

Hello families,

In this Term 1 newsletter, I'll share Term 1's learning themes and goals. I'll also discuss how to support French at home, how students are learning to pick appropriate books for themselves, and how we're learning phonics in class. Finally, I'll put out a call for loose parts.

### **Supporting French at Home**

Parents often ask how they can support French learning at home. **The best way to support your child is to have a regular home reading routine.**

Your child will be bringing home home levelled readers. Your family also has access to e-books on *Je lis, je lis, litt ratie*. Progress comes with **regular practice** of at least 15 to 20 minutes a day.

**Levelled readers will only be changed on a weekly basis.** I'll make time for this book exchange on Fridays. It's essential that home reading books be brought back to school by the end of every week.

If students forget to return their levelled books to school, they'll have to wait to switch books until the following week. Our class collection is both small and expensive, so I must be firm. This way, we reduce the risk of losing books.

As for why we change books on a weekly basis, students are encouraged to become 'book experts'. In other words, by reading and re-reading the same texts, they develop greater fluency and comprehension. They also may notice new details and/or words with each reading.

Scholastic Canada has many good tips on ways to support your child's reading growth. Of their recommendations, I highly encourage the following two tips:

1) Have your child teach you the French words they're learning – whether they be sight words, words that contain the sound of the week, or special vocabulary.

2) Have your child retell the story in their own words. This action has them process information they've read while also revealing how much they've understood.

If interested in further developing your child's French knowledge, consider watching French-language TV together. On our class blog, I've included links to French-language media sites, like Ici Radio-Canada or TV5.

This term, we've been watching *Les copains carlins* on the Ici TOU TV web site. I encourage your child to rewatch episodes to further understand vocabulary.

### **Books for the Heart, Eyes, Brain**

To encourage student independence, children will practice choosing appropriate books for themselves. Students will learn to recognize books 'for the heart, eyes, and brain'.

I'd like students to avoid ranking themselves as 'a level X reader'. Levels are helpful benchmarks for teachers but often not for students. Instead, students are encouraged to focus on a single but crucial task: to find the right books for themselves.

Here are our guidelines for differentiating between the three types of books:

- "For the heart": On a random page, the child can independently read the text. There are only 0 to 1 difficult words.
- "For the eyes": On a random page, the child can independently read the text. There are only 2 to 3 difficult words.
- "For the brain": On a random page, the child can independently read the text. There are only 4 to 5 difficult words.

Students will apply this system with our levelled readers (ex. GB+, Reading A to Z). They'll be eventually hand picking one book of each type for weekly home practice.

Please let me know if you notice that the books seem too easy or too hard – or if you notice the same books coming home every week.

### **Phonics Program - *Le son de la semaine***

Every week, we aim to study a sound using a sound poem (*une comptine*). Depending on how busy the week is, we may extend this study to a two-week period. In doing so, students increase their speaking confidence and fluidity. Not to mention, they flex their reading muscles!

Your child will begin bringing home their *cahier de sons et mots fréquents* in their home reading bag. Occasionally, I'll be assigning 'homework' such as looking for the sound of the week in books they read.

Your child is encouraged to use their sound notebook in their daily home reading routine. Some students have warmed up with a quick read-through of the poem of the week. While others use the *comptine* to wind down their reading session.

### **Call for Loose Parts**

I'll soon be launching Story Workshop. This is another facet to our literacy program. It appeals especially to kinesthetic and visual learners but, really, all students seem to enjoy this activity. Students use loose parts to tell stories.

What are loose parts? They can be natural and manmade. They are "materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways" ([Penn State](#)).

Besides Language Arts, students have used loose parts in other subject areas such as Math, Science, Social Studies, and Art.

I'm continually looking for loose parts. If you have collections, please consider donating them for student use.

Here are some loose part examples:

- pinecones
- buttons
- shells
- wood rounds
- wooden peg dolls
- blocks
- empty spools
- rocks or crystals
- pompoms

I'll also gladly take most storage containers and craft materials (ex. stickers, old magazines and greeting cards, yarn, scrapbook paper, markers, sidewalk chalk, watercolour paper).

## What We're Working On - Term 1

This term, we're focusing on building our learner community. We'll be prioritizing French Language Arts and Math – with some PE, Arts Education, and Social Studies mixed in. We'll begin our Science studies after Winter Break.

Math:

- Focus\*
  - Place Value - Number concepts to 100
- Big Ideas
  - Developing computational fluency comes from a strong sense of number.
  - Numbers to 100 represent quantities that can be decomposed into 10s and 1s.

\*Students will also be learning (and sometimes returning to) other topics, such as patterns, financial literacy, time, measurement, or geometry, throughout the school year.

Language Arts:

- Focus
  - Personal writing
- Big Ideas
  - Fluency in a language facilitates our interactions with others.

Social Studies:

- Focus\*
  - Community
    - Connections between our non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities in Canada
- Big Ideas
  - Canada is made up of many diverse regions and communities.
  - Learning about Indigenous peoples nurtures multicultural awareness and respect for diversity.

\*Students will be studying this topic throughout the school year with some additional topics to be studied in the upcoming terms.

Thanks for reading,  
Mme Lundgren