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7th Graders Beware!

As you may or may not know, 7th grade is the year in which students are tested in Writing! We will be testing on February 20th (that's a Tuesday). We are going to be focusing a lot on writing in the coming two months. You can help prepare your student by having some practice time at home. Here are some helpful hints:

1. Sit down and write stories together.
2. Focus more on ideas and organization rather than nit-picking on specific grammar or

punctuation.

3. Help your student elaborate their ideas and use vivid language.



See page 4 for some 6+1 Traits Writing information and tips.

Here are some writing prompts for you to try:

1. If you could invite any three people to dinner (dead, alive, famous, etc), who would they be and why?
2. Who is your hero and why?
3. Describe your best family vacation.
4. Write an imaginative story about an adventure you have on a rainy day.
5. If you could have any pet, what would it be and why?

Ways to contact us:

- E-mail: smtrayno@ccisd.net or lmyers@ccisd.net or bporche@ccisd.net
- Phone: 281-284-3500

Benchmarks Coming Soon!

It seems all we do is test, test, test! Unfortunately, it is that time again. Benchmark testing will be happening during the fourth week of January.














- Jan. 23rd—Math
- Jan. 24th—Reading
- Jan. 25th—Science (8th only)
- Jan. 26th—Social Studies (8th only)

Schedule of Events

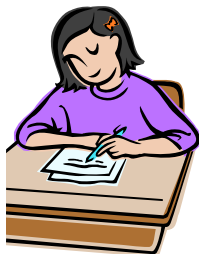
- 4th—Back to School
- 12th—Taylor’s Birthday
- 15th—Staff/Student Holiday
- 16th—Lydia’s Birthday
- 16th—Sorenson Meeting
- 18th—Jerin’s Birthday
- 23rd—Math Benchmark
- 24th—Reading Benchmark
- 25th—Science Benchmark (8th only)
- 26th—Social Studies Benchmark (8th only)

January 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2 	3 	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12 	13
14	15 	16 	17	18 	19	20
21	22	23 	24 	25 	26 	27
28	29	30	31			

From the Desk of Ms. Traynor

Well, break’s over and it’s time to get back down to business! As you read on the first page, the Writing TAKS and/or SDAA is fast approaching for our 7th graders. We will be focusing most of our energies into building our writing skills these next couple of weeks. Be sure to read on page 4 about the 6+1 Traits of writing. We discuss and use these in class often.



We will also continue to work on our Language! Program. We had some interruptions in December, but I hope to be back on track as soon as possible. Unit 8, Whale Songs, will be starting lesson 5 which focuses on using transition words in paragraphs. Unit 10, Telling Time, will be starting lesson 5 as well which focuses on using an outline to sequence paragraphs.

We will be starting our novels this month as well. A paper will be sent home with your child outlining the expectations for this long-term project. You and your child will need to sign it so that I know we are all on the same page. These novels might seem a bit overwhelming, but with everything I plan on doing with them, your child will pick up many skills. I can’t express enough how very important reading is to your child’s development. Encourage reading as much as you can!



From the Desk of Mrs. Myers

Welcome back! I hope your holiday was refreshing and you are ready to get back to work! I know I am looking forward to it!

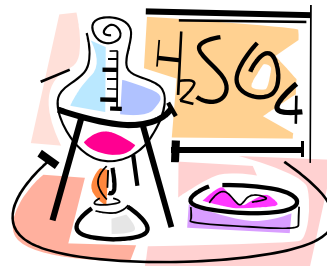
1st and 6th period science:

This semester we will be working on labeling the parts of an atom, using the periodic table to find information, giving examples of physical and chemical changes and whatever else may come up within the semester that I feel is important for the students to know about. The first semester went without saying, quite well and I am looking forward to the second semester following in the same lines as

the first, with some more independent studying at home.

2nd and 5th period science:

YEAH! We have made it through the first semester as a co-teach class! I am looking forward to this semester. The first semester was successful and I want the second semester to be just as bright. Some things I want to work on are getting the reviews for 9 weeks tests out to ya'll earlier. The problem is, the district gives the mainstream teacher the tests, they then have to look through



them and make a study guide for the students to do and then we go over them. During this time ya'll have 5 other classes to study for. I will make it a goal of mine to become more involved and interactive with the mainstream teachers in getting the information to study out to you earlier. Overall, I feel the co-teach situation is going great!

From the Desk of Mr. Porche

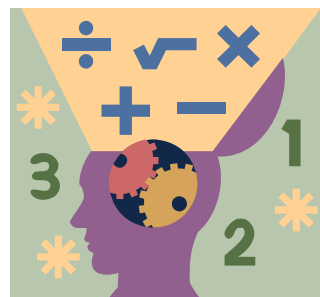
Welcome back to school! I hope you had a great Christmas break and New Years. I am looking forward to a great semester. However, there is a lot to be done and the biggest project for me is setting up an ASL club for anyone at Creekside to join. With the establishment of the club, the opportunity arises for friendships to form and better communication among each other. If you are interested in supporting, please let me know.

On a small note, I received a Masters degree in December and

it was a milestone for me. I realized how much time and effort I have put into accomplishing my educational goals. One of those goals is I plan on teaching for many years to come and look forward to the kids growing up and accomplishing their dreams too.

Henry David Thoreau once said, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; there is where they should be. Now put foundations under them."

Looking forward to a great semester!



Six Traits Writing Tips for Parents (Part 1)

The traits are not new. A trait can be defined as a quality or characteristic critical to successful performance. Just as there are traits for good ice skating, like balance, grace, technical skill and so on, there are traits for good writing. The purpose of using Six Traits is to give teachers and students the same language and expectations of writing. We want students to transfer the writing skills they have developed in their language arts classes to writing whenever it's used, not just within their language arts experience.

IDEAS

The ideas are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme. A paper with good ideas is clear, focused, and holds the reader's attention. Ideas are the heart of the message. They are the reason we are writing.

Parents can suggest that their children ask the following:

- Is my message clear?
- Do I know enough about my topic?
- Is it interesting?
- Is my topic "small" and focused?
- Did I show what was happening?

ORGANIZATION

Organization is the internal structure of the piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas. Organization gives direction to all writing by drawing the reader in. It enhances and showcases the central theme or storyline. Everything fits together like a puzzle, leaving the reader with something to think about.

Parents can suggest that their children ask the following:

- Does my paper have a good opening that captures the reader's attention?
- Are my ideas in the best order?
- Does my paper have a strong ending?

VOICE

The voice is the heart and soul, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words. Voice gives writing personality, flavor and style. In a paper with strong voice, the writer speaks directly to the reader and is sensitive to the reader's needs.

Parents can suggest that their children ask the following:

- Does this writing sound like me?
- Did I say what I think and feel?
- Does my writing have energy and passion?
- Is it appropriate for my audience and purpose?

WORD CHOICE

Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader. Word Choice enriches our writing and makes it almost come alive. Precise words add energy and clarity. Words convey the intended message in a clear, interesting and natural way.

Parents can suggest that their children ask the following:

- Will my reader understand my words?
- Were my words accurate, original, and just right?
- Did I use energetic verbs?
- Did I use language that painted a picture?