



It has been a busy month and I have really enjoyed getting to know our new Grade 1 students! I also really appreciate the effort families have put into following the new Covid protocols and updating agendas for me each morning. We know this is challenging for parents and your support has been incredible.

October Updates:

Clothing:

As our weather changes, it is very important to ensure that your child has his/her name clearly written in all personal items and outdoor clothing. Many parents shop at the same stores and we often have multiple sets of identical outerwear/footwear. This includes coats, mitts, boots and snowpants, so that we can identify and return lost belongings. A "Sharpie" fine tip marker works well to write on the tags of items.

Schedules:

We are settling into updated routines in our class. With Westbrook staffing now complete, we have confirmed that **Library visits will normally take place on Tuesday afternoon**. Please ensure your child returns all books each week; if a renewal is needed for a longer chapter book, your child can arrange that with Mrs. Ashley.

I am delighted to have classroom support from Mrs. Ashley and Mrs. D. Gordon during various periods in the morning. We are also mid-way through a 2 week visit from Ms. P, a University of Calgary student who has been learning about primary education and seeing what classrooms look like in the early part of the year. Student Teachers follow all Covid protocols (as per Westbrook staff) and the children have benefitted from having an extra set of adult eyes and ears in our room last week and for the coming week.

Physical Education:

Ms. Bonaventura will be teaching our class' **P.E. on Wed., Thursday and Friday afternoons**.

For those of you new to our classroom, most of the children's work is placed in duotangs kept in tubs in our room. This helps students learn to keep track of assignments, as well as to refer back to previous activities. I also collect their written and art work throughout the year, and have it assembled into a large, year-end Memory Scrapbook for them to take home in June.

At this point, I have also taken photos of several of their Art projects and a Thanksgiving writing assignment and placed them in their **Myblueprint.ca** digital portfolio. Families should all have received an online invitation to open this program, so you can see the effort they have put into class projects. If you have lost track of this invitation in your email, please let me know and I will re-send the invitation to you.

Students are now bringing home 10 weekly spelling words to practice. Some weeks will involve phonetically similar words (such as words with the short /o / sound). Another week may include thematically- linked words (such as those relating to a theme like bats

or owls) or high-frequency sight words. I choose words to reinforce spelling patterns, or to help children learn words that they will be reading or writing in our Language Arts mini-units. We normally practice the words 2 to 3 times in class before the next week's quiz. Please help your child practice during the week. If your child appears overwhelmed, I recommend that parents work on only 2 or 3 words the first evening, and then add a word or two each progressive night. Studying should not take more than 5 – 10 minutes per evening. Please let me know if you feel your child is having significant difficulty in the dealing with the 10 words on the list; we can find ways to make the activity more appropriate and successful for your youngster.

Students have also brought home the first list of sight words on flashcards to practice. **These are words that occur with great frequency in primary reading materials and knowing them instinctively is critical to become a fluent reader. We have been practicing the Pre-Primer words in class but it is essential that parents also help with daily practice of these lists.** As children are ready, they begin to work on the next lists of sight words. I recommend that parents start by practicing 5 words with their child, and then progressively add a few more words every few days. Please mix the words up when having your child read them to you; children get very good at memorizing the lists' sequence of words if always done in the same order. The goal is for each child to master their current list by the end of October. I have posted your child's sight word progress online for you to review.

In October, we have been, or will be working on, the following concepts:

- writing in Journals
- reading and writing about fall changes, harvest, Thanksgiving, pumpkins and Halloween
- reviewing consonants/-introducing more short vowel sounds
- identifying, counting and writing numbers to 31 (in conjunction with our daily calendar work)
- continued sorting, patterning and starting number concepts to 20 in Math
- studying Colours and the changing Seasons in Science
- discussing "Community" concepts and belonging to groups in Gr. 1 Social Studies
- learning about beat, rhythm and tempo in various folk and seasonal songs

Westbrook's Halloween – Friday, October 30:

As per Ms. Parker's newsletter, this Halloween will look different than previous years, but will hopefully included a number of fun classroom activities. Students may wear their costumes to school or put it over their regular clothing when they arrive. We will **not** be changing enmasse at lunchtime, as has been the Westbrook tradition. We will be staying in our own cohorts throughout the day and will not be sharing any foods/snacks to protect all.

I would recommend that parents send a bag in the backpack to collect parts of costumes before the trip home. As a mom and Gr. 1 teacher, I typically see children wear costumes for about 30 minutes, and then begin to feel hot or uncomfortable in their outfits. It would be helpful if your child had a bag to collect costume parts if they have tired of wearing them, so they will be prepared for Saturday night family events.

***Please be on the lookout for information regarding the upcoming Westbrook fundraiser, in lieu of the annual Walkathon event.**

Please feel free to contact me at the school at 403-932-5443, or at sjaeger@rockyview.ab.ca if you have any questions about your child or the upcoming activities. Happy Halloween!

Cheers,
Sandy Jaeger

