



Gifted Services Newsletter - Ashlawn Elementary School

Grade 4

April 28, 2023

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

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During the 3rd Quarter, 4th Grade students had the opportunity to participate in daily differentiation to meet their learning needs. Please read below to see how 4th grade teachers adjusted the general education curriculum to provide these daily learning opportunities!

In **Language Arts** this quarter, students focused on **Treasure Island** and their **Colonial Writing Project**. Students learned about Virginia's Westward Expansion and Virginia's role in the Civil War during **Virginia Studies** in Quarter 3. To continue the focus on Language Arts and Virginia Studies, students participated in several different **Document Based Questioning (DBQ)** units. In the **DBQ "What Was Harriet Tubman's Greatest Achievement?"** students are introduced to Harriet Tubman and learn about three of her achievements: helping enslaved people escape to the North, leading a Civil War river raid, and caring for those in need. Students then decide which of these achievements was the greatest and create a product informing others of this opinion while backing it up with evidence from the documents they have studied. In the **DBQ "Valley Forge: Would You Have Quit?"** students learn that In the winter of 1777 and 1778, George Washington commanded several thousand patriot soldiers who spent the winter at Valley Forge, 18 miles outside of Philadelphia. It was not an easy time. Students examine primary sources, extract information and ultimately offer their opinion to the question "if you had been a soldier in Washington's army, would you have quit?" Students in Ms. Gianni's class conducted a **Socratic Seminar** answering the question "Was the Declaration of Independence Revolutionary?" The **Socratic Seminar** is a method to try to understand information by creating a dialectic class in regards to a specific text. In a Socratic Seminar, participants seek deeper understanding of complex ideas in the text through rigorously thoughtful dialogue. This process encourages divergent thinking rather than convergent thinking. Students prepare questions and run the conversation themselves. This experience was a top teaching moment for me this year!

The **Math** units this quarter focused on Multiplication, Division & Equality; Decimals and Measurement. Students participated in **Continental Math League (CML)**. The CML problems allow students to solve a variety of complex story problems via the application of various strategies they've learned throughout the year. During every unit, students are provided with a choice board that includes work from **Groundworks**, an advanced math resource.

Groundworks: Algebraic Thinking helps students develop their reasoning skills in algebra by providing innovative problems that connect arithmetic and algebra. Each set of problems has a strong emphasis on reasoning and contains ample teacher support. **Groundworks: Reasoning with Geometry** provides students with activities that investigate shapes, symmetry,

congruence, angles, rotations, reflections, and other geometry investigations. Many students participated in small groups to learn about **Hands On Equations**, which provides students with a hands-on introduction to algebraic reasoning, with 26 lessons divided into three levels of complexity. Students use number cubes and pawns (which represent variables) to create concrete representations of story problems, which they then solve algebraically.

Science units during Quarter 3 included Ecosystem Interactions and Plant Structures and Processes. Students analyzed soil samples to compare the organic matter, visible organisms, and decomposition in progress in each. The healthy soil sample includes worms, and we are feeding them some fruit and vegetable snacks while we observe the changes in this ecosystem!

Outside of the classroom, Ashlawn's 4th Grade **Odyssey of the Mind** team competed in the regional tournament on March 25th, where they placed first in their division. They then went on to the State Tournament on April 15th, where they placed 3rd! Students worked incredibly hard for months to solve a long-term problem and practice spontaneous problems. 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 4th Grade coach Jorge for all of his work this year!