**Dear 3rd grade family,**

This week, your child will start a new Elementary Literacy Unit in the classroom. We’d like to share more information and explain what they will be learning, how they will be learning, and provide ideas for how you can support their learning at home.

**Guiding Questions and Big Ideas**

* How do writers capture a reader’s imagination?
* Authors show-not-tell how a character feels through dialogue and description.
* Authors choose words and phrases for effect to help readers imagine they are in the story.
* What can we learn from reading literary classics?
* Literary classics are told in different ways over time.
* Literary classics can show how things have changed since the time they were written.

**What will your student be doing at school?**

In this unit, students begin reading a retold version of the literary classic *Peter Pan*1to build their understanding of how the historical context of a literary classic can have an impact on the content and also to analyze how writers develop characters to capture a reader’s imagination. In the first half of the unit, students read an informational text to build background knowledge about the author, J.M. Barrie, and some of the relevant aspects of society in Great Britain at the time the novel was written. Students then focus on analyzing how the events in each chapter build on what came before, and they consider how the illustrations in the first four chapters of *Peter Pan* contribute to the meaning of the text. After reading each chapter, students make connections between the historical context and the content of the chapter.

In the second half of the unit, through teacher-guided close reading, independent close reading, and discussion, students analyze the characters by carefully examining the traits, motivations, actions, and points of view of the novel’s main characters.

They also analyze figurative language, word relationships, and shades of meaning to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the text.

The Language standards that students will focus on in this unit (L.3.5a, L.3.5b, L.3.5c) require them to:

* Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases, such as determining the meaning of “her heart jumped into her mouth.” (L.3.5a)
* Identify real-life connections between words and their use, such as describing people who are *friendly* or *helpful.*
* Distinguish shades of meaning among related words, such as *knew*, *believed*, *suspected*, *heard*, and *wondered*.

**Working to become an ethical person** is a habit of character that is emphasized in this unit. Students practice respect, empathy, and compassion as they consider the historical context of the novel and the impact these issues may have on peers.

**How can you support your student at home?**

* Talk to your student about the guiding questions, particularly if any of the topics raised might be sensitive for your student.
* Talk to your student about the texts he or she is reading in the classroom, particularly if any of the topics raised might be sensitive for your student.
* Read narrative texts and talk to your student about how the author has developed the characters by analyzing the traits, actions, and point of view of the characters and comparing the point of view of the characters to the point of view of the reader. Consider asking:

***“What did you think and feel as you were reading?”***

***“Do you agree with his point of view? Why/why not?”***

* Read narrative chapter texts and talk to your student about how each chapter builds on the events in the previous chapters.
* Read literary classics and stories, including those from home countries. Talk to your student about how things have changed since they were written and what this tells us about how things were then.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like for me to connect you to your classroom teacher regarding this information. Thank you for partnering with us on your child’s learning!