

Mist School - Grades 3, 4, 5  
Week of April 13-17

Dear 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade Mist Students and Parents:

I know this is a lot to read, but it is my foundation for continuing on in the weeks to come...however, long that might be. I am here for you and I care about you. Your children are my family away from home and I dearly miss them and our classroom at Mist. Our children have a new classroom, it is their homes. Please use your home as a new classroom that is a new environment full of new learning opportunities.

I would like you to keep a daily journal of your learning. Not only is it an account of your learning each day, but this journal will then turn into a reminder, a piece of history, for you to look back on to read and remember when you are older of what it was like at your young age of 8-11, during a world pandemic, when you couldn't go to school and needed to learn from home.

I am also hoping that this journal creates a daily habit for you in the long run so that you can reflect on each day of your life every year for decades to come and to interact with your younger self's thoughts and possibly share with the people you love in your future.

I would like to use Google Classroom to connect with you all, but for this week the best way for you and your parents to contact me is:

School email - [jjones@vernoniak12.org](mailto:jjones@vernoniak12.org)

Cell phone - 503-308-0220

Home phone - 503-755-0303

I am available Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

\*I may not be able to help or talk to you right away, but I will do my best to respond to you within the day you contact me.

Materials You Will/Might Need:

- Pencils (always use pencils to write and draw with so you can make corrections)
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons, and/or water colors (for capturing the true image of the specimen you choose to learn about each day)
- 1 (or 2) Notebook/journal (lined **or** blank **or** grid - your choice - one could be for your reading and math thinking and the other strictly for your journaling time or you could use one notebook to keep ALL of your learning in to keep it together - your choice)
- Extra Paper
- Folder (to keep extra paper in **or** handouts **or** information you find)
- Box, jar, **or** container to keep specimens in temporarily
- Magnifying glass
- measuring tape **or** ruler
- Your wonderful imagination and creativity!

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Weekly Schedule

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert your name)

In the grid, please briefly write what you chose for your learning for math, reading, and writing each day and the time you chose to work on your learning.

| Day  | Monday,<br>April 13th | Tuesday,<br>April 14th | Wednesday,<br>April 15th | Thursday,<br>April 16th | Friday,<br>April 17th |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Math<br><br>Time:                                    |                       |                        |                          |                         |                       |
| Read<br><br>Time:                                    |                       |                        |                          |                         |                       |
| Write<br>(Journal)<br><br>Time:                      |                       |                        |                          |                         |                       |
| Optional:<br>Extra learning<br>you want<br><br>Time: |                       |                        |                          |                         |                       |

Questions? Thoughts? Ideas?Concerns?

Recommended Daily Learning Time:

30 minutes of Journaling

30 minutes of reading

30 minutes math

\*All learning can be kept in a notebook/journal explained above in the materials section.

Let's try 90 minutes of learning each day, broken down into three half hour increments. A half an hour is a good ballpark time to shoot for. You can spend less or more from there as needed to fit your schedule and your learning needs. You can also spread that time throughout the day. Fill out your learning plan in the weekly calendar grid above.

### **Daily Independent Assignments:**

#### **Assignment 1- "The Journal" is your recording tool for writing. (30 minutes, more or less)**

Use your notebook (whichever way you choose from the materials above) to record your thinking in words and pictures, pencil to write with, and colors for your pictures (if you want).

Each day you write, always include the following information:

- Name
- Date
- Temperature
- Weather
- One word or an emoji to describe how you feel

Instead of our classroom at school you now have many unique classrooms around you that you can visit and interact with whether it's under your bed, the refrigerator fruit/vegetable drawer, a house plant, under the sink, around the foundation of your house, a garden, a tackle box and fishing pole, pond, chicken coop, horse stall, under a rock, in the woods, a favorite tree, in a hayfield, at the river/creek or around the Mill Pond. Use your new classrooms to learn.

#### **3 Choices for your focal point of journal/writing entries:**

(I would like you to get outside for this journaling, but I know you can find some interesting things inside as well)

**Choice #1** - Choose a plant or animal that you can physically observe in one spot for at least 5 minutes (I know things move). Sketch your plant or animal in detail. Add color. Really spend time with your sketch. If everyone sketched a leaf and put their sketches and leaves in a pile, would others be able to identify your leaf with your sketch? That is what you want. Write your observations, thoughts, questions, knowledge, wonderings all around your sketch of the specimen you chose.

**Choice #2** - Poetry of Specimen - If you can think back to the beginning of the school year we did a lot of Free Verse Poetry. Poetry does not need to rhyme, but if you can find something outside (or inside) sketch and color with great detail once more and write words or short phrases on your paper (with the sketch) of the thoughts you have on your subject.

**Choice #3** Personal Narrative - You have read chapter books that have little pictures inserted in between or around the text. Find a calm, peaceful spot to sit, breathe, close your eyes, and take in all that your 5 senses can. After 5 minutes or so, begin to think

what you can write about your spot. Incorporate your 5 senses - the detail! A personal narrative is recording you in your time and place. Think of your day or a moment of the day to include in your writing. Insert pictures around or near your text that are described in your narrative ("I" voice).

### **Assignment 2- Read daily. (30 minutes, more or less)**

Read books, read magazines, read instruction manuals, read signs wherever you see them, read newspapers, read poetry, read picture books to younger or older siblings/parents, read cookbooks, read through websites, read chapter books, read letters from a friend or parent (might have to send a letter first). Be creative in your sources of materials to find words from. If you run out of ideas and sources, then I will send something your way to read. The main idea is to not only read, but enjoy your reading time. Read to travel somewhere else or to learn something new!

After you read, or when you're reading, or even before you read, get your journal out (or the 2nd notebook/journal if you are separating your reading and math from "The Journal"), and record your thinking. Remember the poster on our chalkboard full of strategies? Use that to get you going. Keeping track of your learning is a useful tool not just for me, but most importantly you!

### **Things to ALWAYS record in your notebook/journal about your reading:**

- Name, date, time
- Title, author, (Not a book? Give the source of your reading.)
- Pages read (Not a book? Explain the format of what was read.)
- Time spent reading (around or at that 30 minute time slot.)
- Record your reading comprehension in **words and pictures** from the list below. Write in pencil. Use colors for pictures if you want.

### **Comprehension Writing Activities to choose from (choose 2 daily):**

| <u>Fiction (Literary)</u>         | <u>Non-fiction (Informational)</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| -summary                          | -record learning                   |
| -character or setting sketch      | -diagram/sketch                    |
| -compare/contrast characters      | -compare/contrast subject          |
| -interview a character            | -newspaper article on subject      |
| -Predict/Question                 | -Question                          |
| -Connections with world/text/self | -Connections with world/text/self  |
| -Anything else that you think of  | -Anything else you think of        |

### **Assignment 3- Math through IXL and/or MobyMax (30 minutes, more or less)**

I can assign lessons to you on either math source. I know that each of you has your preference. I will be talking with you and your parents soon which tool you want to use. You can use both. When I find out what you are going to use I will begin to assign the lessons. If you do not remember your username/password please have your parents ask me or email me through your Google accounts.

For those of you who do not have internet access or you just want to use paper and pencil, I can print lessons from MobyMax to share with you in weekly paper/pencil packets.

Record your math practice learning in your notebook (whichever notebook method you choose from above in the materials section) Your learning should include:

- Name and date
- Title your learning, such as “Multiplication Facts” or “Adding Grocery Shopping Items” or “Subtracting items purchased from \$20” or “Dividing Money” or “Area of the Dining Room Table” (These are just ideas. Be creative.)
- Show your thinking in numbers, words, and pictures.
- Write about your understanding of your practice.
- Write down questions to ask me that you are not sure about with your learning.

During this first week please practice your basic math facts at your level where you feel you need to work on. Basic facts include adding, subtracting, multiplying and Dividing. Not all of you 3rd and 4th graders have had a lot of exposure or practice to dividing this year. We will work on that. Use a deck of cards, roll dice, dominoes to practice quick fact fluency. If you have mastered fact fluency, then create larger numbers for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. I promise you that these skills you will use for life!

### **Note to Parents:**

As you read through the letter to your child (above), know that my focus is open-ended learning with writing and reading. As long as students are following the assignment outline and using the weekly calendar grid to plan daily learning, then there really is no right or wrong to the learning your child engages in. Please have fun! You are and have been your child’s teacher since birth. You know what is best for them! I can help too!

Open-ended learning is a tool for you and me to assess and direct the daily needs of our children. This learning style provides:

- Individual responsibility for their work (or rather learning).
- Invaluable discussions, activities, interactions and feedback with our children.
- Opportunities for young learners to explore on their own to develop personal views, opinions, and thoughts on the world around them.

The goal is to foster an independent, self-motivated, self-confident, life-long learner.

This is not to say that some sort of structured learning isn’t needed. It is! But for this first week, let’s keep things open-ended and communicate back and forth more needs and questions for me to consider and help you with.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my phone conversations with you all. What I have learned is that all of you have spent more time with your families, have enjoyed this time, and have found creative ways to learn at home. It’s not to say there haven’t been some hair

pulling, teeth-gritting, deep breathing because I-am-going-to-blow-moments...I understand. I am in the same position.

I am including this handout to give you an idea of what I am asking students to be as scientists in their environment at home. I am sure they can find areas to interact with and learn from. Encourage or help your child to find a unique “classroom” in their environment and spend time daily observing and working on their journal.

Field journaling can pull in so many different aspects of learning that are hands-on. There is reading, writing, science, math, social studies in journaling, but to break that down even further there is: thinking, observing, analyzing, forming opinions, awareness, measuring, comparing, contrasting, note taking, discussions, water cycles, photosynthesis, area, perimeter...I could go on! I get excited about this kind of learning.

This is a trial for the week. I would love it if parents could send me through email or to my phone pictures of your child’s most favorite journal entry of the week so I can give feedback and gather information needed to move forward with more learning over the course of time we are not together. If your child is willing to let me share his/her work through google.classroom with the other students in our class as examples to learn from please let me know it’s okay to share.

## FIELD JOURNALING WITH STUDENTS

“Journaling is the single most powerful tool to supercharge your observation, memory, and connection with nature. It is the critical foundational habit of being a naturalist and scientist.” – John Muir Laws

**Remember:** See free journaling activities and tips in *Opening The World Through Nature Journaling*: [www.johnmuirlaws.com](http://www.johnmuirlaws.com)

### Benefits to field journaling:

**Building an emotional connection to nature.** As students engage in focused study and record observations in their journals, they build a connection to that aspect of the natural world. This process will lead to a memory of that place and of the student’s experience—one the student carries in their mind, and in the pages of their journal. **Connections to standards: By engaging in field journaling, students are practicing disciplinary literacy in science.** They are learning how scientists write and communicate. By creating accurate, detailed field journal entries, they are creating science text, using both illustrations and academic language.

### Naturalists and scientists:

- **Have different goals when they approach making a journal entry.** They might choose to focus on recording information about where an organism is found, writing down thoughts/ideas, recording data, capturing a moment, doing biodiversity inventories, etc.
- **Use different strategies to record information.** These might include: labeled drawings, text, measurements, questions, tentative answers based upon further observation, arrows, magnified view circle, charts, etc.

## Field Journaling:

- **Focuses on observations before art.** It's not about pretty pictures, it's about accurate observations and the thinking that happens in the process of journaling.
- **Uses writing and drawing to record information.** Scientific drawings often include labels and accompanying descriptions in writing.

## Instructors who use journals successfully to support science instruction suggest:

- **Pay attention to group and individual needs.** There are great times for journaling, and there are...less great times for journaling. If students are super energetic, have just gotten off the bus, or are very hungry, they won't be able to focus on journaling as much. Weather conditions, like very cold or windy conditions, or extreme heat, can also provide challenges. Set your students up for success in journaling by choosing a time and location for it where they will have the best possible chance of being engaged.
- **Offer structure and scaffolding.** To engage students in journaling, offer them a focused learning experience and some direction for how to record information in their journals—much like a naturalist or scientist.
- **Match scaffolding with learning goals.** The types of observations and thinking students do while journaling will vary based on the kind of scaffolding you offer. Think ahead of time about what part of nature students will focus on, kind of prompt will lead them to make observations and engage in thinking relevant to your learning goals.
- **Give appropriate and supportive feedback.** Avoid the tendency to comment on the artistic quality of drawings. Instead, give feedback on what you are asking students to do—to make accurate observations and record them in drawing and writing. Be non-judgmental as you point out observations students made or methods they used to show thinking on the page.
- **Give students adequate materials for journaling.** Make sure students have at least some blank pages on which to record their observations and experiences.

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