

THIRD GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

October 17, 2013

Dear 3rd Grade Parents:

Hello! This week, I started as your child's Social Studies teacher. I am excited to be back on staff at Onekama School, and for the opportunity to get to know your child. I am committed to providing a challenging and comprehensive curriculum while supporting the unique aspects of each learner.

Each week, I will send home a letter outlining the topics we are covering in Social Studies, and letting you know about any upcoming assignments. Since the school year is already well underway, we have *hit the ground running*. Here's a look at what we are studying in 3rd grade Social Studies:

This week's lesson topic was: **WHAT IS A STATE?**

In this foundational lesson, students were introduced to the ways geographers look at places and the questions they ask. They reviewed the concept of "community" and the geography of our local community by completing a class chart. They reviewed the concept of region by exploring other regions to which their community belongs. Finally, students explored the question: What is a state?

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- Geography is the study of places.
- Geographers study small places like communities and big places like states and countries.
- To study a place geographers ask questions about the place and try to find answers.
- A state is one of the fifty parts of our country.
- To learn about a state, it can be helpful to think and work like geographers.

This week's vocabulary words:

geography, geographer, natural characteristics, human characteristics, county, state, border, government.

Students have notecards with the definitions to these words that they keep in our classroom. They will bring these home before any quizzes or tests to help them prepare.

There were no homework assignments this week.

I'm looking forward to a great year ahead with your child!

Megan McCarthy

THIRD GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

October 24, 2013

Dear 3rd Grade Parents:

Hello! What a busy week we've had in Social Studies class! Students completed their first quiz on Monday. This required a good deal of at-home studying. I was pleased to see that the majority of the class took the assignment very seriously. The quizzes were sent home on Tuesday and require a parent signature. Please ask your child to see the quiz if it hasn't yet been shared with you.

Here's a look at what we are studying next in 3rd grade Social Studies:

This week's lesson topic was:

MICHIGAN'S NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS – LANDFORMS & BODIES OF WATER

A good portion of our attention this week was put on non-fiction/*informational reading*. Being able to understand what they read will be a crucial skill in Social Studies...and in life. Students were given informational texts, and then we worked together to identify headings, subheadings, main ideas, supporting details, and examples. We also learned how to read charts, and locate information in a graph.

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- To study a place geographers ask the question: What is the place like?
- To answer that question geographers study the natural (physical) characteristics of the place.
- Natural (physical) characteristics include landforms, bodies of water, vegetation and climate.
- Special purpose maps can be used to learn about these natural (physical) characteristics.
- Important landforms of Michigan include peninsulas, islands, mountain ranges and sand dunes.
- Important bodies of water include the Great Lakes, inland lakes, rivers and waterfalls.

Next Tuesday, October 29th, there will be a short quiz. Students will need to be able to name the 5 Great Lakes and locate them on a map. A study guide has been given, so your child can begin to study over the weekend.

I'm enjoying getting to know your child!

Megan McCarthy

THIRD GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

October 31, 2013

Dear 3rd Grade Parents:

Happy Halloween! This week in Social Studies, your child took a quiz on the Great Lakes. He/she was asked to name the 5 Great Lakes and locate them on a map.

I also gave students an in-class "open book" assessment to gauge understanding of the material we have covered. Students were allowed to use their handouts and class notes, and in quiz format, they were asked to list 3 important landforms in Michigan, 3 important bodies of water, and 1 interesting fact they have learned about our state. As a whole, the class did very well on this assignment!

Here's a look at what we are studying in 3rd grade Social Studies:

This week's lesson topic was Michigan's Natural Characteristics: Vegetation and Climate

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- To study a place geographers ask the question: What is the place like?
- To answer that question geographers study the natural (physical) characteristics of the place.
- Natural characteristics include landforms, bodies of water, vegetation and climate.
- Special purpose maps can be used to learn about these natural (physical) characteristics.
- Forests and orchards are important types of vegetation in Michigan.
- Michigan's climate has four seasons and is influenced by the Great Lakes.

Students continued their study of the important natural (physical) characteristics of Michigan by exploring vegetation and climate. We began by analyzing special purpose maps of forests and orchards. Next they were introduced to the concept of climate. We also took part in a chart reading activity dealing with Michigan state symbols.

Next week, we will begin with an activity to help us learn more about the unique symbols that represent our state. Report cards will also be sent home next week.

Please let me know if you have any questions. You can always reach me via email – mmccarthy@manistee.org – or by calling the school.

Megan McCarthy

THIRD GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

November 6, 2013

Dear 3rd Grade Parents:

We had a fun week in Social Studies class exploring our state's symbols.

Students completed a chart reading activity independently, in which they were asked to locate information about 12 Michigan state symbols. Next, students worked with a partner to research in more detail one of these symbols, using an iPad. Pairs of students worked together to create a state symbol poster, with an illustration and information on the symbol they were assigned. Students received a grade on the completion and accuracy of their poster as well as their ability to work cooperatively with a partner.

Our state symbol posters are on display outside our classroom. Please take a look the next time you are at school!

We ended our week with an introduction to next week's lesson: MICHIGAN'S HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS. We reviewed the definitions of natural (physical) characteristics and human (man-made) characteristics of a place. I explained to them that these two concepts are often connected; people often interact with natural characteristics by creating human characteristics.

Next week, we will be examining the unique human characteristics of our state.

There were no homework assignments this week.

If you get a chance this weekend, ask your child to tell you about the state symbol he/she researched.

Megan McCarthy