



A Year in the Life of a PS11 First Grader*

*The staff of PS11 has carefully planned for this coming school year. However, all great educators understand that even the best made plans need to be reflected upon, and edited depending on the needs of the students at any given time. While we do not imagine the scope of this year to be drastically different than we have planned, this guide should be considered a framework, rather than a specific and exact plan. We try to keep these pages as up to date as possible, but typos are inevitable. If you see an error, please send an email to ps11slt@gmail.com. Thank you.

8/2011

A TYPICAL DAY IN FIRST GRADE AT PS11

Welcome to First Grade!

School begins each day at 8:50am promptly. Students who wish to eat school breakfast will be allowed to enter the cafeteria at 8:30am. First grade parents and guardians will NOT be permitted to accompany their children to the cafeteria. All other first graders will enter through the playground starting at 8:30am, and will be sent up to their classrooms at 8:45am.

A sample day in first grade is provided below. Each class's daily schedule will differ due to scheduling, but all periods run the same length of time. Depending on unit foci, outside programs and classroom goals, studies may change. Students will have math, reading and writing every day.

Sample Daily Schedule for First Grade

8:45	Arrival (students go to classrooms from playground)
8:50-9:27	Morning Work, Morning Meeting, Word Study
9:27-10:20	Reading Workshop
10:20-11:15	Writing Workshop
11:15-11:22	Snack
11:22-12:22	Specialty Class
12:22-1:24	Lunch/Recess
1:24-2:16	Math Workshop
2:16-3:08	Science/Social Studies
3:10	Dismissal (pick up students at bottom of main doors)

Lunch and Recess

First grade students eat lunch before going outside for recess. During recess, teachers, coaches and school aides monitor students. Our fifth grade Lunch Leaders will also assist first grade students. Both organized activities and free play options are offered. If the weather is cold, be sure to dress your child appropriately, as students go outside all year round, even in colder months.

Morning Program

Each September, and at various times throughout the year, teachers identify students who could benefit from additional academic instruction in a small group setting. These students are invited to attend Morning Program where they will receive small group, targeted instruction.

Morning Program will be held on Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00-8:50am. Students should be dropped off *before* 8:00am in the front lobby and will be sent upstairs to their Morning Program classroom. They will be sent directly to their regular classroom at 8:50am. *It is imperative that students are on time.*

After School Program

Students registered for the PS11 After School Program will be escorted to the cafeteria at 3:10pm by their classroom teacher. Students registered at other after school programs will be picked up by program employees in designated areas.

Late Arrival

All students arriving late for school (AFTER 8:45am) will enter through the main entrance (eastern set of doors) on 21st Street and must wait in line in the cafeteria to obtain a late pass before going upstairs to their classroom. Late students will not be permitted to enter a classroom without a late pass. Family members are not permitted to escort students to classrooms.

Late Pickup

Parents or guardians who arrive late for dismissal (AFTER 3:10pm) will find their child in the Main Office on the second floor. As there will not be staff members available to supervise children, if the Main Office is unable to contact you, your child may be taken to the NYPD 10th Precinct on West 20th Street.

LITERACY CURRICULA

PS11 uses a research-based reading and writing curriculum developed by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). TCRWP is a research and staff development organization housed at Teachers College at Columbia University. The teacher-educators are involved in long-lasting collaborations with teachers around the world. The Project has a lasting and deep affiliation with six hundred schools, and develops ideas that are foundational to literacy instruction across the globe. Through our affiliation with Teachers College, PS11 staff members visit Columbia a few days a year for specific professional development seminars. In addition, we have a staff developer who visits the school throughout the year to support our professional practice.

For more information on TCRWP, please visit their website:
<http://tc.readingandwritingproject.com>

Literacy Assessments

We use a multitude of assessments to make sure we are constantly aware of where your child is performing and how we can best serve him/her.

Formal Running Records: As determined by Teachers College, we use leveled books and in-depth questions to determine a child's reading level. A child reads a book one on one with the teacher, retells the story, and answers both literal and inferential questions. Determining a child's reading level is based on reading accuracy, reading rate (words per minute) and comprehension.

Conferences/Informal Running Records: Teachers hold individual conferences with students as often as possible. Conferences are specific to each child and focus on their need of skills and strategies. During conferences it is common that a teacher will keep an informal running record. This is to ensure that students are constantly being pushed in their ability and are increasing their reading levels as needed.

Spelling Inventory: This assessment is administered three times a year: September, January and May. It is a list of spelling words that test students' knowledge of spelling patterns. This spelling inventory

determines where a student starts, and continues working, during their word study time.

Word ID List: There are 8 levels of Word ID lists. Each list contains a set of the most common words found in leveled books. Students are required to master 23 out of 25 words on each list to move on. When a student has mastered all 8 lists, they proceed onto phrase cards and more challenging words.

READING CURRICULUM

In first grade, students tend to make great strides in their reading, which is truly exciting for them. First grade focuses much of their reading instruction on tackling tricky words, making predictions, learning to infer, reading with expression, fluency, feeling and making connections to the plot and characters in their books. First grade works heavily on reading partnerships, being able to have meaningful conversations with others and acting out the books they are reading. First grade also works deeply on reading comprehension and having students truly understand the meaning of their books. All students practice reading skills in authentic trade books that they choose based on their reading level. Anthologies or textbooks are not used in the classroom for student reading.

Units of Study in Reading (*subject to change*)

Unit 1	Readers Build Good Habits
Unit 2	Tackling Trouble
Unit 3	Meeting Our Characters
Unit 4	Non-Fiction Reading
Unit 5	We Can Be Our Own Teachers
Unit 6	Reading Across Genres
Unit 7	Dramatizing Characters
Unit 8	Science Topics
Unit 9	Independent Reading Projects

You will receive more in-depth information about what each unit entails during the beginning of year grade breakfast, and through monthly Classroom Newsletters.

Shared Reading: Shared reading is when the teacher uses an enlarged text to teach skills and strategies. Skills and strategies are based around self-monitoring for meaning while reading, accumulating information, developing thoughts around the big ideas and making connections to what we already know about the world and ourselves. The text is enlarged so students can see and follow along in the learning process. Texts may include letters, short stories, poems, advertisements, newspaper articles, songs or non-fiction materials.

Read Aloud: Reading aloud exposes students to books on and beyond their current reading level. This enables students to enjoy and appreciate the world of literature, while giving them a glimpse into their future reading lives. It is a way to expose students to cultural and social issues that they are faced with daily. This exposure leads to rich conversation and reflection about both the literature and important worldly topics. Reading aloud is typically done in a whole class setting with time set aside for partnership discussion.

Guided Reading: Guided reading instruction happens with students reading at the same reading level. This time is used to introduce a set of skills necessary to move on to the next reading level. This instruction incorporates strong teacher support as students become comfortable navigating more difficult texts. Teacher supports include strong book introductions, vocabulary exposure, tools to support students with new reading skills and in-depth book discussions.

Strategy Group Instruction: This is a time when the teacher works with a small group of students with the same needs. These students may not be on the same reading level but they need the same work with specific readings skills and strategies. Here students are taught strategies to practice right then and there. They work within their own books so the work is authentic. Discussions ensue about the usefulness of the strategy and how it can be incorporated into further learning. Often students set goals during this time for how they will practice this strategy in their future reading. Based on need, strategy groups are commonly held 2-3 times on the same strategy so that it becomes a natural tool for the student to use while reading.

Independent Reading: Independent reading is the time in Reading Workshop when students are reading books on their **appropriate reading level**. It is crucial students spend this time (in school and at home) in their "just right" books because this is when they practice their skills and comprehension. Students select their "just right" books from the classroom library and are expected to build up stamina so they are reading for about 25 minutes at a time. Students create reading plans to set goals and keep them on task throughout the week. Reading plans are to be filled out at the end of each reading session (both in school and at home).

Reading Plans: Each week, each individual student creates a reading plan. This plan is specific to each child and the layout varies depending on the types of books students are reading. One day each week, students "book shop" for new books. At this time, they plan out how many books/pages they will be reading each day, both in school and at home. This is a way for students to create reading goals for themselves and helps to increase stamina, responsibility and accountability. By the end of the week, each child is responsible to complete his/her reading as planned. If they are unable to finish their reading during a designated time, it is up to them to find the time to make it up. This process can be difficult in the beginning of the year and it is great if parents can support them in this process. As time goes on, they will become independent in the process.

Word Study: First grade uses two word study programs. One is a program called *Words Their Way*, which teaches students letter sounds with an emphasis on vowel sounds and patterns, diagraphs and blends, complex consonants and prefixes and suffixes. Students are given a spelling inventory 3 times a year to assess their initial placement in the *Words Their Way* program and teachers will assess their progress throughout the year. Each week students are given a set of words. These words are based around a spelling pattern/rule, i.e. long vowel sound 'e' can be 'ea' 'ee' or a word that ends in 'e' (CVC-e; here). **On Day 1**, students read through these words with the teacher and discuss the patterns they see. **On Day 2**, the teacher reads through an overhead story and students find words that match that week's rules. Students then independently sort their words into categories. **On Day 3**, students sort their words and then go on word hunts through their reading and writing work. They find and/or fix words in their work with the same spelling patterns. **On**

Day 4, students sort their words and challenge a friend to develop fluency in identifying sounds and spelling patterns simultaneously. **On Day 5**, students sort and glue their words into their books. Some teachers test students on their word work words while others will review them at a later time by returning to the section.

The second word study program is *Foundations*, designed for students who need increased support in word work. Foundations is a phonics program which works intensely on mastering letter sounds, vowel patterns, diagraphs, blends and decoding and encoding words. Students will work in small groups and receive a new letter sound, blend or diagraph each day. They will get direct practice with these sounds and work on reading and writing them in their *Foundations* Student Notebooks. They will also work on handwriting and will learn about the worm, grass, plane and skylines and how they can help you write your letters correctly.

WRITING CURRICULUM

Students will continue the technical aspects of letter formation, punctuation and sentence structure throughout first grade. They will begin their journey as *writers* this year.

Writing Assessments

On-Demand Writing Pieces: At the beginning and end of each unit, students write an on-demand piece of writing. They are given 45 minutes to complete a story in the genre of study. This gives teachers both a baseline and final assessment of student writing and learning. On-demand pieces are evaluated using the Teachers College Narrative Continuum. This is a continuum of writing techniques used to measure where students are performing, how students are progressing, and what teachers should focus on to push students to the next level.

Conferences: Teachers hold individual conferences with students as often as possible. Conferences are specific to each child and focus on their need of skills and strategies.

Spelling Inventory: This assessment is administered three times a year: September, January and May. It is a list of spelling words that

test students' knowledge of spelling patterns. This spelling inventory determines where a student starts, and continues working, during their word study time.

Units of Study in Writing (*subject to change*)

Unit 1	Launching with Small Moments
Unit 2	Writing for Readers
Unit 3	Realistic Fiction
Unit 4	How-To Books
Unit 5	Opinion Writing
Unit 6	Authors as Mentors
Unit 7	Information Books
Unit 8	Poetry
Unit 9	Science Writing
Unit 10	Cross Genre Writing

Writing Workshop: Each writing period will start with a mini-lesson from the teacher. During this time the teacher will instruct the whole class on a writing technique that is not just appropriate to that unit of study, but to their life as a writer. Students will have the opportunity to engage this skill while still in a whole group; this is an opportunity for them to try it out before working independently.

Independent Writing: Independent writing is the time when students are working on their own stories. Students work within specific genres, but each individual student generates his/her own ideas. The writing process is a major focus in first grade. Students are taught to brainstorm ideas, test a few of those ideas out (by planning to see if there is enough information for a story), draft a story, revise and edit that story and publish their writing into a final piece. Focusing on this process teaches students to plan, organize and maintain focus on one idea. In first grade, students become true writers.

Shared Writing: Shared writing is when the teacher and students create a writing piece together. During this time, the students generate the ideas and sentences, while the teacher does the physical writing. It is a time for students to practice writing skills as a whole class with teacher support. Shared writing emphasizes both

skills recently learned and those skills that should be used consistently in their life as a writer. It is a piece that can be referenced as an example during their independent writing time.

Interactive Writing

Interactive writing is when the teacher and student share the pen. This means that instead of the teacher doing the writing, the students hold the marker and do the writing. If teacher support is needed during the letter formation process, a hand-over-hand procedure will be used. Often the ideas/sentences are teacher generated, however, depending on the level of students, and the topic at hand, it can be jointly created with students.

MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM

The PS11 math curriculum is based on the *TERC Investigations* program, designed to create critical thinkers and problem solvers through a deep understanding of mathematics.

The *Investigations* curriculum is designed to:

- Support students to **MAKE SENSE OF MATHEMATICS** and become mathematical thinkers
- Focus on **COMPUTATIONAL FLUENCY** with whole numbers
- Provide substantive work in areas of rational numbers, geometry, measurement, data and early algebra —
- **AND THE CONNECTIONS AMONG THEM**
- Emphasize **REASONING** about mathematical ideas
- **COMMUNICATE** mathematics content
- Engage the range of learners in **UNDERSTANDING MATHEMATICS**

In addition to the *TERC Investigations* curriculum, teacher instruction and assessments are based around the *Common Core State Standards*. These standards can be found online at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

Mathematics Assessments

Several comprehensive assessments are used to track where students are performing in math. This lets the teacher determine how best to support a student's progress.

Units of Study/Math Expectations by Strand (*subject to change*)

Instead of listing individual units, math expectations are categorized by strand. Below you will see what your child is expected to know by the end of first grade.

Place Value, Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Knows numbers in sequence through 125
- Can identify written numbers through 125
- Writes numbers correctly, both consecutively and by 5s, 10s, 100s, through 125
- Counts backwards from 20 to 0
- Understand place value through 100
- Mentally add and subtract 1 and 2 to any number under 100
- Fluently add and subtract within 30 using place value, properties of operations and/or the relationship between +/-
- Fluently add and subtract within 20 using mental strategies
- Know from memory the doubles of 1-10
- Knows from memory the combinations of 10
- Add up to four 1-digit numbers
- Discriminated between addition and subtraction
- Knows a variety of strategies for addition and subtraction
- Explain why addition and subtraction strategies work
- Use addition and subtraction to solve one- and two-step story problems
- Determine whether a group (up to 10) has an even or odd number of members

Geometry and Fractions

- Recognizes and draws 2D and 3D shapes, specifying their attributes (number of angles, sides or faces)
- Identifies triangles, various quadrilaterals and hexagons
- Recognizes how smaller shapes can make larger shapes (relationships to one another)
- Recognizes that equal shares of identical wholes don't need to have the same shape

Measurement and Data Analysis

- Measures the length of an object using a ruler
- Recognizes and can explain that an object measured with two different units will yield two different answers
- Represent whole and half inches using a ruler

- Understands and uses $\frac{1}{2}$ inches while measuring
- Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve story problems involving lengths of the same units
- Creates and administers a survey with two possible responses
- Represents a set of data using tallies, words (names), pictures or graph up to two categories
- Interprets given data
- Discusses conclusions and makes predictions based on a set of given data

Time and Money

- Recognizes and names coins and their values
- Uses different combinations of coins to make money amounts within 50 cents
- Solves word problems involving dollar bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies using \$ and ¢ appropriately
- Tells and writes time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest quarter hour

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies in first grade consists of studying ‘Communities.’ Students get a chance to explore a variety of different communities and learn what a community is.

First grade begins the year by discussing the community of our individual classrooms and what we want our classroom community to be like. We talk about the importance of safety, rules, respect and responsibility. We also look at the PS 11 community and students get a chance to interview various staff members in our school. We then move to family communities and talk about different types of families, roles/responsibilities in our family and the changes in families now and long ago.

We end the year exploring the Chelsea community and take many community walks and trips around Chelsea. As a culminating activity, the first grade creates a school-wide post-office where each class takes on the role and responsibilities of postal workers and is in charge of selling, collecting and delivering PS 11 mail.

SCIENCE

UNITS OF STUDY

There are three major units of study in first grade science: Animal Diversity, States of Matter and Weather and Seasons.

Animal Diversity: Students focus on one animal group (amphibians, Fish, Mammals, Reptiles, Birds & Insects) and the animals within their group. Through the lens of their animal, they learn about the other identifying factors for animals and their groups. Students study identifying features of animals, how they help the animal survive, their habitat as well as enemies. Students understand how all animals have a means to survive and what that is. This unit culminates in a visit to the American Museum of Natural History where we are able to see various animals represented in their natural habitats.

Properties of Matter: Students are introduced and explore the three states of matter. Through a series of experiments, students learn that each state of matter has its own characteristics and how a change of temperature can lead to a change in the state of matter. Students then take this basic knowledge to further investigate solubility and work towards an understanding of how shape and materials affect flotation. This unit culminates with *“The Penny Challenge”* when students compete in teams to build an aluminum foil boat that will hold the most pennies while floating in water.

Weather and Seasons: First graders will observe and describe weather conditions as well as record data based on observations throughout the year. Students will also learn to interpret various weather related tools. First graders will culminate this unit with the construction and test of kites based on weather variables. This unit will correlate with a scientific writing unit; this will give students the opportunity to be researchers and writers simultaneously.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Classroom participation is a major factor in student learning. Students gather information, clarify their thinking, question new ideas, contribute their thoughts and opinions, and respond to others.

Therefore, just as with every aspect of their academic learning, there are expectations for speaking and listening.

Through strong accountable talk, all first grade students will:

- Practice active listening
- Use precise language
- Take turns speaking
- Ask relevant questions for more information or clarity
- Share information, thoughts and opinions
- Support their ideas with personal experiences or literary text

SPECIALTY CLASSES

Each school day, first graders participate in a different specialty class or "Special", taught by certified staff members.

Music: First graders continues in the *Music and the Brain* program, adding different tempi, dynamics and rhythmic patterns to their keyboard playing. They continue in *Piano Book 1*, adding both hands to some songs and more difficult rhythms. Students work on expanding their vocal range and adding more vocal warm ups.

Theatre: First graders will engage in dramatic storytelling through narrative and tableau. They will participate in a community-based dramatic project, and also create characters and scenes using props, costumes and other theater materials.

Gym: First graders will focus on developing loco motor skills (skipping, hopping, etc.) with an emphasis on spatial awareness. Students will participate in fun group activities that support this and hopefully encourage them to participate in physical activities on a daily basis. Through a collaboration with *The City Soccer Initiative*, first grade students train with a professional soccer coach. This program promotes sportsmanship, teamwork and the basic fundamentals of soccer.

Computer: First graders will create text and picture presentations to augment their literacy and social studies classroom work. They will also augment their Investigations Math Curriculum by exploring pattern blocks in *Kidspiration* and other age appropriate math concepts in *MicroWorlds Jr.*

Art: In Art, students learn the importance of expressing themselves through various forms of art. Students use drawing, painting, oils, clay, ceramics, mosaics and collages to learn about various techniques and styles of art.

Dance: First graders will create a Brain Dance Warm-Up, following human movement from the most simple (Breath) to most complex (Crossing Movements and Balancing). Students will wiggle and jiggle, bend, clap, twist, and spin! They'll work on Leaf, Snow, and Seed Dances and do a shadow unit.

HOMEWORK

Each teacher's homework system varies. Specifics will be given during the curriculum breakfast at the beginning of the year.

In general, homework for first graders should be expected Monday through Thursday, and will consist of both 20 minutes of daily reading plus an additional assignment (i.e. reading response, writing work, math, social studies, science). During their reading time at home (every day), students should be focused and completing the reading work they are doing in class (using tools such as post-its, chapter grids, etc.)

The additional assignment should take 5-10 minutes per night. Homework is a review of what has been taught in class; students should have a clear understanding of what they are doing. If there are questions about homework, email the teacher or send a note with your child. Please do not just leave it blank.

All students will also receive holiday and summer homework packets to keep their minds fresh and active over school breaks, and to ensure that they retain what they have learned.

OUTSIDE PARTNERSHIPS

CookShop: CookShop is a program sponsored by the Food Bank of NYC that helps introduce students to healthy produce. The students explore foods grown by local farmers. After learning about where the produce comes from, the students have the opportunity to cook with

each week's ingredient, taste what they made, and bring recipes home.

Joyce Dance Company: A Teaching Artist from the Joyce Dance Company, based in SoHo, comes into the school to teach first graders about the various styles of dance. Over the year, first graders will visit the Joyce Theater in Chelsea. The curriculum is based around the uniqueness of each performance students will attend at the Joyce Theater.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Field Trips: Field trips in first grade are mainly tied to the science and social studies curricula.

New York Hall of Science: The New York Hall of Science is New York City's only hands-on science and technology center. The more than 450 hands-on exhibits explore biology, chemistry and physics.

The Highline: Students visit the Highline at least four times during the year to study the affects of each season on plants and their surroundings.

American Museum of Natural History: This visit will focus on 2-3 areas of the museum where we are able to see animal groups represented in their natural habitats

Valley Shepherd Creamery: This sheep farm located in Long Valley, NJ is a chance for students to step out of the city and see the life of other people who contribute to our community. Students will learn about and see the cheese making process as well as meet baby sheep!

Bronx Zoo: This trip is to further study the animal diversity unit and to observe the animals we learned about in the animal diversity unit.

Art Museums: Throughout the year first graders will visit a variety of art museums to study the connection between Art and Writing. Each class will visit a few of the following: MOMA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum and The Ruben Museum.

100th Day of School: First graders celebrate the 100th Day of school with activities relating to the number 100 throughout the day. Each

class visits the Auditorium for part of the day to experience an array of 100th Day activities arranged by the PTA.

PS11 Garden: Students will have the opportunity to work and learn in our amazing vegetable and flower gardens all year. Throughout the year, food from our garden will be harvested and served in our lunchroom.

Field Day: Each June all first, second, third, fourth and fifth grade students participate in a full day of field day activities. Students are divided into cross grade and cross-classroom teams. Field day takes place outside in the big yard and on 21st street.

Enrichment Cycle: First graders participate in a 10-week enrichment cycle, during which they participate in an activity of their choice along with a mixed group of K-2 students for one period a week. Enrichment activities change each year with our teachers' interests. Mosaic Murals, Puppets Around the World, Swimming, Origami, Merengue, Calendar Making, Jewelry Making, Cheerleading and Mask Making are just a few of the options offered in the past.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Kind & Gentle: The PS11 community revolves around a philosophy called "Kind & Gentle". More than just words, "K&G" means all the actions and language of "doing unto others what you would have them do unto you." Throughout the school, there are clear expectations for students to behave in a kind and gentle way towards others within our community and beyond. Students are encouraged to maintain this attitude towards others throughout their years at PS11. Some examples of ways teachers foster K&G in the classroom include: using kind words, complimenting one another, and picking a secret K&G and being extra kind to that person all day or all week.

Family Friday: One Friday morning each month is designated as "Family Friday". All families are invited to come into the classroom and take part in activities that reflect an element of the school day. This is a great opportunity for families to see all the amazing work that is going on in the classroom. Activities in the past have featured

reading workshop, art projects, Family CookShop, publishing celebrations and poetry centers.

PS11 Garden: Students will have the opportunity to work and learn in our amazing vegetable and flower gardens all year. Throughout the year, food from our garden will be harvested and served in our lunchroom.

SLT and PTA Events: Throughout the year, PS11's School Leadership Team (SLT) and PTA sponsor community-building events, as well as family workshops that support parents as partners in their children's education. You will find information about these events on the PS11 website, in the monthly Classroom Newsletter, and in flyers coming home in your child's home folder.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP

We believe very strongly in community service at PS11. Throughout the year students will be engaged in activities that will benefit our local, national and global communities.