

The Thunderbolt Times

The monthly newsletter for the Sky Ranch GATE Magnet
Community



Quarter 3 Newsletter- 2023

Happy New Year! We hope you had a restful break and are excited to be off to a fresh start with the beginning of the third quarter!

Important January Dates:

- **Monday, January 16th:** No School- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **Monday, February 20th:** No School- Presidents' Day
- **Monday, March 13th:** Teacher PD Day-No school for students
- **Friday, March 17th:** 8th Grade Field Trip- Nevada Museum of Art
- **Monday, March 20th - Friday, March 24th:** Spring Break

Wondering how to better support your child's academics in core classes? Here's what we suggest:

Step 1: Check our team websites and assignment calendars to see what assignments are due soon. This is a proactive approach - see what's due before it's due. With this approach, you can help your child break down large assignments and ask your child to show you and talk about their upcoming or completed work before it's turned in. This approach lessens the frequency of missing and late assignments. It's important to check this resource several times throughout the week as teachers do adjust frequently.

Team websites

7th/8th grade team: washoeschools.net/pilotsquadron

Step 2: Check Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus is where we post students' grades after the assignments are graded. Some assignments are posted within hours, but some assignments take longer to grade; it may be more than a week before these assignments are posted in IC. Checking IC is more of a reactive approach - it may lead to chasing down missing assignments and backtracking whereas knowing what's coming up due keeps everyone up to date.

Classroom Updates

English/Language Arts 6 – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **Why is it human to search for understanding?**
- **How do systems influence human understanding?**
- **How can writers use poetry to explore aspects of their own identities?**

After a well-deserved break, 6th graders are returning to ponder some of the deeper questions about existence as we begin our reading of our new class novel, *Sophie's World*. As such, we have discussed the basis of logic, identity, and life in attempting to match the intellectual underpinnings of the novel. We will continue our Socratic Seminar discussions and weekly quizzes with this novel, and students are continually working on writing various types of poems to describe their individual identities and experiences. We will work further on presentation skills and explore more deeply the ELA concepts of denotation, connotation, and symbolism.

English/Language Arts 7 – Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **How do authors of fiction and non-fiction use different strategies to tackle the same subject?**

In November, the 7th graders enjoyed hearing from Dr. Michael Perrin about the nature of intelligence and giftedness. Dr. Perrin is the psychologist, assessment and enrollment coordinator and identification program facilitator for the WCSD Gifted and Talented department. The students asked many thoughtful and interesting questions and learned so much about what it means to be intelligent and gifted.

Here, the students demonstrate the classic bell curve which illustrates how IQ is distributed in the human population:



This quarter, seventh graders are going to tackle the classic novel, *Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding, this quarter. Through fiction and non-fiction texts, we'll be exploring the ideas of mob mentality and how that connects to bullying interactions in modern times. We'll also look closely at the dichotomies of civilization and savagery and good and evil as common themes in our novel and in literature in general. In addition, we'll be focusing on our writing, speaking and grammar skills and an independent novel with a book project at the end of the quarter.

English/ Language Arts 8 - Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **How do authors confront the eternal struggle between good and evil?**

In November, the 8th graders enjoyed hearing stories from Anjeanette Damon, an investigative journalist who worked for years as a “watchdog reporter” for the Reno-Gazette Journal. She showed the students an excellent example of what modern-day muckrakers can accomplish in our local area.



This quarter, the eighth graders will start the new semester with an exploration of novels written during and about the first and second world wars. Students will make choices about what to read for in-class Literature Circles from a variety of books on these topics. Together, as a class, we will look closely at the memoir, *Night*, by Elie Wiesel and the graphic novel, *Maus*, by

Art Spiegelman. Resilience with an emphasis on survival and the dichotomy of good and evil will remain our themes to focus on as we explore these works. In addition, we will continue to work on writing skills in preparation for the rigors of high school writing; we'll be focusing on Literary Analysis through Critical Lenses this quarter which is a new approach to analyzing literature that leads to interesting and high-level exploration of our texts, art, music and literature students will continue to encounter later in life.

Earth Science 6 – Mrs. Cameron

Essential Questions:

- **What is the universe, and what is Earth's place in it?**

We will be starting the third quarter by looking at Earth and its solar system as part of the Milky Way galaxy. This will include exploring how earth moves in space and the impact of gravity. We will also learn about the phases of the moons, eclipses, and tides. Our exploration of the sun and planets will happen through research and creating planet travel brochures. There will be several hands-on activities during this unit so be sure to ask them about what they are learning.



The 6th graders loved finding a new purpose for old t-shirts. These bags will be distributed by our counseling department filled with food to families in need.

7th Grade: – Mrs. Masten

Essential Question:

- **How can one describe physical interactions between objects and within systems of objects?**

Students will be introduced to different types of energy, Newton's laws of motion, speed, velocity, acceleration, momentum, forces, electricity, magnetism, renewable/non-renewable energy, and energy transfer/conservation. There will be several hands-on activities during this unit. Students will also be able to make a bottle rocket and an electromagnet. Please start saving 2L soda bottles for this project! ☺

8th Grade Honors Biology- Mrs. Masten

Essential Questions:

- **How do the structures of organisms enable life's functions?**
- **How are the characteristics from one generation related to the previous generation?**
- **How can individuals of the same species and even siblings have different characteristics?**

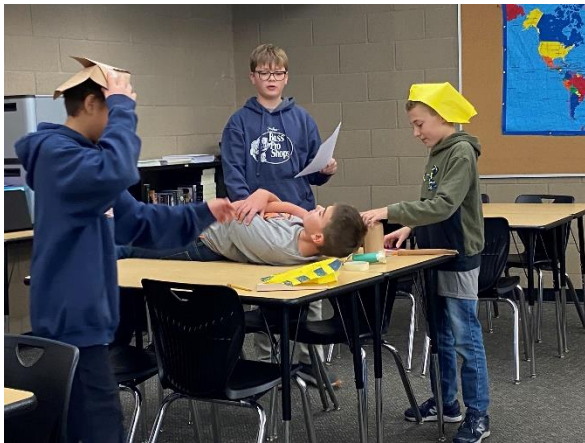
We have moved on to our next unit, Genetics and Heredity. There will be different activities, projects, and labs that focus on DNA, mutations, Mendelian genetics, pedigrees, karyotypes, and blood-typing. Students will be able to make a lot of real-life connections during this unit. I hope that they come home and analyze your family's genetic characteristics!

6th Grade: Ancient Civilizations – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **Can we truly change our station in life?**
- **Why should we be “good?”**
- **How do we decide who wields power?**

Having used India’s strict caste system as a guide, we discussed how this cultural belief interplayed with the religious beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism. We will continue by including looks at the mathematical, scientific, and cultural benefits early Indian civilizations passed on as we move East into ancient China to examine the dynasties and philosophies that made up the culture of the period as well as the cultural diffusion caused by the success of the Silk Road. We will then wrap up the quarter returning west again, into ancient Greece by discussing governmental systems created by the leaders of the time and how each type of government led to another.



7th Grade: U.S. History – Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How do interactions affect relationships?**

Kicking off this quarter, students will look at how America expanded west. They will analyze the means that it took to expand West. What relationships were created or impacted? Students will utilize primary resources to reach conclusions about the Mexican-American war, manifest destiny and the Donner Party. The unit will be assessed by creating a board game. After looking at the west, we will move onto the era of growth and disunion. What was taking place in America prior to the Civil War? What tensions were rising that could make a country go to war?



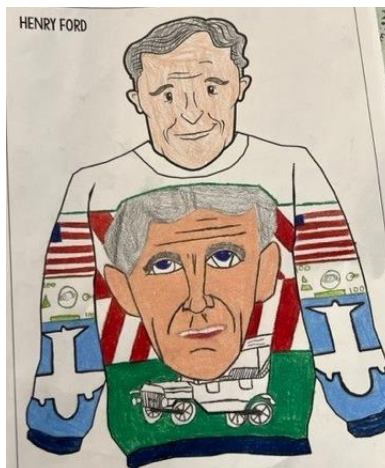
One of our dress up days this semester was dress up like one of your teachers. Alivia dressed as Mrs. Porter and totally nailed it!

8th Grade: Accelerated Analyzing War - Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How does perseverance require resilience?**

As we return from break, students will be embarking on the study of “the years between the wars”. We will look at primary and secondary sources that help to dive deeper into the 1920’s and 1930’s, focusing on the Jazz age and stock market crash. Students will be creating a 1920’s newspaper to highlight what they have learned but will also have a lot of choice when selecting the topics for their articles. After the 1920’s we will move through the 30’s and look at the Dust Bowl and the impact it had on America. Throughout this quarter, we will focus on writing skills while utilizing the essential question as a driving force for analysis.



Students had the chance to create “ugly sweaters” for someone of their choice from history. Here are a few examples!

Math 6 – Mrs. Cameron

Essential Questions:

- **How can we use ratios to make predictions?**
- **When are decimals an effective standard of measurement?**

Now that we have completed fractions and decimals, we will take the opportunity to use the concepts we've gleaned from these units to make a natural segue into ratios and proportions. The students will work to use the setup of the fractions and, more specifically, equivalent fractions to see how ratios can change. Then, by using their deeper understanding of the fractions involving tenths and hundredths, they can see how decimals are similarly related to fractions, percentages, and extrapolate into ratios as well.



Math IS fun!!! 😊

Integrated I - Mrs. Sandoval

Essential Questions:

- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**
- **How do patterns help us determine mathematical relationships?**

This quarter we will begin the functions unit. Integrated I students will investigate this essential question by representing relationships between quantities using functions, tables, and graphs. We will also analyze patterns and learn about the domain and range of a set of data. Students will learn how to identify different types of functions based on patterns they discover. We will then shift focus specifically to linear functions. Students will continue to graph these functions and then begin writing the equations of these functions. Students will learn the different forms of writing a linear equation and when to use each form. Students will learn to manipulate the different variables in writing equations and determine the effect each has on the linear function. Toward the end of the quarter, we will explore exponents and learn the rules of simplifying exponents.

Integrated II - Mrs. Sandoval

Essential Questions:

- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**
- **How are the properties of numbers and polynomials related?**
- **How are proportional relationships related to similarity?**
- **How can relationships in trigonometry be applied to the real world?**

We will begin this quarter with a polynomial unit. Students will take prior knowledge of polynomials from Integrated I and use it to learn new material. Students will learn how to multiply and factor polynomials through investigation and looking at patterns. Multiplying and

factoring are completely new topics for the students, and it is important they master this topic to succeed in the quadratics unit. Next, we will move into similarity of triangles and an introduction to trigonometry. Students will employ prior knowledge of proportional relationships and apply these skills to similar figures. Students will take prior knowledge of right triangles to understand trigonometric relationships. Students will then prove the Law of Sines and Cosines in triangles. We will end the unit building a clinometer to measure the heights of trees and basketball hoops at our school. We will compare measurements using trigonometry and similar triangles to determine which one is more accurate.

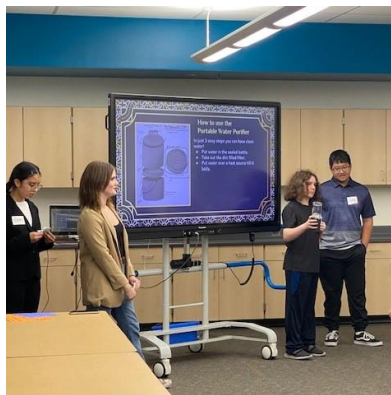
Enrichment:

6th Grade: During quarter 3, students will participate in a rotation that includes current events, study hall and social emotional learning activities.

8th Grade and 7th Grade: During quarter 3, students will participate in a rotation that includes current events, study hall and social emotional learning activities. Students will also participate in the district's SHARE program. More information will be given soon in their science class. If you'd like to view the curriculum ahead of time, here is the link: [S.H.A.R.E. / Middle School \(washoeschools.net\)](https://www.washoeschools.net/S.H.A.R.E./MiddleSchool)



7th Graders participating in our Ethical Debates PBL Showcase in November - they did AMAZING!



8th graders pitching their Gilded Ages businesses to sharks. We are so proud of their hard work!

Pilot Squadron was super excited to bring back brown bag luncheon! Here are a few photos from the event!



Pilot Squadron Specific Information:

Tis the season for absences for illnesses. Please review the following protocol of what to do when you are absent for any reason.

If I am absent, what do I do?

Step 1: Check the team assignment calendar

Step 2: Cross reference names of assignments with TEAMS and OneNote, if possible at home. If these assignments are not posted, email your teacher and ask for the specific assignment for that day. Remember the assignment names are on the team assignment calendar!

Step 3: Ask a classmate

Step 4: Email teacher (following email guidelines) with specific questions. Please follow these guidelines when emailing:

- Fill in the subject line with what your intentions are for the email and your name.
- Address your teacher at the beginning of the email.
- Use complete sentences and proper grammar. Be clear in what you are asking.
- Make sure you sign your name: first and last!
- Add which period you are in under your name.
- Use “please” and “thank you”.

**Remember, office hours for teachers are weekdays 7:15-2:45. This means that emails that are sent after this time will be answered the next morning. Emails sent on the weekend will be answered on Monday morning. ** If you have access to TEAMS, post your questions there for your peers to help.

Step 5: Complete work and fill out an absence slip.

If due dates have been communicated prior to your absence, the assignment is still due on the original due date*

If I have an assignment that is late that needs to be turned in, what do I do?

Step 1: Complete the assignment- incomplete work will not be accepted.

Step 2: Fill out a late slip. These can be found in each of your core classes.

Step 3: Physical assignments: turn in completed work with a slip attached to your teacher

Electronic assignments: Turn in completed late slip to your teacher

Counselor's Corner:

GT Counselor: Ms. Ivans, our GT counselor, will share some resources for parents. Mrs. Porter will forward you newsletters from Ms. Ivans as they become available.

Sky Ranch Counselor: Ms. Gunderson is our counselor for both Griswold Base and Pilot Squadron. Her email is rgunderson@washoeschools.net.

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