

Good afternoon! We had a great first week and everyone has transitioned well with our new schedule. We jumped right into social studies by working on a map of the United States, identifying states, capitals, state abbreviations, major rivers, and mountain ranges. We will finish up the maps on Monday and begin learning about the states by region. Since we are working on American History this year, I thought this would be a good start.

In science, we started chapter one of the Life Science book. Chapter one covers basic concepts of science, scientific inquiry, and safety in the lab. I anticipate this will go pretty quickly. I am having students complete at least one Key Concept question plus the vocabulary for each section.

We began math this week as well, with 4th and 5th grade beginning the Go Math books. 6th and 8th grade worked on benchmark tests, which I will review this weekend to see what concepts we may need to review. I have gone back and forth on the timed math tests, and think I will start giving a short, one minute skill test as a refresher for students. We also will start the Problem of the Week next week.

We also started working on grammar and language arts. Grammar began with parts of and kinds of sentences. For language arts, we are reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which I thought would be a fun and interesting choice. Along with reading, students are completing vocabulary and comprehension questions based upon the book. I am working with them on character, plot, and setting as well.

Everyone has been pretty receptive to the poetry selections in the morning. I wasn't sure how this would be received, but I like the feedback I get when the kids share their ideas and understanding of what they read. Next week's poet is Carl Sandburg.

One final note- I am working on the best way to keep track of work in science, poetry, and language arts. Students have a binder for each in the classroom, and it seems like it would be bulky to send those home every Friday to share their completed work. I would appreciate feedback as to what parents think about this. One option is to wait until the sections or chapter is finished, then send everything home for

review. These are just subjects where I think it's important to keep track of paperwork for testing over the entire concept.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone (618-534-5631). Have a great weekend-

Heather