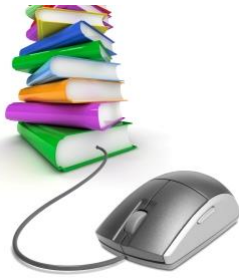


6th Grade News

April 10, 2020

For *all of us*, this has been another challenging week. Establishing routines seems to help – of course, that is easier said than done, especially when there are households with more than one student, younger



children vying for attention, and adults, who also need to work remotely, while supporting their children's efforts. We are right there with you! While you're trying to help your children navigate their lessons, we're trying to create those lessons using a tool that we are still learning (while implementing). At the

same time, we are also trying to maintain somewhat normal routines in our own homes.

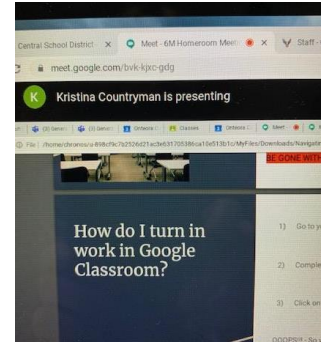
These *unprecedented times* are certainly opening our eyes to the life lessons, and the everyday, teachable moments that we all need to learn. It's very easy to focus on the negative, but we're all trying to shed light on the positive! Let's continue to do that, *together*.

On a positive note, despite a few technical glitches, we were very pleased with last week's homeroom meetings – every Friday at 2:30 p.m. – most students were in attendance, and the conversations were lively and upbeat. Lots of questions were asked and topics discussed; it was just so nice to see so many faces! Also, this week, we began our regular “hang out” sessions. Each academic session includes two homeroom groups – this allows us to connect with more students; while keeping the numbers down, providing everyone with the opportunity to share. Mr. Downs and Mrs. Kuhne facilitated science meetings; Ms. Bruck and Ms. Mastrangelo discussed writer's workshop with students; Ms. Mayone-Allison and Mrs. Countryman participated in ELA hang outs that we referred to as “reading circles,” and Mr. LaMonda and Mrs. Kuhne checked-in with their math students; all group meetings were optional, but the conversations and academic support seemed to benefit all those who attended.

We would just like to remind you that while the “hang outs” are optional, school work is not. We are definitely seeing a continuation of students' work habits; those that were always going the extra mile, conscientious about their school work, and putting forth their best efforts, continue to do so, despite any technical difficulties they (and we) encounter. Positive work habits lead to success; feeling successful alleviates stress! Taking on their academic responsibilities and tackling assignments in a proactive manner builds confidence! As we (teachers) repetitively create assignments and utilize

Google tools, we are hoping each accomplishment will make the next task a little less daunting!

We applaud the students who have used whatever form of communication they feel comfortable with – Google Classroom or emails – to ask questions; we are here for them. If we can't answer their question when it's asked, we will find the answer and get back to them. Please support your child in taking this new type of school – remote learning, seriously. The assignments are not busy work; they are connected to our curricular plans, with purpose and meaning.



General Work Reminders: Setting a plan and a goal will be extremely helpful. Students who consistently used their planners will attest that keeping track of their assignments and due dates help them set goals and prevents them from feeling overwhelmed. We are attaching a sample table that contains this past week's assignments, as well as a template that can be used to record upcoming assignments, based on due dates. Mrs. LaMonda (yes, MRS.; she created something similar for their fourth grader, Philanthe) inspired this idea.

End-of-Third-Quarter: According to the school calendar, the third quarter was scheduled to end on Friday, April 3rd. However, students realized the quarter was over when schools were abruptly closed (due to the pandemic). For some students, this did not fare well with their pattern of work completion. Despite numerous reminders about late work, many students don't feel the panic until about a week before the books are closed. Having lost the opportunity to submit multiple assignments “at the last minute,” these students will realize the consequences of their choices. Please be aware, as previously mentioned, students who have positively utilized the organizational tools afforded to them, have undoubtedly maintained their academic standing. Students who do not consistently utilize their abilities and tools will see results that are more reflective of their efforts, not their abilities. Despite our present situation – remote learning; students should work toward maintaining consistent effort on all assignments.

In **Social Studies**, we have begun our study of Egypt. Hopefully, the lessons learned during our January field trip to two Albany museums will prove useful as they navigate the Nile. Mrs. Kuhne has created some exciting lessons for students, as they make this journey.

In **Science**, Mr. Downs, as always, is reminding students to get outside! For his unit on Constellations, he's suggesting they also look up! “I really want students to take advantage of this time and get outside,” Mr. Downs explains. “During the day, have them find signs of spring. If possible, have them send photos of what they discover. At night, go outside and look at the moon,

the stars, or just the darkness. Use this time to explore the world!”

Mr. Downs will be sending assignments on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “As we all learn how to navigate our new reality,” he shares, “I am finding ways to streamline what I send and make it more manageable (for your student).” There will be activities they can try if possible, video links to support the learning and one assignment will be required to complete. This will be the weekly expectation. “If you or your student begin to feel overwhelmed, please reach out to me,” Mr. Downs offers. “so I can alleviate any stress you may be experiencing.”

In **Math**, Mr. LaMonda has been working on some review of unit rate with number lines and continuing geometry. Students are calculating the area of a digital birdhouse with missing measurements, as well as cut outs. According to Mr. LaMonda, “This will be a great lead into the unit of calculating surface area of multiple shapes. Creating nets, identifying parts of shapes and figuring the difference between two dimensional shapes and three dimensional shapes. This is a great real world application found in product design and architecture.”

In **Writing**, Ms. Bruck uses daily prompts that invite students to think, not only about what’s going on with them, but also different ways to express themselves. Although it’s called a “weekly journal”, students are encouraged to write every day. “They will choose one to submit as an assignment for feedback,” Ms. Bruck adds. “In addition to the journal entry, we are picking up where we left off in information writing. Before we left, we were looking at non-fiction topics, finding facts throughout the texts. Students were then documenting their thoughts or questions they had about those facts.” Shortly, students will submit their topics for research and projects will begin! “I let all the classes know that I will be posting assignments on Monday, but they are not due until Friday to allow them to plan out their week,” Ms. Bruck continued.

Many students also mentioned that they did not have any of their writing resources, notes, or binders with them. Ms. Bruck has all of her notes and resources, and will be posting them under *Materials*, for students to refer to. “This is a new forum for me as well, so everyone’s patience is greatly appreciated,” she concluded.

In **Reading**, before we look ahead, there’s some old business to finish up – on Sunday (04/05), only the students who did *not* submit their non-fiction slide presentation for grading were reminded to do so. This was an extensive project that culminated our non-fiction reading unit. Students who are using Google Chrome are able to send me their presentation, regardless of whether or not it is completed.

We are now in Bend 1 of the Social Issues unit of study. Our initial mentor text was a video titled *The Present*. Students were asked to watch, take notes, and then reflect on various story elements, in addition to

responding to several prompts. This week, our mentor text is *What Makes A Hero*. Again, students are asked to read, note-take, reflect, and respond to prompts. We will be revisiting some previously read texts, as well as some new titles. Students should feel assured that when they are notified (via Google Classroom) new material has been uploaded. Unless there is an assignment attached, the materials are for them to reflect on, as they will be mentioned in future lessons.

Some students have also mentioned that they have run out of things to read. Mrs. Countryman, along with the other reading teachers, are working to build online reading resources for students to access. Below are two sites that students can access (free of charge, with no login required), to obtain reading materials.

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.htm>
<https://www.timeforkids.com/>

Students should continue to read, trying not to go more than two days without having their eyes on text. In the Materials & Resources section of Google Classroom, there is a Reading Form on which students can record their thinking while reading – students can use some of the nonfiction texts they have been assigned to read in Science and Social Studies, too.

As an added reading treat, Ms. Mastrangelo has begun an optional read aloud of *Ann Frank’s Diary*. Students can participate each day and listen to a text chock full of personal and social issues. This, too, can be a source used for daily reading reflections.

IMPORTANT Format Update: Beginning this afternoon (Friday, 04/10), Classroom folders will look slightly different. We know many students feel overwhelmed when they log onto Google Classroom in the morning and there are so many files to wade through! We discussed it with Mr. Reimer, our technical expert, and he is making changes that will make it easier for students to access specific subjects. In addition to homeroom folders, there will also be subject specific folders. Students will be able to log into each subject separately, looking at the work that has been posted by their teachers. This will make it easier for students to complete assignments, *and* for teachers to find the assignments that have been completed. As an aside, when an assignment has been returned to you, it means your teacher reviewed, graded it, and/or included a comment – it is not intended for you to redo or resubmit the assignment. This will all be discussed during today’ homeroom meeting at 2:30 p.m.

