

Young Learners

Central School

Winter 2022

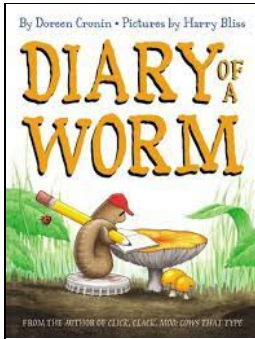
Our Program

Our Young Learners program is designed to challenge and enrich those 1st graders in our building who have been identified as gifted by the district. Students participate during a pullout period for 30 minutes every six day cycle. Currently, our Young Learners meet in the Library Media Center every Day 1 from 2:15 to 2:45 p.m.

Throughout the year, students will be exposed to accelerated content and will work on a variety of projects and activities that encourage critical thinking skills, creativity, higher level thinking and problem solving that enrich and broaden their learning experience. This program is project based and most projects incorporate a variety of disciplines. For example, a science experiment is likely to include reading, writing, math, and technology.

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Unit 1: Worms

We began by reading *Diary of a Worm* by Dorren Cronin together. This amusing picture book tells the adventures of a worm through a series of journal entries that weave together fictional fun with scientific facts. Students discussed what they know about worms and did some research to separate the facts from the fiction.

Each student took home a library book from the same series and read either *Diary of a Fly* or *Diary of a Spider* independently. At our next session, each reported what they learned about their creature and shared some of the funny details from their story.

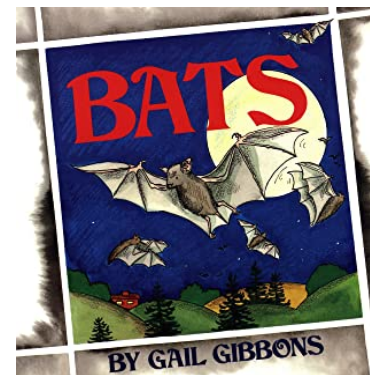
We then discussed the many different ways you can learn new things, including observing them first hand. Students watched a video that led them through a lab on earthworms and answered questions about what they saw and learned. They were encouraged to try some of these simple experiments with live earthworms at home.

This introductory unit involved science, reading, writing, and speaking skills. It also gave us a chance to get to know one another better while establishing our routine.

Unit 2: Bats

To get in the Halloween spirit, next we read the book *Bats* by Gail Gibbons. This nonfiction text helps demystify some of the common misconceptions about these flying creatures.

Students learned some new words and we played a game, in which they were challenged to match relevant words to their definitions. Key concepts reviewed included mammals, nocturnal, hibernation, echolocation, migration and more.



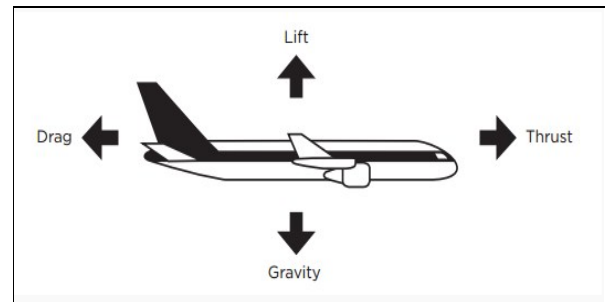
The following week students experimented with paper bats to see how incline and weight affected their ability to “fly.” Our bat was outfitted with part of a straw on its back through which a string was run. Students observed how adjusting the height and angle of the string affected speed. Then they attached paper clips and taped coins onto the bat to see if the heavier one “flew” faster or slower than the lighter version.



Unit 3: Flight

We transitioned into a unit about the mechanics of flight. Students read the text *How Do Airplanes Stay Up?* and watched a video clip that helped illustrate the four forces that affect airplanes.

Our Young Learners then followed instructions to make three different kinds of paper airplanes. They threw each, observing the differences and discussed how the various shapes and sizes impacted the lift, drag, thrust and gravity.



Unit 4: STEAM Challenge

To prepare for a STEAM challenge sponsored by the NJ Consortium for Gifted and Talented Programs (NJCGTP), we researched how trash and especially plastic are impacting our oceans and environment. We learned the importance of recycling for the future of our planet.



Each student was tasked with gathering recyclables from home that could be repurposed for this creative art project. They drafted designs for their 3 dimensional snowman displays and went to work building them over the break. They have to meet specific size requirements, be built from at least 50% recycled materials, and must also display one of the seven pillars of character: caring, courage, citizenship, fairness, honesty, respect and responsibility. Students will be taped speaking about their displays to be submitted to the NJCGTP for consideration in their grade category.