2023-2024

Dear Families,

Welcome to Mrs. Timson’s 4th grade Class!

I have been teaching 4th grade at Perkins since 2009. Before that, I taught 5th grade at Gulf Beaches Elementary. I am originally from Ohio but have lived in Pinellas County nearly my whole life. I am the proud mother of an adult daughter and son who live nearby. I also have 2 cats and 1 dog. I love being outside, gardening, cooking, and creating. As you may know, one of my all-time favorite authors is J.K. Rowling, the author of Harry Potter, but my favorite genre is either science or historical informational text.

The Harry Potter theme of 4th grade is just a theme. We do not teach potions or make real potions. We do not cast spells. In no way are we teaching or engaging in witchcraft. It is just a fun way to get kids interested in series books, character development, and the genre of fantasy. Some themes that we will explore throughout the year are friendship, justice/fairness, equality, integrity, honesty, persistence, overcoming obstacles, resiliency, teamwork, and choices. The theme also provides a behavior structure for the class (using class dojo for weekly points and earning team points for quarterly awards throughout the year). Students also can earn POTIONS (fun activities & science experiments) through completed homework, classwork and good choices throughout the week. POTIONS is an acronym for our character traits that we strive to exhibit each day: Perseverance, Originality, Teamwork, Integrity, Outstanding Effort and Attitude, Niceness, and Self-reliance.

Some of the more popular POTIONS activities are “Galaxy in a Bottle” to explore the properties of density, “Flubber” and “Oobleck” to explore characteristics of chemical and physical changes, and edible “Moon Phases.” One of my very favorite aspects of our theme is the House Stole. In the fall, students are sorted into Houses and receive a stole with their House Letter on it. Throughout the year, as they achieve their goals, they earn badges on their stole to represent each accomplishment. What they earn is completely in their hands and is a result of their own choices. This year, one student earned a whopping 19 badges for academics, extracurriculars, and good character! Students keep their stole at the end of 4th grade.

We will read *many* great books in fourth grade. Some of the titles include Manatee Summer, Gregor the Overlander, Esperanza Rising, and Save Me a Seat.

I STRONGLY encourage all students to read every day this summer, at least 30 minutes.

In this packet you will also find a list of the new Sunshine State Young Reader Award Books for 3rd to 5th grade. Students who would like to participate in Battle of the Books in 4th grade should get started and read *at least* 3 titles over the summer. There are 15 Sunshine State titles, so start soon!

There are also many great titles available on MYON, Newsela, and CommonLit for free. Students can access that through CLEVER using their same username/password.

When students return in August, they can take the reading counts quizzes for books read over the summer. Each 100 points earns a STAR on the House Stole and an ice cream celebration! The Ice Cream Celebration will occur at the end of the school year!

The other summer goals I STRONGLYencourage every student to reach are:

1. to learn their basic math facts (through 10 for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division). This will make 4th grade math much easier!
2. to review and understand basic place value through the thousands place. Place value is the backbone of math. We use it when we learn multdigit multiplication and division. We use it when we learn decimals. We use it when we work with measurement in math and science. It’s essential to understanding maths now and in the future.

4th and 5th grade uses Standards Based Grading as our grading method. This is significantly different than previous grades. Students will not receive a participation grade, but rather will be graded according to their mastery level on our BEST Standards for ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Each week, I will send you a list of ALL the standards we will be addressing that week, so as a parent you are aware of what your child is striving to master. There will be multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery throughout the grading period, but you will only see the standard listed once in the gradebook. Students are encouraged to review and retake any summative assessments. More detailed information about our standards-based grading policy, retakes, and resources for review will be sent out in the fall. If you would like to look at all the Florida Standards for 4th grade, you may access them through these links:

<https://cpalmsmediaprod.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/docs/standards/best/la/elabeststandardsfinal2108.pdf>

<https://cpalmsmediaprod.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/docs/standards/best/ma/mathbeststandardsfinal.pdf>

<file:///C:/Users/timsonc/OneDrive%20-%20Pinellas%20County%20Schools/Desktop/science_standards.pdf>

Research shows that students who do not read or practice skills previously learned are in danger of losing that knowledge. Some reports estimate that students who do not stay mentally engaged over the summer can lose up to 22% of the knowledge gained in a school year. That’s a lot! Please give your child the invaluable gift of keeping that 22% by making sure he or she reads and does common, everyday math around the house, in the store, and just because.

Please feel free to contact me through either Class Dojo or email over the summer if you have any questions or concerns.

I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Respectfully,

Colette Timson

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**Tips for Preventing the Summer Slide**

Studies show that children who do not read or have access to books during the summer lose up to 2 months of reading performance. Those losses accumulate during the elementary school years so that by the time a child enters middle school he/she may be 2 1/2 years behind! All children may fall victim to the “summer slide” if not provided with summer reading opportunities. So how do we prevent the summer slide-or even accelerate reading growth? Here are a few ideas:

* Visit your local library! Help your child find “right fit” books. Right fit books are books that are of high interest to your child and are not beyond their reading level. You can use the five-finger test to determine if the book is too difficult for your child. Open the book to a page with many words. Have your child begin reading the text. Hold up a finger for each word he/she does not know. If you have 4 or 5 fingers up, the text may be too difficult for your child to read independently. Feel free to still check out the book! It just may be a book you want to read with your child.
* Be sure your child reads at least 20 minutes a day. According to research, a child who reads only 1 minute a day outside of school will learn 8,000 words by the end of sixth grade where a student who reads 20 minutes outside of school will learn 1,800,000 words! That’s huge! If reading isn’t one of your child’s top priorities, you may need to set up an incentive program.
* Read to & with your child. When you read to your child, he/she hears the rhythm of language. explore different types of reading such as poetry. Poetry is a great way to improve phonemic awareness skills as poetry often incorporates rhyme. For older children, poetry is a means of improving fluency and vocabulary.
* Read for different purposes. Reading directions for a recipe or directions for assembling a toy are fun ways of incorporating reading into everyday activities.
* Play games with words. Games like Apples to Apples and Scattergories improves vocabulary. Hink Pinks are a very fun and addictive vocabulary game. No materials needed!

<http://www.thinkablepuzzles.com/hinkpinks/hinkpinks1.shtml>

<https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/TM/WS_sponges.shtml>

* Play simple math games with cards and dice to help learners strengthen place value skills and fact fluency.

<https://www.weareteachers.com/math-card-games/>

<https://www.upperelementarysnapshots.com/2015/09/7-math-games-for-card-sharks.html>

My favorite site for just getting lost in all the awesomeness of math is:

<https://mathigon.org/polypad>

Have a happy and healthy summer! Keep those busy brains active and learning!

What Supplies Does Every 4th Grader Need?

Essentials:

* ONE 1 inch or 1 ½ -inch binder to hold all communication, data, returned assessments, and notes. Used daily.
* 1 set of dividers for the binder (6-8)
* 3 composition notebooks for math, ELA, and science. Please no spirals- they fall apart fast.
* 24 pencils. Students go through a LOT in a year!
* Headphones or earbuds for daily use
* Water bottle- can refill at the sink all day. The door is locked, so students do not have access to the water fountain during academic time.
* 1 pack of sticky notes.
* tissues

Nice to have:

* Colored pencils
* Pencil pouch
* Erasers
* Set of highlighters- yellow, pink, blue, green

Wish List for the Class (also on Amazon):

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1LVESUGONFLSE?ref_=wl_share>

* Extra of ANYTHING above😊
* Bandaids
* Ice packs for minor boo boos
* Gallon sized bags
* Disinfectant wipes