

Fourth Grade Curriculum

Fourth Grade at Springhurst Elementary School is filled with many rich learning experiences. Students gain greater independence and life-long study skills. Science and social studies are departmentalized so students will have the opportunity to switch teachers for one of those subject areas. Enrichment activities in the arts, math, ecology, and student government are offered for students to take part in.



Language Arts

Our Language Arts curriculum is aligned with both the Common Core State Standards and offers students challenging reading and writing experiences. We use a variety of approaches to build the necessary skills and strategies for success in reading and writing.

The children will actively participate in *Reading Workshop* and/or *Writing Workshop* each day. The *Reading Workshop* begins with a whole-class lesson that explicitly teaches a reading strategy or skill. Students will then practice what they learned with an assigned or self-selected text. During the independent reading time, students will have opportunities to self-select their own appropriate books and discuss literature with partners, small groups, and teachers. The goal of the workshop model is to offer instruction that meets the specific needs of all of the children in the classroom while giving them the time they need to practice using the strategies and skills they are learning. Students are expected to read at home for at least 20 minutes each evening. They will also periodically be asked to respond to their reading.

During the *Writing Workshop* students are taught how to write well through the writing process approach. The writing process includes gathering ideas in a writer's notebook, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students will confer with teachers and peers throughout the process. Each student will be expected to complete several writing pieces from a variety of genres, including narrative, persuasive and informational.

Students continue to develop and build upon vocabulary and conventional language skills during a separate Word Work time. They are instructed in vocabulary, word analysis (prefixes, suffixes, and root words), grammar, and spelling rule, and other writing mechanics through daily activities. Students will be using the *Wordly Wise 3000 Program* as the basis for vocabulary instruction and the *Sadlier Grammar Workshop* text as the foundation for grammar instruction.

Cursive handwriting is reviewed, which includes both upper and lower case letters. It is expected that certain published writing pieces will be completed in cursive handwriting.



Math



The math curriculum in fourth grade is called Primary Mathematics, based on a program developed by the Ministry of Singapore. The program features a balance of problem solving, mental math, and computational skill development. Primary Mathematics features a Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract approach. When learning a new concept, students will often work with concrete materials, then use drawings and pictures to help them understand the concept, and then move toward abstract symbols and algorithms. Students are given ample opportunities both for practice and application of new ideas learned. The program is closely aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

Mathematical ideas are developed through problem solving, and students will use the bar model drawing approach to help them make sense of word problems. Reasoning and communication skills are fostered throughout the program, as students are expected to explain their thinking to others. Assessments will be given both during and at the end of units.

The topics that will be addressed this year include:

- Place Value
- Operations with Whole Numbers
- Fractions and Operations with Fractions
- Geometry/Area and Perimeter
- Decimals and Operations with Decimals
- Measurement

Students are expected to have quick recall of their multiplication facts (0-10) in 4th grade.



Science



The fourth grade science program is an inquiry based program. *Full Options Science System (F.O.S.S.)* is divided up into hands-on investigations and activities. In these investigations and activities students learn to ask questions and answer those using scientific methods of inquiry, both independently and in cooperative groups. Students take part in a variety of exciting, motivating, hands-on experiences that engage them intellectually and have real world relevance. Hands-on performance based assessments and written assessments of concepts are administered periodically.

Science Units of Study

- I. Magnetism and Electricity
 - a. magnetism
 - b. parallel circuits
 - c. series circuits
- II. Measurement
 - a. standard vs. non-standard units
 - b. linear
 - c. mass
 - d. volume
 - e. temperature
- III. Simple Machines
 - a. work
 - b. types of simple machines
- IV. Structures of Life
 - a. plants and crayfish
 - b. needs of living organisms



Social Studies



The Springhurst Social Studies curriculum follows the New York State and Dobbs Ferry Standards. In fourth grade we focus on the study of New York State, including its geography and regions, and its history. We study New York State's early inhabitants (Native Americans, Dutch, English, French) and their influences. We continue studying New York State during colonial times and the American Revolution, and learn about the establishment of our government and its underlying principles. We explore New York's role in the women's rights and slavery reform movements, as well as industrialization and expansion periods. Map skills are integrated as we look at a variety of maps with regard to New York State's history. Projects may be assigned periodically.



Springhurst FLES Program



The Spanish FLES curriculum for fourth grade is a sequential model in which all students receive 20-minute sessions 4 times per week. FLES instruction is proficiency-oriented with a greater focus on meaningful communication than on grammatical structure. Students are encouraged first to understand and then to produce in the language. Using an immersion approach, similar to the way children learn their first language, students participate in language training activities that are geared to the child's interest level and include experiences with cultural practices and integration of thematic content. These experiences emphasize listening, speaking, reading and comprehension in meaningful, communicative

contents: social/cultural situations, games, songs, and rhymes in addition to experiences with arts, crafts, movement and total physical response.

Each lesson lays the foundation for the next and children gain confidence in listening and speaking. As they follow the sequential FLES curriculum each year, they eventually progress toward reading and writing in the target language.

It is at the fourth grade level that students begin to experience some writing in the target language based on prompts and modeling from their teacher. As they have seen the written form of the language in previous years and lessons they have begin to make connections between sound/symbol relationships and are, at this point, ready to begin practicing the language through writing.



Homework



Reading for a minimum of 20 minutes each night is expected. You may read with your child, to your child or have your child read alone. It is important that you encourage your child to talk about what was read. You can talk about the content and share your responses and reactions. Please make reading a priority in your home.

Various combinations of reading, math, vocabulary, grammar, and writing homework will be given on a daily basis. The purpose of these assignments is simply the practice of concepts that the child is working on. Please set aside a quiet time and place for homework. Allow your child to work independently as much as possible. Your interest in your child's work is a very important component in the beginning development of good work habits and a positive attitude.



Communications



Throughout the year, we will be observing your child's growth and development so that we can support his/her individual needs. We are always available to discuss any thoughts, questions, or concerns you may have. You can reach out to us by telephone, via email, or handwritten note.

Please remember that teachers need to be notified of all changes in transportation by way of a note from you. Last minute changes should be called into the office rather than being sent via email, as teachers may not access their email until after students have left for the day.

We look forward to a wonderful year with your child!