Third Grade Reading and Writing Workshop

 

Parents,

Below is information on our exciting reader’s workshop and writer’s workshop format that we use! I wanted to give you some background so you know how your child is learning these two very important subjects in third grade and so that you understand why your child is taking home books and their writer’s notebook each night. Please let me know if you have any questions!

**Writer’s Workshop**

Writer’s workshop is the name given to our writing time each day. We call it Writer’s Workshop because that is what “real” authors call their special writing time. Since our students are becoming “real” authors, we have adopted the name as part of our daily instruction.

Our lessons are taken, primarily, from the Units of Study for Writers authored by Lucy Calkins and the Teacher’s College at Columbia University (where I attended this summer). Each day the workshop will last about one hour. The first 10-15 minutes there will be a mini-lesson (direct teacher instruction). The focus will be learning about techniques and strategies that good writers use. During this lesson, students will be expected to by hyper focused (as we call it in our classroom ☺) listening, turning and talking to their writing partners, and taking occasional notes. After the mini-lesson ,students will have independent writing time where they are allowed to choose the topic for their writing within the genre we are working. By giving the students choices in their writing, it makes the writing more meaningful and engaging. While the students are writing the teacher will be meeting with individuals or small groups to conference with them about their writing and to encourage their growth as writers. Sometimes in the middle of the independent writing time we will pause for a “mid-workshop share.” This will be a time for the teacher to refocus the group, or to highlight the extraordinary efforts of an individual writer in the class. At the end of the workshop, about 10-15 minutes will be spent giving the students an opportunity to share their writing with the class or a writing partner. Students will learn to write, revise, edit and publish stories throughout the school year. They will also begin to assess their writing and learn to implement the characteristics of quality writing into their own work. Most of our writing will be kept at school and will be sent home at the end of the year. Whenever you are visiting our classroom, we encourage you to look at our progress as writers. I hang up new writing for each student throughout the week on our “Our Work” board in the classroom. After our first writing unit, students will publish their first piece and all of that writing will be kept in our classroom published binder that we encourage you to check out whenever you visit!

Please note that students are encouraged to take home their writer’s notebooks each night and bring them back in the morning. I encourage students to do this because it helps them become real writers by using their notebooks to store any writing idea that pops into their heads.

We look forward to sharing this adventure with you!

**Reader’s Workshop**

We call our reading time, Reader’s Workshop. It is very similar to writer’s workshop.

We start in the reading corner, where students are expected to bring their reading toolkits (filled with their reading notebook, pencil, highlighter, 2 books, and sticky notes). Students sit quietly next to their reading partner as I give a 10-12 minute mini lesson on a very specific reading strategy using quality literature or non-fiction. During this time, students will be interacting with their reading partner or in small groups as necessary.

After the mini lesson, students go straight to their reading spots and begin reading. As the year goes on, students will be encouraged to use their sticky notes to track their thinking throughout the independent reading time. Third graders will be expected to read 30-40 minutes without stopping or getting up. During this time, I will be meeting with individual students and small groups, so each child is met with various times throughout the week.

Following the independent reading time, students will fill out their reading logs and then get together with their partner to discuss what they accomplished that day, or something interesting from their book.

During the entire process, students are not to go “book shopping” or take a reading counts quiz as this interrupts momentum. Students may shop for books or take a quiz before specials in the morning (in replace for morning work), during a break time, and the last ten minutes of each day.

I am excited to see students grow in this area!