



Learning Safari Adventures

Becerra Safari, 3rd Grade

9/12/16 - 9/23/16



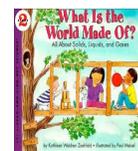
IB Adventures:

Central Idea: *Inquiry provides opportunities for discovery and exploration into how individuals learn.*

- **States of Matter:** Students continued inquiring into the states of matter through SOLEs, read aloud books, experiments, and activities. Ask your child to show you what the molecules and atoms look like in the phases of solid, liquid, gas, and plasma.
- **Scientific Method:** The past two weeks students practiced identifying and performing the steps to the scientific method, while inquiring into, and learning about, matter and energy.
 - **Naked Egg Outcome:** Last Friday we set up this experiment to determine if an eggshell could come off an egg without being cracked. After soaking it in vinegar over the weekend, the outcome was revealed. The eggshell DID come off without cracking. This led to lots of questions! What would happen if it soaked in Sprite? What would happen if the egg was in the dark closet? What would happen if an apple sat in vinegar over the weekend? Would its skin come off in one piece? I hope that students inquire and plan/do experiments at home to answer some of the questions.
 - **Root Beer Floats:** What happens when you combine the solid of ice cream and the liquid of root beer? Well, besides a tasty treat – you get a chemical reaction! Students performed this experiment using the scientific method; and yes, students were able to enjoy the experiment as well!
 - **Ice Cube Energy:** Students inquired into the best way to transfer heat to melt an ice cube the fastest. Each group tried a specific method: warm water, cool water, under a lamp, and by the window. Warm water and cool water both melted the ice cubes quickly. At first, the cool water surprised students--but after discussion, we determined that the cool water was still much warmer than the solid ice cube.
 - **Magnets:** Magnet bars, nails, and staples were used to transfer magnetic energy. Students hypothesized which method (out of three) would transfer the most energy to pick up staples. The 3 methods tested were: a nail touching the magnet bar, a nail almost touching the magnet bar, and then JUST the nail. All scientists came up with the same result, the nail touching the magnet bar picked up the most staples. However, even **just** the nail picked up staples. This prompted lots of questions and great discussions about electrons, magnetic fields, and energy transferring.
 - **Magnetized Cereal?:** Do humans eat iron? Will a magnet pull something out of cereal? If so, what and why? On Friday, we tried this experiment using a blender and cereal. Ask your child about the result, and what it has to do with molecules. (If you happen to be reading this newsletter the evening it was sent, please realize that this experiment will take place tomorrow – so please don't discuss it.) ☺
- **Holden Arboretum Preparation:** Holden Arboretum lessons will be woven throughout the school year. To prepare for the trip, students inquired into the forest floor and maps. After discussing the form and function of the forest, I read aloud the book *The Giving Tree* with students, which took us through a tree's life cycle and the ways the tree helped living things throughout the forest. Also, students worked with a map of Holden and became familiar with the area we toured. We also reviewed the form and function of all maps.

Language Arts Adventures:

- **Word Study:** Last week Word Study began. Students practiced classroom routines in regards to the Wordy Study program. Students choose various Word Study activities (similar to the one for homework, but not the same) 2-3 times a week to practice sorting and spelling. Now that the routines are just about set, differentiated spelling will begin next week. There are 4 Word Study groups. Please remember, the focus is on recognizing and applying the pattern, not just spelling the words. In a month, individualized bonus words will begin.
- **Alphaboxes:** This activity aligns with our IB unit and with our study of the scientific method, matter, and energy. Students practiced using non-fiction text features to search for words that relate to the states of matter. The feature practiced the past two weeks were: *Types of Print*, *Photos*, and *Captions*.
- **Non-Fiction Reading Comprehension:** Students practiced using the non-fiction text features (described above) of *Types of Prints*, *Photos*, and *Captions* while reading a variety of non-fiction passages (comprehension pages, books, science text book).
- **Daily 5 Practice:** The students have been practicing the Daily 5 rotations. All 5 elements are present: Read to Self, Read to Someone, Work on Writing, Work on Words, and Compass Learning Reading. Reading strategies will start in a week or two. Each week there will be a new strategy. The strategy lesson will be taught whole group. During Daily 5 rotations, I will meet with small reading groups to support the strategy at individual levels.
- **Writing:** During the Daily 5 rotations, I stressed the importance of writing a title, indenting the first sentence, and writing on the margin.



- Reading Groups: This week, groups of students read about magnets during reading groups.
- Read Aloud: I started a read aloud book last week called *Hope in my Heart: Sofia's Immigrant Story*. I chose this book because of the history and patriotic connections. This story is about a girl, named Sofia, who traveled from her home country of Italy to America in 1903 with her family. Once to Ellis Island, Sofia became quarantined. I've only read about 30 pages so far—but the students are already captivated. I shared a story about my grandma moving here in the early 1900's. (I brought in a picture of my grandma and her family, which was taken shortly after they arrived to America.) She came with her family during World War 1, and she was quarantined. Fortunately, she was able to reunite with her family, move to Chicago, get married, move to Minnesota, and eventually give birth to my dad! I hope that your child keeps you posted about Sofia's experiences.

Math Adventures:

- Guided Math: Guided Math allows for differentiation, movement, and small group instruction. Small groups are formed from each unit's pre-assessments, and the groups change depending on the lesson's topic. Each unit has 7-12 different topics. The flexible grouping is powerful and meaningful to instruction because it's specific and data-driven. After a whole-class mini lesson (through direct instruction and small group interaction), the students watch a short video (2-3 minutes). Discussions take place during this visual learning to deepen understanding and to stretch concepts. Afterwards, students rotate through 3 stations. The stations are:
 - 1. *Teacher Time*: specific lesson activities and problems
 - 2. *Compass Learning*: computerized individualized math program
 - 3. *Daily Common Core Review & Fact Fluency*: review worksheet / Fact fluency (at level)

Each student is on task, learning at his/her level, and is greatly improving. The lessons taught during Guided Math the past 2 weeks are below.

- Topic 1 Assessment Review: correct mistakes with an adult and game day
- Topic 2 Lessons:
 - Addition Meaning and Properties: commutative, associative, identity properties
 - Subtraction meanings – Solving word problems involving subtraction
 - Mental Math: *Break-Apart* Method: $37 + 86 = 30 + 80 + 7 + 6$
 - Subtraction with regrouping
 - Estimating Sums
 - Estimating Differences

- The Topic 2 assessment will be given next week, on Tuesday. A review test will go home on Friday (9/23/16) as **OPTIONAL** homework. This is not required—it's just an extra resource.

Information Hut:

- Eid al-Adha: One of the (MANY) things I love about Shaker Heights is its diversity! I love having students and families from different backgrounds, countries, religions, and cultures! Understanding perspectives and beliefs of others make all of us well rounded, respectful, and knowledgeable. Last week, Farrah's mom and Abdullah's family came in to the classroom to share one of their special holidays, Eid al-Adha. Students learned about the symbolic meaning of special holiday through a PPT story and discussion. The meaning of giving and sacrificing for others was emphasized. Students received a gift bag of goodies. While students were eating a special snack, they looked through the goodie bag and were able to color Eid-al-Adha pictures. THANK YOU for sharing your holiday with us! You can view pictures of the event on our class website!
- Holden Field Trip: On Monday we went to Holden Arboretum. We hiked through the forest for 2 hours observing and inquiring into nature. Our docent had students using maps as guides, leading students into activities involving the collection of items that match antonyms and synonyms, learning facts about chipmunks, searching for acorns, searching for living things, collecting soil, and more! You can view a slide show of this on our class website!
- MAP Testing: The past two weeks students took the MAP assessment in Reading (last week) and Math (this week). I will share all of the beginning of the year data with you as soon as I have it all compiled and analyzed.
- On Thursday, 9/29, we are going to the **Planetarium** from 9:45-11:00. The volunteers are Silke Forbes and Emily Mankowski.
- International Families Library Night: Tuesday, 9/27/16, 6:30: Library staff will tour families through the many wonderful resources available at the library, including the children's book section, multilingual books and internet-connected computer lab. Staff will assist families in getting their library cards so that families can check out materials for themselves. To get their library cards, families will need to bring TWO of the following: a utility bill such as electricity bill (which shows current address), identification with current address. Join Boulevard's Mrs. Jill Lasheen and Mrs. Angela Bailey for a fun and informative evening.
- Happy Rosh Hashanah to those who celebrate this special day. In honor of this Jewish holiday, there will not be school on Monday, 10/3/16.
- The September Power Calendar & Fact/Reading Log is due on Tuesday, 10/4/16.
- Mrs. Becerra is out for an all-day training on Thursday, 10/6/16.
- On Friday, 10/7, we are going to the **Science Lab** from 9:30-10:45. The volunteers are: Katie Montague-Malone & Hanan Badr.