

Dear parents,

What a busy week! In maths we've been finishing our topic on place value. After working on some fluency skills (counting forward and backward in powers of ten) the children carried out some problem-solving and reasoning work to consolidate their learning, and a quick assessment to help us to work out which areas they're confident in, and which we may need to spend a bit of extra time on.

In English this week, the children have been working on extended metaphors. We looked at some examples and discussed how they're similar to a riddle - there's a hidden meaning to the writing that the reader needs to work out. The children then chose something in nature to write about, and an animal to represent it. There were some fantastic choices - snowstorms represented by ethereal owls, shadows disguised as hungry wolves, volcanoes personified as magnificent dragons and even the season of summer, represented through a vibrant parrot. We worked on building banks of really exciting verbs, adverbs and adjectives before examining the structure of a powerful opening sentence. The writing was absolutely brilliant, and I'll be adding some examples to the 'Class 5 Learning' page of the website in the coming days for you to enjoy.

We also voted for our 'Writer of the Week', based on our previous writing on Wonder. After hearing four pieces of anonymised writing, the children voted for their favourite. The writers nominated were Jessica, Anais, Nancy and Rory, who was chosen as our writer of the week, and is in possession of the 'Writing Wizard' until next week's vote!

In science, we've been carrying out some practical examples of reversible and irreversible changes. Each group was given a different change to think about, which ranged from cooking eggs to mixing vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. This led to some great discussion about different states of matter, and the gases given off by the reactions (we watched as the vinegar/bicarbonate of soda reaction gave off enough carbon dioxide to fully inflate a balloon). Following on from last week's work on solutions and suspensions, we put a saltwater solution to the test to see if we could separate the mixture and retrieve the salt. Filtering didn't work, but boiling the water until it had fully evaporated then left the salt behind in the pan allowed us to retrieve the same amount of salt as we put in.

On Wednesday, the children created artwork based on the characters in Wonder, using thesauri to choose key vocabulary to place around their character's portrait.

In the afternoons this week, we've begun our geography topic on mountains. We recapped the difference between human and physical geography through a 'Kahoot!' quiz - a really engaging and interactive platform that works like a gameshow in which each pair or team is a contestant, and feedback and scores are given live on the screen. Then, on Tuesday, the children carried out their first S.O.L.E (Self Organised Learning Environment). This is a different way of learning that is directed by the children and builds their independent research skills, as well as their group work and speaking and listening. The 'Big Question' this week was 'Why is Mount Everest so big?'. As always, each group found a different angle on the question, and while everyone found and presented the key knowledge of how fold mountains are created, we also learnt about erosion, climate, tectonic plates and earthquakes as a bonus.

Homework this week will be coming home as a loose sheet along with some squared paper for answers, and will be due next Friday.

Thanks, and have a great weekend,

Tim Easton