

The Thunderbolt Times

The monthly newsletter for the Sky Ranch GATE Magnet
Community



Quarter 3 Newsletter- 2022

Happy New Year! We hope you had a restful break and are excited to be off to a fresh start with the beginning of the third quarter!

Important January Dates:

- **Friday, January 21:** American Math Contest
- **Monday, February 21:** No School- Presidents' Day
- **Monday, March 14th- Friday, March 25th:** Spring Break

Wondering how to better support your child's academics in core classes? Here's what we suggest:

Step 1: Check our team websites and assignment calendars to see what assignments are due soon. This is a proactive approach - see what's due before it's due. With this approach, you can help your child break down large assignments and ask your child to show you and talk about their upcoming or completed work before it's turned in. This approach lessens the frequency of missing and late assignments. It's important to check this resource several times throughout the week as teachers do adjust frequently.

Team websites

7th/8th grade team: washoeschools.net/pilotsquadron

6th grade: washoeschools.net/griswold

Step 2: Check Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus is where we post students' grades after the assignments are graded. Some assignments are posted within hours, but some assignments take longer to grade; it may be more than a week before these assignments are posted in IC. Checking IC is more of a reactive approach - it may lead to chasing down missing assignments and backtracking whereas knowing what's coming up due keeps everyone up to date.

Classroom Updates

English/Language Arts 6 – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **Why is it human to search for understanding?**
- **How do systems influence human understanding?**
- **How can writers use poetry to explore aspects of their own identities?**

After a well-deserved break, 6th graders are returning to ponder some of the deeper questions about existence as we begin our reading of our new class novel, *Sophie's World*. As such, we have discussed the basis of logic, identity, and life in attempting to match the intellectual underpinnings of the novel. We will continue our Socratic Seminar discussions and weekly quizzes with this novel, and students are continually working on writing various types of poems to describe their individual identities and experiences. We will work further on presentation skills and explore more deeply the ELA concepts of denotation, connotation, and symbolism.



English/Language Arts 7 – Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **Why is it important to understand interactions?**
- **In what ways does exploration affect interactions?**

The seventh graders are going to tackle the classic novel, *Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding, this quarter. We'll be exploring the ideas of mob mentality and how that connects to bullying interactions in modern times. We'll also look closely at the dichotomies of civilization and savagery and good and evil as common themes in our novel and in literature in general. In

addition, we'll be focusing on our writing and speaking skills and an independent novel with a book project at the end.

English/ Language Arts 8 - Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **How is resilience crucial for success?**
- **How does imbalance require resilience?**

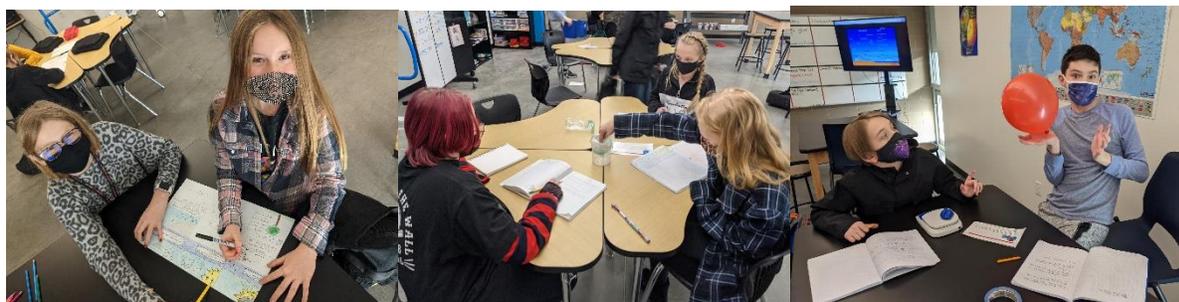
The eighth graders will start the new semester with an exploration of novels written during and about the first and second world wars. Students will make choices about what to read for in-class literature circles from a variety of books on these topics. Together, as a class, we will look closely at the memoir, *Night*, by Elie Wiesel and the graphic novel, *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman. Resilience with an emphasis on survival will remain our themes to focus on as we explore these works. In addition, we will continue to work on writing skills in preparation for the rigors of high school writing; we'll be focusing on Literary Analysis through Critical Lenses this quarter which is a new approach to analyzing literature that leads to interesting and high-level exploration of our texts, art, music and literature students will read later in life.

Earth Science 6 – Mrs. Clotworthy

Essential Questions:

- **What regulates weather and climate?**
- **How do people model and predict the effects of human activities on Earth's climate?**

We will be starting the third quarter introducing different components of the atmosphere, weather vs. climate, and climate change. The focus will be on our Mini weather unit project “Adopt a City”. Each task in the project will have hands-on labs and stations along with independent study to connect to their adopted city. Ask your child about their chosen city and any patterns or questions they have noticed about weather thus far.



7th Grade: – Mrs. Hill

Essential Question:

- **How can one describe physical interactions between objects and within systems of objects?**

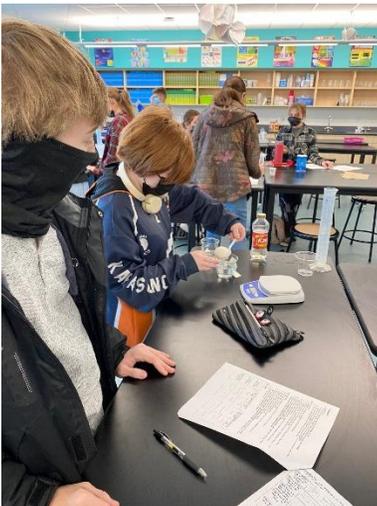
We started off the second semester with a smaller unit on Dimensional Analysis. This unit reviewed material that Mrs. Sellers covered at the beginning of the year. We practiced converting metric and customary units to prep for our next unit, Forces and Motion. Students will be introduced to different types of energy, Newton’s laws of motion, speed, velocity, acceleration, momentum, forces, electricity, magnetism, renewable/non-renewable energy, and energy transfer/conservation. There will be several hands-on activities during this unit. Students will also be able to make a bottle rocket and an electromagnet. Please start saving 2L soda bottles for this project! 😊

8th Grade Honors Biology- Mrs. Hill

Essential Questions:

- **How do the structures of organisms enable life’s functions?**
- **How are the characteristics from one generation related to the previous generation?**
- **How can individuals of the same species and even siblings have different characteristics?**

We started the second semester off with a smaller unit on Cell Structure and Function. Your child was introduced to the different types of cells, the organelles within them, organelle structure and function, osmosis, diffusion, and active transports. We conducted two labs to look at osmosis happening in real-life. Ask your child about these! 😊



We have moved on to our next unit, Genetics and Heredity. There will be different activities, projects, and labs that focus on DNA, mutations, Mendelian genetics, pedigrees, karyotypes, and blood-typing. Students will be able to make a lot of real-life connections during this unit. I hope that they come home and analyze your family’s genetic characteristics!



6th Grade: Ancient Civilizations – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **Can we truly change our station in life?**
- **Why should we be “good”?**

Using India's strict caste system as a guide, we will also discuss how this cultural belief interplayed with the religious beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism. As we delve into these fascinating ideas, we will ask the students to also act introspectively, thinking critically about the role we play in determining our own happiness and affecting others. We will include looks at the mathematical, scientific, and cultural benefits early Indian civilizations passed on as we move East into ancient China to examine the dynasties and philosophies that made up the culture of the period.



7th Grade: U.S. History – Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How do interactions affect relationships?**

Kicking off this quarter, students will look at how America expanded west. They will analyze the means that it took to expand West. What relationships were created or impacted? Students will utilize primary resources to reach conclusions about the Mexican-American war, manifest destiny and the Donner Party. The unit will be assessed by creating a board game. After looking at the west, we will move onto the era of growth and disunion. What was taking place in America prior to the Civil War? What tensions were rising that could make a country go to war?



8th Grade: Accelerated Analyzing War - Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How does perseverance require resilience?**

As we return from break, students will be embarking on the study of “the years between the wars”. We will look at primary and secondary sources that help to dive deeper into the 1920's and 1930's, focusing on the Jazz age and stock market crash. Students will be creating a 1920's newspaper to highlight what they have learned but will also have a lot of choice when selecting the topics for their articles. After the 1920's we will move through the 30's and look at the Dust Bowl and the impact it had on America. Throughout this quarter we will focus on writing skills while utilizing the essential question as a driving force for analysis.

Math 6 – Mrs. Clotworthy

Essential Questions:

- **Can we use ratios to make predictions?**
- **When are decimals an effective standard of measurement?**

Now that we have completed fractions and decimals, we will take the opportunity to use the concepts we've gleaned from these units to make a natural segue into ratios. The students will work to use the setup of the fractions and equivalent fractions more specifically, to see how ratios can change. Then, by using their deeper understanding of the fractions involving tenths and hundredths, they can see how decimals are similarly related to fractions, percentages, and extrapolate into ratios as well.



Integrated I - Mrs. Sellers

Essential Questions:

- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**
- **How do patterns help us determine mathematical relationships?**

This quarter we will begin the functions unit. Integrated I students will investigate this essential question by representing relationships between quantities using functions, tables, and graphs. We will also analyze patterns and learn about the domain and range of a set of data. Students will learn how to identify different types of functions based on patterns they discover. We will then shift focus specifically to linear functions. Students will continue to graph these functions and then begin writing the equations of these functions. Students will learn the different forms of writing a linear equation and when to use each form. Students will learn to manipulate the different variables in writing equations and determine the effect each has on the linear function. Toward the end of the quarter, we will explore exponents and learn the rules of simplifying exponents.

Integrated II - Mrs. Sellers

Essential Questions:

- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**
- **How are the properties of numbers and polynomials related?**
- **How are proportional relationships related to similarity?**
- **How can relationships in trigonometry be applied to the real world?**

We will begin this quarter with a polynomial unit. Students will take prior knowledge of polynomials from Integrated I and use it to learn new material. Students will learn how to multiply and factor polynomials through investigation and looking at patterns. Multiplying and factoring are completely new topics for the students, and it is important they master this topic to succeed in the quadratics unit. Next, we will move into similarity of triangles and an introduction to trigonometry. Students will employ prior knowledge of proportional relationships and apply these skills to similar figures. Students will take prior knowledge of right triangles to understand trigonometric relationships. Students will then prove the Law of Sines and Cosines in triangles. We will end the unit building a clinometer to measure the heights of trees and basketball hoops at our school. We will compare measurements using trigonometry and similar triangles to determine which one is more accurate.

Algebra

Essential Questions:

- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**
- **What rules govern number systems?**
- **How are the properties of numbers and polynomials related?**

This quarter we will begin with the exponential function unit. Students will review simplifying exponents from Integrated I and we will then extend this knowledge into fractional exponents and solving exponential equations. Students will use previous knowledge of transforming absolute value functions to exponential functions. After exponential functions, we will move into polynomials. Students will learn how to multiply and factor polynomials through investigation and looking at patterns. Multiplying and factoring are completely new topics for the students, and it is important they master this topic to succeed in the quadratics unit.

Enrichment:

8th Grade and 7th Grade: During this time, students will focus on current events, our Second Step school-wide curriculum and will also have time to work on homework and assignments from class.

6th Grade: As has been the standard all year, our Enrichment classes will focus, in turn, on SEL, lessons with Mrs. Gunderson, and independent work time (plus the occasional artistic endeavor for Spirit Weeks).



If you have been excluded, due to COVID, what do I do?

Pilot Squadron Exclusion Protocols:

1. Check assignment calendar.
2. Cross reference names of assignments with Teams and OneNote.
3. Email teacher (following email guidelines) with specific questions. The guidelines can be found at the bottom of the e-slip.
4. Exclusion typically presumes being able to work; if a student is excluded *and* sick enough that they can't work, we'd prefer they tell us so we know to expect their assignments to be late.

*Follow bell schedule from home, the days you are out, and keep up with/submit current assignments on time.

Griswold Base Exclusion Protocol

1. Check assignment calendar.
2. Cross reference names of assignments with Teams and OneNote.
3. We prefer that excluded students contact us every day, regardless of having questions.
4. Exclusion typically presumes being able to work; if a student is excluded *and* sick enough that they can't work, we'd prefer they tell us so we know to expect their assignments to be late.

Pilot Squadron Specific information:

Pilot Squadron is lucky to have 2 UNR Education interns this semester. Ms. Miranda Lopez is doing her internship with Mrs. Porter and Ms. Celeste Tinajero is with Ms. Tuttle. Please see their welcome notes below.

Ms. Lopez (History):

Dear parents and guardians,

My name is Miranda Lopez and I will be working in your child's social studies classroom as a student intern this semester. I am currently working on my secondary education and history degrees at the University of Nevada, Reno. I am delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with Mrs. Porter this semester to provide the best educational experience for your student as possible, and also very excited to put my learning into practice. When I am not working on school work or teaching, I love spending time with friends, reading, and cooking.

Ms. Tinajero (ELA):

Dear Pilot Squad families,

My name is Celeste Tinajero and I will be working in your child's ELA classroom as a student intern. You may also remember that I worked with your child as Mrs. Porter's substitute a few weeks before winter break. I am currently working on my K-8 Education Degree at the University of Nevada, Reno. This semester, I will be collaborating with and learning from Ms. Tuttle to provide a meaningful educational experience for your child. This is the culmination of my education degree and I am so excited to use this opportunity to put my learning into practice! When I am not working on schoolwork or lesson plans, I enjoy spending time outdoors, reading or writing poetry, and spending time with my sweet family.

Counselor's Corner:

GT Counselor: Ms. Ivans, our GT counselor, has shared some resources for parents. Ms. Ivans' newsletters can be found on each of the team's websites.

Teacher Contact Information:

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