

Welcome to Fifth Grade!

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The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles.
A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom.
The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard.
~Sloan Wilson

We would like to welcome you to 5th grade. This packet will cover many areas of your child's education throughout this very important and exciting year. This packet is a big picture of our year, but it does not mean that everything is carved in stone. Things can change that are sometimes out of our hands, however, we want you to know that **all decisions made are made with the well-being of the students in mind.**

Our Philosophy:

We believe that every child has the right to learn and get a quality education. Every child who enters into the classroom should feel safe, supported, and valued and our teaching fosters the most eager, most curious learner. We encourage a growth mindset in which students learn that all abilities can be developed through hard work and perseverance. Brains and talent are just the starting point. With this mindset, children learn to love learning, persevere, accept challenges, and learn from their mistakes. Mistakes and struggle are thought of as a means of growing and are "expected, respected, inspected and corrected."

We strive to meet the unique needs of each student and recognize that there are vast differences amongst our students in all areas. Because of this, we believe "Fair is NOT always equal. Fair is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful." With this in mind, curriculum may be altered, modified, or enriched to meet the needs of students. In a large diverse class, differentiation is extremely important.

This year we are excited to continue discovering our students' individual strengths and apply them toward project based learning opportunities. In order to facilitate all learning, we will involve students in the process of assessment by providing them with checklists, giving them opportunity for reflection and finally self-correction. This will help students develop the ability to judge their own accomplishments and to set goals for themselves as well as take responsibility for their own learning- all key components to quality project based learning standards.

Behavior and Consequences: Classroom atmosphere is very important to us because we believe it makes a huge impact on a student's learning and growth. We believe that our classroom should always be a safe and happy place where each student has the opportunity to learn while feeling cared about, encouraged, and listened to. Students are encouraged and expected to take responsibility for their learning by engaging in lessons, participating, asking

questions, asking for what they need as well as always giving their best effort. We will teach students the importance of having a growth mindset and then work with them to embrace one.

There are classroom rules that students are expected to follow. We will practice these rules daily and as needed. If they choose not to follow a rule, they will be expected to practice the broken rule. Practice following the rule will lead to improved behavior. If improvement does not occur after practice at school, then a note will be sent home that asks you to help your child practice the broken rule at home. To quote a philosophy, "You have your choice between two tennis coaches. One coach scolds you for your bad technique. The other coach helps you practice good strokes. Which one will improve your game?"

We believe in reinforcing the positive through authentic praise and caring. We will work hard with the students to build a system of mutual respect, and support in the classroom. High standards for behavior, manners, and good citizenship are reinforced daily through verbal praise and recognition.

Organization/executive functioning skills: One of our main areas of focus in 5th grade will be on organization and executive functioning skills. This includes setting goals, keeping organized, time/project management, study skills, working memory, paying attention and self-regulating. We also believe it is important that 5th graders begin taking responsibility for their own learning. We feel one of our most important tasks is to get your child fully prepared to be successful in middle school and beyond. It's very important that each student comes prepared for school everyday. It will be your child's responsibility to keep an organized backpack, binder, planner, and desk. We will teach and emphasize these skills and would greatly appreciate your consistent reinforcement at home. To help your child get off to a great start, please sign their planner nightly. If their planner and homework are turned in and signed daily, we will give them the privilege of not having to have it signed by a parent.

Subject Areas

Math:

Fifth grade math moves through a large number of concepts. It's challenging, fun, and fast paced. We will use the district adopted the Eureka (Engage New York) math curriculum. Students will also be using online programs on their Chrome books. It's extremely important for students to keep up with their nightly homework and study hard for tests/quizzes. **We strongly encourage students who are struggling to preview the video for the next day's lesson each night. This sets up their brain to better access the new content! There are links to this on our classroom website.** In addition to math practice homework, students will be required to practice math facts regularly until they pass all 4 operations (+ - x /).

The way the new Common Core math teaches math concepts is most likely very different from the way you were taught. Students learn by self discovery, using models and unique ways of looking at, and solving problems. Eventually they learn the "standard" algorithms. It would be helpful to practice the basics at home, such as:

1. standard 2 and 3 digit multiplication
2. long division

3. decimal multiplication and division
4. Addition and subtraction of whole numbers and decimals (if not yet mastered)

Some of the concepts we'll be covering this year are: Understanding large numbers; place value; rounding; estimating; the relationship between decimals and fractions (emphasis on fractions); adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing - whole numbers, fractions, and decimals; Geometry (emphasis on volume), and math facts and strategies for calculating quickly and without paper

Here is a link to parent support that you may find helpful...

<https://edu.symbaloo.com/mix/srvusdfamilyelemmath>

Language Arts-

Writing: There are a number of genres that we will be working on this year.

- Narrative
- Persuasive/opinion
- Research/Informative

Much of the focus will be on organization and development of multiple paragraphs in both expository and narrative papers. We will work on editing (spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and revising skills through the various genres. We will be using a writing workshop as the foundation of our writing program. The writing workshop will consist of mini-lessons, the writing process, and conferring. During the mini-lessons, we will discuss topics such as experimenting with different leads, describing the setting, dialogue, note taking, organizing information (using graphic organizers), providing evidence to support the thesis or claim, grammar, conventions, editing and revising techniques, and creating effective endings etc, etc.

Aside from all of the "standards" that we will be teaching, our main goal is to foster a love for writing in our students. We want them to learn to see themselves as "authors", with something important to say and to know that through their words, they can touch the hearts and minds of readers. We hope to enrich their lives by teaching them a love of writing (or at least a "like"!!)

Reading:

Our reading workshop will focus on teaching strategies to help students choose books that are "just right" and then to read and comprehend the text. The daily reading workshop includes mini-lessons, independent practice and conferring. The mini-lessons are structured so that the students are explicitly taught strategies to help them apply the fifth grade reading comprehension standards, as well as 6th grade standards, for those students ready for the next level.

The students will also be reading books in book clubs (both fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy). They will read biographies to research about a famous American. They will also read lots of non-fiction in order to do a variety of science and social studies projects as well as research for our opinion essay.

Writing About Reading (WAR)

This is a very important tool that students will use often. Just as with the writing notebook, students will add tools that they can use as references/resources for the remainder of the year and beyond. It will also be a place for them to write about what they are reading.

The expectation is that students read 30 minutes in class, and 30 minutes at home each day (or more!). In 30 minutes, they are expected to read approximately 22 pages. Students will be required to make several journal entries each week. They will write about their reading and provide evidence to support thinking. The more they think deeply and write well about it, however, the more they will grow. They have been given a list of topics/ideas that can be used for this writing. They will have many opportunities to discuss books and their thoughts about them. Books will be read aloud, read individually, with a partner, and in a book club group.

In addition, they will work on reading fluency. Sometimes during the year, they will be expected to pick a short passage (a paragraph to a page) and read it aloud 5 times while timing themselves. The time should improve each time they read and the reading should become more fluent with each effort. Unknown words should be figured out on the first reading and by the last, there should be no stumbling. This oral reading practice has proven invaluable for fluency growth in past students, but they must do it correctly and often.

Each night students should write in their reading log handed out. While we encourage students to use it, it will not be required for all students as we have found that sometimes this discourages good and avid readers from reading. **We can discuss whether or not we want this to be required for your child at conferences. You know your child best so feel free to send an email now if you want this to be required for your child. If we do deem it necessary,** this document can give good insight into your child as a reader. The log should include the date your child begins reading the book, the title, author, number of pages and then the date when finished.

A student reading a book that is at their independent level (or Just Right) should be able to complete a book in 8 days or less. If it's taking longer, the book might be too challenging. The expectation is that students read a minimum of 25-30 books this year, including non-fiction titles.

As students learn, they will also add tools to their writing journal notebook that they can use as references/resources for the remainder of the year and hopefully beyond. We will remind students often to use the tools in their notebooks to develop ideas, add transitions, develop character, provide evidence to support ideas when revising, etc as well as use the resources to remind them of punctuation and grammar rules when editing.

Science:

Science lessons will be taught in both class and the science lab. Our science teacher's name is Mrs. Medeiros. We look forward to working with her to coordinate in-class science lessons with laboratory experiences. To teach science, we will use the district adopted curriculum; Twig Science.

Our year at a glance...

Earth Science - Space Systems, Earth Systems
Physical Science - Structure and properties of matter.
Life Science - Matter and Energy in organisms and ecosystems
Life Science - H₂O -the water cycle

Social Studies:

5th grade Social Studies centers on US History. Our units will cover the following:
Geography of the U.S. - States and Capitals, Map skills, and World Geography Overview
Indigenous peoples
Age of Exploration (Galleons simulation)
Colonialism and the American Revolution
U.S. Government

We have a new social studies curriculum this year. We will be implementing this along with doing a variety of projects throughout the year pertaining to the above subject areas. Students will participate in Colonial Day and Walk Through the American Revolution.

Art:

Art is also integrated into social studies, language arts, math, and science. There will also be some art to learn about the elements of art.

Computers/Technology:

Students will work on keyboarding and Internet skills, as well as presentation programs. In addition, we will use technology regularly in the classroom to prepare them for the world they live in. We will use the Chromebooks daily for math, as well as research assignments and projects. Students will be able to take home their chromebooks daily to aid in homework. This will also further encourage responsibility and readiness for 6th grade. **Chromebooks should be brought back fully charged each day.**

Beyond the Classroom

Field Trips:

Here is a tentative schedule for this year's grade level field trips:

- Outdoor Ed- NatureBridge October 11 - 13
- Walk Through the American Revolution May 6

Fee for camp is \$430

Donation for Walk Through is \$20

Please make checks out to Green Valley School. You can write one check.

Homework:

Homework time is used to practice and reinforce skills learned in the classroom, to complete assignments started during class time, and to do research and work on long-term projects. Each day when school begins, students will be required to write all assignments and due dates in their planner. Students are expected to turn in assignments when they are due unless there are special circumstances that have been previously arranged. If prior arrangements have not been made, students will lose points for each day an assignment is late. SRVUSD's

homework policy states that for fifth grade homework (including 30 minutes of reading) should not exceed 1 hour. If this is happening, please let us know.

Attendance:

It is VERY important that you do everything you can to have your child in school each day as long as they are HEALTHY. They miss valuable instructional time if they are absent frequently, which can drastically hinder their progress and learning. As a fifth grader, it is each student's responsibility to come to us in order to make up missed work, quizzes, and tests. If there is a circumstance that requires your child to have an extended absence from class, please get an independent study contract from the office ahead of time and we can work together to keep your child caught up. The request must be at least 2 weeks in advance. Thanks!

Portfolios:

We will be keeping a record of your child's progress throughout the year. If you find that certain assignments are not being returned, it is usually because we are keeping them for their portfolio, and we will be discussing them at conference time. Also, many times we may send assignments/tests home that will need to be signed and returned so that we can add them to the student portfolio.

Miscellaneous

Birthdays:

We like to acknowledge birthdays in the classroom. A way to honor your child's birthday is to let him/her choose a favorite book to donate to the classroom library. You may add a bookplate inside with your child's name and birthdate.

Human Growth and Development:

Human Growth and Development may be taught earlier this year. Date TBD- we are waiting for information on this. There will be two lessons concerning human development. The lessons consist of age-appropriate videos and discussion. There will be a preview for parents beforehand.

Communication: We will work hard to keep you informed. We hope to keep the lines of communication between home and school open. We will send regular newsletters as well as emails as needed to keep you updated. You may use one of the following systems to communicate or find general information.

Online: The most efficient way of communicating with me is through email. My e-mail is bomstead@srvusd.net. We will make every effort to reply to your questions and/or concerns within one school day. **Please be aware that during the school day, we do not often check our email. Your children keep us very busy! We do try to check at recess, lunch, and during preps, but honestly our day is usually non-stop, often until the evening.** Please do not feel we are ignoring you if we do not respond immediately. That said, there have been occasions when we might miss an email or 2. If I do not respond within 24 hours, kindly forward your email again and mark it, "Did you see this?"

By Website: Stay tuned. My website will be launched soon!

By Phone: Our school number is 925-855-5400. If you have an urgent issue during the day, it is best to leave a message with the office. Receiving phone calls in the middle of lessons interrupts the teaching as well as your child's learning. We do value the importance of speaking live with someone when an issue is of a more serious nature, so please let us know in an email or a note if you would like to set up a face-to-face meeting or phone call.

Thanks:

We want to end by saying thank you to ALL the parents who have so graciously volunteered to be room parents, party planners, library helpers, art docents, etc. We know not everyone can donate their time in the classroom, but all that you give to Green Valley, and the time you spend with your child at home encouraging and assisting is invaluable and carries over into the classroom. So, THANK YOU! We are very excited about this year and hope to make this a wonderful 5th grade experience for your child!

We look forward to an amazing year with your children,

The 5th Grade Team