

GRADE 5 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Fifth Graders have increased strength and better resist fatigue than at earlier ages.

The ten-year-old child grows slowly and steadily in height and weight through the year. That physical growth is symbolic of what is happening to the ten-year-old-intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Fifth graders are also slowly and steadily turning away from childhood and toward adolescence.

The ten-year-old now is able to assume personal responsibility for dress and grooming, to concentrate for longer periods of time, and to show better command of time. Along with a developing sense of humor, there is also likely to be an emerging interest in the opposite sex. Most of it is talk, and almost all play is in single-sex groups.

Fifth graders have increased strength and better resist fatigue than at earlier ages, but they need about ten-and-a-half hours of sleep to be well rested and healthy.

Many fifth graders express an interest in organized games and team play which is a natural outgrowth of their need for strenuous physical activity. They also have a strong need for a sense of belonging to a group, team, and especially to the family.

Though ten-year-olds grow steadily more mature and should even begin to make some of their own decisions, they often require large doses of sympathy and security both at home and school. They also profit from frequent recognition and approval of their efforts. The curriculum in fifth grade is designed to broaden and deepen the knowledge and processes begun in fourth grade.

Curriculum

By the end of grade five, students will be able to use their knowledge of word origins and relationships, as well as historical and literary context clues, to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of words at their level. Through reading a wide variety of literary texts, student will strengthen their comprehension skills. They read literature taken from the California Reading List. Fifth graders will describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of text while relating text structure, organization, and purpose. They can analyze the text and organize it in sequential order, while drawing inferences, conclusions, and generalizations.

Fifth graders will write clear, coherent, and focused essays, exhibiting awareness of audience and purpose. Essays include formal introduction, bodies of supporting evidence, and conclusions. They successfully use the stages of the writing process. Narrative essays, responses to literature, research reports, and persuasive compositions are completed with proper punctuation, grammar, capitalization and correct spelling in legible handwriting.

The fifth grade student will create simple documents using electronic media. Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas and relate to the background and interests of the audience. These include significant events and details, clear ideas and images, and examples of textual evidence. They evaluate the content of oral communication including persuasive techniques such as promises, dares, and flattery.

The concepts of mathematics introduced in fifth grade are increasingly complex and abstract. The fifth grader's studies will encompass new material in algebra (solving word problems involving missing variables), in numbers (using decimals and fractions), in geometry (identifying angles and properties of polygons and congruent triangles), and functions (graphing and interpreting linear functions).

They will also explore new concepts in statistics and probability (calculating and interpreting averages), and in logic and language (classifying and sorting objects using two or more attributes).

Fifth grade history looks at the War for Independence, the causes and strong counter-reaction from the colonies, and the role of many patriots and leaders who risked their lives and property by signing the Declaration of Independence. A study of the Declaration of Independence and its importance to the new government will end this unit. Westward expansion is studied as well as the northward migration of Mexican settlers. The reactions of American Indians to this expansion is

introduced. Map work is used to show how and when western lands became states. Students study immigration from 1850 to present and look at the contributions people made from different cultures/countries. Fifth grade history will compare and contrast the three colonial regions of the English colonies: New England, Middle and Southern. Life in the original thirteen colonies is researched as well.

From studying the basics of botany and the systems of the body in life science to the nature of sound energy and electrical properties in physical science, the fifth grader is immersed in an active, hands-on science program. The program is geared toward having the students think and behave scientifically.

In earth science the students study weather and climate. They try to predict weather after tracking components that affect weather conditions.

Health instruction in fifth grade focuses on healthful living, disease prevention, and risk reduction by building social skills that promote responsible decision making. Students study the digestive system and its disorders, the role of nutrients, and the importance of cardiovascular fitness on overall health. Fifth graders are introduced to the menstrual cycle in a short presentation by District nurses.

Avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is taught through positive decision making covered in the D.A.R.E. program.

In physical education, the student will work on muscle development and movement skills in sports like basketball, volleyball, softball, and track.

The range of lessons in the visual and performing arts for fifth graders includes planned art docent programs, lessons in rhythmic structure, an exploration of careers in art, and a variety of performance genres. A student may even opt to join a school chorus or take instrumental music in fifth grade.

Students develop a capacity for enjoying and participating in all of the arts, reinforce skills for effective artistic expression, and heighten appreciation for the contributions of the arts and their role in shaping and reflecting the history of all cultures.

Perspective

Fifth graders have moved into a new realm of education, a world rich with new ideas and facts. To succeed at this higher level of thinking and understanding requires an active learner. That is what fifth graders become. They will write, research, read, discuss, design, plan, present, interpret, and much more as they move through the curriculum.

In real learning, students are workers. What is significant is what students know and what they can do with what they know. To imbue students with the necessary skills, the fifth grade curriculum demands active learning.

An effective curriculum also addresses the developing characters of children. It must stress good work habits, perseverance, honesty, self-reliance and consideration of others. These qualities are as important for the student's future as any of the academic skills acquired.