

Middle Department Homework

☐ Reading Log

- “Eyes on text” is possibly the most valuable time investment made at home. We ask that children read a minimum of three nights a week for at least the minimum time required for their grade level: 10-15 minutes per night for second grade, 15-20 minutes per night for third grade.
- The “Reflections” section is exactly that: a place for your child to reflect, or think about, their reading. We are not looking for a summary here, though part of a story might be retold as background for the reflection. Interpreting events, characters’ actions and words, and an author’s choice of words are the focus. (Sounds higher level? We’re laying the groundwork here.)

☐ Math Packet

- Immediate feedback is critical! If feedback is delayed until after the homework is turned in, corrected, and returned, there is limited benefit. Helping your child to grasp concepts and correctly practice skills ensures that misconceptions and erroneous procedures do not become ingrained. (We heard recently that while it takes 16-24 correct repetitions to cement learning, it takes 75 to undo incorrect learning!)
- Classroom manipulatives are available. Kitchen cupboard items work, too!
- If you reach an impasse and cannot explain a concept to your child, we are happy to arrange for tutoring as needed.

☐ Reading Comprehension Practice

- Provide the amount of support your child needs. Read with them; help them understand the comprehension questions and skill exercises on the back; thoroughly check their work for completeness and accuracy. Gradually pull back the scaffolding as you see that they can do more independently.

☐ Word Work

- Word sorts are individualized. When your child brings a sort home, have them sort the words, then read the sort to you. Do not alert them to errors; instead, have them read a whole column, then indicate a group of 3-4 words for them to try again to see if they all belong to that group. When the sort is correct, have them record it on their homework paper.
- Talk with them about what they notice about their sort; have them write those observations in the space provided on the homework paper.
- Have your child choose at least one activity to complete in addition to sorting and reading. This can be a “blind” sort, a writing sort, or a game such as “Memory.” See the word sort homework sheet for suggestions.

Word Sort Homework

It won't come as a surprise to anyone that working with words is integral not only to spelling development but to reading and writing growth. Word sorts are groups of words that allow a student to investigate a spelling feature, internalize spelling patterns, and draw conclusions about the spelling complexities inherent in our language.

A spelling inventory given at the beginning of the year, along with a few weeks of preliminary word work, has helped us to place children in a word study group. The word study routines for the week are as follows:

- Monday** Students receive a new sort, cut apart their words, sort them for the first time, and store them in an envelope.
- Tuesday** Students resort their words, discuss the sort with their word study group, and record their words and observations in their word study notebook. Their words are then stored in their envelope and sent home for homework.
- Wednesday** For homework, students sort their words a third time, then record them on the "Independent Word Study Form." If it provides an incentive for your child to be timed as they sort, by all means, time them! You can write the time on the form. For the "What did you learn about words from this sort?" section, help your child to describe what they noticed about the sounds and the patterns they sorted. An observation might be something like, "The long *ā* sound can be spelled *ai* or *aCe*, but *have* is an oddball because it makes the short *ă* sound."
- Thursday** Do a "blind sort" or a "writing sort." In a **blind or no-peeking sort**, headers (e.g., *aCe*) and/or key words (bold print words from the sort) are laid down, and a parent calls out a word without showing it. The student indicates where the word should go, and the parent then shows the word to check its spelling and sound match against the key word. In a **writing sort**, the parent calls out the word and the student writes the word in the proper category using the key word as a model. After the word has been written, the parent immediately shows the word to check for correctness. (You can use the back of the Independent Word Study Form for this.)*
- Friday** A short assessment will be given at school, with 10 or 15 of the words from a sort given as a spell check.

*Students will be encouraged to look for words in their daily reading that mirror the features being studied in their weekly word sorts. They will add them to the sorts recorded in their word study notebooks. Any words that you find together at home can be added to the Independent Word Study Form as well.