

SALINE AREA SCHOOLS
Third Grade Curriculum Snapshots

READING:

The third grade reading curriculum of Saline Schools incorporates a balanced literacy program focusing on narrative and informational texts. Third graders will become active, critical readers in various genres such as folk tales, fables, and realistic fiction. In addition, students will read to gather information from a variety of non-fiction sources. Children will become literate readers accurately reading frequently encountered words. They will utilize a variety of strategies to decode words, develop literal and inferential comprehension skills and further develop vocabulary skills. Students will be able to read fluently and apply reading skills appropriate to their individual reading levels.

WRITING:

Saline Area Schools' elementary students learn how to become writers using the *Lucy Calkins: Art of Teaching Writing* curriculum adopted in 2008-2009. Below is a brief description of just a few of the strategies that our students use between kindergarten and fourth grade. Essential to the program is the continuity of the writer's workshop structure that the students use for the entire five years. The program builds on prior learning and allows for adaptations in instruction as the sophistication of writing skills increases year-to-year. Other hallmarks of the Lucy Calkins curriculum include extensive use of literature, author studies, teacher modeling, on-demand writing and published work.

Unit of Study: Launching the Writing Workshop

- Focus on two personal narrative stories, choosing one for publication
- Generate entries/ideas like all good writers and selecting “seed” stories
- Writing a variety of leads for one story
- Rehearse for drafting by creating timelines
- Revise, edit, and publish

Unit of Study: Raising the Quality of Narrative Writing

- Look at texts that resemble the sort of thing they want to write
- Adding personal narrative skill/strategies from K-2
- Bringing out the internal story/moving backward/forward through time, etc, multiple strategies

Unit of Study: Breathing Life Into Essays

- Variety of strategies for living like essayists
- Generate lists of people, places, issues, and passions
- Construct one portion of an essay at a time
- Select convincing material
- Introduction and concluding paragraphs

Unit of Study: Writing Fiction, Big Dreams, Tall Ambitions

- Collect story ideas/channel towards realistic fiction
- Develop protagonist/characteristics/coherent character
- Plot story on graphic organizers (story mountains, etc.)
- Draft and revise beginnings/compare to published leads

MATH:

In *Everyday Mathematics*, children develop a broad background by learning concepts and skills in all these six content strands. The third-grade program emphasizes the following content.

Number and Numeration

Counting patterns; place value; reading and writing whole numbers through 1,000,000; fractions, decimals, and integers

Operations and Computation

Practicing multiplication and division facts extended to multi-digit problems; working with properties; operations with fractions and money

Data and Chance

Collecting, organizing, and displaying data using tables, charts, and graphs, using basic probability terms

Measurement and Reference Frames

Recording equivalent units of length; recognizing appropriate units of measure for various items; finding the area of rectangles by counting squares; using multiplication arrays, coordinate grids, thermometers, clocks, calendars, and map scales to estimate distances.

Geometry

Exploring 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes for other geometric concepts

Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

Finding patterns on the number grid; solving Frames-and-Arrows puzzles having two rules; completing variations of “What’s My Rule?” activities; exploring the relationship between multiplication and division; using parentheses in writing number models; naming missing parts of number models.

SCIENCE:

Force and Motion

“The Learner Will” (TLW) compare and contrast the motion of objects in terms of speed, direction, and the forces exerted on the object.

This unit allows students to explore *Force and Motion* with twelve hands-on activities utilizing scientific tools for measurement, simple machines, various objects, and supplemental readers. The students use *push-pull meters* to measure force and compare amounts of work needed to move objects. Further lessons allow them to discover the affects *gravity* and *friction* have on a moving object. Through the use of the scientific process, students learn how *simple machines* reduce the amount of *force* needed to move the *load*. 3rd graders lift with levers, roll wheels and axles, raise objects with pulleys, drag loads up inclined planes, separate objects with wedges, and secure wood pieces with screws.

As a culminating project, students are encouraged to create an invention that contains two or more simple machines. A tour through the Jiffy Mix factory in Chelsea, Michigan reinforces the real-life use of simple machines in the work force. Through inquisition and discovery, our students develop a deeper understanding of how the motion of an object is affected by various forces in our world.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

The third grade social studies curriculum introduces the history, geography, government, and economy of Michigan.

Students will learn about people and events from the past that have influenced Michigan history prior to statehood. Students will study the geography of Michigan including the physical and cultural characteristics of different regions of the state. Students will explore human-environmental interactions and the effects on the state of Michigan. Students also examine the movement of people, products, and ideas across the two main regions of the state.

Students will explore how Michiganians support themselves through the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. By studying economic ties between Michigan and other places, students will examine the interrelationship of geography and economics.

Students are introduced to the purposes, structure, and functions of state government. They will understand the relationship between rights and responsibilities of citizens. Students will examine current issues facing Michigan residents and practice expressing informed decisions as citizens.