

Fifth Grade

Overview of Curriculum and Expectations

Personal Growth and Work Habits:

In fifth grade, students continue to develop their personal growth and work habits they have been developing in prior years. Students are expected to consistently behave in a respectful and mature manner towards the children and adults in our school community, handling conflicts with tolerance and peace. During fifth grade students develop and hone behaviors and management tools that will assist them as they transition into middle school. These skills include various forms of note taking as well as different study methods.

Students develop skills to work productively while independent, in partnerships, small groups and in whole class investigations. Students are required to reach a high level of stamina and focus on tasks that reflects their fifth grade standing. This standing is achieved through rigorous work and participation, both written and verbal, from every student. Students have many opportunities to challenge themselves and grow in their understandings and are encouraged to make decisions to help this growth occur. Students are required to complete homework that is given nightly and to make up any homework and/or class work that is missed.

At The Children's Workshop School, fifth grade is looked at as a bridge from elementary school to middle school. We emphasize the importance of responsibility, independence and individual choice in fifth grade as this allows our students to move on to middle school with skill sets and habits that will give them the foundation to be successful middle school students.

Speaking and Listening:

Students in fifth grade grow in their ability to express themselves in an organized and appropriate manner that deepens the discussion at hand. Students are also expected to be respectful and attentive listeners to their classmates, acknowledging the importance of actively listening within discussions. Students grow their speaking and listening skills in a variety of settings from partnerships to class discussions and are expected to be engaged in the topic at hand, both as listeners and appropriate vocal participants. In fifth grade, students are also required to give individual presentations, helping to build public speaking skills students will need throughout life.

Social Studies:

We start our year by focusing on our community as a fifth grade class, discussing the importance of citizenship and being a strong and supportive classmate.

We then launch into an extensive investigation of Slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in this country. The students explore significant events during this time period including The Montgomery Bus Boycott, The Little Rock Nine integration, and The Greensboro Sit-Ins. The class uses this knowledge to write their MLK Honoring the Dream play for our school wide celebration. The students also participate in a project that has the students walk in the shoes of people during this time in history. This in turn

helps the students to create a Civil Rights Movement Museum in our classroom that the students used to educate the other classes in the school.

Next we explore the three branches of our country's government. We discover the responsibilities and powers that each branch possesses. Throughout this unit we also look at each branch's role in passing laws through a historical law our government has passed. During this time the students also conduct independent online and book-based research to garner information for their persuasive letters. All of this work allows for the students to understand how the persuasive letters they created could make significant change in our country.

We further our exploration of government with a yearly 5th grade trip to Washington D.C. We have an amazing time, extending their learning on a variety of historical information in our nation's capital. The students investigate D.C. history, various monuments and memorials. They also explore wonderful museums and government buildings. We also meet with a sitting Congressperson which provides a memorable experience that the fifth graders will be able to have for the rest of their lives. This amazing trip not only helps students further their understanding of our government and the history of our country but it also brings to life the information they have learned.

After completing our work in our government exploration, we move into an extensive study of Geography. Using a variety of methods which include working with a teacher made clay model depicting various geographical features, map work and discussions of terms, students develop a deep understanding of geography. We then narrow our focus giving the students the opportunity to understand the various regions of The United States of America and Canada. During this unit students are also given a state within our country to research independently, creating a poster depicting their work. Upon completion of the project each student then presents the information they discovered to their classmates.

Next we transition into our study of American Westward Expansion. We investigate this significant part of American history through a variety of avenues. We explore significant events during this time period including The Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark's expedition, The Transcontinental railroad, The Oregon Trail, The Homestead Act and The Trail of Tears. We also learn about American Tall Tales and why they are based during this time period in American's history. The students use their knowledge of the time period to assist in their historical fiction writing. Our study of Westward Expansion helped to solidify students understanding of our country's history, and how that history influences our lives today.

The students finish their year as fifth graders with an intense study of the Ancient Mayan civilization. The students truly enjoy exploring this remarkable group of people. Our exploration is extensive and includes understanding their daily life, art and architecture, government, and religion amongst other topics. The students participate in

class discussion and read alouds about the Ancient Mayans. We enhance our learning by making Ancient Mayan food and drinks, creating Mayan King Macaw headdresses, and making hieroglyph medallion necklaces. The information the students garner about the Mayan people is used for inspiration when creating their poetry anthology.

Writing:

The students are engrossed in the writing process in fifth grade. We work on gathering ideas, and then choosing an idea to work with. We develop that idea, revise it, and edit it then finally the writing piece is published at the conclusion of the unit of study.

Students regularly reflect on their own writing, applying different strategies they learn to not only create a piece, but how to revise it to make the story even better. The students start the year with Small Moment Personal Narrative writing pieces. They zero in on a memorable moment they experienced over the summer, and stretch out the experience in their writing to write a Small Moment Personal Narrative.

The students also create beautiful Memoirs. They reflect on their experiences throughout their lives so far and each student chooses an overall theme that is important to them personally. Then they choose life stories that relate to their theme, focusing on themselves as the main character in their writing as well as concentrating on improving introductions and conclusions in their pieces.

We also explore the process of persuasive letter writing by asking the students to find an issue in our world today that is important to them. Each student completes individual research about their topic allowing them to form more focused and convincing letters. Upon completion of our letters, we send each U.S. Senator a CD with all of our letters calling them to action, imploring them to address the various concerns the fifth graders have. The students also regularly work on writing prompts for homework and in class. This helps them become more comfortable with impromptu writing, strengthening their confidence and skills.

Next, the fifth graders create Fantasy Information pieces. They use the geographical information from the state they researched in their individual state project to inspire a fantastical city of their own creation. The students work very hard on letting their imaginations soar while still grounding the geography of this fantastical city in reality. They ensure their work is maintaining the true geographical features of their particular state. At the end of this unit, the students have beautifully written and illustrated brochures for their fantasy cities.

The students delve into the process of Historical Fiction writing. They focus their pieces on the time Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery explored the west during America's Westward Expansion time. The students work on making their journals as realistic as possible by taking the information we learn in our social studies investigation and applying it to their writing pieces. They strive to make the setting, language and events as historically accurate as possible.

We finish our year with a creation of Ancient Mayan Poetry Anthology Codices. Students take the ancient custom of Mayan scribes (creating codices to record information and stories) to showcase their newfound learning about Mayan culture shared through the form of poetry. Each student chooses which topics they wanted to focus on within the Ancient Mayan culture information we have studied. The students then write several poems that are each written using different poetic forms, learned from our study of poetry and are inspired by our Ancient Mayan study.

Reading/Read Aloud:

In fifth grade, students are expected to read for 45 minutes every night, maintain a reading log, and reflect on their progress as readers. Independently, in partnerships and in small groups, students work on thinking about how the authors that they read are able to pull emotions from readers. We look at how authors use sensory work and analyze the work different authors do. The students take their observations and apply them in their writing, to make their own writing stronger. As fifth graders we further our independence as readers and develop our ability to critically analyze texts.

Read alouds occur throughout the school day, both literacy and social studies based. We use these opportunities for students to be engaged as a group with various genres of literature as well as exploring more advanced subjects and texts. We also use this time to work on how we analyze books; the students take this knowledge and apply it when they read independently. Reading aloud is a wonderful time for the students to speak in a group setting about literature.

Word Study/Spelling:

Mondays through Thursdays the students explore a new word in our Word of the Day vocabulary investigation. Every student keeps track of these words in their Word Study Notebooks. At the end of each week, the students participate in a game of Word Study Jeopardy. The students play the game, communicating their knowledge through categories that ask them to apply their new vocabulary understanding. We also encourage the students to use the words appropriately in their everyday language and the students work on incorporating the new vocabulary into their writing. Periodic assessments are given to evaluate the students' maintenance of the vocabulary.

We investigate a specific spelling focus within each writing unit as a class. We begin our individualized spelling investigation during our Small Moment Personal Narrative unit. In this work, each student picks five words of their own choosing (i.e. words they have difficulty spelling in their writing) to investigate each week. They work with the words throughout the week and then partner up with a fellow classmate to assess each other at the end of the week. The individualized spelling program continues throughout the year.

At the start of our year within our Small Moment Personal Narrative unit the students establish their individualized spelling investigation and review the various parts of

speech. During our Memoir writing unit, we investigate past tense words as well as conjunctions so the students would be able to write more complex sentences. When creating our Persuasive Letters, we explore the use of persuasive language and words and their influence on those who read our work. The students also delve into a study of contractions to help them understand how words can be altered yet still maintain their meaning. Our Fantasy Informational unit encourages students to use their newfound knowledge of homophones and homonyms as well as exploring words as they exist on a continuum. We also explore future tense throughout this unit. During our Historical Fiction writing unit students explore root words, developing a better sense of where our language comes from and giving them greater abilities to dissect unfamiliar words. Throughout our Poetry investigation, students explore prefixes and suffixes, extending their knowledge from the previous unit.

Math:

We start our year by investigating Factors, Developing Multiplication and Division strategies. The students use arrays and number puzzles to learn about factors, multiples, and other properties of numbers. They work on developing a number of strategies for solving 2 digit by 2 digit multiplication problems, including breaking numbers apart, solving an equivalent problem, and solving related problems. As a class, we work on developing various strategies for solving division with 2 digit divisors and for interpreting results.

The students then investigate Polygons and Finding Perimeter and Area of Related Rectangles. As a group, we work on classifying polygons by looking at attributes including number of sides, length of sides, and sizes of angles. The students also find the measures of angles using protractors. As a class, they use prior knowledge of related polygons in order to learn about area, perimeter, and the relationship between them. The students also investigate Place Values, Studying Subtraction, and Adding and Subtracting Large Numbers. The students use place value relationships and multiples of 10, 100, and 1000 to add and subtract large numbers. We practice and investigate various strategies for subtracting large numbers. They also use what they know about place value to solve addition and subtraction problems.

Next the students focus on understanding, comparing, and solving problems with fractions and percents. The children develop ideas about representing the meaning of fractions, decimals, and percents and the relationships among them; comparisons and equivalents of fractions, decimals, and percents; and the development of strategies for adding and subtracting fractions and decimals. We also focus on the meaning of operations with whole numbers, the development of computational fluency, the structure of place value and the base-ten number system, and generalizations about numbers and operations. Then we focus on developing ideas about patterns, sequences, and functions. Finally, the students develop ideas about collecting, representing, describing, and interpreting data.

Martin Luther King Jr. Living the Dream Book Project:

The fifth graders analyze and ultimately choose a picture book they believe best exemplifies Dr. Martin Luther King's beliefs. The fifth graders meet once a week, as part of this special project and work very diligently. We meet with Manhattan Country School and Central Park East II at least five times a year before all the fifth graders from the three schools, decide which picture book, published in the prior year, best honors Dr. King's dream and vision.

We start this project by working on a list of criteria that will be used to determine each year's winner. We read many of the books that were previously nominated and use our criteria list to evaluate why some books were eliminated and others went on to receive top honors. We share our criteria list with both MCS and Central Park East and they share their lists with us. Collaboratively, the students develop a final list which will be used to evaluate every book being considered for the Living the Dream Book Award.

Over the school year, each and every fifth grader must read and prepare a written evaluation for the 10 books being considered for the year's award. Every student must be able to defend why he/she feels a specific book should/should not be chosen as the year's winner. After all the books have all been read, we meet with MCS and Central Park East II to decide which books should/should not be eliminated, using the combined list of criteria to defend their opinions. One by one, books will be eliminated, until a majority of students have agreed on the 2 final selections. Then (drum roll, please) the winner will be chosen!

After the winner has been decided, a celebration will be planned. Both the author and the illustrator are invited to accept this honor presented by the students from all 3 schools. We are very happy to share that we have had the author or illustrator join our celebration for every book winner in this project's history.

Rosie Theatre Kids©, PS Broadway:

Actress Rosie O'Donnell co-founded Rosie's Theatre Kids© in 2003 to help promote the arts in New York City students. Our fifth graders are incredibly lucky to participate in the Rosie's Theatre Kids© PS Broadway program. The students learn about music and dance through an overview of America's musical theater. The Children's Workshop School is honored to be one of only 22 schools in New York City that have been asked to participate in this program. Over the course of fifteen weeks, the students meet once a week with professional teaching artists developing a song and dance from a Broadway musical.

During this time period students are visited by a guest Broadway artist who performs for the students, providing a deeper understanding into the life of a Broadway performer. The students are also generously taken to a current Broadway show, courtesy of Rosie's Theatre Kids©. The amazing semester culminates with a performance by the students of the song and dance they learned over the course of the semester. The

performance is given for our whole school community from prekindergarten students to the parent community!

The NiteStar Program:

The NiteStar Program was founded in 1987 by Dr. Cydelle Berlin. Since then, Dr. Berlin and her staff have been educating students throughout New York City. NiteStar is a wonderful program all students participate in during the spring of their fifth grade year.

The program provides students with a comprehensive understanding about health and social issues they will face growing up in today's society. Through the performing arts, NiteStar is able to help students develop the understanding and information needed to encourage healthy and productive choices, promoting positive attitudes and giving alternatives to prejudices.