

# Las Cruces Academy Report Card

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L A S  
C R U C E S  
A C A D E M Y

Name of student removed  
Student C A - Report card example Grade Fourth

Spring semester 2014, second term Enrolled since 2009

Absences - 0 days Tardy - 2 days

## Chinese Teacher Mei Dai

In the second term of this semester, members of the Purple Group learned 24 Chinese words about fruits and insects, 9 poems, and several stories at the end of Book One. C A can recognize all 24 words and read all the poems and stories correctly. Most of these were a review for C A. She feels more confident and finds it easy to learn Chinese in this group. C A loves learning Chinese. When I asked C A, "What is your favorite part of Chinese class?" she said, "Singing songs and the Chinese New Year celebration." C A did an excellent job in the end of school performance.

## English Language Arts Teacher Elizabeth Brasher

**Poet Projects:** In English this term, our primary focus was on in-depth research. From a suggested list, each student chose an American poet to research. C A, as you know, chose Emily Dickinson. Students began by using the biographies and profiles of the poets on [poets.org](http://poets.org) and [poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org), as well as articles in the *World Book Encyclopedia*. In order to get students to engage with the material rather than pick out easy facts, I required students to read the material through the first time without taking any notes. From there, students created outlines to help them categorize the information that they had found and determine what they needed to search for or reread. Students used book-length biographies to supplement their research. During this process, students practiced using indexes and tables of content to find relevant information quickly. They also used the encyclopedia index to find related articles. C A is a good researcher because she is such an independent worker. She seemed to enjoy learning about Emily Dickinson, though she had the difficult task of sifting through more material than some of the other students did.

Students used their outlines and notes to draft three to four page reports about their poets. C A completed four drafts of her report, which is quite a bit of writing. Organization was the most important aspect of the report. In my comments to students, I emphasized chronological order, clear and distinct paragraphs, and complete sentences. Students also wrote introductions and conclusions for their reports. These portions proved a bit challenging for most students, but they did not seem to challenge C A. Overall, she did a nice job on her report.

Students learned to document their sources in an MLA style Works Cited page. I worked with each student individually to help them to compile their sources.

Once they completed their reports, students gave a short presentation to their classmates. Though students drew this information directly from their reports, they were not allowed to read from the report. In this way, each student ended up with a shorter draft of his or her report. C A retained a lot of information from her research and writing, and she seemed comfortable sharing that information during her presentation.

**Reading:** We read Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* this term. The book is on the 6<sup>th</sup>- grade Common Core reading list. Right away, the book challenged students because so much of the story is told in dialogue from the perspective of Cassie—a young girl who doesn't fully understand everything that is happening around her. Students, therefore, had to read much more carefully than they might have been used to doing, and they had to interpret information and try to fill in the blanks of Cassie's knowledge. We had five lively discussions about the book. Because of the initial difficulty that students had with the book, I asked more reading comprehension questions about the book than I normally would. Students were able to talk with one another to build their understanding of what was happening in the book, and as time went on, students had

fewer questions about understanding what they read and more to say about what might have motivated a character to act a certain way or to do a certain thing. C A is always able to recall what she has read; sometimes, she will quote a portion of the book from memory. I have always appreciated this during our book discussions. Particularly in this last series of discussions, though, I've noticed that she is giving her peers more time to answer, rather than immediately volunteering the information herself. I think that this is a sign of maturity, and I'm pleased that she is participating in the group reading, rather than trying to give the "right" answer.

**Other Assignments:** Additionally this term, students did some creative writing assignments. They wrote poems that focused on metaphor (making a comparison between two things.) They also wrote stories based on the "squiggle" drawings I gave them. Squiggle stories encourage students to write more. (Most students write at least two pages for each story. C A often writes more.) With these stories, I also assign certain parameters. For example, students might have to include a specific number of events or characters in their stories, or they might have to use two or three of their spelling words in their stories.

C A did well in spelling this term, getting most (if not all) of the words correct each week. Of all of the work that she has done in English class, I can tell that spelling requires more effort for C A, but I appreciate the positive attitude she always has about it.

I have really enjoyed working with C A and getting to know her this year. C A is such a good student and a strong reader and writer.

## **Social Studies**      **Teacher Erica Surova**

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Students began this quarter researching stamps from around the world. They identified and interpreted visual data on stamps and explained how these images represented the various countries. They identified financial currencies, languages, important historical figures, cultural images, physical geography, agriculture, native plants, animals, national resources, industry, and art. We discussed reasons certain images were chosen to represent countries. Students designed stamps representing Las Cruces or issues important to them.

Students followed current events through Scholastic News Weekly Readers and occasionally CNN Student News. Articles discussed environmental issues, human and animal rights, and the ongoing political situation in the Ukraine, Crimea, and Russia. Students participated in Screen Free Week and discussed the positive and negative impacts technology has on our lives. Students learned about various types of advertising and the often manipulative strategies employed to promote a product; they also identified racial and gender stereotypes in advertising.

We covered a unit on Ancient Greece and the major impact the Greeks had in shaping the Western world. They studied Greek religion, mythology, philosophy, mathematicians, scientists, and historians. They learned about Alexander the Great, the conquest and colonization of the Middle East and Asia. Students learned about the motivations behind colonization and how different economic, political, cultural, and social interests interact to create interdependence, cooperation, and conflict. We compared this occurrence in the ancient world and in our world today. The class also studied Greek art and architecture and the impact it still has on our architecture today. They learned the history of the Greek alphabet, language, and literature. They discovered our alphabet has its origins in the Greek alphabet, and Greek letters are still used in the sciences. Students created booklets with English words derived from Greek roots. The students chose a topic about Greece and conducted research; gathering, organizing, and interpreting information from a variety of sources. They completed a research report and final project and presented it orally to class.

Students applied geographic tools: title, grid system, legends, symbols, scale and compass rose to interpret maps of New Mexico. They identified the thirty-three counties which comprise New Mexico, identified interstate highways, and answered questions concerning travelling from various cities throughout New Mexico. Students read about Native Americans living in New Mexico when the Spanish arrived and located where they now live on maps. They also read about the Spanish conquest of New Mexico, answered questions, and separated fact from opinion.

**Focus on Task:** C A is consistently focused on the task what needs to be done. She is very self-directed.

**Quality of Work/ Assignments:** She provides high quality work, understands the material well and is able to take the material a step further by contributing her own thoughts and ideas. She always completes/ turns in assignments.

**Group/Class Participation:** Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in group work and in classroom discussion. She is a leader who contributes a lot of effort.

**Problem Solving:** C A actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.

**Working with others:** She listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. She tries to keep people working well together.

**Class behavior:** She is almost always focused, listens and rarely talks out of turn.

**Additional comments:** C A is a hard working student and is eager to learn and is very self-motivated. It is a pleasure to have her in class. She contributes well with her thoughtful ideas and insights.

**Social studies average quiz scores: 100%**

## **Math Teacher Jennifer Neakrase**

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C A began the term working in the fourth unit of the 6A book on percentages. She completed the book on 5/19/14, and after completing a review of the book she took the end-of-book test from 5/21/14 to 5/22/14. Arabella passed the 6A test with a 90% and will be beginning in the 6B book when she returns in the fall.

**Focus on task:** C A is always extremely focused on her work. Being the first student in the school to make it to the 6A book and basic algebra, she was very determined to do well in her book this term.

### **Quality of work/assignments/tests taken:**

	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Date(s) Taken</b>	<b>Score</b>
6A	Unit 4 (Percentage) Percentage of a quantity Percentage change	4/3/14 to 4/7/14	14/15 13/15
	Unit 5 (Speed) Speed Average speed	5/16/14 to 5/19/14	14/15 9.5/15
6A	end-of-book test	5/21/14 to 5/22/14	90%

**Group/class participation/working with others:** C A was an active participant in class this term. She especially enjoyed our "Friday Fundays" when we watched math related videos, listened to math songs, and read the Sir Cumference series of books.

**Problem solving:** C A shows an extreme adeptness for problem solving. She continues to grasp the algebra introduced with a keen mind for the abstract. I have no doubt that she will take as well to the material introduced in the 6B book when she returns in the fall. Over the summer it would benefit C A to continue to practice percentage change problems, average speed word problems, and more complicated ratio problems.

**Class behavior:** I had no difficulty in regards to C A's classroom behavior.

**Additional comments:** It has been my distinct pleasure to have C A in my mathematics class this year. She has such a wonderful adeptness for mathematics and a thirst for knowledge! I am very proud of her completing the 6A book in a single term!

**Current mathematics level: 6B**

## **Science Teacher Lou Ellen Kay**

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The main topic covered this term was mammalian anatomy which terminated in the dissection of a lamb. The various bodily systems were reviewed until the students knew the facts about them well. Thus, when the students saw the various body parts they knew what those parts did. They were particularly impressed by the omnipresence of connective tissue, which connected and tightly surrounded every part of the body. The systems emphasized were the: digestive, skeletal, respiratory, urinary, and circulatory. We did examine the differences between the digestive system of a ruminant animal and that of humans.

Two other topics covered were the biology of viruses, important because of a small Norovirus epidemic in Las Cruces, and the history of the Earth and life on it.

## **Individual Projects**      **Teacher Vince Gutschick**

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The program of independent student projects blended into an overarching group project this semester, the design, construction, testing, and programming of a light-up periodic table (LUPT) of the chemical elements. In brief, we obtained a printed periodic table, mounted it in a large shadow box, positioned 112 LEDs to light up the cell of any chosen element or elements, and wired these LEDs to mate with digital electronic controls. Those controls have been partly developed and tested; they use a tiny Raspberry Pi computer and digital "latches" that control power to each LED. Students generate and record narrations about each element or group of elements, which are then replayed at appropriate commands by the Raspberry Pi.

Students had options to participate in all steps of the creation of the LUPT: programming, design of the user interface, narrations, physical construction, wiring and soldering, and electrical and electronic testing. They participated on Thursdays and Fridays at one of three periods that fit their individual schedules.

C A participated enthusiastically in every scheduled session and came to several post-class sessions. She maintained focus on all the tasks she undertook, beginning with the physical construction. She collaborated exceptionally well with other students, particularly Alegra, with whom she made a very effective team. C A mastered all the techniques for the tasks she undertook, including drilling, soldering, narration, and testing. Her initiative in generating narratives and designs for the user experience was outstanding.

## **Spanish**      **Teacher Leticia Burbano de Lara**

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Our main topic for this term was the World Cup Brazil 2014. The students read and heard about one of the most famous athletes, Pele, which provided more exposure to the use of the past tense. They also learned about Brazil, its people, economy, languages, major cities, and its location in the South American continent. The readings made them rely on what they knew of Spanish and how to find compound words, borrowed words, and using the context to determine the meaning of new words. The students worked in pairs, studying a Brazilian city or province, and made a poster as their project. They learned the popular Latin American 2014 World Cup song, *La Copa de Todos*, which aided in developing their listening and speaking skills. During much of the term they used their Spanish to make posters and write cards and messages to various people to strengthen their written Spanish.

## **Music**      **Teacher Cory Gasparich**

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This term we worked with instruments, including practicing a composition that incorporated various rhythmic instruments. The students practiced individually and showed some progress. They learned advanced Curwin Hand Signs which not only use the "do, re, mi" but also the signs for flats (ra, meh, se, le, te) and sharps (di, ri, fi, si, li). The students did very well with new rhythmic patterns in the practice piece with some individual coaching. We discussed musical forms such as Sonata Allegro, Rondo, and theme and variations. We listened to 2 examples for each of these forms and saw one fun video of Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup>, commentated as if it were a sporting event. <http://youtu.be/MzXoVo16pTg> Later we listened to opera and focused on the difference between conversational singing (recitative) and the actual songs sung in an opera (arias). The students enjoyed the comedy "The Abduction of Figaro" <http://youtu.be/ZD8jP52Mwck> as well as examples from the late Victor Borge and PDQ Bach.