

# WALT WHITMAN MONTHLY



## Gratitude is a Choice-What will you teach your child this holiday season? ~Mr. Snyder

Dear Walt Whitman Families:

Gratitude is more than just a feeling, it is a step toward a life-changing way of thinking about how lucky we are. Practicing gratitude is an overall approach to life. When we practice or model gratitude for our children, we are learning and teaching others to see through a different lens; a lens of abundance rather than scarcity. We can't be anxious, (envious, angry, worried, etc.) and grateful at the same time.

Gratitude is an attitude consciously cultivated; an orientation, which can eventually become a habit. This holiday season, I challenge you and your family to develop a plan to consciously practice gratitude, even in the smallest moments of your days. My family and I are making it a point to say what we are grateful for just before bedtime. I have already begun to see a difference in how my children process and reflect about their day and I know you will see a difference in your life and the

life of your children, if you simply put a plan in place. Happy Holidays!

Check out this link to learn more about gratitude...

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition>

~Mr. Snyder, Principal



PE with the Principal

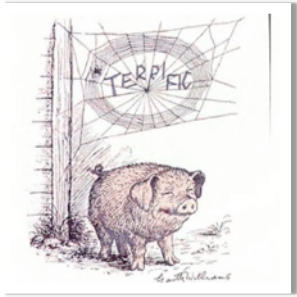


Working hard!



Just hanging around...

# Second Grade is Caught in Charlotte's Web



Second grade students at Walt Whitman have their noses buried in E.B. White's classic Charlotte's Web. The students are busy meeting memorable characters like Fern, Wilbur, Charlotte, and Templeton. Besides learning the theme of friendship, the children are being exposed to rich vocabulary and aspects of a rural community. Recognizing personification, narration and dialogue is holding their interest as they travel with Wilbur on his journeys. Speaking of traveling, the students have been studying and researching the seven continents in the world. Using a map key and a compass rose, students are smoothly navigating their way through the second grade curriculum. Stay tuned to see where in the world second grade is off to next!!

By Mrs. Geschwind, Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Levien, Second Grade Teacher



## Help Your Child Develop Strong Vocabulary Skills

Walt Whitman Student Artwork Was On Display!

Walt Whitman students were highlighted during the month of November at the Syosset Public Library located on South Oyster Bay Road, Syosset. The student artwork exhibit started on November 6<sup>th</sup> and was on display through November 20<sup>th</sup>.

More than 100 of our student artists had their work exhibited on large boards above the book stacks in the children's section of the library. All grades from kindergarten through fifth grade were represented.

These art pieces were in the style of master artists including; Monet, Kandinsky, Matisse, Mondrian, Cezanne, O'Keeffe and many more. All the children worked diligently to produce the beautiful artwork and continue to strive to be the best artists they can be.

Congratulations to all the wonderful art students. The beautiful work speaks for itself.

By Mrs. Schroder, Art Teacher

# A Framework of Writing a Persuasive Writing Piece

Persuasive writing is an opportunity to make an impression and influence others. This type of writing can help your child to improve their critical thinking and writing skills. If they see this as a meaningful and useful tool, they will want to improve their skills to enhance their style, content and spelling. Research shows when students understand that persuasion can be used orally in everyday life, they will look to find other ways to present their opinions.

A persuasive writing piece includes:

**Paragraph 1** - Claim: An introduction that states the position clearly

**Paragraph 2** - At least three pieces of evidence to support the position

- Big Names: Important people or experts can make your argument seem convincing.

- Logos: Facts, numbers and information can be very convincing.
- Sympathy: Getting people to feel happy, sad or angry can help your argument

**Paragraph 3** - A conclusion restates the topic and summarizes the main point

Find authentic opportunities for your child to write persuasive letters to family or community, speeches or classified advertisements. You will be surprised how excited the children get when they receive a reply.

By Mrs. Strauss, Reading Specialist



# Helping Children Balance School & Extracurricular Activities

The hours between the dismissal bell and the dinner bell have been redefined to include the realities of contemporary family life. No longer does this time involve a division between just *free time* and *study time*. Children now need to balance their desire to participate in activities that help develop their talents and passions with their needs to study and enjoy unstructured time as well.

The positive benefits of after-school activities cannot be denied. Participation in such activities offer children a chance to have fun, earn recognition, build self-esteem, and develop physical, social and intellectual abilities. We must ask, however, how much is too much? Children will undoubtedly require their parents' help in balancing their activities and schoolwork.

The message that **schoolwork comes first** must be repeatedly emphasized. School must

take priority even if a child demonstrates an extraordinary talent/passion for an activity. There may come a time when it is necessary to cut back on your child's number of activities or time commitment to a particular activity so that they experience less stress when meeting their primary responsibility of school.

Parents need to be aware of possible **warning signs of over-involvement**.

- A decline in grades/school performance
- Continual complaints of being tired or not having enough sleep
- Not having enough time or energy left for homework on days that are heavily loaded with activities
- Not being able to meet the basic obligations of the activity (i.e., not having time to

practice an instrument regularly)

When attempting to strike a balance, talk to your child about what activities are most important, enjoyable, or fulfilling. If they cannot come to a decision about which activities to cut back or cut out, you may have to make the decision for them. Most children will understand the importance of limits and learning to balance activities with responsibilities. This can be realized more readily with help and guidance from parents.

By Dr. Raspanti, School Psychologist