

# OPEN COURT READING

Our Open Court Reading Program has many components. Below are some of the key parts to the program. Your child goes through all these parts on a daily basis.

## **PHONEMIC AWARENESS: LETTER SOUNDS**

Phonemic awareness is taught through oral blending and segmentation. These complement each other. Oral blending puts sounds together to make words while segmentation separates words into sounds. These activities are quick and game like, often using a puppet. The activities are carefully sequenced and become more difficult as the year progresses. This ability to hear sounds in words and word patterns is essential to progress in phonics and reading. Since these are purely oral, all children can participate and it offers good support for English Language Learners.

## **PHONICS:**

The **SOUND/SPELLING CARDS** are used to introduce the phonics (sound/spelling associations). These are introduced one by one using a see/hear/say and write sequence. Each card contains the spellings for the sound and a picture clue to help with the sound/spelling association. These cards are used in K to 3rd grade.

**BLENDING** is the heart and soul of the phonics instruction. It is also a key strategy for written language. As the spelling for each sound in a word is written, the children say the sound, then blend the word together. It is then used in a sentence. This is an important aspect of vocabulary development. **Daily dictation** and **daily spelling lists** will give children the chance to see the interrelationship between the sounds they are learning and the spelling of words.

**READING DECODABLE BOOKS:** Reading and rereading are the keys to **FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION** leading to independence in reading. Decodable stories build on a single sound spelling and review and reinforce the previous sounds.

## **BIG BOOKS:**

**BIG BOOKS** expose children to written language that is above their reading level. It allows children to practice working with the concepts of print and to use the comprehension strategies of good readers. These include responding to illustrations, setting a goal, connecting to prior knowledge or experiences, visualizing, asking questions, monitoring and clarifying, predicting, what might happen next, and monitoring and adjusting reading rate. They can also comment in response journals to the reading selections.

**STUDENT ANTHOLOGIES** (late January on):

These offer a chance to read a variety of text types (biography, photo essays, history, geography, science and art and music). Stories may be familiar or new, reflect different cultures and stretch their minds. These are tied to thematic units. Comprehension strategies and skills are fine tuned in these lessons.

**SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES** concepts are carefully woven throughout **BIG BOOK** and **ANTHOLOGY THEMES**. This Open Court edition was specifically written not only to meet the California Standards for Language Art but were required to include activities supporting the standards for other curricular areas.

**VOCABULARY:** Daily vocabulary building activities are conducted to expand word knowledge and allow children to make connections to text.

**WRITING SKILLS**

Writing is developed along side reading in this program. Children work with concepts of print from the very beginning. Children will write in response to reading selections while working on legibility, correct grammar and punctuation. As their reading vocabulary increases their writing vocabulary does also. Remember writing is the last piece in the Language Arts Chain that begins with oral language. Children will move from temporary spelling to standard spelling in this process. Through extensive reading, their visual memory expands as does their spelling ability.

During each unit, children will be guided through the five key steps of the **writing process**. Each step will be carefully modeled with support activities. Children will produce one piece of writing with each unit that will reflect the process. They will be keeping on-going portfolios of their written work.

Parallel activities dealing with grammar, mechanics, penmanship and oral language are part of each week's lessons. We will be using a block manuscript program for **penmanship**. If your child has learned D'Nealian well, and is consistent, they may continue during this transition year. However, we will be reviewing the block manuscript, taught in early kindergarten, in class and in homework. Please discourage erasing! We encourage children to proofread their work and circle things that need correcting.

**WORKSHOP:**

This is a time for students to work independently or in small groups to practice or review the work that has been covered. At the same time, the teacher can work with small groups or individuals to reinforce, reteach or extend skills that have been covered.

**ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING:**

Assessment and monitoring are built into the program on an on-going basis.