

SIXTH GRADE NEWS

Inquiring Minds



Sixth-graders listen to Mr. LaRose during class.

Sixth-grade students emerged from the darkest period of the Middle Ages with a thorough understanding of a much more macabre system of myths than their Greco-Roman training had afforded them until now. These scholars now have a superb understanding of the events surrounding the end of the world, even if they did spend more time eating cookies on December 21st than waiting for the sky to fall. Since then, they have examined the formation of three great players in Medieval History—England, France, and the Holy Roman Empire—as well as a number of smaller, but no less important, states in Eastern and Southern Europe.

The students have continued to examine Medieval history thematically, focusing on cross-cultural exchanges linked to the Crusades and expanding trade, as evidenced by growth in science and art. Students then had the chance to attract the best thinkers (or dissuade the worst rulers) of the day through their history projects, which involved practicing their persuasive writing as the count of a small holding.

Westminster students know by now the importance of festivals and traditions in France. To add to that knowledge, the sixth-grade students learned about the different cities in France and the “Fête” or festival associated with each. In Nice, “carnaval” begins with “mardi gras,” while the city of Lyon is famous for its “Fête des Lumières” or Light Festival in December. The students also learned about shopping for clothing, daily activities, and driving in France.

So often, people take improper measurements using the most common everyday devices. To help prepare for the lab-focused seventh-grade life science curriculum, the sixth-graders have recently conducted a lab on the proper usage of scientific instruments. Students were shown how to properly use common lab measuring equipment, such as a tape measure, graduated cylinder, beaker, thermometer, and two-pan balance. They were asked to accurately take a variety of measurements, often to the nearest millimeter or tenth of a degree. Earlier in the quarter, the sixth-graders conducted another similarly-themed laboratory investigation on proper use of a microscope and microscope safety.

Soaring through pre-algebra at a scholarly pace, the sixth-graders have had huge success mastering the use of inverse operations to solve multi-step equations, which is no small feat! These imperative skills are part of the foundation the students will build upon in algebra class next year. Sixth-graders have so much to be proud of, as they have adjusted to the fast-paced, abstract demands of pre-algebra. They have had the chance to work on applications of multi-step equations and inequalities, which they will explore further on the March field trip to Marriott Headquarters. There, students will hear first-hand from professionals how varying departments use algebraic concepts in the business world.

With *Treasure Island* and *A Christmas Carol* enjoyed and digested, sixth-grade students were well equipped to dive into the complex world of Steinbeck’s classic novella, *The Pearl*. Students stitched together the story out of a series of symbols within the text to find their own opportunities to propose each object’s role in the work. This gave them the opportunity to take a deeper look into the themes of greed, loss, and true happiness.

As the segment on letter writing came to a close in writing class, persuasive essays took center stage as students honed the process of developing and supporting an argument. Lessons focused on taking clear stands, gathering objective evidence, and presenting a well-reasoned case that is appropriate for the target audience. Students will have the chance to present their cases before the class and learn what it takes to have another not only acknowledge a point but agree with it.

Other News and Notes!

Students are to return detention white slips to the teacher who issued the detention within two days of receiving it. The detention must be served within two weeks.

Now that we have passed the mid-point of the school year, uniforms occasionally become in need of repair. Students were recently reminded to keep their uniforms in tip-top shape by replacing missing buttons, laundering dirty shirts, making sure pants are still the proper length, and dry cleaning blazers.



Sixth-graders always have fun when they demonstrate what they learn in class.

“It is the mark of an educated mind to entertain a thought without accepting it.” ~ Aristotle