

Language Arts

Our kindergarten curriculum is a unique blend of reading, phonemic awareness and writing. We use a variety of materials and strategies to develop reading skills. Throughout the year students will participate in Readers Workshop, Writers Workshop, and word work to develop into confident, successful readers and writers.

Reading

In kindergarten, reading is taught through the Reading Workshop Structure consisting of whole group teacher directed mini-lessons, individual and small group work, independent daily reading opportunities, partnership reading opportunities and whole group share time. Lessons are both teacher and student directed. The shared philosophy of Readers Workshop provides a balanced literacy approach, daily read alouds, assessment based instruction tailored to students' strengths and needs, opportunities for students to talk and write about their reading experiences, reading high interest, accessible books at the student's level of choosing, opportunities for long stretches of reading time, as well as having teachers who demonstrate a love of reading.

Unit 1: Readers Build Good Habits

Within this unit students learn the established procedures and management of Readers Workshop. Students develop good reading habits such as taking care of books, being a responsible reader, and how to talk about books. Partner reading and procedures are also learned. Throughout the unit students build routines and procedures for their reading.

Unit 2: Readers Read Emergent Storybooks

Within this unit students will not only continue to talk about books and what they are reading but also monitor meaning and comprehension throughout the texts they are reading. They will learn about expression and intonation as they read a variety of texts. Students rely heavily on pictures to construct meaning and how story language helps to convey the author's meaning. They will identify story elements such as characters, settings, and events in stories and respond to what they are reading to help develop comprehension skills.

Unit 3: Readers Talk about books to Grow Ideas

Within this unit students begin to use their strategies for working with print in a variety of materials, thinking about concepts of a variety of materials and talking about the texts they are reading. Students will develop the concept that reading is a way to think and grow. Anticipation and synthesizing in reading are introduced to help students strengthen their conversations about the books they are reading. Throughout the unit students will be working toward summarizing the book they are reading. They will learn to form and express their opinion about a book using terms: "I agree", "I disagree", "I think that because..." and "this reminds me of". Students will monitor their reading for meaning. They

will retell their stories using story elements and details in sequence. Students will learn to share their thoughts and ideas through talk.

Unit 4: Readers Read just-Right Books and Use Print Strategies to Support Conventional Reading

Within this unit students learn to use print strategies as they read conventionally. Students will learn to find books at their independent reading level in classroom libraries. Reading just-right books will use meaning, syntax and graphophonics to guide reading. As a strategy, rereading will be reinforced to help students problem solve at a word level, phrase level, and across multiple pages if necessary. Fluency and comprehension strategies are also reinforced. Students will begin to monitor their own reading. They will begin to read with fluency and accuracy.

Unit 5: Nonfiction Reading Strategies: Readers Read and Think About Sets of Texts They Gather Around an Interest

Within this unit students will begin to look at books with shared interest levels and will begin to study a topic of interest using a variety of leveled just-right books and study books available in the classroom. Text features are studied as well as having students question texts they may not understand. Reading, stopping, questioning and rereading strategies will be used throughout the unit. Students will learn to compare texts side by side. They will accumulate information and be able to talk about what they learned from all of the available texts. Throughout the unit multiple strategies that are appropriate for nonfiction texts will be explored. Text features and organizational structures of nonfiction texts will help students to actively pursue their interests using a variety of informational texts. Students will notice, wonder and develop new theories based on their discoveries.

Unit 6: Readers Care about Characters

Within this unit the entire class is engaged in a shared character study. Students will explore how they can identify characters by name and by understanding character traits. Feelings and motivations of characters will also be explored. In partnerships students will learn to continue their character studies by continuing their thinking and talking with partners comparing characters from books within a series and books outside of a series. Students will have the opportunity to understand their characters by reading across a variety of texts. Students will notice, wonder and make personal connections as well as text to text connections. Students will develop the understanding that characters change and develop over time in a story setting.

Writing

For writing we also use a workshop model with a new mini-lesson taught each day. When the year begins we spend time working on developing speaking skills and how to tell a story. We also spend time daily teaching students how to draw and illustrate their stories. As the year progresses students start to capture small moment stories of things that have actually happened to them in their writing. They are encouraged to draw and label pictures and eventually record the text that goes with their story. As they become more confident writers, kindergartners are introduced to other types of writing such as informational writing and poetry.

An essential component of language arts curriculum is daily phonics instruction to help expand and refine of students reading and writing powers. The lessons are used to enhance their experiences with text and help them become more confident readers. Each day a short lesson is taught and then students are given time to apply the skill they have just learned. The lessons are to help build the following skills: phonological awareness, letter knowledge, letter/sound relationships, spelling patterns, sight words, word meaning, word structures and word solving actions. Throughout the year we work to differentiate the phonics instruction to meet the needs of all students based on their reading levels.

Unit 1: Launching

Within this unit students will learn to work independently within the workshop frame, use writing along with pictures to tell each story, write longer with more varied and more thoughtful pieces, develop writing stamina and prepare for editing and publication. Students here begin to lay the foundation for their writing and writing purposes. Using modeling techniques, mini-lessons, conferring with students individually and share time, teachers help students begin to develop confidence in writing their own stories.

Unit 2: Small Moments

Within this unit students learn to see themselves as authors and discover that their everyday occurrences can lead to a story. Clear structures and routines are established to allow young writers to carry on during writing, developing stamina. Students choose topics, and plan for writing and drafting as best they can. They learn to manage the tools of writing workshop as they work through the writing process. Students learn strategies that begin to enable them to add more writing to their stories, stretch words out for spelling, plan details for their stories, focusing on the most important part of the story, write story endings and revise and edit with partners. Good writing habits such as rereading and monitoring for sense are emphasized.

Unit 3: Nonfiction Writing: Procedures and Reports

Within this unit students learn that writers sometimes write to teach. While discovering writing techniques for how-to books, students will be immersed in a variety of informational texts. Students begin to sequence using step-by-step procedures for how-to books while learning to check for clarity, editing techniques, planning sequencing stages, labeling diagrams, revising and incorporating many features of nonfiction books in their own writing. Using procedural writing and informational writing, students begin to challenge their personal writing skills and their writing ideas. Students recall a procedure that they can do independently and then, through writing, lay out the directions for that procedure. Sequencing and explicit directions are learned to write a comprehensive how-to book.

Mathematics

The kindergarten math curriculum focuses on many content stands, skills, and concepts. Frequent practice of basic skills occurs through ongoing program routines and mathematical games. We provide a realistic approach to problem solving in everyday situations and applications. Our instructional approach is to revisit topics/skills regularly to ensure full concept development and long-term retention

of learning. There are six main strands in the kindergarten curriculum. The first strand number sense and numeration focuses on counting, estimating, representing and comparing numbers, and reading and writing numbers. Operations and computation explores the meaning of addition and subtraction and developing strategies to solve number problems. The data and chance strand teaches students how to collect and organize data by using graphs, tally charts, and tables. They also begin to explore early probability concepts. The measurement strand teaches students how to use nonstandard and standard tools to measure. They are also taught money skills and using calendars and clocks to measure time. In the geometry strand students explore two and three dimensional shapes and line symmetry. The last strand is patterns, functions, and algebra in which students explore a variety of patterns and use rules to sort by attributes, make patterns, and play games.

Unit 1: Exploring Attributes and Patterns

In this unit, students study patterns by:

- classifying and sorting objects into sets
- recognizing attributes and describing color, size, and shape
- describing and extending various simple patterns
- creating and representing various simple patterns

Unit 2: Developing Number Sense

Students will study number sense in a variety of ways including:

- counting by ones to 30
- grouping 10 objects into 1 group of ten as a way to understand place value
- comparing numbers
- create, represent, and extend number patterns
- concretely developing basic facts to 10

Unit 3: Data and Data Representation

In this unit, students organize and collect data in a variety of ways including:

- collecting, counting and recording data
- creating graphs
- reading and explaining graphs
- comparisons
- sorting and organizing

Unit 4: Exploring Shape

Students learn to recognize, classify, and compare geometric shapes by:

- describing the attributes of a shape
- classifying shapes by attributes
- naming and relating geometric shapes to everyday objects

- describing relative positions of shapes
- constructing geometric shapes from other geometric objects

Unit 5: The Number System and Operations

Students learn to model numeric operations in a variety of ways including:

- counting, reading, and writing numbers to 100
- learning concepts of addition and subtraction
- solving addition and subtraction story problems
- writing equations
- working with money to recognize and know the value of coins

Unit 6: Measurement

In this unit, students compare objects to determine with groups are equal or unequal by:

- using direct measurement such as length, weight, and capacity
- comparing measurements
- iterating a unit
- identifying tools for measuring length, weight, capacity, and time
- associating hours of day with benchmarks of daily activity

Social Studies

Unit 1: Who am I?

In the first unit kindergartners begin to understand about themselves and how they are similar/different to others. They develop a timeline of their life to share with others to help them understand their place in time. They will also learn about different roles they have and how they are similar/different from their peers.

Unit 2: Where am I?

The second unit works to develop and understanding of where they live. They learn to use positional and directional words to identify locations and describe places in their environment. Map skills are also included in this unit to teach that maps represent places. Students begin to understand their place in their community and the world around them.

Unit 3: How do I get what I need and want?

The focus of the third unit is the difference between needs and wants. They will work through many activities to understand the differences between their needs and wants and how it may be different for others. As they work through this unit they also learn about goods and services and how to make fair trades.

Unit 5: How We Get Along with Others?

The last kindergarten unit is about how to get along with others, the importance of following rules, and how to solve problems. Although this is our last unit it is an ongoing topic in our classrooms. We spend a great deal of time at the beginning of the year to develop community and rules/procedures and continue to support this throughout the year.

Science

Seasons Unit

Students will:

- Describe and compare weather related to the four seasons in terms of temperature and observable factors as we progress through the year, fall, winter, spring and summer.
- Observe trees for their changes throughout the year in different seasons
- Describe precautions that should be taken for human safety during severe weather conditions
- Generate questions about the world around them

Living Things Unit: Trees and Butterflies

Students will:

- Identify that living things have basic needs
- Observe the stages of the life cycle of the butterfly
- Observe and describe properties of trees and leaves in the schoolyard
- Compare the shapes of leaves to geometric shapes
- Compare the size and edges of leaves

Non-Living Things Unit: Rocks

Students will:

- Identify and compare living and nonliving things
- Describe rocks by their characteristics
- Compare and order rocks using a criteria
- Measure rocks using appropriate tools

Physical Science unit: Force and Motion

Students will:

- Describe the position of an object in relation to other objects around it
- Describe the direction of a moving object
- Observe how object fall toward the earth
- Demonstrate pushes and pulls on objects that can move
- Observe how shape and mass of an object can affect motion
- Conduct investigations and share their results