

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

Chinese Teacher (zhōngwén lǎoshī)

Happy Halloween! We are learning about language and culture in class, from comparing festivals to learning Chinese characters to studying Chinese history! If you have questions, please contact me at christina.liu@lakemaryprep.com.



Happy Halloween!

Children here in the United States really look forward to Halloween! From dressing up in costumes to trick-or-treating for candy, they are definitely excited to celebrate! In class, we have been talking about how Halloween is not a holiday that is celebrated in China. However, there is a holiday that does involve ghosts or spirits, lanterns, and providing food for the spirits. The "Hungry Ghost" festival is celebrated in China, Taiwan, and other Asian countries, in the middle of the summer (on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Lunar Calendar). We watched a short video of a Hungry Ghost festival celebration in Taiwan, and we discussed similarities between the two celebrations.

History Is Fun!

In 4th and 5th grades we are beginning to study different areas of Chinese history. In 5th grade, the students have selected a



different dynasty or time period in Chinese history, and are researching that dynasty or time period. The final project is a poster containing a timeline for that period. When we put all of the timelines together, we will have a timeline of the history of China. In 4th grade, we are studying three of the most famous landmarks in China: The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the Terracotta Warriors.



In the Classroom...

We have been learning about Chinese characters. Many Chinese characters are derived from pictures, and there are many more complex characters that are made up of the simpler characters that are like building blocks for words called "radicals." Pre-K through 2nd grade classes have learned some simple characters derived from pictures, while in 3rd grade the students are learning not only to recognize the patterns or radicals in characters, but are also learning to use the iPad dictionary app ("Pleco", <http://www.pleco.com/> recommended in last month's newsletter) to look up characters and find their pronunciation and meanings. The students will also be learning how to apply this skill with Chinese-English print dictionaries.



There's an App for that...

I have some more favorite iPad apps and websites for learning Chinese to share. I have recently used an app from Better Chinese called "Piggy Picnic" in class. I have used this \$1.99 app for Pre-K through 1st grade classes. It teaches colors, fruits, and also "big" and "small." Students have fun playing this game, especially when rewarded with a lantern as a prize! <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/piggy-picnic/id412674857?mt=8>

Earlier this month, I attended the Florida Foreign Language Association conference, and learned about some new apps that other language teachers recommended. One of these apps is MindSnacks, <http://www.mindsnacks.com/subjects/mandarin>.

MindSnacks is also available in other languages! This app has several games that you can play to help you learn vocabulary, reading, writing, and listening, and speaking skills. The first level is free, and if you upgrade for \$4.99, there are 50 additional levels to enable you to continue to learn and be challenged!