

# Arbutus Middle News



**Interim Quarter 1: October 2018**

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade October 2018**

### **Reading & English**

Standard Language Arts classes will be reading and discussing various short stories as well as the writings of Gary Paulsen in order to identify what changes occur as we grow that determine our individual pathways into adulthood and also to identify in what ways texts are influenced by the life experiences of authors. Ultimately, students' Performance Based Assessment will require students to incorporate literal and inferential meaning gleaned from MY LIFE IN DOG YEARS as well as the biography of Gary Paulsen in order to write an interview with the author.

GT Language Arts students are critically reading and analyzing THE GIVER. Discussions utilizing higher-level questioning will be done through Socratic seminars and small-groups. Students are becoming familiar with terminology related to arguments as they will ultimately be writing an argument essay comparing social statements within dystopian literature. Further work on grammar concepts as well as on improving sentence structure will be completed.

### **Math**

Students have been working with integers. They have been identifying numbers above and below zero on the number line as well as working with the concept of absolute value. Next, we will be starting fractions.

### **World Cultures**

The Arbutus Middle School grade 6 World History teachers welcome our students and parents for another exciting year! We look forward to making this the best year yet at AMS! Your sixth grade students will be starting the year by examining nomadic groups and will be progressing towards sedentary societies and the formation of civilizations. Our classes will be utilizing our laptop computers to enhance students' learning experiences. This was effective last year, and we have identified several strategies using technology that we know your students will enjoy, and will make history more meaningful. Sixth grade World History will also have a literacy focus. In addition to learning new and exciting content, one of our goals is to increase reading, writing, and technological literacy. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have a concern regarding your child.

### **Science**

Sixth grade science started off with safety to make sure students were ready to conduct labs in a safe manner. We then jumped into Ecology and explored the interactions of living and non-living things in our environment. We created mini-biomes and developed an action plan to help a native species. Up next is Earth science. Students will jump into layers of the earth, volcanoes, and earthquakes.

## **Other**

All students should come to school prepared with their supplies, homework, and a fully charged device daily.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade September**

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**

In Science, students are learning about potential and kinetic energy, and more specifically, how heat (thermal energy) is transferred. The culminating event for this unit asks students to show off what they have learned by designing a solar cooker with the intent on raising the internal temperature by 10 degrees Fahrenheit. With this project, students will use the ingredients for a s'more to see how effective their cooker is! This is a very scientific, yet fun project where students will get to use their skills and creativity to test and design a naturally powered oven, and create a fun, fireside treat!

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math**

#### ***Pre-Algebra***

Pre-Algebra students jumped right into the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum with integers. They will learn the integer rules for addition, subtraction, multiplication, & division as well as the vocabulary associated with determining whether an integer is positive or negative when solving word problems. It is important that we spend the time necessary laying this foundation because integers will continue throughout the remaining 5 units of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.

#### ***Algebra I***

Algebra I students will continue to study mathematical relationships and determine if a given relationship is a functional relationship. The students will look at relations and functions numerically, graphically, algebraically, and verbally. The students begin to understand the graph of an equation in two variables is the set of all its solutions plotted in the coordinate plane. The students will then focus on linear relationships, developing an understanding of slope as rate of change, and working with both standard form and point-slope form.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**

#### ***GT/AA***

Students have examined the concepts of history and morality, primary sources, and epidemics that have occurred in the past. Students will have been reading, *An American Plague*, a book about the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in the late 1700s, and analyzing the text based on inferences, critical thinking, language, and conflict.

Unit 1 Essential Questions:

- How does history shape our understanding and morality?
- How does an author use individuals' stories to develop central ideas?
- How does an author use and/or alter history when writing a historical fiction text?

### **Standard**

Students in Language Arts have begun Unit 1: *Choosing to Take Bold Actions* and have received their copies of the class novel, *Outcasts United*. Students will be responsible for completing assigned reading for *Outcasts United* at home. While reading, students will write a variety of post-it note responses, which will help them analyze and interact with the text while they read. Reading quizzes may be assigned to ensure that students are completing the assigned reading at home. In addition to reading at home, students will read a variety of texts in class, including short stories, articles, and poems. Students also completed a diagnostic activity which asked them to read a transcript, watch a video, and then explain how the video furthered their understanding of the text. This key skill, along with a variety of others, will be the focus of Unit 1.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade World Cultures**

The 7th grade social studies teachers began the first quarter examining the Byzantine Empire. We will look at the social structure of the empire, the impact of religion on the people and conflicts religion caused within the empire. We will also discuss the split between the eastern and western church. We will then move on to the Abbasid Caliphate and look at the basic tenets of Islam and how it impacted the growth of the Islamic Empire. We will also look at the possibility of future conflicts between Muslims and the Christians. The entire first unit focuses on the central question: How did trade and growth impact the development of early empires in the East?

### **World Languages**

Students in both Chinese and Spanish are finishing up their first Mid-Unit Proficiency Challenge (MUPC), which showcases two modes of communication (speaking, reading, writing and/or listening). Students are working towards advancing their proficiency goals throughout the year, which parents can see reflected in their MUPC rubrics. We are still encouraging all students practicing at home to improve their language skills. Try looking up fun YouTube clips or making flashcards to help your students!



## Fall News from the Eighth Grade

We are halfway through the first quarter, and students seem to have transitioned well into eighth grade! They are diving into first units in each subject, and are learning lots of interesting facts and information.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science will be wrapping up our first unit “Mastodons and Megalodons” as students construct a digital museum display focused on the extinct animal they have been researching. Next we will move on to “Furious Flowers” as students uncover the mysteries of genetics and why organisms look the way they do. Why do we have brown eyes instead of blue eyes? Why are some plants tall while others are short?

GT Geometry just completed their first unit test on the foundations of Geometry. Their next unit will be exploring transformations in the coordinate plane. These transformations include rotations, reflections, and translations. Algebra I students will continue to study mathematical relationships and determine if a given relationship is a functional relationship. The students will look at relations and functions numerically, graphically, algebraically, and verbally. The students begin to understand the graph of an equation in two variables is the set of all its solutions plotted in the coordinate plane. The students will then focus on linear relationships, developing an understanding of slope as rate of change, and working with both standard form and point-slope form. Math 8 students will be finishing up Unit 1 by using formulas to calculate the volumes of real-world objects like cylinders, cones and spheres. Be on the lookout for our first unit assessment of the year sometime in late October. In Unit 2, students will be working with proportional and non-proportional relationships, as well as, identifying, describing and comparing functions.

Throughout first quarter in U.S. History, students will learn about colonial America and begin learning about the American Revolution. In Unit 1, students will examine settlements in North America and through an analysis of primary and secondary sources, evaluate early successes and failures. Students will examine the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans and evaluate the methods they used to respond to European encroachment. Students will identify the natural resources found in North America and describe how trade involving these resources resulted in a complex system of trade that benefited England and its colonies in North America. Students will examine the growth of England’s colonies into three distinct regions. Students will examine the growth of slavery. Students will examine cultural aspects of Colonial America and important social and political ideas that led to the development of a colonial identity.

English Language Arts 8<sup>th</sup> graders are reading either *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; *Waiting for the Rain*; *Belle Prater’s Boy* as their novel for Unit 1. The novel is read mostly outside of class in order to address the Unit’s Question: “What makes an adolescent become a mature, responsible adult?” Students will be composing an argument essay and a book project for Unit 1.

GT English Language Arts 8<sup>th</sup> graders are reading *Refugee* and *Malala* as their two novels for Unit 1. The novels are read outside of class in order to address the Unit's Question: "How do we navigate cultural crossroads?" Students will be comparing and contrasting a fiction and non-fiction source at the end of the unit for their PBA writing assessment, which is why they have a historical fiction and a non-fiction text this unit to read.

In Unit 2 at the end of the quarter, students will study how the United States transformed from thirteen British colonies to an independent nation. Students will be introduced to the early ideas and principles of government that will set the stage for the new democracy. Students will investigate the events, people, and policies that brought about the American Revolution. Through an analysis of historical writings, students will appraise how the colonists shaped the political and social development of the new nation. This unit will continue into second quarter.



It's October and that means the start of performances for many of our music students at AMS! Our annual Elementary Tour featuring the AWE, Concert Orchestra, and Jazz Band and Festival Choir will be travelling to Catonsville, Halethorpe, and Westowne Elementary schools on Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. This field trip is during the school day and will last all day. Students should remember to wear their performance uniform (black polo, black pants, black shoes) and bring a bag lunch the day of the trip. More details to come in the form of a permission slip.

We have a number of band, orchestra, and chorus students who are diligently preparing for the upcoming auditions for All-County Band, Orchestra, and Chorus on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at Dumbarton Middle School in Towson. Students have already received the audition materials from their music teacher and Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Miskimon, and Ms. McCleary are all available after school to coach students preparing for these auditions. We hope we'll have great news to share with you in November when we receive the results!

Please double check with your child and make sure they have turned in all beginning-of-the-year paperwork, including polo shirt order and money, class expectations, instrument loan contracts, and permission slips for after-school ensembles. We greatly appreciate it!

Please feel free to email your child's music teacher if you have questions or concerns about your child's progress in class.

Music Makes a Difference,

Kelly Boyle

James Miskimon

Caitlin Blough

## Yearbook News for September

Welcome back to another school year full of activities and memories! It's not too early to start planning on purchasing your 2019 all-color AMS Yearbook! They are now on sale for \$30 on the AMS website ([arbutusms.org](http://arbutusms.org)) through May 24, 2018. Personalization of the cover and other accessories for your yearbook are on sale online through the end of January.

Yearbooks can also be preordered in school during American Education Week, November 12-16. Parents will be able to purchase in the front lobby, and students will be able to purchase during all lunch shifts.

There will be other in-school sale weeks throughout the year, so stay tuned for notifications!