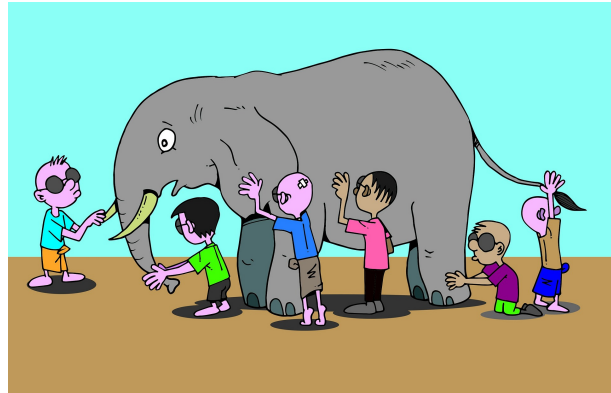


## 4th GRADE UNIVERSAL THEME: MYSTERIES

### September Class News:

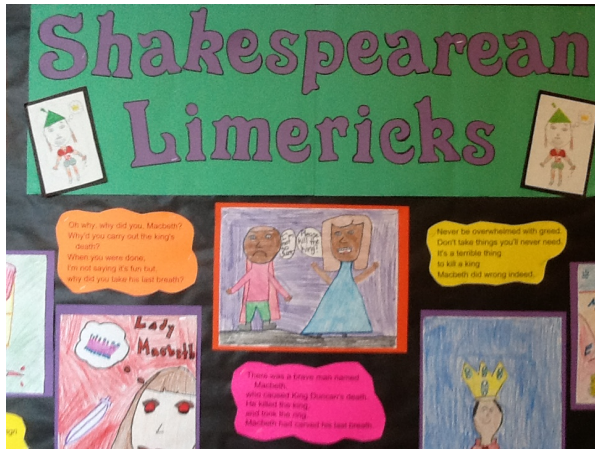
Our first day back was an exciting day in the G/T classroom! We began with what seemed to be an impossible challenge: insert a straw through a raw potato! Several students were successful, which encouraged others to persevere! The purpose of the activity was to show that “failure” is just a step toward success! The students hopefully left at the end of the day understanding that challenging oneself usually involves taking some risk, but that our classroom is always a safe place to try! In other activities, the students read and responded to some One-Minute Mysteries and were introduced to the mysterious Fibonacci sequence, and other activities to launch our universal theme this year- MYSTERIES (Unanswered Questions). We read the famous poem “Blind Men and the Elephant,” and a couple of stories which had us jumping to conclusions. These activities reinforced what Da Vinci said: “All our knowledge has its origin in perception.” It was an awesome start to our year!



### October Class News:

The 4th Grade G/T students have been busy investigating many different kinds of mysteries. They enjoyed learning more about themselves in various “Mystery of Me” activities, including the completion of a Multiple Intelligence survey to find out more about the ways they are smart! In math, we’ve embarked on a “Mathematical Mystery Tour” to learn more about the Fibonacci sequence. A web quest at [this](#) link revealed a great deal about how it appears in nature! We’ve also reviewed Level 1 of Hands-On Equations, a pre-algebra program, and are ready to begin Level 2. We’ve

done some challenging kinds of math puzzles, including Math Perplexors and a CrossNumber puzzle, and enjoyed a **“Contrasting Facts”** activity,



using clues to determine mystery numbers. The students have also been learning how to code, working through lessons at their own pace. In literature, our focus was on **Shakespeare**. After discussing the controversy and mystery surrounding Shakespearean writings, we read the play “Macbeth.” Then the students created limericks to summarize the plot, or specific events in the play, and the resulting bulletin board is

fabulous (on display in the hallway outside our classroom)! Students also participated in a “four-corner” Socratic dialogue surrounding the intriguing question: **Should you always listen to the opinions of others?** Among



Student dactylographers analyzed their fingerprint formulas

the sciences that solve mysteries is forensic science, and we’ve been learning about the many branches of forensic science, such as odontology and entomology. One day, the students came in to see a crime scene and had to use dactylogy (fingerprint analysis) to solve the crime. Finally, the 4th graders have been working on mystery slide shows, presenting research findings in a fun way! And we’ve made some Edmodo pals- students in a 4th grade class located in a suburb of Sydney, Australia! We posted a welcome note on our class blog. There’s a lot going on in 4th grade G/T!

## November / December Class News:

The weeks of November and December, with all of the holidays and special events, just flew by! They were definitely busy weeks in 4th grade G/T. The students completed their **“Guess Who/ Guess What” mystery slide shows** and these will soon be posted to our blog. We continued our Math Mystery Tour, learning the fascinating connections in our universe that can be made to the Fibonacci sequence. Would you believe that **even the way trees grow** reflect this amazing pattern? In other advanced math lessons, we did some ***Contrasting Facts*** and ***Cranium Cracker*** activities and a **Fibonacci puzzle set**, and have continued learning pre-algebra concepts through Hands-On Equations. Literature included a reading of the **famous poem “Oh Captain, My Captain”** and had a wonderful Socratic dialogue in which the symbolism of the poem was revealed (ask your child)! We continue with a variety of critical thinking and logical thinking activities and all kinds of vocabulary and word play, including constant reference to **Greek and Latin roots**. Looking forward to a fabulous spring semester in 4th grade! Parents, report cards will be sent home on January 8th and notebooks will follow within a week or two.

## January - February Class News:

The new year brought some fun math mysteries including the investigations of **time and date patterns**. We celebrated **National Opposite Day** and in February, we also began a simulation of the stock market. The students



have invested \$50,000 in various companies, and we will continue to trade for several weeks. We'll see who gets the biggest return on their investment! We've also begun looking into **mysteries of the deep sea**, the twilight ocean zone, known as the next frontier. We took personality quizzes to see which ocean creature is most like us! But, even more interesting is how research in this ocean zone is presenting hope for the future. As your child about it!

## March Class News:



A “sweet” simulated archeological dig!



Our investigation into many different types of mysteries continues. We completed several additional “crime scene” activities: one, in which handwriting analysis was used to solve the crime, a “mystery powder” lab, and a third one related to forensic anthropology. Now, we’ve begun **investigating another science that solves mysteries: archaeology**. Through hands-on activities, we are better understanding the work of archaeologists and exploring sites around the world that still perplex scientists. In math, our Fibonacci studies have led to a discovery of how the “golden ratio” relates to art and nature, a fascinating art project, an “explosion of stars,” and an exploration of fractals! Wednesdays go by so fast in GT!



Ask your child about what we did with pottery shards!

## April / May Class News

This year has just seemed to fly, but the final weeks of 4th grade G/T class have been so busy and productive! The students have been working on **mystery activities to share** in their classrooms in the final days of school. I’ve already had feedback from some of the teachers, who are thankful that the G/T students are providing *edutainment* for their classmates! A few have created elaborate clues and puzzles to solve, and are excited about the fun things they will teach and present. They will also share their mystery slide shows and short videos about the enigmas we studied during April and May. If you haven’t heard of the *Mary Celeste*, the Nazca Lines in

Peru, or the Moai on Easter Island, ask your child to share about those! We even had a lesson about **Occam's Razor**, a concept that I personally didn't learn about until I was a college student! During the last G/T class, the students participated in a fun end-of-year quiz on the website KAHOOT. The quiz covered learning from the entire year (e.g. Shakespeare, forensic science, Fibonacci) and they remembered a great deal! I am so proud of these wonderful students and I look forward to working with them again next year! Check out **this page** for summer learning opportunities and **this page** for learning links. The students especially like **THINKFUN** games and the company lives up to its name because the games DO require thinking! I wish you all a safe and happy summer!

