

## **Pre Kindergarten**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

Our goal in the prekindergarten classroom is to create a classroom environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supports and extends the joy of early childhood across all the learning domains. The possibilities seem endless for making new discoveries, inventing, creating and learning. Our standards convey the importance of developing the whole child in all domains of learning—social, emotional, creative expression/aesthetic, physical and cognitive development. We facilitate learning experiences that are engaging, interactive and challenging while promoting a safe, nurturing learning environment for all children.

#### ***Social and Emotional Development:***

The development of social and emotional competencies promotes a child's sense of well being, facilitating interactions with others and receptivity to learning. Rooted in relationships, social and emotional development are crucial to the success of the four-year-old during the preschool year. Creating a social and emotional environment for prekindergarten children requires child-centered, age-appropriate curriculum focused on active learning experiences; safe, secure, functional learning environments; and facilitation of family participation to promote the growth and development of children.

#### ***Physical Development:***

Physical development incorporates gross motor, fine motor and spatial orientation ability. It involves the child's growth and skills that develop from expanded interaction with the environment.

#### ***Creative Expression/Aesthetic Development:***

An environment that is both open-ended and multi-sensory encourages children to develop an appreciation for the arts. Creative expression/aesthetic development is focused on children's creative processes—the use and integration of music, movement, dramatic play and art.

#### ***Language and Listening Development:***

A prekindergarten learning environment validates children's play and provides daily opportunities for oral language development. To match children's varying interests and abilities, a broad range of activities and open-ended materials are structurally interwoven throughout the work-play small group time. Highlighted within this environment of complex interactions are opportunities for talking, verbal exchanges, listening and small/whole group discussions.

#### ***Social Studies:***

Children naturally work toward knowing and understanding themselves and their world. Through social studies, children learn about the cultural experiences of their own family as well as their community. They apply the skills of communicating, sharing and cooperating with others who have similar and different perspectives. They begin to understand time, change and continuity, and to relate past events to their present and future activities.

***Literacy Development:***

A literacy-rich environment provides opportunities for phonological awareness, experiences with the concepts of print, letter knowledge, story comprehension and writing experimentation. Activities such as read-alouds, storytelling, drawing, painting and writing are structurally interwoven throughout the work-play small group and whole group time. To facilitate children's later ability to learn to read and write, the instructional program promotes alphabetic knowledge; phonological awareness; book and print concepts; vocabulary knowledge; and discourse skills—meaningful conversations with their peers and with adults.

***Mathematical Thinking:***

Preschoolers make observations, learn about relationships and begin to draw conclusions in order to construct knowledge about mathematics. Appropriate mathematical experiences challenge children to use manipulatives to explore ideas and make connections. Mathematical thinking includes the representation of numbers and operations; patterns, quantitative and qualitative properties; shapes and spatial relations; measurement; and information gathering and probability.

***Scientific Thinking:***

Inquiry and investigation are the central processes of scientific thinking. Scientific thinking involves identifying problems; obtaining and using evidence to construct explanations; evaluating the outcomes of investigations; discussing different points of view; proposing solutions; and communicating information. The prekindergarten environment with its array of materials, activities and interactions is a stimulating place for the four-year-old scientist.

## **Kindergarten**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

#### ***Social Studies:***

The core curriculum for Kindergarten involves a study of our self and our community (the classroom, the school and the immediate neighborhood). For the first part of the school year we take a closer look at ourselves and our families. We conduct interviews, take surveys, record data in a variety of easy applications, missing words, read and create literature about ourselves and our families. By the end of our study, it is expected that the children will begin to develop a strong sense of self and will start to make connections between themselves and their classmates.

For the remainder of the school year we study our community. We take field trips in school and around the neighborhood, conduct interviews, record data in a variety of ways, read and create literature about communities and community workers. The expectation is that by the end of our study, through trips, interviews, class projects, block building experiences and group discussions, the children will begin to develop a strong sense of community and start to make connections between themselves and their community. They will begin to be able to explain, using vocabulary from our study, what a community is and will start to see that they are members of a society that only works if each person cooperates and makes a contribution.

#### ***Reading:***

Through Reader's Workshop, which includes: independent, shared reading (whole group), guided reading (small group), word study, and phonics, the children work on honing the necessary skills to become a smart reader. The children increase their sight word vocabulary and begin to understand the different components (i.e. setting, character, story sequence) of reading. The expectation is by the end of the year, children will be able to read books that are just right for them and will be able to show their comprehension through stories orally and through writing.

#### ***Writing:***

Through Writer's Workshop the children work on writing and writing mechanics and are exposed to a variety of genres of writing. This work will be done through independent, shared, and guided work. Children work on honing the necessary skills to become smart writers using the writing process, which begins with gathering seeds (gathering ideas), planting a seed (choosing an idea), growing the seed (developing the idea), revising, editing and finally publishing.

The children use a variety of resources when developing their stories. They are encouraged to begin using resources that are available in the classroom such as the word wall, charts, words lists, books, other children, etc. The expectation is that by the

end of the year, the children will begin to be able to publish in a variety of writing styles using the writing process and start to understand the difference between the styles of writing.

***Math:***

Our math curriculum is based on TERC (Technical Education Research Centers) and the use of unit and tabletop blocks. This curriculum and the use of blocks, help give the children a well-rounded math experience. The expectation is that by the end of the year the children will begin to be able to accurately explain and record their mathematical thinking using math vocabulary. They will start to be able to solve problems in a number of ways using math manipulatives and other strategies. They also will begin to be able to use math to solve problems in everyday life.

***Science:***

Our science curriculum is based on our work in the Children's Garden, our study of the Union Square Farmer's Market, class experiments and the life cycles of plants and insects/bugs. The expectation is that by the end of the school year, the children will begin to be able to discuss what a Farmer's Market is and start to understand how it functions during each season. They will also begin to understand the life cycle of plants and insects/bugs. Children will also learn how to closely observe and record their findings and explain them using science vocabulary. For a more detailed explanation of our Science work, please look at our Science curriculum write up.

***Choice Time:***

Choice Time is a period in our day when the children have the opportunity to choose what they want to do from a list of activities that the teachers select. This time gives the children a chance to explore and manipulate materials in either of the two kindergarten classes from an artistic and scientific point of view. It gives them a chance to discover new ideas independently, while providing a variety of choices and interacting with friends in both kindergarten classes.

## **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curriculum is both exciting and challenging to the students.

#### ***Social Studies:***

Our core curriculum alternates each year between two focuses, New York City and Water. Within our curriculum focus of Water we look at the various forms of water, weather, the water cycle, major bodies of water in and around New York, and the aquatic life that thrives in them. To help lay the framework for this, we begin with the basics of water - What is it? Students explore water through hands-on activities and experiments to help draw conclusions about the substance and its various forms. We also extend these understandings into an exploration of how it is important to the survival of people, plants, and animals. The students will work with Pat in the Science room as well, conducting experiments and drawing conclusions as scientists. We will center our field trips on searching for water sources around New York City, and visiting places like gardens, and the Coney Island Aquarium to observe water as a habitat and a part of the city. We will also spend time talking about transportation, bridges, tunnels, and the island of Manhattan. These trips are a wonderful hands-on way for children to truly experience this great city.

During our New York City curriculum we launch our study of the city by discussing some landmarks we have seen as well as some that we would like to visit. Our study is neighborhood based and we will focus on various neighborhoods through the city to study. To help lay the framework for this, we begin with a neighborhood walk of the East Village, a neighborhood familiar to all our students. We take neighborhood walks of the surrounding area and document our noticings with maps. To help the students develop their map skills, we begin by creating maps of our classroom and our school. The Lower East Side is home to many parks, gardens and markets that each of the classes visits and shares information about. Some of the other neighborhoods our classes study and visit are China Town, Little India, Little Italy and Harlem. Field trips and visits to these locations are a vital component to support our curriculum. In addition, we further our study by taking a closer look at New York City's Transportation System, the Markets of New York City and also the bridges and tunnels that connect all of the boroughs to surrounding land. These trips are a wonderful hands-on way for children to truly experience this great city.

#### ***Reader's Workshop:***

Reader's Workshop focuses on students developing good reading habits. Each workshop usually begins with a mini-lesson and is followed by students reading independently, with a partner, or in small groups. During this time, teachers hold reading conferences with students in order to meet individual needs. We work with each student to develop reading skills, learn new reading strategies, and choose

appropriate books so that children are able to read successfully and with confidence. As we confer with students, we make formal and informal assessments of their reading behaviors so as to inform instruction. It is expected that students choose books from the leveled library and read independently. Students are also expected to read with their reading partners and discuss books at length.

Our work in Reader's Workshop is broken into several components. These include:

*Read Aloud:* A time when students can listen to a story read to them by the teacher. The teacher will ask comprehension questions throughout the book.

*Shared Reading:* The teacher and the students read a big book, poem or song together. This is an excellent time for students to practice the reading strategies that they are learning.

*Partner Reading:* Partner reading gives the students the opportunity to read together and to learn from each other.

*Guided Reading:* This will take place in small groups of 3-5 students. The teacher will choose a text at a suitable level for all the group members. The work in guided reading takes place when the other students are reading independently.

### ***Writer's Workshop:***

The goal of Writer's Workshop is to both meet each student's individual needs and to stretch their ability as writers. Each day starts with a mini-lesson that leads into active writing and illustrating and concludes with children sharing their work with the class. Students are encouraged to use inventive spelling to put their thoughts and ideas into writing. This helps them to take risks as a writer. Students grow a more firm foundation of the writing process so that they can follow an organized plan each time they create a piece of writing. While the students are writing independently, teachers conduct writing conferences with individual students as well as small groups. Conference time is used to assist students in the process of writing as well as providing the skills and strategies they need to become better writers. When our classes publish a new piece of writing we invite our families and school community to come celebrate our work as authors!

### ***Math Workshop:***

As part of our Math curriculum, students are broken up into smaller groups to fit their needs. There are two math groups for each grade level, which provides small class sizes in math and therefore more individualized instruction. Math is a time where students are expected to construct meaning about numbers and how they work through a variety of hands-on activities. We use a curriculum called TERC (Technical Education Research Centers), known as Investigations. The TERC curriculum helps provide students with the opportunity to learn in an environment that stresses making sense of mathematics, building on the ideas that they already have, and learn about new ideas that they have never encountered. This is done through the use of hands-on manipulatives and small group games.

**Science:**

Working with our Science teacher Pat, students look at New York City with a scientific eye. Each of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes explores different and exciting things both in their classrooms and in the Science Room. Our classrooms are all equipped with Foss Kits, containing hands-on science activities. Making the curriculum connection across subject areas lays the groundwork for an enriched New York City Study. For a more detailed explanation of our Science work, please look at our Science curriculum write up

**Word Study:**

Students exploring the sounds and letters that help create words. We begin with a focus on the classroom word wall. The words wall is also a tool that students will use in their writing. Students can find high frequency and sight words that they might use in their writing. Each week, five words will be added to the wall.

The main program we will use to supplement our word study work is Words Their Way for First and Second grade. This program allows children to engage in hands-on activities while learning about letters, sounds and words.

**Choice Time:**

Choice Time is a portion of our daily schedule where students make new discoveries through academic and social play. During this time students make independent choices and steer their own learning. The children go off to a specific area of the classroom and work cooperatively with a small group of their peers to achieve a learning task. Some Choice Time activities include:

Blocks	Art
Legos	Painting
Puzzles	Chess
Games	Listening Center

## **3rd and 4th Grade**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

#### ***Personal Growth and Work Habits:***

In 3rd and 4th grade, behaviors relating to personal growth and work habits are crucial to students' academic and social success. Students are expected to behave respectfully towards children and adults at all times, and to handle conflicts in a peaceful and tolerant manner. During independent work, students must focus on the task at hand and strive to increase their stamina and ability to try new tasks. They are often asked to work with other children in partnerships and small groups, and must learn to take turns, listen attentively to others' opinions, and be responsible for their share of group work. During whole class times, students must listen to each other and to their teachers, and participate appropriately. Students are given many opportunities to make choices in their work at school, and are expected to make choices and reflect on their own behavior in a way that demonstrates respect for their own and other children's work. In addition to their schoolwork, students are expected to complete their homework in a timely and thorough manner.

#### ***Reading:***

In reading workshop in the fall, we focus on stamina and independence as readers. We also work extensively on developing ideas about our reading, and supporting these ideas with evidence and examples. To facilitate this, we jot down notes about reading, and discuss our reading. Students learn many reading strategies, and are encouraged to continue using previously learned strategies to enhance their understanding. Students read independently for extended periods, and keep track of their progress in their reading logs. They also share their thoughts in discussion with partners. In addition to independent reading, students also work as reading buddies to younger students, teaching them to understand stories and appreciate books. During daily read alouds, students enjoy higher-level books than they may be ready to read, and practice their skills of developing and discussion ideas.

In the spring, students continue to consolidate the skills learned in the fall. They practice these strategies during lengthier independent reading times, in which individual students' needs are addressed in teacher conferences as well as small-group lessons. In the spring, we also focus on reading in genres, such as folktales, informational non-fiction, and poetry. Students learn to notice the characteristics of these genres, including setting, characters, use of language, and common plot developments. Students use what they learn in reading in order to write their own versions of each genre.

#### ***Speaking and Listening:***

Students are encouraged and expected to express themselves and consider others' ideas through speaking and listening. There are many opportunities each day, in each subject, for students to share their ideas with the whole class, as well as with partners and small groups. In these contexts, students are expected to be able to follow a discussion and stay on topic, to think about other people's questions and comments,



and to contribute their own questions and comments in a thoughtful and clear manner.

### ***Word Study and Writing Mechanics:***

In addition to studying these skills in Writing Workshop, students are given explicit instruction and practice in writing mechanics. We use a spelling program called Words Their Way, in which students notice and practice using spelling patterns. In addition, both in writing workshop and during other times, we work on capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing. Specific skills include the correct use of quotation marks, commas, and apostrophes, as well as other skills chosen by the teacher to address issues noticed in student writing.

### ***Math – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:***

In 3rd grade math in the fall, we do in-depth studies of place value, addition, subtraction, and the creation and interpretation of graphs, through the Investigations curriculum. Within each topic, the analysis of word problems and the ability to explain one's own thinking are heavily emphasized, to ensure that students can apply their mathematical knowledge to real-world problems. Students are also expected to attend closely to other people's ideas, in order to enhance their own understanding. Many strategies are explored for each topic, so that students can find the strategies that work best for them. In addition to a strong conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas, students are expected to memorize basic addition and subtraction facts (such as 7+8 and 16-9). Timely and thorough completion of homework is an important factor in students' success in math.

In the spring, we continue to use the Investigations curriculum to study multiplication, division, fractions, measurement, perimeter, and area, as well as more advanced addition and subtraction. Students are still required to analyze problems and situations to figure out how to solve them, and to always show their thinking and write answers to word problems in full sentences. Students listen to each other's strategies, and often try out strategies that their classmates have developed and shared. Students are expected to learn the times tables (1 to 10) and are quizzed on these on a weekly basis. It is crucial that students continue to practice these facts over the summer, since they are fundamental to 4th grade math.

### ***Math – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade:***

In 4th grade math in the fall, we cover multiplication, measurement, division, and data through the Investigations Curriculum. This is followed by a more advanced study of multiplication and division. Within each topic the ability to explain one's own thinking both orally and in writing is heavily emphasized. Students are also expected to attend closely to other people's ideas, in order to enhance their own understanding. Different strategies are explored for each topic, so that students can find the strategies that work best for them. In addition to a strong conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas, students are expected to memorize basic math facts, such as their multiplication tables through 12x12. Timely and thorough completion of homework is an important factor in students' success in math. This work is designed to reinforce and expand on what they are learning in the classroom.

In the spring, we continue to use the Investigations Curriculum to study several new topics, including more advanced multiplication and division; geometry; strategies for

solving 3-and 4-digit addition and subtraction problems; and identifying, representing, and comparing fractions and decimals. As in the fall, within each area, students learn many different strategies and are taught to choose the most effective strategy that makes sense to them. Students are expected to attend closely to accuracy, and to correct mistakes promptly.

### ***Social Studies – Native American Focus:***

In the fall, we work on community-building for the first few weeks of social studies. Through activities such as creating self-portraits, interviewing each other, and creating rules as a class, we develop a learning community that will support each of us in our work through the year. We then move on to a study of mapping, learning about map-reading and map-making with a focus on physical maps that can help us learn about the land we live in, and how it has changed since it was inhabited only by the Lenape Native Americans before 1609. We take trips to sites like Inwood Hill Park to help us better understand what Manhattan was like then.

In the spring, we begin with a study of Native Americans nowadays. We study different tribes and how their members' lives have changed over the years. We also discuss and analyze stereotypes in order to learn how to identify and resist them, with regard both to Native Americans and to other groups. We then move on to a study of the Lenapes before European contact. Through integrated work in reading, writing, and social studies, students read, analyze, and write folktales, learning how a culture's literature can teach us about its history and belief systems. We also do numerous hands-on projects that help the students understand the Lenapes' material culture and what it is like to make everything that you use on a day-to-day basis. Students weave wampum-like belts, make clay pots according to the traditional coil method, make cornhusk dolls, and sew moccasins. Following our study of the Lenapes, students do research on the traditional cultures of tribes from other environments, such as the Navajos of the Southwest. Our social studies work in the spring is enhanced by trips to sites like the American Museum of Natural History and the Mohonk Preserve in the Catskills.

### ***Writing – Native American Focus:***

Note: In writing workshop, some of our projects, though not all, relate to our social studies work.

After establishing good writing habits, our first major project is a personal narrative. Students write many true stories about their own lives, choosing one or two to further develop into more polished pieces. We study strategies such as adding sensory details, using dialogue, paragraphing, and more, to help students increase their repertoire of writing skills. Each skill is then reinforced in subsequent units. After the personal narrative, we work on literary essays. Students learn to summarize stories, articulate ideas about them, and provide examples to back up their ideas.

In the spring, we work on three major projects. First, students write folktales based on the work they do in reading and social studies to understand this genre. Students go through an organized process to develop characters, settings, and plotlines according to the traditions of folktales, particularly Native American ones. Our second major writing unit in the spring is poetry. After reading a wide variety of poetry and noticing how poets do their work, students write many of their own poems. They each choose several

poems to bring to publication, meaning that they go through a revision and editing process to complete them. Finally, students do research, culminating in a written final product, about different Native American tribes around the country. Working in groups, each child studies a nation such as the Inuits, the Navajos, and the Sioux. The students then work individually to further research a topic of interest within their tribe. Final products may include a written report or a computer presentation.

### ***Social Studies – Immigration Focus:***

In alternating years, we do an in-depth study of the history of immigration to New York City, beginning with Dutch colonization in the 1600s. We begin our work by studying our own families' immigration history. We discuss, map, and graph data collected by each student, giving a picture of our class's origins all over the globe. We move on to learn about the Age of Exploration and how it led to the founding of New Amsterdam. Through field trips, role plays, art, and writing assignments, students learn about the experiences of typical Dutch immigrants, as well as minority groups such as Jews, Quakers, and enslaved Africans. We then learn about the British colony of New York, with a special emphasis on slavery in New York. Trips to sites like the Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum and the Morris-Jumel Mansion are central to this work.

In the spring, we continue our exploration of the history of immigration to the United States, and New York in particular. We learn about the Irish Potato Famine and how it led to great numbers of Irish immigrating to the U.S. We also study our own neighborhood in the 1800s, when it was known as Kleindeutschland, due to the large numbers of Germans who settled down here. We learn about their daily lives in New York, and investigate what the neighborhood was like then, compared to what it's like now. We then move on to study the Ellis Island era of immigration through a variety of experiences. We go on to study how immigration laws have changed over time in the United States, and why. Finally, we learn about present-day immigration through interviews with immigrants. Students study the transcripts of these interviews and make illustrated books depicting the immigrants' experiences. Trips to sites like Ellis Island, the Tenement Museum, the Museum at Eldridge Street, the Museum of Chinese in America, and El Museo del Barrio are central to the spring semester's work.

### ***Writing – Immigration Focus:***

Note: In writing workshop, some of our projects, though not all, relate to our social studies work.

After establishing good writing habits, our first major project is a family history picture book. Students research stories from their families through interviews with family members, and choose a story from before they were born (or when they were too little to remember) to learn more about and make into a picture book. Narrative strategies such as the use of strong verbs, and the creation of powerful leads and endings, are taught alongside research strategies. Students next work on an information book on a topic of personal expertise. They learn to categorize and organize information, and how to write non-fiction in an engaging and accurate manner.

In the spring, we work on three major projects: persuasive letters, poetry, and historical fiction. When working on their letters, students learn to state their opinions clearly and back them up with logical reasons, to divide their writing into paragraphs, and to use

standard business-letter format. The poetry unit may be general, may focus on a particular type of poetry, and may also include songwriting. Finally, in our historical fiction unit, students develop research skills in order to incorporate true historical facts into carefully planned fictional stories.

## **Fifth Grade**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

#### ***Personal Growth and Work Habits:***

In fifth grade, students continue to develop their personal growth and work habits they have been developing in prior years. Students are expected to consistently behave in a respectful and mature manner towards the children and adults in our school community, handling conflicts with tolerance and peace. During fifth grade students develop and hone behaviors and management tools that will assist them as they transition into middle school. These skills include various forms of note taking as well as different study methods.

Students develop skills to work productively while independent, in partnerships, small groups and in whole class investigations. Students are required to reach a high level of stamina and focus on tasks that reflects their fifth grade standing. This standing is achieved through rigorous work and participation, both written and verbal, from every student. Students have many opportunities to challenge themselves and grow in their understandings and are encouraged to make decisions to help this growth occur. Students are required to complete homework that is given nightly and to make up any homework and/or class work that is missed.

At The Children's Workshop School, fifth grade is looked at as a bridge from elementary school to middle school. We emphasize the importance of responsibility, independence and individual choice in fifth grade as this allows our students to move on to middle school with skill sets and habits that will give them the foundation to be successful middle school students.

#### ***Speaking and Listening:***

Students in fifth grade grow in their ability to express themselves in an organized and appropriate manner that deepens the discussion at hand. Students are also expected to be respectful and attentive listeners to their classmates, acknowledging the importance of actively listening within discussions. Students grow their speaking and listening skills in a variety of settings from partnerships to class discussions and are expected to be engaged in the topic at hand, both as listeners and appropriate vocal participants. In fifth grade, students are also required to give individual presentations, helping to build public speaking skills students will need throughout life.

#### ***Social Studies:***

We start our year by focusing on our community as a fifth grade class, discussing the importance of citizenship and being a strong and supportive classmate.

We then launch into an extensive investigation of Slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in this country. The students explore significant events during this time period including The Montgomery Bus Boycott, The Little Rock Nine integration, and The Greensboro Sit-Ins. The class uses this knowledge to write their MLK Honoring the Dream play for our school wide celebration. The students also participate in a project that has the students walk in the shoes of people during this time in history. This in turn

helps the students to create a Civil Rights Movement Museum in our classroom that the students used to educate the other classes in the school.

Next we explore the three branches of our country's government. We discover the responsibilities and powers that each branch possesses. Throughout this unit we also look at each branch's role in passing laws through a historical law our government has passed. During this time the students also conduct independent online and book-based research to garner information for their persuasive letters. All of this work allows for the students to understand how the persuasive letters they created could make significant change in our country.

We further our exploration of government with a yearly 5<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington D.C. We have an amazing time, extending their learning on a variety of historical information in our nation's capital. The students investigate D.C. history, various monuments and memorials. They also explore wonderful museums and government buildings. We also meet with a sitting Congressperson which provides a memorable experience that the fifth graders will be able to have for the rest of their lives. This amazing trip not only helps students further their understanding of our government and the history of our country but it also brings to life the information they have learned.

After completing our work in our government exploration, we move into an extensive study of Geography. Using a variety of methods which include working with a teacher made clay model depicting various geographical features, map work and discussions of terms, students develop a deep understanding of geography. We then narrow our focus giving the students the opportunity to understand the various regions of The United States of America and Canada. During this unit students are also given a state within our country to research independently, creating a poster depicting their work. Upon completion of the project each student then presents the information they discovered to their classmates.

Next we transition into our study of American Westward Expansion. We investigate this significant part of American history through a variety of avenues. We explore significant events during this time period including The Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark's expedition, The Transcontinental railroad, The Oregon Trail, The Homestead Act and The Trail of Tears. We also learn about American Tall Tales and why they are based during this time period in American's history. The students use their knowledge of the time period to assist in their historical fiction writing. Our study of Westward Expansion helped to solidify students understanding of our country's history, and how that history influences our lives today.

The students finish their year as fifth graders with an intense study of the Ancient Mayan civilization. The students truly enjoy exploring this remarkable group of people. Our exploration is extensive and includes understanding their daily life, art and architecture, government, and religion amongst other topics. The students participate in

class discussion and read alouds about the Ancient Mayans. We enhance our learning by making Ancient Mayan food and drinks, creating Mayan King Macaw headdresses, and making hieroglyph medallion necklaces. The information the students garner about the Mayan people is used for inspiration when creating their poetry anthology.

### ***Writing:***

The students are engrossed in the writing process in fifth grade. We work on gathering ideas, and then choosing an idea to work with. We develop that idea, revise it, and edit it then finally the writing piece is published at the conclusion of the unit of study.

Students regularly reflect on their own writing, applying different strategies they learn to not only create a piece, but how to revise it to make the story even better. The students start the year with Small Moment Personal Narrative writing pieces. They zero in on a memorable moment they experienced over the summer, and stretch out the experience in their writing to write a Small Moment Personal Narrative.

The students also create beautiful Memoirs. They reflect on their experiences throughout their lives so far and each student chooses an overall theme that is important to them personally. Then they choose life stories that relate to their theme, focusing on themselves as the main character in their writing as well as concentrating on improving introductions and conclusions in their pieces.

We also explore the process of persuasive letter writing by asking the students to find an issue in our world today that is important to them. Each student completes individual research about their topic allowing them to form more focused and convincing letters. Upon completion of our letters, we send each U.S. Senator a CD with all of our letters calling them to action, imploring them to address the various concerns the fifth graders have. The students also regularly work on writing prompts for homework and in class. This helps them become more comfortable with impromptu writing, strengthening their confidence and skills.

Next, the fifth graders create Fantasy Information pieces. They use the geographical information from the state they researched in their individual state project to inspire a fantastical city of their own creation. The students work very hard on letting their imaginations soar while still grounding the geography of this fantastical city in reality. They ensure their work is maintaining the true geographical features of their particular state. At the end of this unit, the students have beautifully written and illustrated brochures for their fantasy cities.

The students delve into the process of Historical Fiction writing. They focus their pieces on the time Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery explored the west during America's Westward Expansion time. The students work on making their journals as realistic as possible by taking the information we learn in our social studies investigation and applying it to their writing pieces. They strive to make the setting, language and events as historically accurate as possible.

We finish our year with a creation of Ancient Mayan Poetry Anthology Codices. Students take the ancient custom of Mayan scribes (creating codices to record information and stories) to showcase their newfound learning about Mayan culture shared through the form of poetry. Each student chooses which topics they wanted to focus on within the Ancient Mayan culture information we have studied. The students then write several poems that are each written using different poetic forms, learned from our study of poetry and are inspired by our Ancient Mayan study.

***Reading/Read Aloud:***

In fifth grade, students are expected to read for 45 minutes every night, maintain a reading log, and reflect on their progress as readers. Independently, in partnerships and in small groups, students work on thinking about how the authors that they read are able to pull emotions from readers. We look at how authors use sensory work and analyze the work different authors do. The students take their observations and apply them in their writing, to make their own writing stronger. As fifth graders we further our independence as readers and develop our ability to critically analyze texts.

Read alouds occur throughout the school day, both literacy and social studies based. We use these opportunities for students to be engaged as a group with various genres of literature as well as exploring more advanced subjects and texts. We also use this time to work on how we analyze books; the students take this knowledge and apply it when they read independently. Reading aloud is a wonderful time for the students to speak in a group setting about literature.

***Word Study/Spelling:***

Mondays through Thursdays the students explore a new word in our Word of the Day vocabulary investigation. Every student keeps track of these words in their Word Study Notebooks. At the end of each week, the students participate in a game of Word Study Jeopardy. The students play the game, communicating their knowledge through categories that ask them to apply their new vocabulary understanding. We also encourage the students to use the words appropriately in their everyday language and the students work on incorporating the new vocabulary into their writing. Periodic assessments are given to evaluate the students' maintenance of the vocabulary.

We investigate a specific spelling focus within each writing unit as a class. We begin our individualized spelling investigation during our Small Moment Personal Narrative unit. In this work, each student picks five words of their own choosing (i.e. words they have difficulty spelling in their writing) to investigate each week. They work with the words throughout the week and then partner up with a fellow classmate to assess each other at the end of the week. The individualized spelling program continues throughout the year.

At the start of our year within our Small Moment Personal Narrative unit the students establish their individualized spelling investigation and review the various parts of



speech. During our Memoir writing unit, we investigate past tense words as well as conjunctions so the students would be able to write more complex sentences. When creating our Persuasive Letters, we explore the use of persuasive language and words and their influence on those who read our work. The students also delve into a study of contractions to help them understand how words can be altered yet still maintain their meaning. Our Fantasy Informational unit encourages students to use their newfound knowledge of homophones and homonyms as well as exploring words as they exist on a continuum. We also explore future tense throughout this unit. During our Historical Fiction writing unit students explore root words, developing a better sense of where our language comes from and giving them greater abilities to dissect unfamiliar words. Throughout our Poetry investigation, students explore prefixes and suffixes, extending their knowledge from the previous unit.

### ***Math:***

We start our year by investigating Factors, Developing Multiplication and Division strategies. The students use arrays and number puzzles to learn about factors, multiples, and other properties of numbers. They work on developing a number of strategies for solving 2 digit by 2 digit multiplication problems, including breaking numbers apart, solving an equivalent problem, and solving related problems. As a class, we work on developing various strategies for solving division with 2 digit divisors and for interpreting results.

The students then investigate Polygons and Finding Perimeter and Area of Related Rectangles. As a group, we work on classifying polygons by looking at attributes including number of sides, length of sides, and sizes of angles. The students also find the measures of angles using protractors. As a class, they use prior knowledge of related polygons in order to learn about area, perimeter, and the relationship between them. The students also investigate Place Values, Studying Subtraction, and Adding and Subtracting Large Numbers. The students use place value relationships and multiples of 10, 100, and 1000 to add and subtract large numbers. We practice and investigate various strategies for subtracting large numbers. They also use what they know about place value to solve addition and subtraction problems.

Next the students focus on understanding, comparing, and solving problems with fractions and percents. The children develop ideas about representing the meaning of fractions, decimals, and percents and the relationships among them; comparisons and equivalents of fractions, decimals, and percents; and the development of strategies for adding and subtracting fractions and decimals. We also focus on the meaning of operations with whole numbers, the development of computational fluency, the structure of place value and the base-ten number system, and generalizations about numbers and operations. Then we focus on developing ideas about patterns, sequences, and functions. Finally, the students develop ideas about collecting, representing, describing, and interpreting data.

***Martin Luther King Jr. Living the Dream Book Project:***

The fifth graders analyze and ultimately choose a picture book they believe best exemplifies Dr. Martin Luther King's beliefs. The fifth graders meet once a week, as part of this special project and work very diligently. We meet with Manhattan Country School and Central Park East II at least five times a year before all the fifth graders from the three schools, decide which picture book, published in the prior year, best honors Dr. King's dream and vision.

We start this project by working on a list of criteria that will be used to determine each year's winner. We read many of the books that were previously nominated and use our criteria list to evaluate why some books were eliminated and others went on to receive top honors. We share our criteria list with both MCS and Central Park East and they share their lists with us. Collaboratively, the students develop a final list which will be used to evaluate every book being considered for the Living the Dream Book Award.

Over the school year, each and every fifth grader must read and prepare a written evaluation for the 10 books being considered for the year's award. Every student must be able to defend why he/she feels a specific book should/should not be chosen as the year's winner. After all the books have all been read, we meet with MCS and Central Park East II to decide which books should/should not be eliminated, using the combined list of criteria to defend their opinions. One by one, books will be eliminated, until a majority of students have agreed on the 2 final selections. Then (drum roll, please) the winner will be chosen!

After the winner has been decided, a celebration will be planned. Both the author and the illustrator are invited to accept this honor presented by the students from all 3 schools. We are very happy to share that we have had the author or illustrator join our celebration for every book winner in this project's history.

***Rosie Theatre Kids®, PS Broadway:***

Actress Rosie O'Donnell co-founded Rosie's Theatre Kids® in 2003 to help promote the arts in New York City students. Our fifth graders are incredibly lucky to participate in the Rosie's Theatre Kids® PS Broadway program. The students learn about music and dance through an overview of America's musical theater. The Children's Workshop School is honored to be one of only 22 schools in New York City that have been asked to participate in this program. Over the course of fifteen weeks, the students meet once a week with professional teaching artists developing a song and dance from a Broadway musical.

During this time period students are visited by a guest Broadway artist who performs for the students, providing a deeper understanding into the life of a Broadway performer. The students are also generously taken to a current Broadway show, courtesy of Rosie's Theatre Kids®. The amazing semester culminates with a performance by the students of the song and dance they learned over the course of the semester. The

performance is given for our whole school community from prekindergarten students to the parent community!

***The NiteStar Program:***

The NiteStar Program was founded in 1987 by Dr. Cydelle Berlin. Since then, Dr. Berlin and her staff have been educating students throughout New York City. NiteStar is a wonderful program all students participate in during the spring of their fifth grade year.

The program provides students with a comprehensive understanding about health and social issues they will face growing up in today's society. Through the performing arts, NiteStar is able to help students develop the understanding and information needed to encourage healthy and productive choices, promoting positive attitudes and giving alternatives to prejudices.

# Science

## Overview of Curriculum and Expectations

### Kindergarten

#### ***Trees Through the Seasons***

*What are some changes we see in trees during the year?*

- Students identify the basic needs of organisms to live and thrive:
  - Needs of plants to live and thrive (e.g., air, water, light)
  - Living things grow and change.
- Students observe and compare the different structures that enable each plant to live and thrive:
  - Roots, leaves, stems, flowers, seeds
- Students observe adaptations of plants:
  - Plants respond to changes in the environment including season changes such as:
    - Leaves falling in autumn and forming in springtime
    - Flowers blooming

#### ***Exploring Properties – Wood & Paper, Fabrics***

*How do we observe and describe objects?*

Students observe and describe physical properties of objects using all of the appropriate senses:

- 
- Size, shape, texture, weight, color, etc.
- Determine whether objects are alike or different

Students observe and describe physical properties of objects using appropriate tools:

- Hot/cold (thermometer)
- Weight (pan balance)
- Measurement (nonstandard units)  
including bigger/smaller, more/less,  
capacity of liquids
- Observations (hand lenses)

Students observe, describe, and identify the properties of materials, e.g.:

- Wood

- Plastic
- Metal

Students sort groups of objects according to their properties:

- Texture, color, shape, etc.
- Sink and float

### ***Animals - What are animals?***

Students identify the basic needs of organisms to live and thrive:

- Needs of animals to live and thrive (e.g., air, water, food, shelter)
- Living things grow and change.

Students observe and compare the different structures that enable each animal to live and thrive:

- Wings, legs, fins, eyes, nose, ears, tongue, skin, claws, etc.

Students make clear that nonliving things do not live and thrive.

Students recognize that living things have offspring and that offspring closely resembles its parents:

- Dogs/puppies, cats/kittens, cows/calves, ducks/ducklings, frogs/tadpoles

Students observe physical animal characteristics that are influenced by changing environmental conditions such as:

- Coat thickness in winter, rabbits changing fur color, shedding of fur

Students observe that some animal behaviors are influenced by environmental conditions:

- Nest building, hibernation, migration

### **First/Second Grade**

#### ***Plant Diversity - Becoming aware of the diversity of life in the plant kingdom***

This Unit provides experiences that heighten young students' awareness of the diversity of life in the plant kingdom. Students care for plants to learn what they need to grow

and develop. They observe the structures of flowering plants and discover ways to propagate new plants from mature plants (from seeds, bulbs, roots, and stem cuttings). They observe and describe changes that occur as plants grow, and organize their observations on a calendar and in a journal.

The students will do cross-curricular work with their social studies units. They will study how the air and weather patterns affect what is available in the greenmarkets and the many processes involved in growing produce.

### ***Weather and Seasons***

The Weather and Seasons Unit consists of four sequential investigations, each designed to introduce concepts in earth science. The investigations provide opportunities for young students to explore the natural world by using simple tools to observe and monitor change.

### ***Animal Diversity– How are animals alike and different?***

This Unit provides experiences that heighten students' awareness of the diversity of animal forms. They come to know the life sequences of a number of insects. Students observe structures and behaviors, discuss their findings, and ask questions. Students observe life cycles of insects and compare the stages of metamorphosis exhibited by each species. They will study the animals that inhabit the local estuaries of the Hudson and East Rivers.

## **Third/Fourth Grade**

### ***Plant and Animal Adaptations***

#### ***How are plants and animals well suited to live in their environments?***

This Module consists of four sequential investigations dealing with observable characteristics of organisms. Students observe, compare, categorize, and in so doing they learn to identify properties of plants and animals and to sort and group organisms on the basis of observable properties. Students investigate structures of the organisms and learn how some of the structures function in growth and survival.

### ***Interactions of Air, Water and Land***

#### ***How do natural events affect our world?***

Students will observe, investigate, and record examples of physical and chemical weathering. They will describe how erosional processes (e.g., action of gravity, wind, and water) cause surface changes to the land. Students will also investigate, measure, and observe the deposition of earth materials. They will investigate and illustrate the natural processes by which water is recycled on earth (e.g., ground water, runoff).

They will also explore the negative and positive impact of extreme natural events on living things. These events include earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and fires.

### ***Animals and Plants in their environments***

#### ***What roles do plants and animals play in their environments?***

Students will classify populations of organisms as producers, consumers, or decomposers by the role they serve in the ecosystem (food chains and food webs}. Students will explore how plants manufacture food by utilizing air, water, and energy from the sun. They will investigate how food supplies energy and materials necessary for growth and repair. Students will identify populations within a community that are in competition with one another for resources. Students will recognize that individual variations within a species may cause certain individuals to have an advantage in surviving and reproducing.

Students will describe how the health, growth, and development of organisms are affected by environmental conditions such as availability of food, water, air, space, shelter, heat, and sunlight. They will understand that animals' senses help them to survive. Students will observe that when the environment changes, some plants and animals survive and reproduce, while others die or move to new locations. They will also identify examples where human activity has had a beneficial or harmful effect on other organisms (e.g. deforestation)

## **Fifth Grade**

### ***Variables***

The Nature of Science – How do scientists gather and share information? The students will be formulating questions of scientific inquiry with the aid of our FOSS kits for Variables. Students will identify questions, formulate hypotheses, and conduct scientific investigations to answer these questions. They will use tools to gather, analyze, and interpret data and identify dependent and independent variables. Cross-curricular work will be done when the students are studying Government in their Social Studies curriculum.

### ***Food and Nutrition***

While the students are studying Westward Expansion in their Social Studies; they will study Food and Nutrition in their science classes. Through a variety of experiments, readings, and explorations the students will learn how nutrition and exercise affect our health. This will be compared to the food and health conditions during the westward expansion.

***Ecosystems***

While the students study the Mayans in social studies, they will be Exploring Ecosystems in science. There will be a particular emphasis on the Amazon Rainforest and how the plants and animals in any ecosystem are interconnected.

***Earth Science***

Earth Science and the processes that help shape the land will also be explored in science. The students will classify sedimentary, igneous, or metamorphic rocks. They will investigate and explain how rocks and soil form. The students will observe, compare, and describe the topography of the earth's surface. These topics will be related to the students' geography study and topography of the westward expansion time period in social studies.



## **Library**

### **Overview of Curriculum and Expectations**

All classes visit the library at least once a week during a regularly scheduled time period and they LOVE IT! During their visits, children may choose to read, enjoy the 'listening center', browse through the magazine collection, join their classmates for a video and/or just share a wonderful book with a friend. While gathered together in 'Dorothy's Corner', children experience the power of words through read alouds and lively discussions. All children are encouraged to borrow a book, each time they visit the library, keeping their selection for a one week period. Children are encouraged to share their personal selections with friends and family.

As the children get older, the library offers more opportunities to independently discover the world of literacy available to them through magazines, computers, research, and documentaries. Lively discussions often follow the discovery of something new, interesting or just plain fabulous!

In the fifth grade, helping in the Library is an option for Community Service; shelving, reading to a Community member, alphabetizing and/or guiding a schoolmate on how to find what they are searching for.