

Specialists' Newsletter

FOURTH GRADE

September/October 2010

ART



In conjunction with the study of California regions, fourth graders began the year with an exploration of California **landscape paintings**. Students viewed the art collection at the **Oakland Museum of CA** and were inspired by the ways various artist expressed a deep love for the land. They compared and contrasted landscapes done in such styles as **Realism, Impressionism, Surrealism, Abstract, and Pointillism**. Students are now painting their own landscapes on canvas-boards using acrylic paints in the style of their choice.

The process allowed them to practice drawing and painting with **depth perspective** in addition to experimenting with various brushes strokes and **textures**. Next, students will compose poems about their paintings that both enhance the visual image and convey their love of nature. The finished products will be displayed in the lunchroom.

MUSIC



In music the girls have been preparing for their place as musical leaders of the Lower School! They worked on their vocal projection for speaking and explored the instruments in the music room to find possible choices for the "peaceful listening moment" that ends each Lower School Assembly. The girls helped honor the 8th graders and welcomed the kindergarteners by singing "Bashana Haba'ah" and "Sansa Kroma" at our All School Assembly!

The girls have been very excited to (finally) receive their recorders! They are reviewing correct hand position, tone, and tonguing as they go over songs from last year. I am very encouraged hearing how much they seem to have retained since last fall's 3rd grade recorder unit!

Your daughter has received her own recorder to keep and practice as part of the ongoing music instruction throughout the year. After learning the first five songs (probably early November) she will get to bring it home. Please watch for more information about recorder care and practice habits as the time gets closer. And, when the girls do bring their recorders home I hope you will encourage them to play for you and let me know if you think your daughter is having any difficulty. The sooner I know about problems the sooner I can help your daughter get back on track so that she continues to enjoy the recorder and music in general.

I am thrilled to work with your daughter this final year before passing her along to Ms. Thomson. I hope you will be sure to read through the music curriculum overview you received in conjunction with Curriculum Night. There is information on grade level

specifics, including this year's performance dates for your daughter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments as the year progresses.

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PE



Fourth grade girls begin the year learning to work together in cooperative games. They are challenged to accomplish a task. Each member has to have the opportunity to be heard and be involved in solutions. Playing Ultimate Ball and Team Juggling with three or four balls, or transferring marbles in pipes from one place to another are examples that took planning as well as multiple attempts. More than one solution is a goal.

Teams are randomly chosen and change daily with each new challenge.

We also practice lead-up activities for Volleyball. The girls learn a handgrip for the bump pass. They practice bumping on their own, to a wall, and to a partner. They have a choice of beach balls, other light balls, and volley-lites. This allows them to build their confidence. We have mini contests, "How long can you keep the ball in the air on your own, with a partner or in a small group?" We play lead up games in small groups so each person has many opportunities to handle the ball.

SCIENCE



The fourth grade studies water throughout the entire year in science. We began the year by investigating the importance of water and what we each can do to conserve our clean water. During one lesson, we used all the students in the class to represent the earth, then divided the girls into sections like land and ocean to demonstrate just how small a percentage of the earth our drinkable water is. Each girl has come up with her own water conservation goal that she will

aim to follow to reduce the amount of water she wastes. We have also explored where water comes from before it reaches our sinks, and where it goes when it goes down the drain. The girls simulated a wastewater treatment plant in preparation for visiting the real thing!

We have now begun studying the physical properties of water. Through an exploration of what objects sink or float, we have started to grapple with the concept of buoyancy. More hands-on projects are on their way to help us understand this topic.

During the girls' design technology lab time the fourth grade reviewed the simple machines they learned about last year, and learned how several simple machines can be combined in a compound machine. The girls got a practical lesson in compound machines' usefulness when given the challenge of changing the tire on my car. By using the jack and lug wrench, they accomplished this feat with very little help on my part, and were rightfully proud of themselves! Now we are focusing on pulley simple

machines by identifying pulleys in common devices like a flagpole or a car and by building different types of pulley machines from Lego/Dacto kits.

TECHNOLOGY



The fourth graders come to technology once a week to work on Humanities, and I come to them a second time to work in their classroom on supporting Math. As a tool to help answer the question, "How does geography affect how we live?," the girls have been learning to navigate digital maps using the application Google Earth. The girls will be using this tool to illustrate incidents in the book **Island of the Blue Dolphin**. They have begun an animal research project in conjunction with Library and Humanities. As a support to the work they are doing on California Landscapes, the girls have found a photograph of a natural setting, downloaded it, cited the source, and used it in Hyperstudio to trace and recolor. The students will continue to use our wiki on PBworks for work in humanities, library and technology. Each student has her own log in, and she will learn to do her own writing and to read and respond to other's writing in a scholarly voice. The other school network site we will use is Voicethread. Voicethread is a collaborative site where girls can practice having a professional online identity as students and peers. We will be using Voicethread throughout the year as a place to post and comment on student work. The girls will explore their academic digital identity in a safe and supported manner. The first math project was a series of photographs taken on campus. The students looked for objects that looked like arrays and objects that didn't look like arrays. They are using the commenting feature of Voicethread to support their opinions on whether or not the photo is an array. Our protected link is <http://kdb.ed.voicethread.com> and your student has her own login and password. It is the same as the PBworks login and password. There is no need to login at home, but the girls have been asking for the web address. They are practicing important 21st century skills.

LIBRARY



Welcome!

Library

FOURTH GRADE
SEPTEMBER/
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Think. Apply and Create. Share, Collaborate, and Act Ethically. Grow.

Welcome! Fourth graders are off to a great start! They began the year by doing research to prepare for a landscape-painting project in Art. The girls examined many art books filled with landscape paintings to see different styles. They also examined nonfiction books filled with photographs of California scenes to get ideas and inspiration for their own paintings. As for independent reading, the first category was free choice with the follow-up response having to do with titles. The girls are currently reading **ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS** in the classroom, and, most recently, in Library, they

have been studying adaptation as preparation for a research project on animals in the Channel Islands. Thus, in multiple ways, we have covered wise book selection (for example, the Five Finger Rule), browsing in books for purpose, taking notes with purpose, proper citation, and the literary reasons for a title. In conclusion, the girls have practiced learning skills that have to do with processing information, appreciating the social context of learning (sharing work and ethical behavior), and pursuing personal interests (art and literature appreciation). Note: We are reading

THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX by Kate DiCamillo aloud, a chapter a week. It will tie-in with new units.

Questions:

- How do I choose a book that is "just right for me?"
- What is a title?
- Why is a title important?
- How do I take notes for a purpose?
- How do I skim or browse through a book, looking for ideas and inspiration?
- How do I share what I researching and learning?
- How do I make a persuasive argument?
- What is a citation?

21st Century Learning

Process Information.

Use information for good purpose.

Appreciate social context of learning—sharing, collaboration and ethical behavior..

Pursue personal and aesthetic interests.



2010

As a reminder: Lower School students may have out up to 4 books at a time. Fourth graders may have a fifth book in order to fulfill an assignment. They may then borrow up to 2 books during each library class period plus an extra book for a specific assignment. A book is due 3 weeks from the borrowing date, but it may be returned any time before that. You are, of course, invited to use the Library as well. You have a card on file, and you may borrow as many books as you like. It's best to come before school or at the end of the school day on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 3:10 and 4:00. Should you have any questions or requests, please call me at 751-0177, ext. 311 or e-mail me at susan.f@kdb.org.