

Lit Bits

Cleveland Heights–University Heights
School District

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WARMING UP WITH SUMMER READING

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights summer reading program is revised to better support all readers across grade levels. Hundreds of completed surveys from families guided the effort. Refinement of the lists was also informed by input from a review committee consisting of teachers, coaches, and administrators. The goals of encouraging student choice and recommending high quality literature remain the two highest priorities. Elementary and middle school students will return to school with a completed log recording the books they have read. High school students have specific assignments that accompany the books they will read. The summer reading lists are again organized around a grade level ban theme related to Civility and can be accessed at www.chuh.org throughout the summer. Students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade may choose any book that reflects the sub-theme listed below by grade:



- K-2: *Celebrating Differences*
- 3-5: *Caring About Others*
- 6-8: *Relationships*
- 9-12: *Making a Difference*

Generating interest in reading is a goal as summer quickly approaches. Several schools have special programs to promote summer reading, two of which are described in other articles in this issue of Lit Bits. Other suggestions include presenting in-class book talks, sharing reviews of various titles, or reading aloud a portion of one of the texts as a teaser.

Second Annual Poetry Gala

The Second Annual Poetry Gala will be presented in the Wiley Middle School Auditorium on Thursday, May 29, from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Poets from each school will recite an original poem or present one of their published favorites. Students selected this year by their schools to participate in this special event are as follows: **Cedric Little**, Grade 1– Noble; **Julia O'Donnell**, Grade 1 – Boulevard; **Reine Evans-Roskos**, Grade 2 – Gearity; **Meryem Azzam**, Grade 3–Roxboro Elementary; **Kaylah Powell**, Grade 4–Oxford; **Breanna Smith**, Grade 4 – Canterbury; **Mason Spencer**, Grade 5 – Fairfax; **Autumn Mehring**, Grade 6 – Monticello; **Darnetta Scott**, Grade 6 – Wiley; **Mikale Thomas**, Grade 7 – Roxboro Middle; **Jakisha Bell**, Grade 8 – Bellefaire; **Khalia Canion**, Grade 9 – Transition; **Mia Mathis**, Grade 10 – P.R.I.D.E.; **Shequea Howard**, Grade 11 – R.E.A.L.; **Jeilee Letcher**, Grade 11 – Mosaic; **D'Amber Jones**, Grade 12 – Legacy; **Samir Zutski**, Grade 12 – Renaissance.

Mr. Brian Sharosky, Roxboro Middle School Principal, will be the host for the evening's festivities. Ms. Bunny Breslin, teacher at Wiley Middle School and Meredith Holmes, the first CH-UH Poet Laureate (2005) will also perform. Please plan to attend the Poetry Gala to support all the students who have practiced so hard for their performance.

“School’s Out – Reading’s In”

For the third summer, Oxford's teachers will offer a *Read with the Teacher* program at the Noble Road Library. Oxford's kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, as well as some specialists and resource teachers, will take turns reading aloud some of their favorite books. This year teachers are working together in pairs. Each team shares two picture books with the students: a fiction selection and a non-fiction selection on the same theme.

Primary-level students and their families are invited to the library on biweekly Thursday evenings throughout the summer to read with their teachers. The 30-minute program has multiple benefits for the Oxford Owls. Students are able to visit teachers, participate in a shared reading experience, and work towards their summer reading requirements. By holding the event at the neighborhood library, families are encouraged to take advantage of the resources and other programs provided by the public library system.

Teachers are enthusiastic about the *Read with the Teacher* program as well. They are looking forward to reconnecting with students and families over the summer months. More importantly, teachers have the opportunity to share their love of literacy and model its importance to our CH-UH children and their families.



Summer is for Writing, Too!

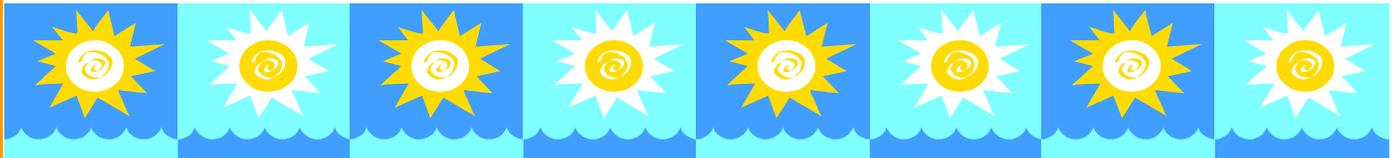


Have you ever thought that you might have the next Sharon G. Flake or Sharon Draper sitting in your class? Maybe the next J.K. Rowling, R.L. Stine or Avi has written a short story just for fun. Perhaps a young Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes or Shel Silverstein has touched your heart or tickled your funny bone with a poem. Have you discovered a good writer while reading essays, Quick Writes, and/or journal responses? Well, the *CH-UH Summer Writer's Workshop* is just the place for your students.

The *Writer's Workshop* is an opportunity for students who have a passion for writing. It's a place where student writers can practice their craft, discover their voices, explore new genres, and do what writers do - write for the love of it.

Writer's Workshop is a two-week enrichment session offered as a part of the Summer S.T.R.E.T.C.H. Program (Stretching Through Enrichment, Thinking, Challenges, and Hands-on investigation), held at Cleveland Heights High School from July 21, 2008 through August 8, 2008. S.T.R.E.T.C.H. Program courses have been created exclusively for CH-UH students entering grades 6-12 in the 2008-2009 school year.

Students who are interested in participating in the *Writer's Workshop* can submit the registration application included in the Summer S.T.R.E.T.C.H. brochure, which was mailed to CH-UH families, or download and print the registration application from the S.T.R.E.T.C.H. Program link at www.chuh.org. Encourage the writers in your classroom to register today!



Increase Thinking: Quick Writes and Think Writes

The Quick Write and Think Write are two strategies that provide opportunities for increased rigor in the classroom. When students write, they are given opportunities to communicate understanding, extend thinking, build vocabulary knowledge, and ultimately, increase comprehension.

While planning a unit and individual lessons, strategically write questions that will be presented to the students before, during, or after instruction. Students are given one to five minutes to respond using non-linguistic representations, lists, phrases, a few sentences, or a paragraph. Based on students' written responses, you are able to monitor understanding, adjust pacing and emphasis, assist students who need additional help, and extend learning.

The chart below is designed to more clearly define the Quick Write and Think Write strategies. Although there are specific differences, both strategies allow students to build "thinking fluency" and provide valuable diagnostic information.

QUICK WRITE	THINK WRITE
Teacher creates questions on an ongoing basis during the unit to check comprehension of daily lessons.	Teacher creates questions when designing unit to check understanding at key points during the unit.
Teacher writes question at the knowledge, comprehension, and application levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.	Teacher writes questions at the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.
Teacher uses written responses diagnostically for future lessons, but does not evaluate or grade.	Teacher uses written responses diagnostically for future lessons and may assign points for a grade.
Teacher can use as an entrance or exit slip.	Teacher can use as an entrance or exit slip.
Students write for 1-3 minutes.	Students write for 3-5 minutes.
Students write daily.	Students write weekly.

3rd Grade Students Led Parent Conferences in February

After learning about the District literacy focus of student led conferences, Joi Curry, an Oxford third grade teacher, decided to teach her students how to conduct the student-parent-teacher conferences. She created a timeline that supported students as they planned for their new role during the conferences, and she wrote a script for students to follow while conducting their presentations. Here are the steps that she followed:

1. At the beginning of the year, have students create portfolios. Students collect samples of work from all subject areas throughout the course of the semester. Have the students assess their own work, reflect on their growth and comment on the assignment. A few words of advice: keep it simple.

2. Two weeks before conference time, allow each student an opportunity to go through his/her portfolio and select several samples that represent their best work from language arts, math, writing, social studies, and science. These will become the work samples shared with parents during the conference. Provide a form for the student to complete. On this form have the student articulate the purpose of the assignment, the steps followed in order to accomplish the assignment, and the learning experienced by completing the assignment.

3. One week before the conference, allow time for each student to reflect on and explain in writing three strengths and three areas for improvement. Then each student writes personal goals and a plan which will lead to the accomplishment of the goals. During the conference, the written reflection and plan will serve as a guide for the conversation with parents.

4. A few days before the conference, allow time for organizing the work samples. Have each student practice the conference with a partner.

5. On the day of the conference, students should leave their portfolios and scripts on their desks before leaving for the day.

6. During conferences, students retrieve their portfolios and present their work and comments using the script as needed.

Joi felt that the parents and students were more engaged in the conference, and she observed that questions and conversation flowed easily. She is looking forward to repeating this format again next year.



Creative Middle School ELA Teachers

Middle School English Language Arts teachers who are interested in learning more about the capabilities and usefulness of the Easy Planner software can plan to attend an all day workshop on June 10th. The workshop will be held at Monticello Middle School in room 106 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Rachel Coleman and Karen Heinsbergen will co-present tips for using and organizing the textbook resources available electronically within the Easy Planner. Additionally, the group will design, save and share customized lesson plans.

You can register at the following website: <http://resources.chuh.org/StaffDev> or call Deborah Brainard at 320-2008.

Analysis of Anonymous Work Leads to Rich Classroom Dialogue

by Jeanette Eichmuller

In my 5th grade language arts class, I have found that when students are not overtly sharing their own work with their peers, they are able to critically analyze and evaluate work more effectively.

We are currently working on the concept of extended responses as a means of thorough investigation and analysis of a topic. Students work in small groups of 4 or 5 and each group is given an anonymous response to analyze. Students are encouraged to discuss the theme presented to them, confer about the answer, and grade the piece based on a 4-point rubric.

I love to walk around my classroom and listen to the rich dialogue that I hear concerning the topic that they are examining. I notice that all of the students are more excited about the work because they are not emotionally connected to it. This open forum gives all students the opportunity to learn about the use of a 4-point rubric, without revealing their individual skill level to the rest of the class.

Peer Conferencing

by Holly Taylor



Holly Taylor, special education teacher at Roxboro Middle School, describes how she introduced her students to peer conferencing as a way to support their writing development.

As I planned for peer conferencing, I modeled every step of the peer conferencing process. I found it to be essential for my students to see what this process looked and sounded like. The modeling occurs in a “fish bowl” like atmosphere where I sit with one student in the middle of the class and demonstrate the entire process of peer conferencing while other students observe the process.

When modeling the peer conference, I recommend giving students *examples* of language to use as

well as *non-examples*. This really helps the students to see this as a collaborative process not a judgmental one. Furthermore, it establishes a classroom community in which students use their strengths to help each other become better writers.

Before peer conferencing can take place, the students and I also brainstorm and record what the term “peer conferencing” means, and what they think will occur during a peer conference.

We process the brainstorming and collectively develop a list that provides structure and parameters for a peer conference. From the discussion, an anchor chart pairing the procedural guidelines with a picture or visual cue is displayed for reference. The use of a picture supports students who may have receptive language challenges.

The following is the list my class made. *This list can be adjusted for younger or older students.*

1. Get materials (personal writing, different colored pen, peer conferencing form)
2. Sit side by side (shoulder to shoulder)
3. Exchange papers (establish roles: one person is editor, the other is author)
4. The editor reads the paper out loud while the author listens (The Editor must use constructive feedback – using a positive tone when suggesting what the author could change.)
5. The editor fills out a conference form recording two things that are good about the author’s writing and one thing that needs to be changed or improved. We refer to this step as “two stars and a wish.” This allows the author to have a goal to accomplish in their writing before the teacher conference takes place.
6. The author and the editor switch roles.

Students using this strategy have an opportunity to help others as they learn they are not alone in their process of becoming better writers.

Rocking and Reading through the Week



Canterbury School hosted an exciting literacy event called “Rocking and Reading Through the Week!” from May 19th through May 23rd. Daily “Drop Everything and Read” times were scheduled and experienced by everyone in the building including the principal, teachers and cafeteria and custodial staff members. Select students were in-

involved in the literal meaning of “Rock & Read” using the rocking chair in the main hall. As an extra bonus, Cleveland Heights-University Heights librarians presented an assembly about their summer reading program. In addition, Scholastic sponsored a “BOGO” Book Fair.

Our culminating activity, on May 23rd, was a school-wide book swap sponsored by the Student Council Members whose goal of providing one book per student was reached! The purpose of this project was twofold: it enabled our students to have books of their own, and it encouraged our students to read for pleasure over the summer. Second grader, Hunter Henderson, said it best, “I know why we’re having a book swap. It’s because they want

us to pick up a book and read it.”

We want everyone at Canterbury enjoying as many books as possible this summer!



Mr. Dennis Christopher, our custodian, presented a story using puppets to students in Mrs. Woods’ 2nd grade class.