

WHITE RIVER SCHOOL
102 Pine Street
White River Jct., VT 05001
(802) 295-8650
Sheila Powers, Principal
www.hsdvt.com

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Dear Families:

In science we are going to be learning about sound and light. This unit is part of the Next Generation Science Standards. We will explore and experiment with different interesting materials. The following are the main ideas of our unit: sounds are made when something vibrates, sounds can be loud or soft or high or low, we use sound and light to communicate, and a shadow is made when something blocks the light. These will be some of our science words we will be learning and using: translucent, opaque, illumination, communication, transparent, reflective, vibration. To help with one of our science activities, **could you please send in any time next week an empty toilet paper tube** (or two so we have enough for everyone)? We will be using them to make “kazooos” and test out the different sounds we can make using some different materials in science.

Please remember students get dismissed from school two hours early next Thursday, March 23 in order for teachers to begin parent-teacher conferences. Students also have no school on Friday March 24. I look forward to meeting with you.

Report cards go home today. Please feel free to ask any questions about the report card. Any items left blank/unscored means they were not addressed this term (so you will see some science and social studies units scored and some left blank). A score of 3 means a student is meeting expectations for this point in the first-grade year. So receiving a 3 now as well as a 3 in November reflects steady, on-grade progress. Scores of 2 are not cause for tremendous concern. They are areas to work on but are areas in which the student is progressing. At the conference I will focus on sharing my observations and showing you some of your child’s work samples and assessments.

Right now in writing we are working on opinion pieces. We are learning different techniques to try to convince your reader of your opinion, such as giving lots of reasons, and including details, or elaboration. These pieces, like our informational writing, have to be organized with a focus statement in the beginning, supporting details, and a concluding statement. We read as a class the book *From Dawn till Dusk*, which is about life on a Vermont farm, by Natalie Kinsey Warnock. Then we reread the book, discussing what some of the words and phrases in it meant, such as “fiddleheads” and the phrase “threw up her hands” at trying to keep the floor clean. Then we looked through the book once more and made notes of reasons from the text that life on a farm sounds fun, as well as reasons from the text that life on a farm sounds like hard work. Students each got to choose their opinion in answer to the question: Would you like to live on a farm? They have been busily writing their opinion and reasons from the text to support it for the last several days. After this during writing time students will get to choose which of our Red Clover books is their favorite and support that opinion with reasons.

Speaking of Red Clover books, this is a description of what they are from the libraries.vermont.gov web site: “The Red Clover Book Award is designed for children in kindergarten through fourth grade. Each year thousands of Vermont school children read the 10 nominated picture books and vote for their favorite in the spring.” Our class is really enjoying reading our way through each of the ten books. One thing that is enjoyable is that they are such a wide range of books and topics and styles—poetry and prose, fiction and nonfiction, silly and serious-- with the one unifying feature being that they are nominated for being a great picture book that’s relatively new. There is a new set of Red Clover books each school year and most classrooms in our school read them and vote on their favorites at some point each year.

--Amanda Ehret