

First Grade – Core Academic Subjects, Miss Rafael

At Adda Clevenger, we believe that education should focus on the whole child, and that learning is an active, rather than passive process. I believe that students learn by doing, and by taking responsibility for their learning. I am a firm believer that effective learning results from communication, creativity, and reflection. As a teacher, I strive to make every student an effective learner and an active participant in the education process.

I believe that all students have the ability to learn. It is my job to facilitate this learning by engaging students and motivating them to learn by making content accessible, differentiated, and age-appropriate. I plan to actively engage students by incorporating a variety of strategies such as kinesthetic, hands-on activities, as well as independent and cooperative learning projects. While the curriculum references common core and state standards, I thoroughly enjoy the freedom I have as an educator at Adda Clevenger School to create my own lessons based off the interests, inquiries, and learning needs of my students.

I believe that all students have the ability to think critically and be reflective. It is my responsibility to create a community of interactive learners and communicators in my classroom, who think critically and respect each other's viewpoints.

I respect and acknowledge diversity and individual differences in my classroom. Students learn at different rates and in different ways. Because of this, I strive to present material using multiple modalities and provide differentiation and scaffolds as needed in order to meet the learning and developmental needs of all my students. I believe that it is very important to have high expectations for each of my students to maintain and promote high self-efficacy and a sense of pride in one's academic accomplishments.

1st Grade Course Descriptions

Math

First grade math students at Adda Clevenger build on a solid foundation of math concepts covered in Kindergarten. Our program teaches math in a sequence, using age and grade appropriate math activities to progressively build understanding, skills, and confidence. Through these activities we develop conceptual understanding beyond the rote learning of arithmetic skills. In first grade, students will cover all the objectives for first grade and move on to touch on the Grade Two learning objectives.

Math objectives include increasing number sense and comparing numbers up to 100, understanding the concept of place value, adding and subtracting one-and-two-digit numbers, analyzing geometric shapes, measuring objects in basic units, using graphs to represent data, telling time, and understanding the value of money. Activities and learning strategies will move from concrete, to representational, to abstract to promote conceptual understanding of math topics and problem-solving skills. A large emphasis will be placed on memorization of addition and subtraction facts within 20.

Throughout the year our students learn to make decisions about how to approach a problem, check results, explain their reasons, and justify what they did. They will use strategies, skills and concepts in finding solutions and express solutions clearly using the appropriate mathematical notation. The objective of our program are met in a warm, small group environment that encourages students to develop their critical thinking skills.

Language Arts

Phonics, comprehension, high frequency words, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and writing are included in the 1st Grade ELA curriculum. Students will also respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature throughout the school year.

Phonics/Spelling

Students will participate in weekly phonics and spelling lessons with spelling words based on the phonic skills taught in the classroom. Spelling tests will be given each Friday. Students should study words each night during the week.

Comprehension

Weekly comprehension skills (e.g. generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions and comparing information) will be taught and reinforced through the week. Students will be assessed on these comprehension skills regularly.

High-Frequency Words

New sight words will be introduced regularly. A list of sight words will be sent home for your child to practice and drill throughout the school year.

Fluency

Students will understand the basic features of reading. They will select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They will apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading. Learners are encouraged to become fluent readers who can use a constant rate for most materials they learn to read, but learn to use different speeds based on their purpose for reading. Learners will take timed reading fluency assessments throughout the year. Fluency passages may be sent home occasionally to be practiced at home as well.

Nightly Reading

Learners are expected to read 15-20 minutes each night. Please remember to help build your child's reading stamina and encourage him/her to read more independently as the school year progresses.

Writing

1st Grade Writing is centered around narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Students will learn and practice the entire writing process from conventions, to planning and drafting, to revising and editing, and eventually to publication. The role of the teacher will be that of a writing professional and peer coach, guiding authors as they explore their craft at their own individual pace and skill level. Over time, authors learn to choose their own topics and to manage their own development as they work through a wide variety of writing projects in a sustained and self-directed way.

Student progress will be evaluated through writing samples and published pieces, quizzes, and participation in the writing process.

Grammar/Mechanics

Elements of grammar will be taught to develop and vary sentences, as well as apply proper capitalization and punctuation. We will focus on a specific grammar concept each week.

Handwriting

In first grade, students review and utilize the D'Nealian style of handwriting learned in Kindergarten. By the end of the year, students will be ready to transition to cursive handwriting, which is taught in second grade.

Science

Students will participate in various directed, guided, and independent inquiry activities and utilize higher level thinking skills as they learn life science, physical science, and earth science concepts. The subject matter is aligned to both the Next Generation Science Standards and the California Science Standards for 1st Grade, including: using inquiry skills; how technology is incorporated into science processes; animals; plants; environments; earth's resources; weather and seasons; concepts about space; changes in matter; and forces and energy. In addition to participating in class discussions and hands-on learning activities, students will complete various projects throughout the year.

Social Studies

Students will actively participate and apply their knowledge and skills in class discussions and mini projects while learning standard-aligned content. The curriculum integrates mathematics, science, language arts, and visual and performing arts skills, all correlated to first grade California standards. The subject matter is aligned to the California History-Social Science standards for 1st Grade, including: citizenship; geographical concepts; American symbols; holidays and heroes; how the world changes over time; cultures and traditions from around the world; and economic concepts. Students will increase their academic vocabulary as well as their knowledge of the world in which they live through interactive and collaborative learning activities and projects.

Civility

This is the time that social discussions will take place. We have class meetings on practical social issues as they arise and brainstorm ways to solve them. Students in the first grade continue to develop individual responsibility, respect the rights, opinions, and differences of others, as well as the rules and laws by which we live. First grade civility concepts include: identifying, expressing, and controlling feelings and emotions; strengthening problem solving skills; and collaborating with others.