

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Technology at Work.”

As we begin our fifth unit in the Benchmark Advance program, we are approaching the halfway mark! As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

The selections in this unit will get students thinking about the role technology plays in their lives. For example, we’ll explore the many ways technology solves problems. The selections include a variety of genres, such as informational texts, fantasy, poetry, and realistic fiction.

This thought-provoking unit will engage both you and your child as you think about the problems technology solves.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Technology at Work

In this unit, we'll read and compare selections about the purpose of technology and how it works as we consider the question "How can technology make a difference in our lives?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about technology at work and to build on skills and concepts your child has learned in school.

Topic Connection

Rolling Back Time

To recognize the influence of technology on our lives, imagine with your child what life would be like without all of the technology you use every day. To do this, first make a list of the technology you use every day, from the time you get up until you go to bed. Your list may include everything from alarm clock and microwave to lap top and school bus. Now imagine a day in your life without technology. How would this affect you in both positive and negative ways? Make a pro and con list together.

Vocabulary Connection

Word Search

In school, your child is learning new words related to technology. Some of these words include **computer, tools, flight, controls, communicate, images, technology, invent**. Support your child's understanding of these words by using them in meaningful contexts as you share everyday experiences, read newspapers and magazines, and watch television and movies.

Comprehension Connection

Solve It!

Several of the selections we'll read in class describe how technological inventions have solved problems. For example, in one story, a man invents a new kind of alarm clock to solve his problem of oversleeping. Recognizing problems and solutions in a text is an important reading skill. To practice this skill, take a tour of your home, making a list of the various inventions you use, such as the refrigerator, washing machine, or computer. For each invention, discuss the problem it solves.

Phonics Connections

Make-a-Word

In our phonics instruction, your child is learning to read words that have a long *a* sound and end with an *e*, as in *lake*. On separate index cards or small pieces of paper, write the letters *-ace*, *-ade*, *-age*, *-ake*, *-ame*, *-ane*, *-ape*, *-are*, *ate*, *-ave*. Shuffle the cards. Turn over the top card and say a word that ends with those letters. For example, for *-ace*, you might say *face*. Next your child says a different word ending with *-ace*. Continue back and forth until you can't think of any more words that end in *-ace*. Then turn over the next card.