

First Grade Looks Back - September 2008

We are celebrating our first month of school. We continue to be appreciative of the students' enthusiasm for learning and the relative ease with which they have transitioned from being kindergarteners to becoming first graders. Our favorite quote that we have heard repeated often by many of the children: "I LOVE FIRST GRADE!"

Reading: We began our reading program with a review of letter sounds and an ongoing orientation to the new routine. The children are reading as a whole group with our big book series, in pairs with the small readers, and individually during choice reading time. We will also begin working in small reading groups. We will continue to review the alphabet phonetically and will soon be moving into consonant blends and digraphs, such as spr, bl, wh and sh. The children have moved quickly from writing dictated sentences and introduced topics to using their own ideas and their "best guess" spelling when writing in their daily journals. We enjoy establishing a rapport with the students as they share daily events that make their life exciting. It is also an important opportunity for them to build their confidence and practice their writing skills. They have been learning to transfer these skills to informational writing about interesting African animals.

Math: In math we reviewed skills introduced in kindergarten and in unit one worked with improving their understanding number concepts. The children practiced using a number line and building their ability to recall number sequence by finding numbers that come before and after other numbers. Unit two will focus on practicing addition facts to ten and learning vocabulary associated with creating and solving equations.

Science/Social Studies: We have had many informative discussions surrounding African animals and their habitats. We used a variety of colors to identify the different vegetation zones on a map of Africa. The children continue to work on the challenging concept of understanding the difference between a country and a continent. One of our favorite activities was creating a paper African mask and describing how we would use it to celebrate. We expanded this project in art class by crafting masks out of clay.

We are continuing our Talk It Out curriculum, reviewing the process of talking it out and the finer points of working together, such as using a kind tone, choosing kind words, and learning to compromise.

Next month: spiders, skeletons and bats, oh my!

Thanks,
Yolanda and Rebekah