



Welcome to Third Grade!

JULY 2021

Third grade is a significant year as students start to show real awareness of themselves in the world. They are more attentive to how peers and adults around them behave and start to be more aware of their place in the group.

Reading and Writing work is grounded in The Teachers College reading and writing units of study. Throughout the year students learn to share ideas with their peers, build upon one another's ideas and look to the text for evidence. Reading needs are met through whole class and small group instruction. Students use *Kids A to Z* accounts, an at-home application for reading practice. Students respond to reading in journals which become an important tool for teachers to chart progress. They learn to cite evidence from the text to support their ideas and read for both inferential and literal meaning. Reading assessment, formal and informal, is frequent.

Third graders write in full sentences and spell more words conventionally. They write about a single topic in greater detail; thus paragraphing is introduced. Revising and editing is an essential part of the writing process. The program Words Their Way provides targeted instruction on spelling rules and patterns. Students learn and practice cursive handwriting. Units of study correspond with the reading units and include narrative, opinion and informational writing. Third graders are invited to publish their work in the Lower School literary journal, *DEscribe*.

As in all grades, a problem-based math approach, supported by the *Singapore Math* program, helps develop strong conceptual understandings and skills, flexible thinking and a willingness to engage with open-ended problems. As in all grades, teachers work with whole groups, small groups and one-on-one, as needed and determined by frequent assessment. Students are given an ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) account. ALEKS is a web-based, artificial intelligent assessment and learning system that allows students to practice, develop and master skills at home. Topics in third grade include becoming problem solvers; operations in base ten; geometry; measurement and money; multiplication, division, and fractions.

Social studies work becomes more complex for third graders, and they study historical time periods for the first time through studies of Native Americans and immigration. In these units they learn to read for information and content, imagine different perspectives, and develop an inner timeline of American history.

Third-grade musicians continue to build on the concepts of beat, melody, rhythm and dynamics. Students learn to play the recorder and read and play notes B, A, G, E, D and High C, and D. They also learn to identify quarter, half, dotted-half, whole, and eighth notes, as well as verse, refrain and coda. Our hope is that we will soon return to our live performances; typically, third-grade students present a concert on the main Dwight-Englewood stage and perform at "Grandparents and Special Friends Day."

Visiting the science room and outdoor space, third graders observe carefully to make scientific drawings and record ideas in science journals. They conduct simple experiments and learn the vocabulary associated with this process. They learn about collecting, organizing and studying data. They learn to think critically and support their ideas with evidence.

In Spanish students use words and phrases to express themselves orally and in writing. Listening and reading comprehension are taught and reinforced through songs and videos.



Dwight-Englewood School

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Third graders visit Swartley Art Center where they learn about color, line, shape and pattern while exploring drawing, painting, collaging, sculpture, digital art and printmaking. Students work independently and collaboratively, and all students produce a collection of work to represent their work within each medium. They develop the language for talking about art by studying their own work, the work of their peers and professional artists.

In Health and Wellness students develop an overall understanding of fitness and basic skills. They learn to use a fitnessgram and participate in *Jump Rope for Heart*. Sports introduced and practiced include soccer, flag football, handball, basketball, floor hockey, base games and lacrosse. They learn to become more strategic teammates. They engage basic movement and motor skills to improve overall fitness, hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, and body/spatial awareness. When possible, and frequently in the spring, students have physical education on the school's Leggett Field.

Third graders are naturally more independent and not only tie their own shoes but also manage materials such as laptop computers and iPads. We work hard to recognize and celebrate their independence while keeping in mind they still want hugs from the adults in their lives and may still sleep with a favorite stuffed animal at night.