

Mrs. Wilson's Fourth Grade Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 6

206.935.0651 X110, or cwilson@guadalupe-school.org

October 5, 2020

Fun!

Friday's morning zooms are a time for a little fun. This week we brought our stuffies. There are some pretty impressive stuffed animals out there. More impressive are the stories behind them. "My dad made a basket at the very end and we won this!" "My family donated to an organization to help rhinos and they sent us this." "This bear has his own spot, the lower bunk of my bed." We also did a zoom scavenger hunt. Evie was our judge, helping to determine the winner of each round and keep score.

Another fun task is knitting. Many fourth grades are taking this on for the first time. I think the key is to allow your fourth grader to choose to participate or not. It can be a challenge to learn a new skill, but for those with the motivation to persevere, the rewards are great.

I'm working with our schedule to add Art to the mix. Look for changes to that, coming this month. Also this month... Halloween. I'll definitely make the October 30 Zoom a fun experience. We are without a room parent right now, but I can coordinate a "party bag" if parents send in Halloween treats. Drop off on 10-9 or 10-16. That gives me time to put a party bag together for each student, pick up 10-23, not to be opened until the 10-30 zoom. Hope that makes sense!

Math:

Fourth graders are ready to move forward to Math in Focus, Chapter 2, Estimation and Number Theory. Hold on to your seats. In this chapter your child will learn about estimation, factors and multiples.

Some of the skills your child will practice are:

- estimation and choosing between an estimate and an exact answer
- finding common factors and common multiples
- identifying prime numbers and composite numbers.

These concepts seem innocent enough. I assure you they are vital for our future work with division and fractions. Comfort with basic multiplication facts will help this process be smooth.

When it comes to estimation, Math in Focus presents two methods: estimation through rounding and front-end estimation. I will give a nod to front-end estimation but will emphasize estimation through rounding. It may surprise you to know that rounding is a persistent problem for students, even into middle school. It may also surprise you to know that I've received many parent emails throughout my decades of teaching, questioning the value of estimation. Don't we want our calculations to be exact?

I affirm the struggle. I also teach estimation and walk fourth graders through two different methods. You and I probably learned a step by step process for rounding, then estimating. Step by step doesn't work for everyone. A second method usually fills the need. Understanding place value is key to both methods.

Look to this newsletter for more details.

Estimation through Rounding

Step by step directions for rounding.

1. Find the rounding place (If you are rounding to the nearest thousand, then the digit in the thousands place is the rounding place.)
2. Look at the digit to the right.
 - a. If it is 5 or more, add 1 to the rounding digit.
 - b. If it is less than 5, leave the rounding digit alone.
3. All other digits to the right of the rounding place become 0.
4. All digits to the left of the rounding place remain the same.

This doesn't work for everyone.

If the step by step process does not work, try this method instead.

Find the rounding place. (If you are rounding to the nearest thousand, then the digit in the thousands place is the rounding place.)

Decide which two numbers you are choosing between. For example, if you are rounding 172 to the nearest ten, the rounding place is 172. Your two choices are 170 and 180.

Ask, is 172 closer to 170 or 180?

If in doubt, draw a number line.