

TRAILBLAZERS NEWSLETTER JANUARY 5, 2009

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 19 – No school for students- Martin Luther King Holiday
February 4 – Parent-Teacher Conferences 4:00 PM-8:00 PM
February 5 – Parent Teacher Conferences 8:00 AM-4:00 PM
February 6 – No school
February 16 - No school – Presidents' Day

TIMELY TIPS

With the beginning of the new semester, students have an opportunity for a fresh start in each class. A strong effort at the beginning of the semester helps to set students up for success. A weak effort sets them up for failure. Please encourage your son or daughter to keep up with his or her assignments and to study for tests. Also remember that the agenda is a valuable tool for checking up on your student, and you can access grades through Powerschool on the Internet. If you haven't set up your account on Homeworklive.com, this would be the perfect time to do so. Teachers post assignments and class activities on this website, so if your student is ill or simply forgets, the assignments are available.

January is a good time to check your student's school supplies. Many students were running low on paper at the end of December. It's amazing how many pens and pencils they can use up or lose. Please have them bring red grading pens or pencils, too.

CLASS NEWS

Integrated Algebra

During January, Integrated Algebra classes will be studying chapter 5 which deals with graphs and functions. Students build on their knowledge of equations by relating a graph to the story it tells and to the equation whose solutions it pictures. Students will read and use function notation as they model function rules with tables and graphs.

Algebra

In January, Algebra classes will be studying chapter 6. This chapter introduces rates of change and defines slope of a line. This leads to graphing linear equations and writing the equation of a line in three different forms, using the slope, intercepts, or points on the line. From there, the characteristics of parallel and perpendicular lines are examined. Finally, all of these topics are applied together to find trend lines and lines of best fit.

Language Arts

During January, students will be practicing expository writing. We're planning a compare/contrast essay. Additionally, students will be competing to represent the eighth grade in the spelling bee that will be held in mid-January. Weekly vocabulary and spelling will continue as usual, and we'll study adjectives and adverbs in grammar.

Students will be taking the Kansas State Writing Assessment in late February. This assessment takes four class periods. One class period is devoted to each of the following activities: prewriting, drafting, revising, and writing the final copy. All writing must be done in class.

Literature

To coincide with the study of volcanoes in science, students will read an explosive story, "The Dog of Pompeii." We'll be focusing on the literary element theme. >From mid-January through February we will turn our attention to strategies for reading nonfiction. Students will take the Kansas Reading Assessment in early March.

Remember to encourage your student to read at least 15 minutes every night. Their AR points count 10% of their grade.

Social Studies

We are near the end of our Kansas History Unit. During the month of December, we focused on the cattle drives, cow towns, the Gilded Age and the Reform Movement. Students were introduced to the Reform Movement through the historical perspective of Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*. We will complete the Kansas History unit by the end of January.

Science

Now that we've completed our study of plate tectonics and earthquakes, we will continue with volcanoes and geothermal energy. This will involve looking at what causes volcanoes; what kinds of volcanoes there are; where volcanoes are most likely to occur; and why there are, currently, few earthquakes and no volcanoes in Kansas.

We will supplement this investigation with videos dealing with volcanology; we will do some scientific researching using the Internet. We will have the students begin working on research papers/presentations about earthquakes, volcanoes, or plate tectonics. Students will receive specific information about the presentations in mid-January.