



St. Martin of Tours Academy
Eighth Grade Newsletter
January 2012

Dear Eighth Grade Parents,

We are on the cusp of a new quarter, thinking about high school placement and applications. We are intensely pursuing our studies and working hard. Please remind students to stay focused and to renew their classroom supplies as we approach the second semester. I'm looking forward to a productive and eventful quarter with your teens, and to meeting with you at conferences.

In history we will study our forefathers' creation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Following the American Revolution, the next thirty-five years spanned the administrations of the first five presidents of the United States and the conflicts, which led to the establishment of political parties. We will look into the differences between the Hamiltonian Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans. We will also explore how the Louisiana Purchase opened westward exploration and expansion. *(SLEs: 2b, 3d, 4b, 5b)*

In language arts we will continue to review the parts of speech, with special focus on the functions of nouns and pronouns, learning about objective and subjective case pronouns and antecedents. Students will study subject-verb agreement, adjectives, and adverbs. We will practice writing timed essays, and later will be writing a comparison/contrast essay. We will soon be reading the Diary of Anne Frank in play format in class. (A web site available in language arts and grammar is <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/partsp.html>). *(SLEs: 2a, 2f, 4a, 5a)*

Spanish finds us learning the conjugations of the ER and IR present tense verbs. We will also learn vocabulary about subjects in school. Students will be working on a new diálogo using this vocabulary and these new verb forms. *(SLEs: 2d, 3a, 3b, 4d, 5a)*

Converting between fractions and decimals, and then between decimals and percents in prealgebra sets us up for working with percents and equations, proportions to solve equations, percent of increase and decrease, and mark up and discount. Then we will solve two-step equations and multi-step equations. (WebMath is another good Internet site that can be helpful with a variety of math subjects: <http://www.webmath.com/>.) *(SLEs: 3b, 3c, 4a, 5c)*

In algebra (with Mrs. Beck) we have spent quite a bit of time factoring polynomials. We are now writing and solving equations using factoring. Our next chapter has us graphing linear equations. The connections among linear equations in two variables and their graphs, slopes, and intercepts are investigated. Characteristics of parallel and perpendicular lines are discussed as is fitting equations to data. The material is getting progressively more difficult. Assignments are not considered finished until they are COMPLETE, CHECKED, and CORRECTED. It is important that students are in class every day. *(SLEs: 2a, 2e, 4a, 4d)*

In science (with Mrs. Beck) students are currently working on an Individualized Lesson. They have choices on some assignments in addition to other required assignments. I am free to walk around and touch base with each student every day, providing individual help to each person. This chapter is "Combining Atoms and Molecules." Atoms of two or more different elements can combine to form compounds that have different properties from those of the elements that formed them. Atoms, ions, and molecules can link together to form large, repeating structures such as solid metals, ionic and molecular crystals, and polymers. *(SLEs: 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d)*

In religion we will work with the concept of acceptance of those different from us, including racial tolerance. This dovetails nicely with the idea of peace, emphasized in January, and Black History Month in February. We will place special emphasis on understanding the sacraments and the order of the Mass, including the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Our Life Perspectives unit focuses on God giving us the gift of family. As we follow God's direction, it helps us to more fully enjoy this gift of family in the future. *(SLEs: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1e, 5d)*

Sincerely,

Ronda Galvan

