

Dear Parents,

The children have become etymologists this week, and have been learning about the turbulent history of the English language. We discussed all those tricky spellings, odd rules and exceptions to rules that the English language has, and thought about why our grammar system is so complicated - a result of the invasion, settlement, travels and influences of Britain over the last 2000 years - from the Latin of the Romans to the Old Norse of the Vikings, the imagination of Shakespeare to the influences of other countries during the days of the British empire. The children were then challenged to work out the origin of English words, ranging from 'malaria' (coming from the Latin 'mal' - bad, and 'aria' - air and the belief that bad smells caused diseases) to 'beserk' (from the Norse 'ber' - bear and 'serk' - shirt: the uniform of the most feared and terrifying Viking warriors - berserkers). Language really is the story human life, and it was great to see the children so fascinated by the roots of our messy but brilliant system of language!

In maths this week, we've been continuing our topic on multiplication and division by focusing on the method for \times/\div by powers of ten - 10, 100, 1000 and 10,000. We recapped the use of place value holders before using them to notate decimals. This understanding was really useful as we began to use the place value holder to multiply and divide numbers that ranged from millions right down to decimal 1000ths by simply moving the digits across the place value holder, and learning when and why placeholders were required. After working on some fluency skills, we then applied this method to some reasoning and problem solving, with the children being challenged to prove or disprove statements about multiplications and divisions, spot 'odd ones out' and convincingly argue their thinking, and solve word problems. We've also been consolidating long multiplication skills, with some class work and targeted small group work. In amongst all of this, we've also had time for some bus stop division practice (in preparation for next week), some 'pointless' maths, a mental maths practice test and a challenging 'Mathvember' problem in which the children were challenged to create 5 integers from the digits 0-9 that had to fit certain criteria - for example all being multiples of 3,7, or being prime numbers. Each digit could only be used once, so solving the problem required a structured approach and a good deal of perseverance!

In English, we've been following our 'Once Upon a Time' topic by creating writing inspired by a video set in a futuristic landscape. RUIN is a really exciting, sci-fi style short animation which inspired us to create some DADWAVERS writing.

Each time we use this tool, the children become more familiar with it and create more powerful and successful writing. We'll be picking a writer of the week on Monday, based on this work.

We've been using a range of tools in D.T this week in order to create our recycled plastic products. After some safety tips, the children have been building their hands-on skills using craft knives, hacksaws and hot glue guns to bring their designs to life. We've also been wrapping up our World War 1 mini-topic by finishing off the family history fact-files on the computers and the wartime propaganda posters.

PE this week has been divided between dance preparation with Miss Sarah for the Christmas production, and some Cybercoach dancing skills (due to Thursday's rather wet weather). On Friday we joined the rest of Key Stage 2 to practice the songs for Young Voices (which is approaching very quickly!) and the acting and singing for 'Panto Pandemonium'.

Homework this week is some word problems involving multiplying and dividing by powers of ten - the children should be confident with using the place value method for these, rather than long multiplication.

Have a great weekend,

Tim Easton