

Practice or Unfinished Work Ideas

Homework is given in 4th grade for two primary reasons. First, the student needs more practice at home to further instill the learning objective. Second, homework is assigned if work in the classroom is not finished during class time. Many days will end with a half hour study hall to work on practice work with teacher to help eliminate “the homework battle” at home.

If a student continues to find this arrangement challenging, the following steps will be initiated to help build better study skills.

- Loss of independent choice time until work is completed.
- 3 missing assignments in 1 week, requires a conversation with family and student to attend Thursday Academy to finish work or remain after school to work with Mr. Harder on a strategy that will help eliminate missing assignments.

Setting up a consistent schedule and work place at home helps students maintain their responsibilities and study skills.

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FOURTH GRADE



“Be true to your work,
your word, and your
friends.”

-Henry David Thoreau



Code of the 4th Grade Classroom

1. Believe that to have a friend, you must be one
2. When you make a promise, keep it
3. Know that some battles are meant to be lost
4. Talk less but say more
5. Do what's best for the class, but always look out for yourself!
6. Be tough but fair
7. Do what has to be done
8. Always finish what you start
9. Take pride in your work
10. Live each day with courage, compassion, compromises and communicate well

We will also be developing an extensive field journal for recording our ongoing observations outside the classroom.

Also new this year we will be traveling much more outside the classroom to help develop a strong personal and professional sense of place in Gallatin County and Montana. \



As well, we will be trying to Flip the classroom! More to come about this but it is an exciting new and unique way to learn both at home and at school by allowing students to move as fast or careful as needed!



“Life was meant to be
lived and curiosity must
be kept alive.”
-E. Roosevelt

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR



**“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body”
-Sir Richard Steele**

Teaching children and preparing them for the future requires a philosophy that connects the child to the outside world. My goal as a teacher is to guide my students by empowering them through becoming responsible for their own learning, while building positive self-esteem. I will create an enriched and safe learning environment that will facilitate their learning needs. In doing so, our classroom will be constructed around an interdisciplinary curriculum based primarily on inquiry based learning practices. Components of our classroom responsibilities include: critical thinking, creative expression, clear communication, working collaboratively, and sharing in the excitement of comprehending the natural and technological world.

Science Units

This year in science, the class will focus on several ideas that are crucial for understanding the world outside the classroom. Some of these include: observing, comparing, relating, discovering and exploring! These are all components that help make the scientific process work.

We will begin our science units on observing and discovering local plant and animal sciences as naturalists. After completing the ecology unit we will explore, Geology, a lengthy Physics unit, and environmental awareness throughout the year.

Special again this year we are very fortunate to have local scientist Kristin Gardner from The Blue Water Task Force working on our class once a week with our service learning program. With her, we will explore our local hydrological system, soil, and climate change and work on building a strong foundation for local stewardship.

Social Studies Units

Currently, we are learning the processes that accompany map making. This unit will lead us to discovering our family histories, Geography, Gallatin County and Montana History, the 50 States, Black History, and American Indian Studies. As we learn the geography of these great places, we will also discover amazing cultural similarities and differences.



**“Work smarter, play harder!”
-Mr. Harder**

The class will also develop effective study skills, organizational strategies, and classroom job-related responsibilities.

Math

In math this year the 4th grade will be using the “Singapore Math Program” model. We will learn to utilize numeration, computation and estimation. With each unit we will develop our addition/subtraction, multiplication/division, decimals, fractions, measurement and geometry skills! Work on those multiplication facts!



Literature

In literature class, we will read several types of literature genre and work with the adopted reading program from Houghton Mifflin.

We will also be using basic training of word development, leveled texts, DIBELS and other effective methods to support the reading of novels, poetry and non fiction. We will also be incorporating a Science and Math based literature program. These units are cross curricula emphasized.

Reading is an essential tool in our success and I ask that our parents keep the enthusiasm alive! Reading and writing are the two most powerful tools for a child’s success in school and life!

We have a new set of reading materials for young readers to choose from such as:

Wringer by Jerry Spinelli

Turtle in Paradise by Jennifer Holm

A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clements

Elijah of Buxton by Curtis, Christopher

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

WWS

This year we will further develop our writing skills with paragraph development, and many creative projects trying to build an effective writing tool box. Each week, students will develop a paragraph in a 5 step process based on *Six Traits of Writing*. Other projects will include creative writing, poetry, menu building, post cards, comics and website construction. We also will write/sketch/reflect daily in our field journals! Our Life Words vocabulary will be based on active and reflective learning strategies, rather than rote memory spelling skills. These words will reflect everyday word usage and will help develop a rich vocabulary bank.

Goals

This year, as 4th graders, we have set some goals that we hope to attain by year’s end. Some of these goals pertain to learning and some to social and personal guidance. Whenever possible we will use the environment and technology for learning advancement and our community resources for further follow-up. I encourage all parents to participate with their child’s learning both in the classroom and at home. As we look forward to a great productive year, we hope you share our enthusiasm!

Find your bravery to make mistakes, that’s where we learn the most; and remember that practice makes permanent not perfect...Mr. Harder