



**Gifted Services Newsletter - Ashlawn Elementary School**  
**Grade 2**  
**April 28, 2023**

[APS - Parent Resources and Organizations Supporting Gifted Learners](#)

**Questions?** Please contact Vicki Paris [victoria.paris@apsva.us](mailto:victoria.paris@apsva.us)

During the 3rd Quarter, 2nd Grade students had the opportunity for daily differentiation to meet their learning needs. Please read below to see how 2nd grade teachers adjusted the general education curriculum to provide these daily learning opportunities!

In **Language Arts** this quarter, the units included Cycles in Nature and Insects. Second graders focused on cycles in nature while studying the book "The Tiny Seed" by Eric Carle. Students examined the text and illustrations and completed a unit of the **Jacob's Ladder Reading Comprehension Program**, which targets reading comprehension skills in high-ability learners by moving through an inquiry process from basic understanding to critical analyses of texts. Using skill ladders connected to individual readings in poetry, short stories, and nonfiction, students move from lower order, concrete thinking skills to higher order, critical thinking skills. The ladders include multiple skills necessary for academic success, covering language arts standards such as sequencing, cause and effect, classification, making generalizations, inference, and recognizing themes and concepts.

Second graders also completed a book study of the picture book "Jumanji," by Chris Van Allsburg. This book study incorporated activities from the Navigator curriculum, a resource written for advanced learners. The **Navigator Units**, developed by the Center for Gifted Education at The College of William and Mary, encourage advanced readers to develop their skills at analyzing and interpreting literature through structured questions and activities that highlight themes and concepts, literary elements, and real world connections contained within the books. In addition, novel studies are opportunities for students to develop their own vocabulary and writing skills by exploring and emulating the language and style used by authors.

Second graders also had access to **CKLA Choice Boards** created by APS Gifted Services, which include differentiated questions, writing prompts, investigations, and activities to challenge all learners. Gifted learners benefit from this differentiation which includes evaluative and inferential questions to spur higher order thinking.

Finally, students used **ReadWorks**, which contains articles that are paired with CKLA's reading units. These articles help to build background knowledge, extend learning, and challenge students.

The **Math** units this quarter focused on Fractions, Number Concepts: Three-Digit Numbers and Addition and Subtraction: Sums and Differences within 99. All students completed a math unit written for advanced learners, **Project M2: Shopping at the Bazaar: Connecting Number and Algebra with the Meerkats** explores the ideas of expressions, equations, and the equal sign. During their adventure, students travel to a shopping bazaar to learn about numbers and engage with basic algebraic concepts. Students also showed their thinking using **APS Exemplars**, which promote problem-solving skills and provide students with an opportunity to refine their ability to effectively communicate their mathematical thinking through their writing. Second graders also completed work from another advanced resource, **Groundworks: Reasoning with Numbers**, which provides students with a better awareness and understanding of how numbers and operations are related. Many students also took advantage of the advanced resource **Nimble with Numbers**, which provides lively and interesting math activities for meaningful practice of high priority skills necessary for number sense, operation sense, and number competency. Students engage in games, computational skill checks, and independent activities to enhance their math learning.

**Science** units during Quarter 3 included Plant and Animal Life Cycles. Students were provided **curriculum extensions**, which are a means of “extending” the depth or breadth of the curriculum in order to add rigor and complexity to the learning of advanced learners.

In **Social Studies**, students learned about American Indians. Students examined **primary source documents**, which are original documents and objects from history. Primary documents engage students, promote inquiry, and allow students to apply critical thinking skills when analyzing an image or document. In addition, students were provided with **curriculum extensions** to help encourage deeper thinking and learning.

Students have also been exposed to critical and creative thinking strategies. Some of these include:

- **The Frayer Model** promotes higher-level thinking and allows students to think critically about words/concepts by looking at the definition(s), characteristics, examples, and non-examples.
- **Fluency, Flexibility, Originality, Elaboration (FFOE)**
  - Fluency – The ability to generate numerous ideas or alternatives to solve a problem that requires a novel solution
  - Flexibility – The ability to consider a number of different perspectives in an effort to generate a wide variety of ideas or alternatives.
  - Originality – The ability to generate novel, unique, and rare ideas or alternatives to solve a problem that requires an innovative solution
  - Elaboration – The ability to generate a large number of minute details or descriptions that explain a specific and novel solution to a problem
- **Habits of Mind:** In the book *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Arthur L. Costa describes a habit of mind as “a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems.” Using Habits of Mind enables students to better understand what “intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions to which are not immediately apparent” (Costa).
- **Growth Mindset:** Students are being explicitly taught characteristics of those who have a **growth mindset** and are actively encouraged to work towards this mindset. When students have a growth mindset, they take on challenges and learn from them, therefore increasing their abilities and achievement.

- **Mind-mapping** is a method of visual note taking that helps students organize information in unique and personal ways. It helps students retain, remember, and recall information, in addition to helping them see the whole picture at once and make connections among related ideas.

Outside of the classroom, Ashlawn's 2nd Grade **Odyssey of the Mind** team competed in the regional tournament on March 25th. Students worked incredibly hard for months to solve a long-term problem. They learned how to use their imaginations, pay attention to details, work as a team, and communicate effectively with each other and their coaches. Thank you, thank you, thank you to our 2nd Grade coaches Dan and Jill for all of their work this year!

