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5H Updates

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Geometry

Geometry and spatial sense are fundamental components of mathematics learning. They offer ways to interpret and reflect on our physical environment and can serve as tools for the study of other topics in mathematics and science. (National Council of Mathematics Teachers – Standards for School Mathematics)

“Math is boring, Mom!”

This statement coming from my first grader was quite a blow to me as a teacher and math lover. Ever so calmly I responded, “Why is that?” “We just make shapes, count how many of each block we used and use little shapes to make big shapes. It isn’t math and it is boring.”

So went my son’s perception of his 1st grade introduction to 2D Geometry. Many of us number lovers have a hard time seeing geometry as “math.” It was an opportune time for a discussion of the reasons we study geometry, (and no, not to do well on MCAS, get good grades, or solve proofs in high school,) but to be able to develop reasoning and classification skills that are useful across the curriculum

and in life beyond school. He particularly enjoyed hearing that “big kids” in fifth grade study geometry and enjoyed playing some of the “Guess My Rule” classification games. He also started to see how shapes can be used to represent fractional parts – “six of the green triangles make up one yellow hexagon so one green triangle is a sixth of a hexagon.

Many fifth graders still rely on work with pattern blocks from the primary grades to visualize fractional parts. 5H referenced images of these common shapes to help students visualize and classify rhombi, equilateral triangles and trapezoids this week. This gave the older students a basis for comparison -- do all trapezoids look the same? What does a shape have to have to be a trapezoid?

5H also began the study of 2D Geometry this week. 5H students had some of the same reactions as my son while we worked to describe and classify shapes according to attributes. It was a great opportunity to answer the age old question, “When am I ever going to need to know this stuff?!”

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Geometry Cont.

Classification and reasoning are skills used in every discipline. Students also develop visual discrimination skills and later measurement skills working with perimeter and area. Students discuss questions such as “Are all squares rectangles? Are all rectangles parallelograms?” Considering these questions helps children make sense of hierarchical classifications.

I encourage you to work with your child to play the Guess My Rule games or ask your child questions such as “*Why can't a triangle have two obtuse angles? Is it possible to have only 3 right angles in a quadrilateral? Can you draw a quadrilateral with 3 acute angles? Can you change the perimeter of a shape without changing the area?*”

Language Arts - Author Study

Grade 5 will begin a study of Eve Bunting’s writing in February. Bunting has many picture books written for an older audience. Her books have strong messages about topics such as family, hope and pride. Children will read many books by Bunting and use her books to study theme and practice pulling evidence from the text to support writing.

Science

Our next science unit will be Light and Color.

Social Studies - Ancient Egypt

5H students are drafting Expert Research papers and tomb paintings. We look forward to sharing these final projects with you!

Inauguration

With great pleasure, I witnessed the swearing in of our new president with your children. Watching history in the making, and being able to explain our political process to children was a great civics lesson.

Mid-Year Reminders

5H has had quite a few students coming to school tardy each day. It makes it difficult to begin our day on time when we have students arriving late. I know how difficult it is to get out on the winter mornings, but appreciate everyone’s effort to be to school on time so we can begin our day together. Thank you!

Also – I am asking 5H students for a renewed effort to have all materials at school each day, homework completed and turned in on time. We have had greater incidences of missing math notebooks, assignment notebooks and reading journals.

Again, thank you for all your support!