

June 2013

Dear Families and Incoming Third Graders,

We hope that you are enjoying your summer holiday and we are looking forward to an exciting school year! While you are relaxing on your vacation, remember to keep your brain active and engaged. In order to avoid the "summer slump" that sometimes happens when students are out of school, we have compiled a list of activities for your child to work on over the summer to keep his/her skills sharp. Vacation settings and travel are wonderful experiences for children and hopefully many of these activities will fit in well with your holiday plans.

Summer Reading Activities

READ, READ, READ!! The one piece of research that is irrefutable is that the MORE students read, the more SUCCESSFUL readers they become. ☺ During the summer, encourage your child to read daily. Do not limit their choices. Just as adults enjoy different types of text at different times (newspapers, magazines, journals, novels), so do children. Encourage them to read magazines, books, websites, poems...even the back of a cereal box! Aim to read 4-5 chapter books over the summer.

BOOK vs. MOVIE-Choose a book that was made into a movie. Read the book and then watch the movie. Compare and contrast the differences and similarities. Which one did you like better? A list of quality literature that has been turned into movies includes:

The Tale of Despereaux
Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
The Lightning Thief
Charlotte's Web
The Littles
The Borrowers
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

LIBRARY-Go to the local library and encourage your child to check out books. Many times the library has a list of summer activities for children that help encourage a love of reading.

PARTNER READING-Choose a book that your child will enjoy and get two copies, one for your child and one for you! Read it together like a book club. Set goals that you will each read independently (ie: Chapters 1 and 2) and then come together when you have reached the goal and discuss what you thought, enjoyed, were confused about, etc. This is a powerful activity that engages kids, as well as improved their comprehension.

READ POETRY ALOUD- Reading poetry is a great way to practice fluency. Poetry is short and fun to read. Have your child practice several poems and then ask them to perform for the family.

PLAY APPLES to APPLES Jr. -This is a great game for building vocabulary. The greater a student's vocabulary, the more likely they are to become strong readers.

www.textproject.org - This "Summer Reads" website offers *free* downloadable and printable books for incoming 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. Each book comes with comprehension activities at the end of the story.

Summer Writing Activities

Summer Journal Writing

It isn't always easy to get kids to write during the summer. Here are some tips that will make journal writing fun and easy. Start by buying a fun journal. A soft cover spiral notebook makes a great summer journal. There are many with fun, novelty covers.

Set up a regular journal writing time. Pick a schedule that is realistic, but regular. It could be daily at 4pm, or every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. It is great if an adult is around but not directly observing the writing. Perhaps pay the bills or make the grocery list during journal writing time.

Prompts are super to get students started, however, in the beginning, children might need to be challenged to write a minimum number of lines. Pick an amount that is appropriate, perhaps 6 lines for beginners. Increase the required amount as the writer's abilities improve.

Always have the child re-read their entry. Making a checklist is helpful.

- Does every sentence begin with a capital letter?
- Does every sentence end with a period or some form of punctuation?
- Does the entry make sense?
- Underline 2 words that just might be spelled incorrectly. Check it out with a dictionary or adult.

*Try an *interactive journal*. This is where two friends (or a parent and child) take turns writing to each other. This is especially helpful for children who never know what to write. A parent might start the journal entry by asking what activities the child is looking forward to this summer.

Using Technology for Writing Activities

Storybird - This is a great website where children can be authors and write e-books. The site is free but requires registration. Children write stories based on beautiful artwork available on the website. E-books can then be publicly or privately shared online.

Emails - Find a friend or relative who will be a reliable pen-pal and return letters quickly. This is a great opportunity to get to know a distant cousin or aunt. Email correspondence gives writing a purpose and won't seem like a chore. A child may need adult help at the beginning of the summer with the initial contact letter. Send out three or four, to increase the chance that at least one of the pen-pals will continue to correspond all summer long. Alternatively, the medium could be postcards instead of emails.

Word Activities and Games

Summer writing doesn't have to involve writing long stories or reports. Writing and games involving single words can be just as valuable. It will increase vocabulary and spelling skills. Whenever parents need to write things down during the summer, they should consider having the child take the pen. It may require some time and patience initially but the benefits are valuable.

- **Lists** - Have children make the grocery, packing or cleaning lists. Encourage kids to make a *Things to Do* list for themselves every week. Don't correct every single spelling word. Pick only one or two common words on each list and point out the errors. Kids will be turned off if every list is followed by a spelling lecture. Keep it fun and don't worry, the spelling will improve.

- **Scrabble or Upwards** - Word games increase a child's word knowledge and spelling skills. Set aside a regular Scrabble night. For younger children, Upwards is great. Feel free to customize the rules to suit the child's spelling level. On the first night, allow them to use all the tiles to spell anything. Upwards is great for playing with word families. Spell *sit* and ask the child to change the word by changing only one letter. See how many times the original word can be changed, one letter at a time.
- **Word Searches** - Children love doing Word Searches. With the website, [Puzzlemaker](#), kids can make different puzzles for themselves or their friends. This free site is great for puzzle making. Adults might want to make puzzles that will target particular types of words. Some suggestions are homonyms or words with prefixes and suffixes.

Summer Math Activities

Ordering/Comparing

- ⌚ Play the card game "War" with each player drawing 2 or 3 cards to make a number.
- ⌚ Draw a greater than ($>$), less than ($<$), and equal sign ($=$) on separate index cards. Use 2, 3, or 4 cards from a deck of playing cards to make a number. Repeat. Compare the numbers and put the correct sign between them.

Estimating and Counting

- ⌚ Skip count by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, and 10s.

Addition and Subtraction

- ⌚ Make/Buy flashcards to practice addition and subtraction facts to 18. Challenge yourself: How many facts can you answer in 1 minute? Can you answer all 100 in 3 minutes?
- ⌚ Use dice/cards to practice adding and subtracting 1-, 2-, and 3-digit numbers. Be sure to write the addition/subtraction sentence too.
- ⌚ When you are out and about, add the numbers you see on a license plate. Challenge a family member or friend to see who can find the sum the fastest.
- ⌚ Difference Challenge - Take 2 playing cards and subtract the smaller number from the larger one. Record the difference. Play continues until each player has 5 numbers recorded. Add your list of numbers. The winner is the player with the lowest sum (total).
- ⌚ Difference Challenge Level Up - take 4 cards and make two 2-digit numbers. Subtract these and record the difference. Repeat 4 times. Add your list of numbers. The winner is the player with the lowest sum.

Place Value

- ⌚ Use dice or a deck of cards (without the jokers and face cards). Each player turns over 2, 3, or 4 cards and makes a number. The player with the largest number takes all the cards. Tell the value of each digit. 542 \rightarrow 5 is 500; 4 is 40; 2 is 2.
- ⌚ Use dice or cards to make a 2-, 3-, or 4-digit number. What number is 10 more? 10 less? 100 more? 100 less? 1000 more? 1000 less?

Money

- ⌚ Race to \$1. Roll two dice. Add the two numbers together and take out that amount of money from a bag of change. For example, if you roll a 2 and a 5, take out \$0.07. Players can exchange 5 pennies for 1 nickel, 2 nickels for 1 dime, etc. Continue rolling dice until someone reaches \$1.
- ⌚ Keep a piggy bank and count change.
- ⌚ Get a handful of coins. What coins do you have? How much is your handful of coins worth?
- ⌚ Pick an amount of money less than \$20. Find as many different ways as you can to represent that amount with coins and bills.

- ⌚ Assign each letter of the alphabet a money value (A=1¢, B=2¢, C=3¢, etc.). Find out how much your name is worth. Who in your family has the most expensive name? Repeat with everyday words. Can you find a word worth \$1.00?

Allow your child to handle money at the store. Talk to them about how much money they owe and how much change they should receive. Students incoming to 3rd grade need to know the value of all coins. This will increase their sense of the value of coins/dollars, as well as addition and subtraction.

Time

- ⌚ Make a paper clock and practice telling time to the hour, half-hour, 15-minute, and 5-minute.
- ⌚ Predict how long it will take you to do different activities - brush your teeth, read some pages from a book, color a picture, etc. Then time yourself to see how close you were.
- ⌚ Count how many days and weeks you will have on summer vacation.
- ⌚ Pick an activity. Look at an analog clock and record the time. Complete the activity. Look at the clock again and record the ending time. How much time did it take you to complete the activity?

It is a great idea to purchase an analog clock for your house and to teach your child to tell time according to that clock, rather than a digital clock.

Measurement/Graphing

- ⌚ Use M&M, Skittles, etc. to create a graph based on color.
- ⌚ Cook with an adult. Read the recipe and use measuring cups to help measure ingredients for cooking and baking.
- ⌚ Pick 5 things in your bedroom, house, yard, etc. and measure them with a ruler. Write down the length and width of each object in inches and in centimeters.

Summer Science Activities

Growing Plants from Seeds

This summer, try to grow a plant from a seed. Record your daily observations by tracking the plant's color, height, and any other notable characteristics. To extend this project, plant your seed outside or in a larger container and continue to record your observations weekly.

Keep a Moon Journal

Have you ever noticed how the moon's shape changes throughout a month? Try your hand at scientific observation by drawing a picture of the moon each night. Over the month, you will see the 8 moon phases. Use a solar system book or the internet to label your moon drawings using the following terms: new moon, waxing crescent, waxing gibbous, first quarter, full moon, waning gibbous, last quarter and waning crescent.

Summer Social Studies Activities

Travel Journal

Are you traveling this summer? If so, write a journal entry from the place you are visiting. You should include information about the landscape, food, language, and landmarks you visit. Try your hand at sketching the beautiful and interesting things you see!

Code Writers

The ancient Egyptians used a series of characters called hieroglyphics to write to others. Now it's your turn! Create your own language code using pictures and lines to write a secret message as well as a key that shows what letter each picture represents. Then, have someone try to solve it!