

In the Classroom: Session One • Ages 8-11

Monday

Astronomy

Topics Studied: what is an astronaut, spacecraft, nutrition in space, what is life, the Sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, the Moon, Mars

Projects Completed: Large Solar System poster, Martian landscape diorama, space travel nutrition program, cell diagram shrinky dink, 3D universe simulator, custom rocket creation simulator, LEGO rockets

Educator Note: This unit marks the start of our deep dive into the planets of the Solar System. All of the students are very enthusiastic about the progress they've made on their Solar System posters!

Stories & Legends

Books Read: *Lore Of the Wild-North American Superstitions, Babe the Blue Ox, Raven Steals the Light, Rain of Fish-Father Subirana, Compere Chien, My Name is Gabriela, I Am a Very Calm Capybara, Snippets, Latinitas- Evelyn Miralles & Teresa Carreno, Christmas Spider*

Countries Studied: USA, Canada, Honduras, St Lucia, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Argentina

Additional Topics Covered: World Kindness Day/Kindness around the world, Christmas around the world, determining continental boundaries, tectonic plates

Vocabulary Words Learned: frigid, covet, torrential, ruse, cherish, altruism, composition

Projects Completed: travel journals, Inukshuk art, rain of fish mobile, Compere Chien horns, Los Pollitos, La Mano (The Hand) sculpture, waiter's race/bow ties, travel posters, kindness quilt

Educator Note: Travel posters were such a fun art piece! The kids looked at examples of how travel posters are an interesting way to highlight the scenery or a famous landmark of a place. Each child chose from one of the countries we covered and decided what they thought the feature should be to advertise their chosen country.

Writer's Workshop

Books Read: various mentor texts

Topics Covered for Vica, Victoria, and Ava: planning, writing, editing a story, using graphic organizers, writing a paragraph (topic sentence, detail sentences, closing sentence). acrostic poetry, setting descriptions, inferencing, Venn diagrams, point of view, spelling rules, and narrative stories

Spelling Chunks Covered: ark, ill, each, out, eep, ain

Topics Covered for Christian, Lorenzo, Alex, and William: parts of speech, acrostic poetry, describing words, phonemic awareness, writing a sentence - we focused on writing complete sentences and expanding original ideas

Spelling Chunks Covered: end, ill, ing, oss, est, ash

Projects Completed: creating a comprehensive writing portfolio

Educator Note: the students' writing has greatly improved this session! I have seen an increase in confidence and writing ability and their portfolio books are filling up with a nice variety of written work.

Wednesday

Timeline History

Dates Covered: 5,000 BC-1200 AD

Topics Studied: Stone age civilizations, Ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, Aztecs, Greeks, Medieval Europe, famous rulers, ancient architecture, inventions

Projects Completed: students are working on a bound timeline book where they write and draw their lessons into during the entire year

Educator Note: I am very impressed by how everyone's history timeline books are turning out! Each one contains dozens of carefully crafted drawings that colorfully depict everything we've discussed with historically accurate details.

Unit Study Menagerie

Subject: National Parks

Parks Studied: Everglades, Biscayne, Voyageurs, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Sequoia, Denali, Hawaii Volcanoes, Isle Royale, Hot Springs, Mammoth Cave, Yosemite, Acadia

Rabbit Hole: NPS, Ansel Adams, John Muir

Projects Completed: NPS park folio and logo creation, alligator, moose, buffalo mixed media project, pronghorn, weasel, Northern Lights watercolor, hibiscus, parts of a volcano drawing, red squirrel, Red River mudpuppy, Yosemite Valley drawing, puffin

Educator Note: We learned so much about the United States and how diverse our National Parks are! From the vast remoteness of Denali to downtown Hot Springs, we were surprised that parks could be so varied not only geologically but in their locations. Loads of geology was covered from caves/karst formation to volcanoes along with unusual ecology exploration such as freshwater sloughs and marl prairie. Every park has something that makes them special. A very small example of some special features: Arkansas Novaculite, shipwrecks, the largest cave system in the world, wild rice harvesting, the legend of Pele... it was an endless mix of super cool things to learn about and places that we all hope to visit someday!

Zoology

Books Read: *The Sassafras Science Adventures: Zoology*

Habitats and Animals Studied:

Grasslands: Kenya, Africa

- lion, cheetah, elephant, giraffe

Desert: Egypt

- camel, cobra, lizard, fox

Farm: Quebec, Canada

- cow, bee, chicken, house spider

Amazon Rainforest: Peru

- sloth, toucan, poison dart frog, blue morpho butterfly

Eucalyptus Forest: Australia

- koala, rabbit

Bamboo Forest: Sichuan, China

- panda, golden eagle, powerful owl, sambar deer, golden hair monkey, mouse

Arctic Tundra: Alaska

- musk ox, snow goose, polar bear, mountain goat

Projects completed: types of consumers poster, SCIDat journals, habitat scenes, panda face, clay farm animals, musk ox

Science Demonstrations: reptile egg simulation and giraffe saliva consistency experiment

Rabbit Hole: Jane Goodall

Educator Note: As we chatted in our morning circle time about classes, zoology was announced as everyone's favorite class! Students are completely invested in the Sassafras twins adventure as we continue to hear about their perilous travel to obtain information about the animals and the habitats they live in!