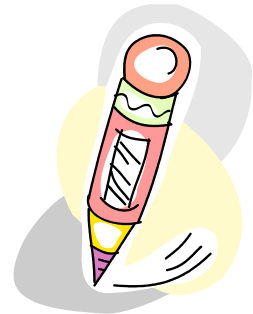


Mrs. MacDonald's Intermediate Classroom



A Week Full of History

Issue 21
January 25, 2009

Important Dates

Open House Sunday,
January 25

New Extra sessions be-
gin on Wednesday

On Tuesday, students watched the coverage of the inauguration of our 44th president. We talked about previous inaugurations and speeches, discussed Article II of the Constitution, and then had the chance to watch live as the president was sworn in. Kelsey Auditore, one of my former kindergarten students, was in Washington DC and sent us photos and texts of what she observed.

We had discussed the possibility of limited cell phone service with that many people converged on the DC area, however, we were pleased to see that it did not affect her ability to communicate with us. (I personally find it amazing that we could do this. These children cannot possibly understand that just a few years ago you would have to wait until a person returned from a trip to see their account of the sights and sounds.) The class laughed at her pictures of OBAMA souvenirs... hats, buttons, and puppets. She texted about the long lines for transportation, crowds of people everywhere, and the atmosphere of energy. I believe this added to the classroom experience. Every time my phone beeped with a new text message from Kelsey, they couldn't wait to hear what she had to say.

We talked about the first children. (Sasha and Malia are close in age to the students in our class.) We discussed what they must be feeling with so many changes occurring in their lives. Our character trait in January is COURAGE. We talked about how it would require COURAGE to make these changes—new city, new school, new friends and the added pressure of secret service and press constantly following them around.

We used this connection to work on narrative writing skills. The students were asked to write a story about living in the White House and having a parent be the president. (Again, a few years ago, it would have been mostly DAD's that were in this assumed role, however, many students chose their MOM as the person chosen as the next president.) The writings are still works in progress. It takes a considerable amount of time to write, conference, revise, and rewrite these narratives. Writing skills are showing strong growth and progress.

Reading/Language Arts

Thank you for reviewing and signing the Language Arts books. We continue to work on editing skills and learning together while reviewing the daily work. Last week's writing assignment on kids living in the White House had to have an appositive somewhere in the writing. (something like: My mom, the president, loves to shop with secret service agents. Or... John, the secret service agent, always hides from the cook.) This way we are using what we learn in our daily writing to help improve sentence structure.

We began a new read aloud...Time Bike. Prior to starting the book, we discussed "if you could travel in time, would you go to the past or to the future." This would have been a great writing assignment but they were already elbow deep in the White House writing and I did not want to see anyone explode so we just talked about our thoughts on the subject.

My intent was to get them to relate to this new fantasy book and see what their thoughts were on the subject and how they would relate to the text. I wish it had been in writing... the ideas and thoughts were amazing. A few said they would go back in time... just a bit to change something they had done that they wish they had not done. WOW! Coming from 9-10 year olds, that is pretty amazing. Someone else said they would travel back so they could see what their mom looked like, another said to get a look at their siblings, and one said they would want to know if the machine was waterproof or fireproof so they could make the decision. And finally, one said they would only go back one hour, that was to check and see if he could return, because if he could not return, then it was only an hour that was lost, not stuck back a long time ago.... I have to say that I was very impressed with their answers.... I was thinking I would go back into the past just to see what the castles looked like or the building of the pyramids... their answers were much more reflective than I had expected.

Math

This week we worked on probability and how to determine the probability that an event will happen. Thank you for practicing on the suggested web sites. On Friday, students participated in the PROBABILITY of FUN put on by Mrs. Matson's Middle School Class. Students created games for the class to try. Everyone was given 10 tickets and they could choose the games they wanted to play. We discussed raffles vs. games that spin a wheel. The Middle School did a fantastic job on this activity. The culmination of the activity came at SPOTLIGHT. Miss Teter chose the winner of the raffle to pie Mrs. Matson in the face. The winner was our own Lauren Davis. Be sure to ask your child about the activities.

History

We witnessed history in the making with the inauguration of the 44th president. We made scrapbooks of the inauguration activities with the help of our newspapers.

Spelling -

Spelling showed a HUGE improvement from the pretest to the actual test on Wednesday. Now we need to be sure we are applying the skill of changing the y to an i before adding the ending.

OPEN HOUSE THIS SUNDAY:

I want to extend the invitation to stop by the Art Show and Open House being held this Sunday afternoon from 1:30-4:00. It's a great opportunity to bring family or friends for a tour of the school, and to support the many students who have submitted entries for the art competition.

Finally, I want to thank the families who have already returned their registration forms for next year. As your family considers this important decision, feel free to ask any questions that you may have. You can call, write, or set up an appointment, and I will do my best to field your questions or re-direct you to the best sources of information. We always welcome your input and feedback!

(This week, I told the students to tidy up because there would be an open house this Sunday, and one student that recently has been through OPEN HOUSE frenzy at home asked: Why? Are you trying to sell the school?)

Homework for the week:

Monday: Practice spelling words. Copy them on paper in cursive and return to school on Tuesday for Mustang Money. **risky, track, topic, blank, question, pocket, monkey, junk, equal, ache, public, attack, struck, earthquake, picnic, banker, electric, blanket, mistake, stomach, second, request**

Tuesday: Courage- Write about a situation where you think someone acted courageously. You can use your newspaper from class to find possible situations. Please write a paragraph that states why you think this person is acting courageously. Be sure to use good writing skills. Your paragraph should be at least five sentences long and written on lined paper.

Wednesday. Math practice- angles.

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/assets/resources/flash.php?&file=angle>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks2bitesize/maths/activities/angles.shtml>

Or practice Roman Numerals : <http://sln.fi.edu/time/keepers/Silverman/html/RomanMatch.html>

Thursday: Study spelling words for a test and read for 20 minutes.