



4th Grade Students Research the History of Kansas, Choose a New Kansas Symbol and Learn about the Democratic Process

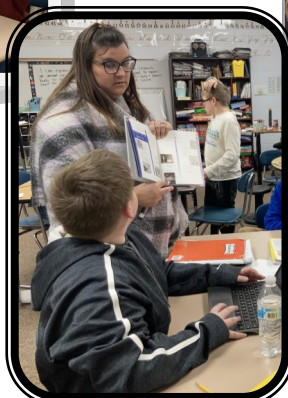
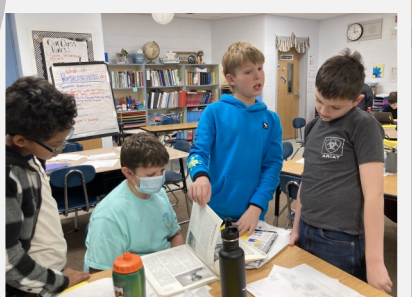
Fourth-grade students are working on a Kansas-themed PBL project. To prepare for this project, students researched current state symbols. They also made a timeline of events in Kansas history, a mind map of natural resources in Kansas, and sketch notes of the prominent industries in Kansas. They worked in small groups to research through books, online websites, and even made a call to the Santa Fe Trail Center Museum & Research Library in Larned to ask questions. The design and critical thinking part of the project was for each student to (1) choose a new symbol to represent the state of Kansas, (2) create a poster about the symbol they chose, (3) present to the class while making a claim about their proposed symbol and (4) support their claim with three pieces of evidence. Mrs. Mullen and Mrs. Marsh encouraged students to use their imagination and become innovative problem-solvers throughout this process.

Students also created a graphic organizer to help them understand the basic functions and roles of the Kansas state government. Knowledge of the democratic process helped the students understand the process required to have their proposed symbol be officially designated as a state symbol of Kansas.

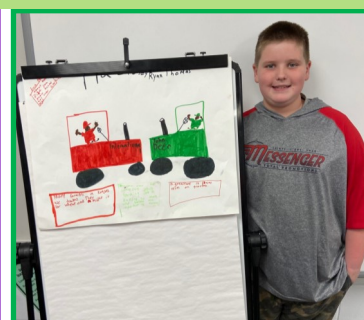
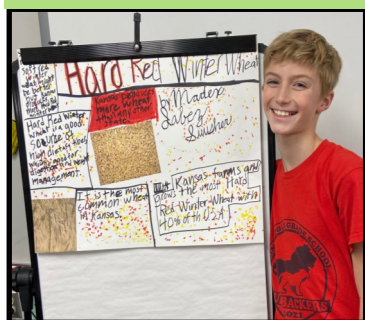
Making a Timeline of Historical Events in Kansas



Research and Collaboration



Students Illustrate their Proposed Kansas Symbol, Make a Claim, and Support their Claim with Evidence



Kindergarteners Learn by Making Choices

Kindergarten teachers continue PBL activities during the second semester by having students pick the animal they most want to research. With the help of the students' parents/guardians, each student chooses five of their favorite animals and returns their list to the classroom teacher. By giving students a choice, teachers are allowing them to take ownership of their learning. After the lists are returned, teachers work together in a fair manner to decide, in case of duplicates, who gets which animal. Each of the forty-five kindergarteners will have a different animal to study during the semester.

Kindergarten students will also be meeting with their 5th grade buddies soon to begin research on their chosen animal. In January, they studied *Furtive Friends* and wrapped up their study with a trip to the Rolling Hills Zoo on January 27th. *Forest Friends* (primates) will be the focus during the month of February.

Using Legos and Teamwork in Project-Based Learning

Using Lego building blocks, sixth grade teacher, Amanda Rensink, challenged her students to focus on team-building. Students were divided into teams and given the challenge of making a specific Lego object, with each team having a different project to work on. Team members were required to choose their own director, and the remaining team members were the builders. The director, using ONLY the cover of the Lego box, had to communicate with words, describing each specific Lego piece by color, size, or design. The director could not show the picture or use the step-by-step instructions that came in the original Lego box.

The team, using communication and perseverance, worked hard to follow the verbal instructions from their director. Mrs. Rensink stated, "The kids worked very hard, struggled through many parts, but were able to have gratification when they succeeded and got the project put together."

Exercises like this, where members of a team must follow instructions to execute a plan, are well-suited for team building. Communication and perseverance are essential for success. When team members realize how to fit in as part of a whole, they learn to appreciate the efforts of other team members. Students learn that, when working as a team, they can be more productive and harmonious in whatever they do.



TEAMWORK

Winter Physical Activity Bingo



Here are fun ways to keep moving this winter! See how many BINGO squares you can check off.

B	I	N	G	O
Go for a walk or run 	Build an indoor obstacle course	Have a dance party 	Go sledding	Play balloon volleyball 
Make a scavenger hunt	Scoop snow 	Stream a fitness video	Make indoor hopscotch with painter's tape	Try indoor bowling with empty water bottles
Play follow the leader	Build a fort with pillows & blankets	Free Space	Go to a playground 	Clean your room, vacuum or dust
Draw a chalk maze on the driveway	Play sock or beachball basketball 	Blow bubbles outside – if it's cold enough, they will freeze	Enjoy a bike ride 	Have an indoor snowball fight with wads of paper
Try yoga 	Make a painter's tape balance beam	Go on a winter nature hike	Build a snowman or snow family	Fly paper airplanes 



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