

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE NEWS

Academics and More

We are just finishing up the second week of Cycle 1. Each of our four yearly cycles has a theme, which is woven into all of our curricular areas. The theme for Cycle 1 is "Forces." Each cycle has this structure:

We are here



Week 1 Week 2 Week 3 Week 4 Week 5 Week 6 Wrap-up

←-----Science----->←-----Social Studies----->

←-----Literature, Language, and Writing----->

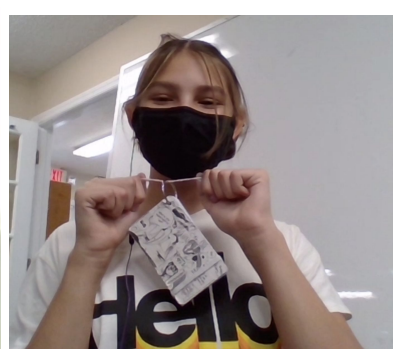
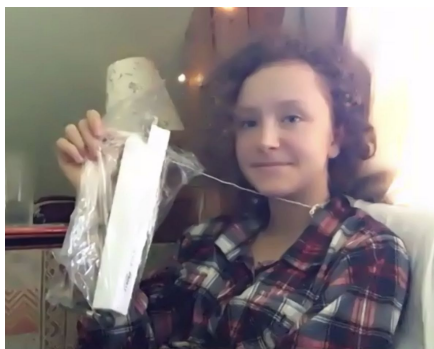
←-----Read Choice Novel----->←-----Read Thematic Novel----->

←-----Personal World----->

←-----Math----->

←-----Geography & Current Events----->

We're currently in the Science part (first 3 weeks) part of Cycle 1. We've studied velocity, acceleration, Newton's Three Laws of Motion, momentum, and parabolic motion of a projectile. Students have worked on online simulations of parabolic motion and Newton's Second Law ($Force = Mass \times Acceleration$). One of our very first science activities was to familiarize ourselves with the international unit of force, the Newton. Students did this by each making and wearing their own One Newton necklace. The necklaces could be made of anything, as long as they pulled down with a force of one Newton. Here are some of our students wearing their necklaces:



We've been integrating math work into our science, with students creating distance-time graphs and learning how to interpret patterns of constant velocity, acceleration, and no movement. We've also been learning how to create conversion factors to go from one unit to another.

Students are currently working on two group science activities. In the first activity, each student is measuring the force of gravity on their car at different angles. Each group of students will then compile their data on one group graph. In the second experiment, each student will each measure the average velocity of their science car, over a distance of one meter. Each group will then compile the individual data into one graph.

In language and literature work, students have been learning about the structure of memoirs, and have been reading and discussing excerpts from various memoirs. Students also worked in small groups based on the summer novel they chose to read (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, and *Whale Rider*). The assignment was to choose a significant image from the novel, and make a drawing or painting of it. The students first brainstormed about what images described by the author were significant, chose one, and decided how as a group they would create it. Some groups chose to create multiple images of the same event, whereas others worked together on a single image. Here are several shown below:



Wedding Scene from
The Five People You Meet in Heaven



Paikea Saves the Whales
from *Whale Rider*

The students who read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* chose to make multiple images of the scene in which the protagonist, Christopher, finds Wellington the dog, who has been stabbed by a pitchfork.

If you look at the cycle chart at the beginning of this newsletter, you'll see that this is coming week is the last week students will be reading their choice novels. The following week, we'll be starting the thematic novels, and that is the topic of our next section.

Thematic Novels for Literature

The week after next, the students will begin reading their thematic novels. The thematic novel choices are:

How Tia Lola Came to Visit (Stay) by Julia Alvarez

Sarah Bishop by Scott O'Dell

Johnny Tremain by Ester Forbes

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi (advanced choice)

