

# SPARKNotes

Students Pursuing Advanced Reasoning & Knowledge

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January 30, 2026

## From the Director



Ms. Phyllis conducted the first Math Club lunch meeting this week. We have a great group of bright students ready to take on math challenges and prepare for math competitions through the MATHCOUNTS program next year.

## Calendar

March

3 Lois Lowry, author video interview

10-12 Spring Break

April

7-9 Standardized Testing

15 Vester Field Station field trip

May

27 Second Semester Presentation

28 Academic Competition - AM, Field Day Games - PM

## Lesson Summaries

### Geometry

This week, we worked on slope, equation of the line, and graphs. The students made great progress. We started trigonometry with Pythagoras's theorem and we will continue to study Special Right Triangles next week.

### Pre-algebra

We continued our unit on graphing with histograms, line charts, scatter plots, stem and leaf charts, box and whisker plots, and various other visual aids. This chapter contains math that most adults use in regular life, so we are using practical examples in class to help the students relate to the lesson.

### Math

This week, we began Chapter 6 Percents. Chapter 2 had already introduced many of these concepts, so the students moved through the lessons quickly. Our focus for the weekend is to have the students master conversions of fractions to decimals to percents and vice versa.

## Science Blue

The students calculated the density of 8 pure element cubes. They used "Happy Atoms" to model elements chemically combining to form new compounds. Both Ms. Darlene and Ms. Phyllis showed the students how to balance chemical equations, but it was a challenge for most students. They will learn how to do this in high school or college chemistry so it was meant to be an introduction.



## Science Green



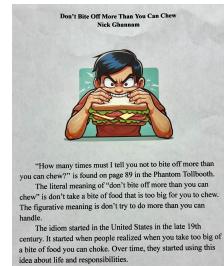
I brought in 8 cubes of pure elements and the students measured the mass and volume in order to calculate the density. The students also learned about common elements in the Periodic Table and made molecule and compound models.

## Language Arts Blue

We continued to read through parts of *Romeo and Juliet*. Some of the students are picking up the skill of how to read Shakespeare's poetic language. We are also watching certain scenes of the movie that illustrate turning points in the story. This week it was the sword fights with Mercutio and Tybalt being killed and Romeo banished from Verona.

## Language Arts Green

*The Phantom Tollbooth* is filled with figurative language, so this week the students researched and illustrated an idiom found in the story. We also looked at homophones, homographs, homonyms, synonyms, and antonyms. The students are defining several vocabulary words this weekend because, even though the story seems like a children's fantasy story, the vocabulary is very challenging.



## Social Studies

We began our study of the Renaissance, focusing on the changes in religious views of Europe, and the technologies that brought Europe to the forefront of civilization. With the advent of the Reformation and the split of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church lost most of its governmental power, changing the landscape of faith and science in Europe. The invention of the printing press exacerbated the transition, allowing widespread education to gain momentum so that more people had access to information than just an elite few. During our study, students were split into groups and completed station readings of various events in the lives of Martin Luther and King Henry VIII. Albeit two very different reasons, the fracture of the Roman Catholic Church was evident from these two individuals.