

GRADES 6-8 NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023 | TRIMESTER II



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY CONTEST



Congratulations to all 7th grade students for a job well done on their National History Day projects!

Everyone thoughtfully organized their research and presentations. This year's theme, **Frontiers in History: People, Places, and Ideas**, prompted students to find topics that connected well to the theme. A special congratulations (and good luck!) to the students moving on to the Massachusetts Regional Competition in March.

- Jack C.** Thomas Edison: Let There Be Light
Isa F. & Alexandra R. The Fashion World in One Woman's Hands: How Coco Chanel Changed the Fashion Industry
Grace K. Woman. Doctor. Pioneer. Elizabeth Blackwell: Forging a Frontier in Medicine
Allie M. & Cate G. The Wicked Truth of Salem: How the Salem Witch Trials Were a Frontier in History
Mason M. & Patrick M. Jackie Robinson: Stealing History One Base at a Time

ATHLETICS



The second trimester brings us into the busiest athletic season for Saint Joe's, as we had nine basketball teams across grades 3-8 competing against other Catholic schools in the South Shore area and grades 5-8 had ski club when the weather allowed. When Mother Nature wasn't too warm or too cold, the kids got their skis and snowboards and hit the slopes at Nashoba Valley.

Our basketball teams played 99 games combined this season and won 57 of those games. More importantly, turnout for the basketball teams was at a record high and the kids had a lot of fun throughout the season. We couldn't have had a successful season without the help of our volunteer parent coaches and all the parents driving their students to games!

NEXT UP: SOCCER!



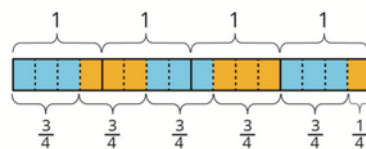
Math

GRADE 6

A good deal of the second trimester was spent mastering the multiplication and division of fractions and decimals. The sixth graders flipped out using reciprocals to divide mixed numbers. The concept of division leading to larger quotients was a bit challenging initially until the students realized they were dividing the dividend into portions smaller than one whole. Hence $3\frac{1}{2}$ cakes divided by $\frac{1}{8}$ equals 28 slices that are an eighth the size of a whole cake. There were many baking and measurement word problems as our mathematicians learned to determine how many batches could be made from a set amount of an ingredient. For example, if a recipe calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a stick of butter to make a batch of brownies and a person has $4\frac{1}{2}$ sticks of butter, how many batches of brownies can they make for the school bake sale?

Tape diagrams were introduced as a useful tool for visualizing and calculating division problems involving fractions such as, “If students have raised \$280 which is $\frac{2}{5}$ the cost of their school trip, how much is the cost of the trip?” Here is an example of one of the tape diagram questions the students had to ponder.

5. Lin draws this tape diagram for $4 \div \frac{3}{4}$:



Lin says that $4 \div \frac{3}{4} = 5\frac{1}{4}$ because there are 5 groups of $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ left. Do you agree with Lin? Explain your reasoning.



Valentine’s Day provided the sixth graders with an opportunity to create and solve some heartfelt word problems, such as this example from Katherine. “I got a box of chocolates for Valentine’s Day, and I ate $4\frac{1}{2}$ chocolates, which represents $\frac{3}{8}$ of the full box. How many chocolates were originally in the box?”

When dealing with dividing decimals, the students honed their long division skills using the mnemonic 'Dirty Monkeys Smell Bad' to remind them of the order of operations in the long division algorithm cycle. When multiplying or dividing with decimals that were multiples of 10, the students navigated the nuances of which way to move the decimal point as they thought about whether their quotient or product would be decreasing or increasing in size in comparison to their dividends or factors. They needed to be able to explain why $38.9 \div 0.01$ and 38.9×100 both equal 3890.

Trimester III

As we spring ahead into the final trimester, our sixth-grade mathematicians are learning to solve algebraic equations with one variable, and they will be empowered to use exponents. The students will learn more about negative numbers and plotting points on number lines and coordinate planes with four quadrants. That will be followed by a unit on how to represent data sets and distributions in graphs, dot plots, and histograms. It will be a busy and productive spring!



Math

Grade 7 | Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra classes have been working hard to master many topics in Trimester 2 including the current study of rates and proportions and word problems that require these skills. Previous work with Rational Numbers including fraction-decimal equivalents, operations with positive and negative fractions and mixed numbers, as well as variable expressions with fractions, prepared them to tackle solving equations with Rational Numbers and related word problems.

Students are learning to show their thinking in several ways and to make smart decisions about what method to use whether dealing with changing a fraction to a decimal, solving a multi-step equation or a proportion, or determining what's the better buy. Students are expected to practice their skills via homework, presenting problems on the board, procedural writing, correcting mistakes on quizzes and tests, and doing independent practice with IXL.

They are making great progress and getting ready for new topics of percent applications and Geometry for term 3!

Grade 8 | Algebra

Algebra classes are preparing for cumulative assessments on the units they have completed in term 2. Topics include solving multi-step equations and inequalities and a focus on graphing and writing linear functions in various ways for 8.1. Currently they are learning how to solve systems of linear functions using several methods like graphing, substitution and elimination and solving word problems via systems. 8.2 has been focused on learning factoring patterns of polynomials, solving quadratic equations by factoring and the quadratic formula as well as solving word problems via quadratic equations. Currently they are focused on operating fractions with polynomials, solving fractional equations and word related word problems. Both groups have been working collaboratively on data displays and statistics and will be challenged with a stained-glass design project involving linear functions that will be displayed before Easter!

SPANISH

GRADE 6

Grade 6 has had a busy trimester two. If you have not already heard your student saying their prayers in Spanish, ask them! We started working on verbs with gustar and infinitives, and then moved onto tener and ser, and we have just started with AR verbs. Along with ser we spent a lot of time discussing gender of nouns in Spanish and adjective/noun agreement. As we discuss the culture of Mexico, we are learning more about Mexican muralists.

GRADE 7

Grade 7 has spent time this trimester learning about the culture of Spain. This included reading an excerpt from Don Quijote, and then creating and illustrating their own Don Quijote adventure. In grammar we have worked on comparatives, direct object pronouns (a good English review, too!) and stem-changing verbs, which we are currently working on.



GRADE 8

Grade 8 has spent time this trimester reading a novela, *Mi propio auto*. Each week we spend time reading a chapter together, and then the students work in groups discussing and answering questions. When we finish the book, students will be responsible for writing the next chapter of the book. After working on demonstrative adjectives and indirect object pronouns, we are continuing our work on comparing past tenses. This grammar focus includes working with more authentic examples in reading, writing and conversation.

SCIENCE

GRADE 6

In Trimester 2, the 6th grade students closed out their Astronomy unit and begin to look at the characteristics of life. Through a variety of labs and activities, the students learned the 6 characteristics that all living things shared. Microscopes were introduced and the students had an opportunity to look at an onion skin up close to examine the cells. We are continuing our Biology unit as we explore cells more closely and the organelles within each cell.

GRADE 7

Trimester 2 began with learning about Animal Behavior. The students looked at the many different types of behavior an animal has as well as how animals interact with one another. The 7th graders had many creative examples of animal behavior from their own experiences with pets or animals in the wild. We then moved on to the different Plant Processes like photosynthesis and cellular respiration. Their thoughtful questions and engagement in this unit was impressive and more discussion, as we move into plant responses, is certainly something to look forward to.

GRADE 8

The 8th graders have incorporated technology into their daily Science routine. Each student uses their own tablet during class to complete assignments, research and conduct labs. They've adjusted quickly to the use of technology, and how technologically savvy they are is quite impressive. The unit on Chemistry began with understanding matter and looking at physical properties. It will be exciting to dive deeper into this unit with the students!

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

GRADE 6

In grade six we read the historical novel "Refugee" by Alan Gratz. The students loved the book and were often overheard talking about it. This book lent itself beautifully to written reflections as well as meaningful book group discussions. The students wrote 2 essays in ELA writing time for their Social Studies Country Report. We continued to work on grammar as well as vocabulary building.

GRADE 7

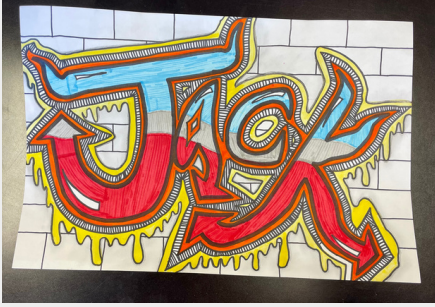
This term we finished reading "I Am Malala;" it was interesting to hear about students' thoughts on Malala's personal memoir. We had great discussions and the things we learned about connected with some of what we studied in Social Studies. We began reading short stories and completed some analysis charts that we will continue to work on in Term 3. Students continued studying their vocabulary, building Latin root prefixes, and had plenty of review with punctuation and capitalization. We just started reading The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton, which is already prompting some great discussions.

GRADE 8

Term 2 brought thought-provoking discussions about a range of topics from Animal Farm and To Kill a Mockingbird. From the famous fable of George Orwell to the great historical fiction of Harper Lee, these pieces of literature have helped students think more deeply about world affairs, current events, and their own role in society. We continued studying vocabulary with Wordly Wise, building our Latin root prefixes, and had plenty of review with punctuation and capitalization. Everyone is now adept at using a proper semicolon to enhance their sentences and it has been great to see proper punctuation reflected in the writing. Looking forward to a great Term 3 where we will be continuing with TKAM, poetry, and ending the year by reading Night by Elie Wiesel.

ART

Trimester II was an exciting one in the Art Studio! Grade seven students created their name (or nickname) in the style of 80's Graffiti Art! Each boldly colored unique masterpiece will be on display at the student art show on May 17th. Please join us!



STREAM

Over the course of Term 2, the middle school students have been learning how to use Google docs, Google sheets, and Google slides. We will be continuing to improve on our skills by creating a presentation based on a particular country, or place, using the Google apps.

SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 6

Wow! We're officially 2/3 of the way through the year!

In early December, students began their country reports. I am excited to report that along with the usual European nations of Ireland, Italy and France, students are also investigating several African countries including Morocco, Uganda and Kenya. In fact, this is the first time in many years we will have FIVE continents represented.

During our study of South America, we were pleased to welcome siblings Luli and Alvaro Martinez who spoke so lovingly of their many visits to Ecuador. Both Luli and Alvaro took time away from their classes to talk to all three 6th grade sections about life in Ecuador, including what it is like to go to school there. They answered our many questions and left us with some sweet and savory snacks. Muchas gracias, Luli and Alvaro!



GRADE 7

Geography - During Term 2 we finished studying the continent of Asia where we learned about the physical geography, history, culture and current events of countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Next, we studied Antarctica and spent time watching the famous

documentary March of the Penguins. Finally, we covered Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania islands and created travel brochures with key information and helpful tips.



MEET: MRS. MEADOWS

My name is Glinda Meadows and I am the new middle school counselor.

I am excited to join the Saint Joseph School community and look forward to working with our students, families and staff!

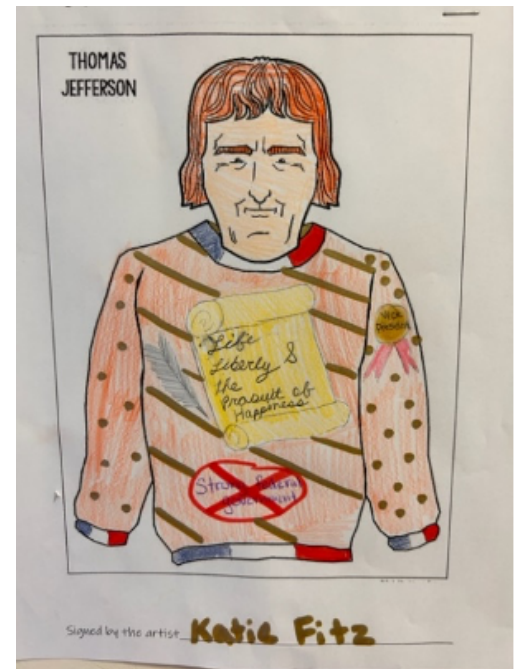
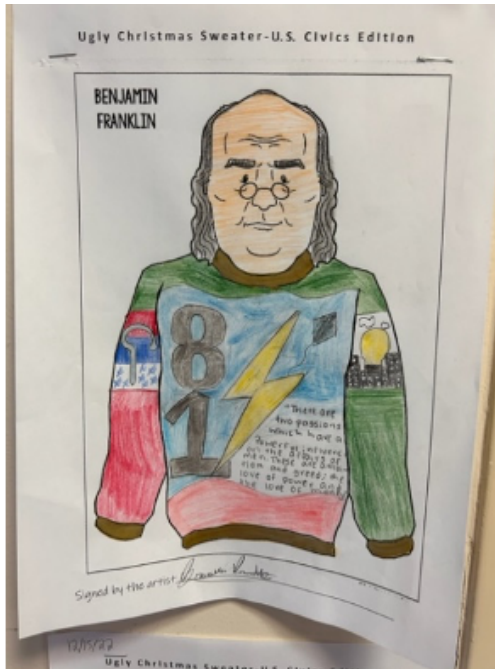


SOCIAL STUDIES

GRADE 8

The new Civics curriculum has gone well so far this year. Just ask any 8th grader!

We started the new trimester with some impressive Ugly Christmas Sweater Designs - Civics Edition. Students had a great time designing a holiday themed garment with visual representations of the ideals of the Framers of the Constitution. We laughed a good deal that day! Check out some of the entries below.



As reported last trimester, students have spent time investigating elections in legislative and executive branches as well as the nomination and confirmation process in judicial and executive branches. Just last week, we held a mock trial where students took on the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, judge, witnesses, court reporter and jury. Both sections found the defendant, Hondo Motor Co., guilty of infringement of copyright law when they created an ad using MGM's "James Bond" character. This activity took three class periods and some quick thinking to understand the four "Fair Use" exceptions to copyright law.

It has been a pleasure to watch our school leaders improve their debating and analyzing skills and grow in confidence.

See some candid moments from our Valentine's Day breakfast. The days until graduation are coming too fast!



MUSIC

The 8th Graders each selected a song they had a particular attachment to based on a special memory or a bond with the lyrics. In their class presentations, they identified and discussed the composers, singers, instruments, genre, and texture of their songs. In addition, we discussed songs used to protest social injustice or progressive taxes from the 1960s to the present.

RELIGION

GRADE 6

Sixth grade has just completed reading the Books of Exodus and Numbers. They have learned a great deal about the stories regarding Moses, the escape of Israel from Egypt, their desert wanderings, the reception of the Ten Commandments, and the building of the Ark of the Covenant. The students have also continued to learn how these events foreshadow Christ in the New Testament. In the upcoming weeks, students will be reading the Book of Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land under his leadership.

GRADE 7

The seventh grade has completed studying how Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom of God in his person. Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills the promises made to Abraham to make of him a world-wide blessing. The students of seventh grade can explain that the Kingdom of God is not a terrestrial or political one but one that is spiritual. We have covered the miracles of Jesus as signs that point to this kingdom and Jesus as the true Messiah. Currently, we are learning about the passion and death of Jesus Christ.

GRADE 8

The students of eight grade have been studying the nature and scope of the natural law and its importance in Catholic moral teaching. They are able to articulate how the design of things we find in the universe point to their ultimate fulfillment. This bears upon morality since humans are designed a certain way that differs from all other creatures on earth. We have been created with intellect and freewill giving us the ability to love. We are quite literally created for love and to share in that eternal love that is God himself. The natural law is known through reason and guides us in making loving decisions. Students have learned that freedom was given not for license but as a force for positive growth in virtue. The more we choose to love as God has taught us in his law, the more we fulfill the purpose for which we have been created.

GYM

The 2nd trimester for PE brings a lot of mixed emotions as we get into our ultimate frisbee and dance units. In Ultimate Frisbee, the 6th graders learned the rules of Ultimate Frisbee by playing Speedball and got comfortable throwing/catching the frisbees. In 7th and 8th grade, we improved our frisbee skills and played a variety of competitive frisbee games.

Our 6th graders learned a line dance – the cha cha slide, cupid shuffle, achey breaky heart, git up or electric slide – and performed in front of the judges, Dancing with the Stars style. The 7th grade created tik-tok dances, and the 8th grade choreographed and performed a flash mob. It's a lot of fun and the kids create some amazing choreography.

Save the Date
STATIONS OF THE CROSS
THURSDAY 4/6 1:30PM

