

## Weekly Newsletter

Good afternoon-

This week, we finished our lesson on Ancient Mesopotamia and began the chapter on Ancient Egypt. I have a friend that is currently living in Egypt, and he is scheduled to be our Friday guest. I will make sure students have several questions to ask him and am hoping he will be able to show us some of Egypt from his home. I will be incorporating some maps and other activities to help students visualize Egypt and to get us away from only reading the text.

We wrapped up our chapter on rocks and will start Chapter 5, Plate Tectonics. The chapter focuses on the earth's interior, the crust and mantle, the continents, and the sea floor. I am looking at some interesting ways we can model the way the plates of the Earth's lithosphere are in constant motion.

In language arts, we are roughly halfway through *The Wednesday Wars*. I have enjoyed the Shakespearean references in the story and am working on making students more familiar with Shakespeare by stressing comparisons between the story and Shakespearean plays. Students spent the week learning about relevant music during the 1960s. We will continue to learn about the styles, politics, and people of the 1960s next week as we continue through the story.

We will probably be going a little more slowly in math over the next week. Several grades are starting completely new concepts, like converting fractions to decimals and calculating rates, and I want to make sure students completely understand these essential concepts. There may be a day or two when I don't assign homework so we can continue to work on problems together. As soon as students feel confident with these concepts, we will continue to move forward.

We began working on grammar this week. We are reviewing the basic concepts and we will move into more challenging assignments as the year progresses. I have started (after several weeks of warning) marking points off if students don't answer short-answer questions in complete sentences, with proper punctuation and capitalization. I am

hoping to reverse some unfortunate writing habits quickly. I will keep you updated on how this is coming along!

We received a new Scholastic Scope magazine and we will read through it on Friday. Students enjoy doing the play, and I can't wait to see what this month's turns out to be. On Friday, I will also be dropping off our first round of Secret Buddy letters at the school. Our art project this week was making cards for the younger students at CNS, and the cards our class created are fantastic. I was overwhelmed by the time spent on the cards and by how thoughtful and creative they are!

On Monday, we will be making Apple Cider Donuts. I sent out the recipe to students as well as parents. If you haven't seen it or have any questions about the recipe or ingredients, please let me know. I made them using a small bundt-type pan, and they turned out beautifully. The recipe indicated they could be made in a muffin or cupcake pan as well as a donut mold. They were really delicious and fairly simple to put together.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Have a great weekend!

Heather