



First Grade Communication Newsletter

Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2014

First Grade is loving the signs of Autumn. They can use their senses, smell it, taste it, hear it, feel it and see it all around them. Enjoy! Jump into the many opportunities to learn. We will focus on the 7 Habits of Happy Kids and use the leadership skills in our classroom study habits and behaviors. As we also enter this 'spooktacular' season, we will explore nocturnal animals fact and fiction. Bats will be the first on our list. We will read, sing, draw, and research online all about bats, their characteristics and habitats. Students also know a Vowel Bat song to the Batman theme. Keep singing! Word Study is stretching our brains as we investigate word building by what we hear and what we see. Here are a few tips for making the most of your Word Study time at home and school.



Descriptions of Word Study Patterns/Concepts

Purpose of Word Study

It teaches students to examine words to discover the regularities, patterns, and conventions of the

English language in order to read and spell.

It increases specific knowledge of words – the spelling and meaning of individual words.

3 Layers of word study

Alphabet – learning the relationship between letters and sounds

Pattern – learning specific groupings of letters and their sounds

Meaning – learning the meaning of groups of letters such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Vocabulary increases at this layer.

Sorting – organizing words into groups based on similarities in their patterns or meaning.

Oddballs – words that cannot be grouped into any of the identified categories of a sort. Students should be taught that there are always words that “break the rules” and do not follow the general pattern.

Sound marks / / - Sound marks around a letter or pattern tell the student to focus only on the sound rather than the actual letters. (example: the word gem could be grouped into the /j/ category because it sounds like j at the beginning).

Vowel (represented by V) – one of 6 letters causing the mouth to open when vocalized (a, e, i, o, u, and usually y). A single vowel sound is heard in every syllable of a word.

Consonants (represented by C) – all letters other than the vowels. Consonant sounds are blocked by the lips, tongue, or teeth during articulation.



Concepts in Order of Instruction

Initial and final consonants – students are instructed to look at pictures and identify the beginning sound. They then connect the beginning sound to the letter that makes that sound. Students then listen for the ending sound and match the sound to the ending letter.

Word Families – students match pictures to words that contain a word pattern/family. Words are in the same “family” if they have the same vowel and ending letters (example of words in the same family – cat, bat, fat, sat, etc). Short vowel sounds and rhyming are discussed.

Digraphs – letter combinations that represent only

one sound (examples: sh, ch, wh, th – although there are two letters, only a single sound can be heard). Students can sort pictures or words that begin with these sounds.

Blends – letter combinations in which each individual sound can be heard such as bl, cr, sk, etc.

The goal is to do it until the student can sort with ease, accuracy and speed. Word study words should be automatic. It will help to build fluency, comprehension, spelling and writing skills. The great thing is that the words are provided based on a developmental spelling assessment. The words and activities should be just right!

In Spanish this week, First Graders will review vowels and focus on "o" and focus on this vowel. Prayer will begin with the Sign of the Cross in Spanish. Students will learn songs about fall leaves and be able to identify colors in the song. They will learn also through movement the difference between steady beat and rhythm.

This week in Math, students will be preparing for their Chapter 2 Addition Strategies test, which is scheduled for next Tuesday, October 7. We will be reviewing some helpful strategies, as well as learning strategies to add three numbers. Please keep up the great work on IXL for practice at home!

In Science, students are loving our new unit about plants! We are continuing to explore parts of plants, as we apply that knowledge to trees. We will also be going on a leaf hunt this week, as we investigate changing fall leaves. The students are also enjoying caring for their classroom plant every day.