

## **Yellow Room (Second Grade) Curriculum**

The Yellow Room Curriculum is designed to support and challenge students as they progress academically, to guide them as they develop socially, and to nurture them as they continue to grow independently. The importance of strong character (listening to one's moral compass and doing the right thing) is emphasized through modeling, positive reinforcement, shared readings and class discussions. Students are encouraged and expected to participate as part of the Yellow Room community by asking questions and sharing their ideas. It is understood that children will participate and contribute in different ways, depending upon individual personalities and comfort levels.

### **Language Arts**

In second grade students continue to develop effective communication skills with an emphasis on oral fluency and listening. Yellow Roomers engage daily in a variety of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities incorporated throughout the curriculum. Direct reading and writing instruction is provided during Guided Reading Groups, Word Study Groups, Specifically Sentences lessons, Journal Writing, and Poems & Songs (choral reading and singing). Yellow Roomers also regularly listen to read-alouds of picture and chapter books. Reading aloud to children helps them increase their concentration and attention spans and also serves as a model for reading with fluency and expression. Experiencing and enjoying books together is one of the ways we build community in the Yellow Room.

Guided Reading instruction focuses on skills such as decoding unfamiliar words within sentence context; understanding and “reading” punctuation; understanding new vocabulary; making predictions before and during the reading of a text; reading to confirm predictions; identifying the problem, solution and main idea in a text; describing story elements such as setting and characterization; comparing and contrasting characters and/or stories; and retelling and paraphrasing. Together the teacher and students analyze the text and the author's message. Small group discussions encourage students to express their own opinions, articulate their understanding, and connect what they read to other texts as well as to their own experiences. Guided Reading Groups facilitate continuing development of reading skills, comprehension and fluency, leading to increased reading confidence and independence. When not meeting with a teacher-led Guided Reading Group, Yellow Roomers work independently, reinforcing their literacy skills by engaging in sustained silent reading, writing in response to their reading, and writing creatively in blank books. As individuals complete these self-selected writing projects (i.e., fictional stories, informative books from their own reading/research, alphabet books, cookbooks, etc.) they are invited to participate in Authors' Chair Share (reading their books aloud to the class).

Once a week students meet with the teacher in small Word Study Groups. The purpose of Word Study is to build word knowledge and vocabulary through an examination of phonics clues, spelling patterns, and word origins. Word Study lessons incorporate activities such as manipulating letters to make words, sorting words by vowel sounds and spelling patterns, examining consonant blends and digraphs, and

studying word roots and prefixes. When not meeting with a teacher-led Word Study Group, Yellow Roomers reinforce their growing word knowledge by engaging in independent Word Sort practice. As word knowledge grows, reading, writing, comprehension and communication skills are also strengthened.

The goals of Specifically Sentences lessons are for students to gain a clear understanding of the elements of a complete sentence and to apply that knowledge to their everyday writing. Specifically Sentences lessons focus on skills such as identifying subject and predicate, discriminating between common and proper nouns, determining subject-verb agreement, brainstorming alternatives for overused words, and choosing and using correct punctuation.

Based on the theory that students learn to write by writing, Journal Writing provides Yellow Roomers with frequent, informal writing practice. Students are given prompts as a springboard for creative expression and are encouraged to write increasingly longer entries, adding details for clarity and interest. Individuals are asked to carefully read over each of their Journal entries, looking for and self-correcting errors. During one-on-one conferences with the teacher, students receive mini-lessons addressing one or more writing skills at a time. When Journal prompts ask students to respond to a read-aloud, they have the opportunity to demonstrate reading comprehension while also practicing the conventions of writing. Other prompts provide avenues for students to express their ideas, opinions and imaginations; synthesize their theme study learning; observe the world around them more closely; write descriptively using their senses; experiment with language; and reflect upon personal experiences in order to write with increased meaning. Journal Writing provides students with frequent opportunities to apply their growing spelling awareness and understanding of writing mechanics in a meaningful context.

In addition to Journal Writing, Yellow Roomers engage in a variety of formal writing projects throughout the year. Whole class writing lessons focus on generating pre-writing ideas; organizing and sequencing; sentence structure and punctuation; grammar usage; the introduction of characters, settings, problems and solutions; and writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. In the spring, students participate in the annual BNS Authors' Tea. Yellow Roomers prepare for this eagerly-anticipated event through a writing process facilitated by one-on-one teacher guidance, with an emphasis on revising for clarity and proofreading/editing. The Authors' Tea celebrates students as writers when they read their stories in front of an audience of classmates, family members, and friends.

Throughout the year students are encouraged to use the spelling resources available to them, including environmental print. Phonetic spelling (students' use of alphabetic representation for sounds and word patterns) may be used when writing rough drafts and Journal entries. Students are also encouraged to use a strategy called "Sticky Note Spelling" in which they give a word two tries before having the correct spelling verified by the teacher. Students are expected to use conventional spelling during Word Study practice and Specifically Sentences work, as well as in classroom-published writing.

The Yellow Roomers build a collection of theme study-related poems and songs throughout the year. Reading/reciting/singing poems and songs as a class provides a model for (and practice with) reading with expression and intentional emphasis. Students learn about the structures of poems and songs and note how various writing mechanics are used for specific purposes. Yellow Roomers also participate in analytical class discussions about how a writer's choice of specific words is used to create imagery and meaning. Special attention is given to interesting and playful language (i.e., rhyming words, alliteration and onomatopoeia, repetition), as well as to new vocabulary. Poems and songs are reread numerous times to provide further reading practice, for the fun of discovering new surprises in the language, and for the sheer pleasure of enjoying the sounds and rhythms of words and phrases!

## **Second Grade Literacy Objectives**

Read fiction, nonfiction and poetry independently

- Use knowledge of common vowel patterns, consonants and consonant blends when reading
- Use knowledge of syllables to decode words
- Use knowledge of sentence structure, story structure and story sequence when reading
- Expand reading vocabulary
- Reread and self-correct when necessary, using context to decode words and to clarify meaning
- Read with fluency and expression

Demonstrate reading comprehension (orally and in writing)

- Make personal connections between previous experiences and reading selections
- Make predictions; read to confirm predictions
- Ask questions when reading
- Answer questions about what is read
- Locate information in texts
- Describe characters, setting and important events in fiction selections and poetry
- Identify the problem, solution and main idea

Read and follow written instructions independently

Give and follow oral directions with three or more steps

Clarify and explain words and ideas orally

Use oral language to inform, persuade and entertain (in both formal and informal settings)

Share stories or information orally with an audience (in both formal and informal settings)

Demonstrate an understanding of language structure in conversation, storytelling, writing and oral dramatic activities

Expand listening and speaking vocabularies

Participate as a contributor and as a leader in a group

Write stories, letters and simple explanations

- Generate ideas before writing
- Organize writing to include a beginning, middle and end
- Recognize and write in complete sentences
- Use capitalization at the beginning of sentences
- Include end punctuation
- Revise writing for clarity
- Use knowledge of vowel patterns, consonants, consonant blends and syllables when attempting spellings
- Use correct spellings of high-frequency sight words

## **Theme Study (Science and Social Studies)**

The Yellow Room themes listed below have been developed to teach students about people and cultures worldwide and to provide students with the opportunity to increase their understanding of the natural world and the concept of change. Theme Study lessons and activities teach students to formulate questions, conduct research and experiments, make connections, draw conclusions, present data and write about their learning.

Ancient Egypt

Ancient China

Magnets

States of Matter

Weather

The Cycle of Seasons

The Water Cycle

Plant and Animal Life Cycles

Living Systems and the Power of Plants

American Indians

Pilgrims: A Simulation of the First Year at Plymouth Colony

Communities, Resources and Economics

American Government, Symbols and Historical Figures

U.S. and World Geography

Each Yellow Roomer participates in the annual BNS Science Fair by creating, conducting and presenting an in-depth investigation of her/his choice. The Science Fair provides students with the opportunity to share their projects and learning with an audience of peers, family members and friends.

## **Math**

BNS utilizes the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project curriculum, Everyday Mathematics, for grades K-4. Everyday Mathematics is a spiraling curriculum – it introduces new concepts, then revisits these concepts at different points throughout the year and in subsequent years. Yellow Room Math students work independently, with partners and as a whole class. Students receive direct group instruction on mathematical concepts and are then given opportunities to apply their new learning and build on their skills with individual practice and partner games. Students are encouraged to use a variety of tools and resources when solving problems (i.e., base-10 blocks, mini clocks, play money, rulers, number grids). Yellow Room math students are also encouraged to articulate their problem-solving strategies in order to demonstrate and reinforce their learning. By listening to each other's strategies and processes, students become aware of new ways to approach and solve problems. Students also work on practice pages in their Math Journals to reinforce their growing understanding of new and reviewed concepts. During this time individuals receive further one-on-one instruction, as needed. Twice during

the week Yellow Room Math students complete Mad Minute exercises (e.g., solving 30 addition or subtraction facts in one minute). As the year progresses, Yellow Roomers are expected to transition from using tangible counting objects – including their fingers – to demonstrating mastery of rapid recall (memorization) of basic addition and subtraction facts. A monthly Math Game Day emphasizes the fun in everyday math while reinforcing previously learned concepts and helping students further develop and practice a variety of math skills.

## **Second Grade Mathematics Concepts and Skills**

Solve addition number stories using single operation and two-operation number models  
Solve subtraction number stories using single operation and two-operation number models  
Determine and name fractional parts of a circle  
Understand place value through 1,000s  
Write numbers in expanded notation  
Demonstrate the relationship between base-10 blocks and place value  
Compare number values using the symbols  $>$   $<$  and  $=$   
Find sums of two 2-digit numbers using exchanges  
Find sums of two 3-digit numbers using exchanges  
Find differences between two 2-digit numbers using exchanges  
Find differences between two 3-digit numbers using exchanges  
Use mental math to calculate the sum of multiple 1-digit (and 2-digit) addends  
Estimate and measure lines to the nearest inch and centimeter  
Measure, compare, and determine difference in length between two line segments  
Solve comparison number stories using single operation number models  
Read analog clocks and tell/write the time to five-minute intervals  
Determine different combinations of coins that total a given amount  
Create a line plot using given data  
Ask and answer questions about the data from the line plot  
Plot data on a bar graph  
Read and interpret data on a bar graph  
Recognize/name and create various quadrilaterals, incorporating knowledge of parallel lines  
Partition/divide a rectangle into smaller, same-sized squares  
Explain how to determine the number of equally-sized squares in a larger rectangle  
Add/write number models for a given set of dots  
Articulate problem-solving strategies orally  
Explain problem-solving steps orally and in writing

## **Art, Music, Spanish, & Physical Education**

Specialists employed by BNS provide students with regular instruction in Art, Music, P.E. and Spanish. Curricula information for these subjects is available on the BNS website -- [www.new-school.org](http://www.new-school.org).

## **Homework & Assessment**

Yellow Room homework includes Everyday Mathematics Home Link pages, individualized Word Sort practice pages, self-selected at-home reading as well as children's periodicals (Scholastic NEWS and Science SPIN), and a variety of Home Fun Projects.

- At least twice during the year students will be given formal reading assessments to determine their reading comprehension levels.
- Students' reading progress throughout the year is assessed during Guided Reading instruction and during one-on-one conferences with the teacher.
- At least twice during the year students will be given formal Qualitative Spelling Inventories to determine Word Study skills/needs.
- Once a week students' retention of Word Sort spellings will be assessed with Spelling Tries, including two dictation sentences.
- Students' writing progress will be assessed through review of in-class writing assignments and during one-on-one conferences with the teacher.
- Students' understanding of math concepts will be formally evaluated through written Everyday Mathematics assessments following each unit of study, mid-year and end-of-year.
- Students will informally demonstrate their problem-solving skills as well as their on-going understanding of math concepts during class lessons and on Math Journal practice pages.

Parent-teacher conferences are held three times during the school year to review students' progress and to discuss ongoing goals.

Note: The Virginia Standards of Learning for second grade have been incorporated into the Yellow Room Curriculum.