



It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the 2017-2018 school year. After returning from a much-needed break, we entered the fourth marking period full steam ahead. We began the fourth quarter with a field trip to Historical St. Mary's City. Here, students learned about early Maryland colonial life. Specifically, they learned about indentured servants, trade, and the economy of the 1600's. The field trip was pleasant, but we have to maintain our course of learning in the classroom. Third, fourth, and fifth graders will continue their academic studies of grammar, reading, and vocabulary. However, the challenge of their final writing assignment for

the year will test their knowledge and ability to research information. Third grade has the task of writing a biography report. For this report, they have to research a famous person, provide information on the person's early life, middle, and later life. Additionally, they will provide information of their person's contributions, interests, and hobbies. Furthermore, they will present their report to the class. Fourth and fifth graders have the task of writing a persuasive speech. This is a unique experience in itself because students explore the elements of counter-arguments, rhetoric, bias, and redundancy.

THE POWER OF *Writing*



Additionally, they will understand the concept of audience appeal because just like the third grade, the fourth and fifth grade students will present their arguments to the class. Finally, as we wrap up the school year, fifth grade will participate in swimming safety awareness class. This class will provide a hands-on experience on swimming safety. Specifically, they will learn how to respond if they are trapped in a rip current, basic lifesaving instruction of a drowning victim, and how to make a flotation device from a pair of pants and

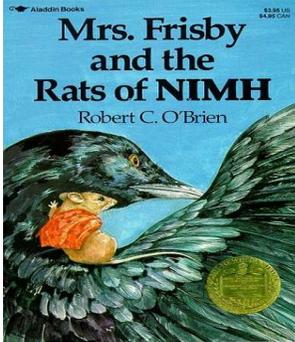
shirt. What better way to end the school year and prepare our students as we head into the summer break.





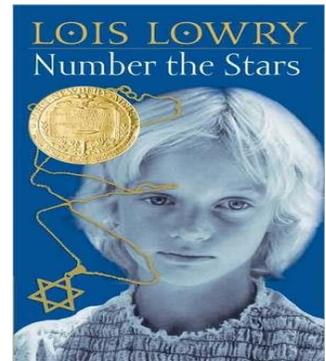
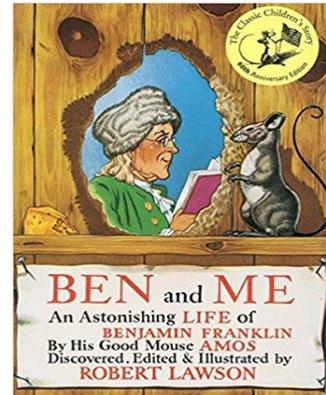
Winter is here and the temperatures outside are cold, but the learning is heating up in the classroom, as we approach the mid-way point of the school year. Specifically, students have been learning about the writing process and they are applying these skills toward their second quarter essay assignment. Third graders have been tasked with writing a personal narrative about a previous experience or something they want to experience. Fourth and fifth graders have been tasked with an expository essay. Unlike the narrative writing for third grade, fourth and fifth grade will be experiencing the research process of writing. As we move into the

third quarter, we will begin reading our classroom novel. Classroom novels provide the opportunity for students to engage in class discussions and analyze various elements of literature and literary devices. Third grade will read *Ben and Me*, an historical fiction detailing the inventions of Ben Franklin. The story offers a bit of a twist, such that is told through Ben's sidekick, Amos the mouse.



Fourth grade will read *Mrs. Frisby and the Secret Rats of NIMH*. This fantasy fiction presents themes such as sacrifice, family, and identity. Fifth grade will read *Number the Stars*. This historical fiction tells the story of a young, brave Danish girl who helps her Jewish friend and family escape to Switzerland as the Nazi regime begins to invade Denmark. In addition to the classroom novel, students will continue to move

forward in the academic areas of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.



LEARNING
IS
FUN



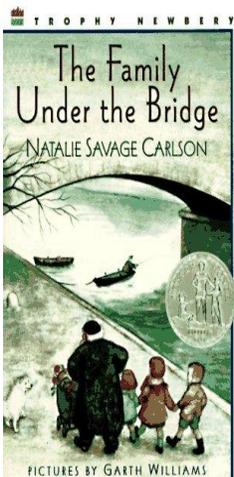
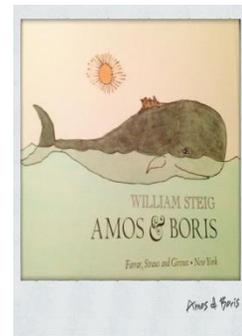
My name is Matthew Strain and it is a blessing to be part of the St. Peter's School and community. I am a first year teacher; however, I am not a stranger to the St. Peter's community. I started my journey at St. Peters in 2013, as an instructional assistant. At the end of the 2016/2017 school year, I was offered the position of fifth grade teacher and I gladly accepted this calling.

As the fifth teacher, I will be responsible for the intermediate grade language arts program. I am looking forward to a year that will introduce students to the elements of writing, expanding their vocabulary and grammar knowledge and developing their literacy skills. Students will engage in collaborative learning activities, analyzing stories using story maps and other types of graphic organizer.

Additionally, I am pleased to have an instructional assistant in my classroom. Mrs. Tanji Bhullar is the fifth grade instructional assistant this year. She served as a substitute teacher during the 2016/2017 school year, additionally; her son is a student at St. Peter's. As a substitute and a parent of a St. Peter's student, her knowledge of the school curriculum will be a valuable asset to the team.

As we kick off the school year, each grade level will be presented with new challenges as well as revisiting familiar concepts:

3rd grade: During the first quarter, third graders will be adjusting to a totally new environment of learning and expanding their level of independence. They will face new challenges as they begin their journey exploring and learning new grammar concepts and expanding their vocabulary. Additionally, we will explore the concepts of comparing and contrasting and the elements of narrative writing. As we continue to move forward in the first quarter, we will read and analyze, as a class; the story of *Amos and Boris*.



4th grade: Fourth grade students will continue to expand their knowledge in grammar and vocabulary through the fourth grade level Workshop program. Additionally, they will be introduced to the concept of constructing an outline, such that by the end of the year, they can effectively write a narrative essay. For their first quarter classroom novel, we will read and analyze *The Family Under the Bridge*.

5th grade: Like fourth graders, the fifth grade students will continue their grammar and vocabulary studies through the fifth grade level Workshop program.

However, the writing process will present new and rigorous challenges for the fifth grade. This is an important area of their academics, as it will be necessary to prepare them for challenges ahead in

middle school. The first quarter we will concentrate on how to choose a topic, points of view of a story, understanding the components of an outline and constructing an outline. By the second quarter, they will begin their journey of writing an expository essay. For their class novel, we read and analyze *The Egypt Game*.

With these new and exciting challenges being presented at the different grade levels, I look forward to watch each student grow and develop their new skills and knowledge and become critical thinkers. More importantly, I am blessed to be called as a witness to their learning.

