

Lower School Chinese Classes

小學的中文課

xiǎo xué de zhōng wén kè



From the Desk of the 中文老師 zhōng wén lǎo shī (Chinese Teacher)

We are quickly approaching the end of the school year—there's only a little more than a month left! Not to worry, we are still actively learning Chinese! Conference Day is next week Friday, and you are welcome to stop by and chat! Feel free to contact me anytime! I can be reached at christina.liu@lakemaryprep.com.

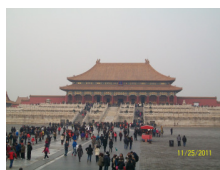


Visible Thinking!

We have been learning and exploring Chinese culture by using Visible Thinking. This teaching approach consists of strategies and routines that stimulate students to ask questions, make connections to concepts, and most importantly, allow them to think critically and learn actively. The photo above is an example of a sort-connect exercise for Chinese characters that was done in 5th grade. The students were given Post-It Notes with Chinese characters written on them. The students placed the different characters on the sheet, and then worked in groups to determine how to sort them. They recognized some of the words by meaning, but the goal of this exercise was for them to recognize that many characters are made up of component parts, called radicals. Different characters may all contain the same radical, so the characters can be sorted into the same "word family." This is a skill they will need in order to use Chinese dictionaries and look up words for which they do not yet know the meaning.

Learning about Chinese Landmarks

The 4th and 5th grade students have been studying one of three different Chinese Landmarks as part of their research project. They could choose The Great Wall,



the Forbidden City, or the Terracotta Warriors. They have had time to do research in class, and will prepare their final project (a choice of a model, a PowerPoint presentation, a travel brochure, a poster, or an essay) and present their project to the class. In Kindergarten – 3rd grades, we have been exploring the Great Wall and the students have made wonderful observations and asked very thoughtful questions using the Visible Thinking routine called "See, Think, Wonder."



There's an App for that!



I have been testing out many different iPad apps for learning Chinese. Most of these apps can be downloaded and used for free. One of my favorite apps is a fun game that is a variation of the classic computer game MahJong (where you match tiles to remove them). The twist on this game is that all of the MahJong tiles are made up of Chinese characters, and when you click on one, it gives you the meaning as well as an audio voice that speaks that word. There are 14 levels of play, each one increasing in complexity of the Chinese characters. You can choose the simplified characters (and hear the words in the standard dialect of Mandarin), or traditional characters, and hear the words (and see the phonetic pronunciation) in the second most common spoken Chinese dialect, Cantonese. You can access TileSpeak via their website: <http://www.tilespeak.com/> or you can download the FREE app to iPad or iPhone! <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/tilespeak-mahjong/id446011890?mt=8>



TileSpeak Mahjong