



CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHT



11 March 2022: An Afternoon at the Museum



The history class in fourth grade participates in a lengthy study of exploration each year. Reading and discussing material in their history book gives them a good jumping off point on their road to individual research projects. That course of study covers explorers from the 1200's to the 1700's, but the class is not limited to just the individual explorers. Many facets of an explorer's life are researched, with an Explorer Portfolio being created by each student along the way. Contents of the portfolios are maps, the seven reasons for exploration, an application letter to apply for a job on one of Columbus's ships, a sea chest of personal items one would take on a voyage, a letter written home from James Cook's voyage, colored pictures of the types of ships used on voyages, and a map of the Northwest Passage found in 1906. This in itself is a fairly comprehensive study, but they are not done yet.



Students selected their own “favorite” explorer and set about meeting the requirements for research, as set by Mr. Ken Park, fourth grade teacher. Several sources are required, and several pages of questions about their selected explorer must be answered in that research. A rough draft of their papers are prepared, class-editing of those drafts takes place, and finally students are ready to put together their final papers along with a portrait of the explorer. This all culminates in the Wax Museum activity.

On the actual day of the Wax Museum, students dress in full costume as their explorers, with props to help their display. And they stand immobile until a visitor to the museum arrives at their post, pressing an activation button, which results in the recitation of their speech. The speech tells the story of the explorer from birth to the end of their adventures, including details of where they traveled, what they uncovered, and what their lives were like. Students remain in full character for the duration of the event.



Once again, the curriculum at Topeka Collegiate fosters this creativity in a project for students to share their new-found knowledge as a result of their individual research efforts. We appreciate all the parents and other visitors who gave these students a chance to showcase their learning. A hearty congratulations to Mr. Park and the fourth grade students on a job well-done and a successful event.



Would you like to suggest a curriculum highlight?

Email Academic Dean, Mr. Flax, at mflax@topekacollegiate.org.