

1-DG Update

September 22, 2023

Reminders:

September 25: No School, Yom Kippur

October 2-6: Book Fair

October 9: No School - Indigenous Peoples Day

October 19: School Picture Day

October 25, November 1 and 2 (half day Thursday): Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 10: No School - Veteran's Day

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break

Highlights of our week

-This week we focused on the -ap chunk. We built words such as cap, apple, happy and collapse.

-We learned the poem "My Magic Cap."

-We started Expert Book this week. Expert Book will be a regular routine all year. At the beginning of each week, each student picks one book at his or her instructional level. Each day the student practices reading the book and works on a variety of writing, comprehension and word study activities connected to the story. This writing component is recorded in the student's Book Notes. By the end of the week the student should be an "Expert" at his or her book. The following week a new book is chosen and the process repeats. While the students are working on their Expert Books, I circulate around the room and check in with them to see how they are doing with their books. I closely monitor their progress and increase the difficulty of books only when their decoding and comprehension skills are both strong enough for a new challenge. At this time, I am working with each student to decide which books feel "just right." Conversations about whether a book feels too easy, too hard or just right are important as they help your child learn how to find books independently that are a good fit. This is not an easy task and it is one that we will continue to work on throughout this school year.

-In *Foundations* we finished reviewing all of the lowercase letters; the sounds each letter makes; and correct handwriting letter formation. We took an end of Unit 1 assessment. Many first graders are still working on correctly forming lowercase letters. Specifically, we are working on using a correct pencil grip, writing neatly with our letters on the lines (not floating above or below the lines), and always using a top down motion when forming the letters (if you see your child starting a letter at the bottom - on the grass or worm lines - please remind them to always start at the top - the sky or plane lines - on our handwriting practice sheets). Please reinforce this work at home. Parent information about correct letter formation is on my website. On Friday, we began Unit 2, which focuses on tapping out the sounds of CVC words (consonant - vowel - consonant, e.g. mad, bug, sit, etc.). We tap and blend sounds to help read and spell words. Please ask your child to demonstrate how to tap the sounds in the words: pet, jog, sad, pin, and mud. Pointer finger touches thumb for first sound, then middle finger touches thumb for second sound, then ring finger touches thumb for third sound, and finally slide thumb from left

to right across fingers to blend sounds together to say the word. Your child should use his or her left hand, so the tapping goes from left to right just like we read.

-In writing workshop the first graders took a personal narrative writing pre-assessment. Thank you for helping your child brainstorm ideas as part of homework. I read the books Ralph Tells a Story, by Abby Hanlon and One Day, The End: Short, Very Short, Shorter-Than-Ever Stories, by Rebecca Kai Dotlich.

-I finished reading aloud the first Dory Fantasmagory book and we just started the second book Dory Fantasmagory: The Real True Friend, by Abby Hanlon. The first graders are enjoying this character and series!

-In social studies we continued to focus on the communities we belong to, our classroom and school. We read the book My School Community, by Bobbie Kalman. We talked about the people in our school who work hard to make Sprague a place where everyone can work, learn and play together. We learned that communities have a physical location that can be found on a map. After reading the book Me on the Map, by Joan Sweeney, the first graders drew their own maps of our classroom.

-In math, we played the games *Double Compare* and *Five-in-a-Row*. We practiced solving Story Problems. When solving Story Problems, first, we visualize what is happening in the story and think about whether we are combining something or taking something away; then we retell what happened in the story and think about whether our answer should be a larger or smaller number than the numbers we started with; finally, we solve the problem and share our strategies with each other. This week the first graders shared strategies such as drawing a picture; writing an equation; using counters or fingers; counting on from the larger number; and using a known equation (for example, if $5 + 5 = 10$, then $5 + 6 = 11$ one more!). We used math tools such as Tens Frames and number lines to show our thinking. Please encourage your child to explain his or her mathematical thinking to you and the strategies that make sense to him or her at this time. We will spend a lot of time on these strategies and concepts this year, so don't worry if your child's mathematical thinking is just beginning to develop. Please note, your child brought home a set of Primary Number cards with directions and a recording sheet for the math game *Double Compare*. Please put these cards in a safe place so they will be available for homework assignments and practice.

-Our SEL lessons focused on feelings and when to ask for help from a trusted adult. Our first lesson focused on teasing and bullying. We read the book Hooway for Wodney Wat, by Helen Lester. This is a book about a little rat that cannot pronounce the letter r sound. His peers tease him because of his speech problem and consequently hurt his feelings and ability to thrive in school. We then did an activity that demonstrated how much teasing hurts us. Please ask your child to describe what we did with a paper person and tape. At home, please continue this discussion about teasing with your child. Then we read Wemberly Worried and as a class completed a "Thinking Bubbles" chart. Thinking bubbles help make us more aware of what another person is saying, thinking, feeling, and wishing, so that we can better understand that person's point of view. I will use thinking bubbles a lot this year to help the students handle the interpersonal conflicts that will inevitably arise. We read the book First Grade Drop Out, by Audrey Vernnick and discussed how sometimes embarrassing things happen to everyone and its okay to talk to a grown up about how you are feeling. We talked about the importance of being

respectful and kind to others. In another lesson, we learned how to be good listeners. We watched the video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6FDts-erVw>) *The Biscotti Kid*, a Cookie Monster parody of *The Karate Kid*. The first graders were very amused by this video and we had a great discussion about how Cookie Monster learned how to be a good listener. Finally, we learned that none of the strategies we are learning about will work if we are not calm. We used a virtual "Breathing Bubble" from calm.com to practice taking deep, mindful breaths.

-On Friday morning we participated in a bus evacuation drill.

Enjoy the three-day weekend!

-Dara Gaul