

# news

news from the trunk  
Thursday, February 21, 2019



## SUDAN DAYS FRIDAY FESTIVAL AT KAS

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## Superintendent's Message

**IB Diploma Parent Seminar** – Thanks to all who attended the Parent Seminar today to learn about the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. For parents unable to attend the seminar, the slide show presentation will be accessible on the KAS website.

**Construction Update** – The new cafeteria/multi-purpose hall is going ahead on schedule. One of the other areas we are addressing is the capacity of our back-up generator. We will be upgrading our main blue generator and also purchasing another large one. We will replace and install new electrical boxes and a new electrical line to the cafeteria. This will give us enough backup electrical capacity for the whole campus, including the eventual addition of more classrooms. Next week, reinforced concrete foundation work will begin. We ask everyone to enter the swimming pool area through the soccer field entrance and to not try to enter the construction site. The pool entrance next to the construction site will be locked during construction.

**Update Your Contact Information** - We want to remind parents who change phone numbers or email addresses to please contact the school office to update your contact numbers. Thank you.

**Steve Alexander**  
KAS Superintendent

## Letter from the Middle & High School Principal

Dear Parents and Students,

There is always something exciting happening at KAS!

Sudan Days at KAS proved to be an exceptional experience this year. Sudan Days are great because they involve students, teachers and parents who come together to participate and celebrate the culture and art of our host country. Our students were encouraged to celebrate Sudan by performing activities in class and outside of class. I would like to thank the Sudan Days Committee and all the members of the KAS community who contributed to making Sudan Days once again an unforgettable experience.



Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, February 26th, from 12:00PM to 4:00PM. Students will be dismissed at 12:00PM on that day. Parents of middle and high school students can visit classes on a drop in basis. We highly encourage middle and high school students to participate in the conferences. Early childhood and elementary have scheduled parent/teacher conferences. Please try to attend because it is a well-known fact that children do better in school when parents are involved.

Students are also preparing for our own annual KASMUN (Khartoum American School Model United Nations) Conference which will take place on February 27th, February 28th and March 1st. The theme of the conference is: Combating Inequality Through Global Consensus. The opening ceremony will begin at 6:00PM on February 27th. You are all welcome to attend.

Our Grade 8 students will be leaving to Uganda for their Ecology Trip next week. This week-long trip, which culminates the unit on Ecology, is a highlight of the Grade 8 year, and also incorporates activities from Math, Social Studies and Language Arts, as well as a Service Learning project.

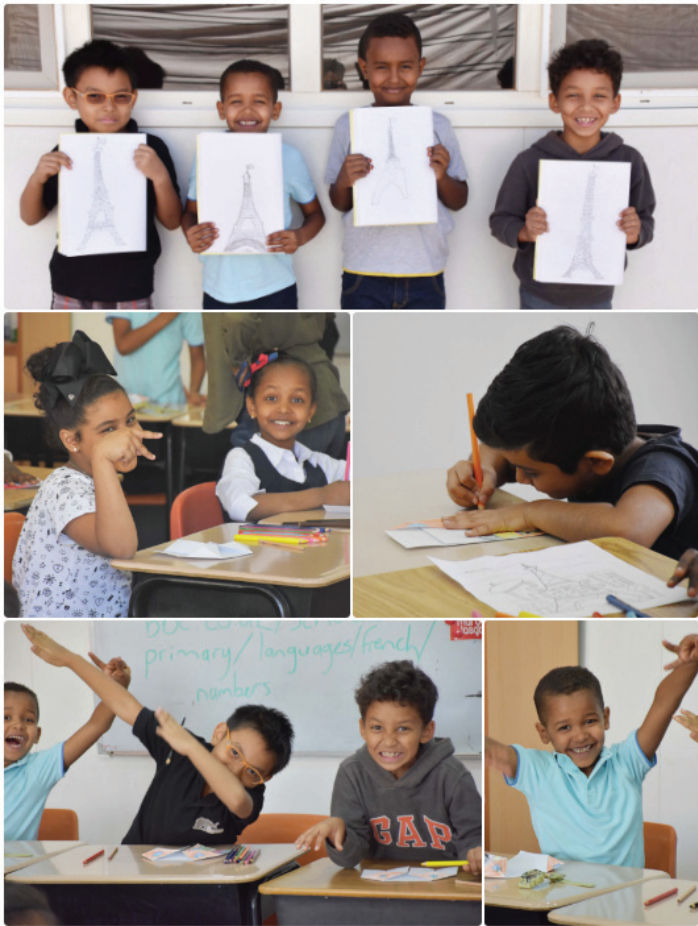
Looking forward to seeing you in the coming days!  
Have a great weekend!

**Susan Boutros**  
Middle & High School Principal

# MULTILINGUAL MATTERS

Dear KAS Community

I simply cannot believe that we are speeding towards the halfway mark in our second and final semester of this academic year. Where has the year gone? It feels like only a couple of months ago I arrived as a newbie to the KAS family and now I feel as if I have been here all the time!



There is often a perception that a foreign language classroom is a place where, as parents, especially ones who do not have experience in the target language, we are not able to assist or even interact with our children about their learning. Today I would like to challenge this assumption with a few, hopefully, handy tips.

### 1. Have your child spend time with a native or fluent speaker of French.

Now, I'm not inviting everyone to visit me on weekends, but you will find plenty of French speakers around Khartoum and French parents would be grateful for the opportunity for their children to practice a language exchange.

### 2. Find French music and media that you and your child can listen to or watch together.

With websites such as YouTube and apps such as Spotify and a number of online radio stations, the opportunity to explore artists or shows that draw your interest are varied.

### 3. Learn the language together.

I often have parents who tell me that they have always wanted to learn French. Why not try websites such as Duolingo or Rosetta Stone, where you can learn and then share with your child?

### 4. Language learning is all about making mistakes

Whether you are aiming for your children to learn as many foreign languages as possibly by the age of 18 or whether French will be the only language you ever want them to experience, please encourage your children's language-learning by not constantly pointing out their mistakes or correcting them.

Sounds wrong, doesn't it? You only have to think back to your own experience possibly asking directions from a native speaker in China or Italy on that holiday where you got completely lost and were it not for the patient stranger and his broken English you might never have made it home.

Sometimes getting the point across is all that matters, and as the wise poet says: "The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first hesitant steps."

In the grade 2 and 3 French class, we have been discovering Paris and its many tourist attractions, not least of which is of course the Eiffel Tower! Students had the opportunity to draw from scratch their own Eiffel Tower while learning the fascinating facts surrounding this iconic monument that is instantly recognised the world over.

This past week we have learnt about our homes and the rooms that make up a house. The grade 2 and 3 students constructed their own model houses and had to draw and label the rooms correctly.

**Ilse Young**  
French Teacher

## Saying of the Week

**To Be Screwed** is a widely used term for being cheated, or placed at a disadvantage. During the 19th century English prisons were intended to be cruel places of punishment (hard labor) to deter prisoners from returning. One of these forms of punishments was to force a convict to turn a crank handle up to 10,000 times a day. These handles were designed in a way that the hard labor could be made even worse by a warder turning a simple screw, which increased the resistance of the handle. In such barbaric places, bribery and corruption were commonplace and any prisoner who did not agree to a warder's demands could find himself being 'screwed' the next time he was on the handle.

**Minette van der Bijl**  
High School English Department

# Why Learn Algebra?

by Jason Gibson

All of the math leading up to algebra that we learned growing up such as addition, fractions, and the like, seem to have a concrete meaning. These concepts all deal with numbers in some way or another and because of this we can wrap our brains more easily around the concepts. After all, I can pick up six pencils and give two to a friend and by using math I can figure out how many pencils I am left holding in my hand. We can all imagine situations where basic math serves us well - calculating your change in the grocery store for instance.

Enter Algebra. Suddenly, we are asked to deal not only with our comfortable numbers but with letters. And it doesn't stop with this. You start seeing parenthesis and exponents, and a whole potpourri of other symbols that seem to make no sense at all. This single fact more than any other turns many people off to learning algebra. At the very beginning you are asked to learn certain rules on how to calculate things in algebra.

You must learn which steps are legal to do before others, and if you do them in the reverse order you get the wrong answer!

This leads to frustration. With frustration, despair follows in short order. And so the thoughts begin:

"Why do I need to learn this?"

"When would I ever use Algebra in real life?"

What you have to remember, though, is that basic math is riddled with special rules and symbols as well. For example, the symbols "+" and "=" were at one time foreign to us all. In addition the concept of adding fractions, as a single example, is filled with special rules that we must learn. When adding  $1/3$  to  $1/3$ , for example, you keep the common denominator and add the numerators, so that  $1/3 + 1/3 = 2/3$ . The point here is that when you begin to learn algebra it may seem overwhelming with the rules that you must learn, but this is no different from the multitude of rules that you had to learn that dealt with basic math such as addition and subtraction.

Learning Algebra is achievable for all, you just need to take things one step at a time and learn the basic rules before moving on to more advanced topics.

But this does not answer the question of "Why should I learn Algebra?" This is a difficult question, but the simplest answer is that Algebra is the beginning of a journey that gives you the skills to solve more complex problems.

There are examples all around us of things in the everyday world that you could fully understand using only the tools in algebra. If you drop a rock off of the roof of a house, how long would it take to hit the ground? If you dropped a second rock 100 times as heavy off of the roof of the same house, how long would it take to hit the ground? If you somehow brought a bulldozer up to the roof of the house and dropped it, how long would it take for the bulldozer to hit the ground? The answer in all three cases it takes the same amount of time to hit the ground! The time of free-fall depends only on the Earth's gravitational field (which is the same for us all) and the height of the roof you drop from. Even though the bulldozer

is "heavier" than the rocks, they all fall at the same rate to the ground.

Many of the applications of Algebra are known as the study of Physics. If you had to boil the word Physics down to one sentence it would be: "Physics is all about studying the world around us using math as a tool." Simply put all the math that you ever learn is really a tool for understanding the world around us. And believe me, we have only begun to scratch the surface of understanding how the world works. Algebra is a stepping stone to learning about this wonderful universe that we live in. With it you have the tools to understand a great many things and you also have the skills needed to continue on and learn Trigonometry and Calculus which are essential for exploring other types of problems and phenomena around us.

So, try not to think of Algebra as a boring list of rules and procedures to memorize. Consider algebra as a gateway to exploring the world around us all.

Quazanne van der Bijl  
HS Mathematics Teacher



## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Date : Sunday February 24th, 2019

Place : Quad

Time : Lunch

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