



SEVENTH GRADE CLUSTER "B" NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2009-2010



Upcoming Field Trips

➤ We are planning several field trips for Cluster B this year! Three of the field trips are confirmed

already! The first one is the Urban Nutcracker. Students will be attending the Urban Nutcracker on Thursday, December 17th at the John Hancock Hall. The cost of the field trip will be \$15.00. This fee will cover the cost of the ticket, transportation, and lunch following the performance. Students have received the permission slips which should be returned along with their \$15.00 by Tuesday, December 1st. Checks should be made out to Boston Latin Academy.

➤ The second one is entitled: "Classic Times: Pompeii through Today." Students will be visiting the Otis Museum, a 1796, Federal-era mansion in downtown Boston. This program teaches students the basics of neoclassical architecture and gives them the

opportunity to make connections between lessons learned in Latin classes and the contemporary world they live in. In this 4-hour program, museum teachers guide students through a series of activities, including drawing, a scavenger hunt in the museum, making plaster ornaments, and a walking tour of Beacon Hill. Students will take a bag lunch and eat at the museum as well. The Otis Museum provides school buses which will pick us up at Boston Latin Academy and return us following lunch! Since the museum allows 50 students to come at one time, we will have three dates for the trip: Friday, May 14th, Friday, May 21st and Friday, May 28th.

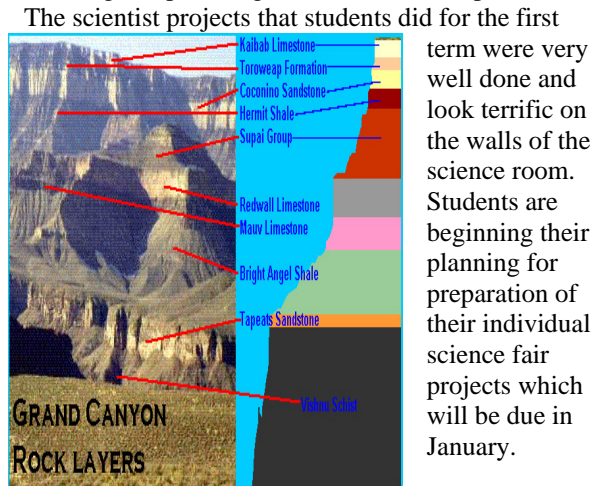


The third trip will be to Spectacle Island which is one of the Boston Harbor Islands. This trip will take place in late spring! Ms. O'Connor and Ms. O'Flaherty have written a grant to provide for the cost of the trip as well as the buses! On this trip students and teachers will take a ferry over to Spectacle Island and will complete a chart of the harbor which deals with the glacial formation of the islands. They will do an insect study and also inspect the tide pools and their organisms. Students will take a bag lunch and eat on the island.



Science News - Ms. O'Connor

Our goal in Science is to practice thinking, writing, and working scientifically; that is, questioning, hypothesizing, and gathering and analyzing evidence before we reach our conclusions. We are focusing our learning of Earth's history on what the rock layers of the Grand Canyon reveal to us. Some of our recent activities have included making models of sedimentary rock layers, observing erosion in our stream table, and examining samples of igneous and metamorphic rock.



The scientist projects that students did for the first term were very well done and look terrific on the walls of the science room. Students are beginning their planning for preparation of their individual science fair projects which will be due in January.

Riddle



What did the turkey say before it was roasted?

Boy! I'm stuffed

English Language/Arts- Mrs. O'Flaherty

The students in Cluster B have already read three books since the beginning of the school year. We started out the year reading *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen and then read *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. We just finished reading *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. We've also had a couple of big projects. Term One, the students learned all of the elements of plot structure and created their own "graphic novels" in the form of a plot line. This term, the students created their own memoir in the form of a series of thematically connected vignettes based on the style of Cisneros. We have learned lots of literary terms and are also working on rules for punctuation. In addition, we are now starting to learn some background information on William Shakespeare and Elizabethan England as we prepare to read *The Tempest*.



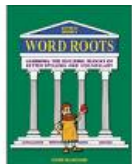
Theater News!

Parents are invited to attend "Fairy Tales in Style" presented by the

Cluster B Theater Arts classes. The performances will take place during the school day on Friday, January 29th. A letter will be sent home with specific times for each classes performance. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Mrs. Berinato at aberinato@boston.k12.ma.us

Salvete Omnes - Magistra Markis

In Cluster "B", MS Latin Classes, students have been learning so many new grammatical, cultural, mythological, and historical facts about the Romans and the Latin language. We have completed 2 Units in our textbook and have learned over 100 new words. The students are easily recognizing Latin roots in English words and are able to translate Latin passages into English.



We have begun our study of the Olympian Gods & Goddesses and have used this knowledge to write very Creative Myths! Our Product for Term I was to write a myth incorporating the 4 components of a myth. Many of the myths are displayed throughout the classroom.

What Was It Like To Live In Ancient Rome?



Each week in class, we discuss aspects of Roman Daily Life. It is

great to see the students making connections to their own lives. We have studied:

- Roman Houses
- Roman Medicine
- Roman Festivals
- Roman Education
- Roman Entertainment: Baths, Colosseum, & Circus Maximus

We'll be continuing our study of Roman Daily Life throughout the course of the year! The students really are enjoying this component of the class.

Our Product for Term II will be a Derivative/Vocabulary Building Group Project. This type of product allows the students to see in print the everyday



connection between Latin and English words. Students will be learning how to figure out the meaning of many words by recognizing their Latin root.

In Term III, we shall be starting our Unit on Roman History which will cover

from 753 B.C. – 476 A.D. Our beginning point will be the Trojan War and our end point will be the Fall of the Western Empire.

N.B. Grammar, Vocabulary, Culture will still be our main objectives. Daily Review of class notes is crucial to doing well in Latin. We love "pop" quizzes!

Annus Beatus Novus

Trivia:



Q: In North America, children hang their stockings at Christmas. In Holland, do children receive gifts in their: (a) stockings; (b) shoes; or (c) hats?

A: Their shoes. And gifts may appear anytime between mid-November and St. Nicholas Day, December 6th.

What's going on in History in Cluster B? - Wally Monestime

Renewing a three-year old tradition, cluster B is happy to publish its fall/winter edition. After the inevitable period of adjustment, our sixties seem to have regained confidence in their ability to shine.

During the first term in History and Geography, we were able to take our first steps into the world of the "earliest human societies." As we surveyed the nomadic communities of hunter-gatherers, we gained valuable insights into their precarious lifestyle. But, as we moved on, we also witnessed the slow transition into the Neolithic Age and the "agricultural revolution." In ancient Mesopotamia, those inquisitive minds of cluster B showed an extraordinary sense of historical imagination, working their way almost effortlessly



through the ancient Sumerian cities of Ur, Umma, Lagash, and Eridu, to name a few. As a result, Term I ended on a very hopeful note. Their effort was crowned with success.

As for the new term, we have been exploring the key individuals and developments of the first Mesopotamian Empires. Working cooperatively, students have been able, so far, to:

- Define the concept of empire
- Describe how empires take shape
- Describe how empires grow
- Describe the challenges rulers of empires face
- Explain how rulers of empires deal with such challenges
- Explain why empires fall
- Describe the rise and fall of the Assyrian Empire
- Compare and contrast the Assyrian Empire and the Persian Empire



For the remainder of Term II, we will turn to Ancient Africa. Students will not only take a closer look at

ancient Egypt, but also at societies and civilizations in other parts of the African continent during the same time period. To encourage students to take a more active role in gathering information and to look at a subject in greater depth, they will take part in several internet hunts and use the results of their findings to generate a final product.

Good Luck, Sixties! Excelstior!

Pre-Algebra - Ms. DeLuca

Our Pre-Algebra students started off Term 1 examining properties of numbers, creating scatterplots, reviewing absolute value, and performing basic operation with integers. We also learned the Distributive Property and how to solve one-step and two-step equations.

In Term 2, students will find factors, write expressions using exponents, simplify fractions, and express numbers in scientific



notation. As the year goes on, concepts will become significantly more difficult, so your child will need to study harder

to maintain a good grade. Here are some great online resources:

www.pre-alg.com This site contains practice quizzes and tests, extra examples, videos on some of the topics, and more. The online book may also be accessed at this site
(Username: PREALG05; Password: ph5Ves7a)

Go to

www.engage.com/students

to see all of your child's exam grades. Ask your child for his or her unique username and password to access the grades. Note that homework and class work grades are not entered until the end of the term

THE END!!