

A Typical Day of First Grade in Room 3

Welcoming and Opening

When students arrive they independently hang up their belongings, put their lunches on the shelf in their lockers (if they are bringing that day) and bring their green folders into the classroom. Putting lunches on the shelf helps students verify that they have a lunch for the day. It is also very important that students know if they are buying lunch. First thing in the morning is the best time to solve lunch problems. When students come in the room they check green folders and turn in any notes or homework, visit with their friends and sharpen pencils until announcements or until we sing our opening song. After this, they begin our reading workshop time with some independent reading until our lesson begins (see Language Arts Block below). After reading workshop we have a daily **Morning Meeting**. Our meetings begin with a greeting for each student, the saying of our school and class mission statements, songs and poems and then sharing (eventually each student will have an assigned day to share). We then discuss important issues of how our classroom community is working. We end our meeting by reviewing our schedule for the day.

Language Arts Block A large part of our day is spent on language arts instruction. We use a variety of materials, strategies and proven practices. There are so many pieces to language arts instruction in first grade. The major components include reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Some essential sub-components of reading and writing instruction include: phonics, handwriting, grammar, mechanics, spelling and word work. Reading is taught with whole group, small group and independent formats. In a typical day we have:

- **Reader's Workshop** - Our literacy paraprofessional (Mrs. Merogi) works with us during this time. Each day our workshop includes a mini-lesson, private reading, individual conferences with students and/or small group instruction, partner reading and sharing. While Mrs. Merogi and I are conferring with students and/or running small groups your child is involved in independent reading, listening to reading, working with words and/or reading on a Chrome book. We end most workshop sessions with partner reading time.
- **Word Work** - After our specials class (gym/art/music) we use the Foundations program to teach high-frequency words, phonics, phonemic awareness, spelling patterns and grammar and mechanics.
- **Writer's Workshop** - After our morning snack break, we begin writing workshop with a mini-lesson, students then write independently (while I confer with small groups or individuals to coach them in their writing), and we close our workshop with sharing or reviewing what we learned. Our focus in first grade is on writing personal narratives, informational pieces, opinion pieces and studying the craft of writing.
- **Shared/Interactive Writing** Each day we have some time to work together on some writing. It may be writing a poem together, writing about a science experiment we did, making a list, or writing small moment piece about something we did together.
- **Handwriting** - We use the Foundations program to teach proper pencil grip and posture along with proper letter and number formation. Our handwriting study is completed early in the year and then reviewed and practiced as needed throughout the year.
- **Shared Reading and Read Aloud** - At this time we share big books and a variety of stories. The books we read at this time foster the study of writer's craft, comprehension, text structure and THE JOY OF READING. During this time students often talk to partners about the text we are reading.

Snack

We have a great day full of fun and learning and we stop for a healthy snack break in the morning. Your child knows that he/she can also bring a **water** bottle (with a sports, pull top) to school each day to keep on their desk. Water is the only beverage allowed in our bottles. Thank you for sending a healthy snack to help keep your child energized.

Special Classes

On A days we have art, B is gym and C is music at 10:00 to 10:40. These days follow in a pattern. They are posted on our schedule in the room. For girls who love skirts and dresses, it may be best to just always wear a pair of shorts underneath so that they're ready. We will have library each week (day and time not set yet). Students check out one book to take home. Books are due back the day before our library day (or sooner). Students cannot check out a new book until their other one is returned.

Daily Calendar Routine

Just before lunch we gather to begin our math instruction with our daily calendar routine. Many math concepts and problem solving skills are introduced and practiced during this time. We graph weather and teeth lost. We keep track of the number of days in school, practice place value, counting in various ways and money concepts as well as share our learning and investigate problems together.

Lunch and Recess

At 12:30 - 1:00 we have recess and from 1:00 - 1:30 we eat lunch. We go outside for recess unless it is raining or below zero with the wind chill. It is very important that your child has appropriate clothing and shoes/boots for outdoor play, especially in the winter. Please label all articles with your child's name. There are so many pairs of similar snow pants, boots, etc... that it is hard to tell who they belong to.

Math Workshop

After recess we have a short rest/read period to relax, get drinks and use the bathroom and then we begin our math workshop. A typical math session begins with a whole group lesson where we read, play games, share our thinking, learn

Math Workshop - continued

strategies etc... We then move into some independent work which allows your child to show me what they know as they practice skills and this gives me the opportunity to help them where needed. We will be working in a math journal which stays at school. After our lessons and practice, we will often have time for some game play which provides your child the opportunity to have some choice in learning and practicing the skills and concepts we are studying. Your child will have homework (Homelinks) often which directly matches the concepts taught in class. **The homework is due the next day.** There are many opportunities in class and at home for differentiating learning for those who have already mastered the concepts or for those who need additional support. Many students have learned math facts, but do not have a depth of knowledge and deep number sense. We will spend time this year deepening our knowledge to help them understand the concepts at a deeper level so they can apply them to new learning. We also spend a great deal of time learning how to explain our thinking and how we figured out the answer. We will be spending time investigating concepts with manipulatives and hands-on activities with a balance of traditional paper pencil math fact pages. Please keep a folder or box at home for math games that come home and have your child play them often.

Science/Social Studies/Health

Science

Air and Weather
Feature Functions (plants and animals)
Solids and Liquids

Social Studies

What is a Citizen?
What is a Family?

Health

Feelings
Safety

How Do We Get What We Need and
Want?

Good Health Habits and Nutrition

How Do We Learn About Places?

How Do We Learn About the Past?

We have science, social studies, and health lessons in the afternoons after math workshop. We never do all three in the same day or week. Many times we work on a science unit for a few weeks or so, then a social studies unit, then a health unit. There are many interesting and fun units of study that we do in first grade.

Leadership Notebooks and Reflection

Some of your child's work will be saved in a Leadership Notebook that he/she will bring home at the end of the first trimester for review and then to keep at the end of the year. We reflect daily on our behavior and our work and at times save pieces for our Leadership Notebooks. In the Leadership Notebook your child also keeps some assessments, sets goals and keeps track of progress on graphs or other tools. We have a Lead Time at least once per week where we look at how we're doing on our goal and share with our accountability partners. We record and highlight our progress on our W.I.G. of reading at least 10 minutes each day at home.

Clean up, Pack up, Story Time and Closing

We organize our work space and clean up our room around 3:20 and pack our green folders. Soon we will begin having classroom leadership roles that change every week. After cleanup we always try to end the day with a story. This end of day time is very important for your child and our classroom community. Please try not to pick your child up early unless really necessary.

Each day we have much to do and at the same time enjoy coming to school. I hope this overview helps you understand your child's day and helps you ask them some specific questions about what they've done. **It is amazing that their answer to "What did you do at school today?" can be "NOTHING."**

Set up for Success

Don't do for your child, what they can do for themselves, but please set them up for success by:

- ✓ Have your child outside in line a few minutes before the bell rings at 8:25. This way he/she can socialize with friends and be to class on time. Your child misses many important instructions and just doesn't start the day well when arriving late. It takes up valuable learning time to repeat instructions and redo attendance when children arrive late.
- ✓ Verify with your child that all homework, golden reading tickets and/or notes are in the green folder.
- ✓ Discuss behavior choices each day and initial calendar on weekend.
- ✓ Have your child put his/her green folder in their backpack each evening after it is emptied and homework is done.
- ✓ Have a healthy snack packed. Be sure your child knows what is for snack.
- ✓ Have a fresh water bottle (with a sports-type pull top).
- ✓ Have a routine at home for where to keep library books. Have your child put his/her book in his/her backpack the evening before they are due back or sooner if done.
- ✓ If at all possible, please do not pick your child up from school before 3:47. At the end of each day your child is organizing his/her workspace, helping clean our room, and packing his/her green folder and backpack. There are many important discussions and instructions that are missed even in those last few minutes. Also, when students are called out of class it interrupts everyone else's precious learning time.