms today.