

Mrs. Fischer's 6th grade Science Course Description & Expectations

Welcome to Bret Harte Middle School and 6th grade Science! In this year-long course, we will explore concepts outlined in the California Content Standards for Sixth Grade Science, including: **Tools of a Scientist, Lab Safety & Metric System, Earth's Structure & Plate Tectonics, Shaping the Earth's Surface** through earthquakes, volcanoes, weathering & erosion), **Ecology & Resources** (natural resources, and the transfer of energy on Earth, Earth's water and weather). In addition to the Earth Science Standards, we will continue to develop the San Jose Unified School District's Lifelong Learning Standards: Students will be effective communicators, informed thinkers, self-directed learners, collaborative workers, responsible members of society, and information processors. Our textbook, *Focus on Earth Science (California Edition)*, is published by Glencoe McGraw-Hill; students can access an online student edition as well as resources such as online study tools, practice quizzes, and a multi-lingual glossary at <http://glencoe.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0078741831/> Links are provided on the classroom website to the publisher's online resources.

COURSEWORK

BINDER & HOMEWORK: Assignments and any ongoing work will be kept neatly, organized and complete in the binder. Homework is given almost every night, except most Fridays. Students are expected to bring their binder and the McGraw-Hill "Science Notebook" to class each day. Unfinished class work is homework unless otherwise stated. Homework assignments often involve reading from the textbook, taking notes, completing activities in the Science Notebook workbook, or Reading Essentials workbook, as well as worksheets or short assignments. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified. Any homework from the textbook must be done in full complete sentences (FCS) that restate the question (RSQ) or students may write out the question (WOTQ). Students will organize all notes, handouts, worksheets, homework, and other assignments in a 3-ring binder (or section of a binder). These will be checked and graded periodically. If an assignment (graded or un-graded) is missing from the Notebook/Binder Check, or is incomplete the work receives a zero for the check.

QUIZZES/TESTS/FINAL TEST- Quizzes are short exams to check for understanding and may be given unannounced. Tests are announced in advance and students are given guidance on how and what to study in preparation for the test. Students will review for tests in class and must also study at home. Students will take a cumulative final test near the end of each semester.

LABS & PROJECTS- We will be doing frequent hands-on labs/activities in small groups as we explore scientific concepts. We will do several longer projects throughout the year. Students may be given time in class to work on some projects, usually they will need to complete the project as homework. Students may also need to coordinate with other students work on a project outside of school. Grading of work done in groups may be individualized for each member based on his or her participation and contribution. **Projects are not accepted late;** if there is an absence on a project due date, please make arrangements for the project to be brought to school on the date it is due (work may be delivered to the office or can be delivered to myself before / after school)

GRADES

The San Jose Unified School District mails progress to reports to students six times during the school year. It is important for students and parents to check grades and assignment credit on the Pinnacle Internet Viewer (PIV). I try to update the grade book weekly; collected assignments should be entered from the previous week by Thursday. Letter grades for this class are based on a percentage of total points as shown on the right column. Students are responsible for all assignments, which must be turned in on time. Extra credit is offered on some assignments. Students are expected to avoid plagiarism by using quotes or paraphrasing AND accurately citing their resources in bibliographies using the MLA format. Students are expected to complete all assignments on time.

NEATNESS COUNTS- Proper spelling, grammar, neatness, completeness, and adherence to directions all have an impact on your grade. Make sure your work reflects the quality of your ideas and effort!

LATE WORK- As students move into middle school, they need to take responsibility for turning in their work, complete and on time. Late work is given partial credit (70% of the score that the paper merits). Missing assignments are recorded as a "Z" or zero points. Any work submitted after the 5th week of the grading period will be entered for partial credit *after* the start of the next grading period. **Projects and extra credit assignments are NOT accepted late. For more detail on absences & late work, see EXPECTATIONS (on back).**

RULES/TARDIES- Classroom rules are posted and referred to in class. Students who do not follow the rules can expect to receive classroom detention, additional assignment, phone call home or a behavior referral to the school administration. If necessary, a parent, teacher, and student conference will be scheduled. Disruptive behavior in class will result in disciplinary actions in accordance with school policy. Similarly, school policy will be followed in and out of the science classroom with regard to bullying, academic dishonesty, tardies, gum and cell phones. **Bret Harte's Rules:** 1) Be in your assigned learning place with appropriate materials when the bell rings. 2) Gum and food are NOT allowed in class. 3) Follow all district rules, including dress code. 4) Listen to the person in charge and follow all directions. 5) Show respect for each other, all staff members, and school property. 6) Participate in creating a pleasant supportive environment by being courteous and polite.

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All school district and school rules must be followed. Bullying is unacceptable; all students deserve to be safe and feel safe. If a student is being bullied, report it to an administrator. Students are NOT allowed to chew gum on campus, please help us to enforce the rule. Cell phones should not be used during school hours (this includes passing time, lunch, making or receiving calls, text messaging, etc.,); they are to remain off and preferably out of sight. Confiscated phones are turned over to an administrator/ the office at the end of the day for a parent/guardian pick up.

BEING READY TO LEARN- As students enter the classroom, they show the teachers the previous nights homework, students are expected to read the "Sponge" on the board for directions. While in the classroom, students are expected to participate in discussions, answer questions, take notes, participate in activities and labs, and keep the classroom orderly. Students are responsible for keeping track of assignments in a planner, and binders will be checked periodically.

ABSENCES/MISSED WORK- Absent students must check class website and/or call a Study Buddy for assignments and missed notes. Some quizzes and tests missed during excused absences can be made up upon return. Labs and some tests cannot be made up during class time, and will require other arrangements; it is the student's responsibility to arrange a make up time with Mrs. Fischer. Students are also responsible for obtaining any worksheets and notes given during absences. Absent work from illness is due # days absent after return to school. (If you are absent for 2 days due to illness, your work is due 2 days after your return). Students who participated in independent study should realize that the work assigned cannot adequately take the place of all class activities that occurred while they were gone. Students should be present in class whenever they are well.

LAB SAFETY- Proper behavior and safety are very important in a lab class. Any student who fools around or behaves in an unsafe manner in laboratory activities will be removed from the activity and receive zero points for each lab missed. No student will be allowed to endanger themselves or others, misuse equipment, or interfere in the work of others. Students must follow instructions and show respect for others in the classroom.

NEED HELP? NEED MORE INFORMATION? NEED TO CONFIRM MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS?

Many questions can be answered by exploring the classroom website, it contains course information, homework (updated weekly) and there are links to various resources. <http://underthemicroscope.microfisch.com/>

I'm usually available to work with students before and after school; students and/or families may drop-in Fridays from 2:30-3:00. It's best to make an appointment to make sure we'll meet up. The best way to reach me is through e-mail: jill_fischer@sjsud.org or to telephone the school office and leave a message. In order to send an email, you'll need to make sure your email address is registered with the district email server.

Details on \$6 lab donation to follow in a few days.

REQUIRED MATERIALS TO BRING TO CLASS EVERY DAY *If providing these supplies presents a hardship, please let me know.*

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Special section in the binder just for Science | <input type="checkbox"/> This year's Bret Harte <u>planner</u> (or other method for writing homework). | If lost or damaged, Glencoe McGraw-Hill Textbook cost is \$70, the "Science Notebook" student edition is \$22, "Reading Essentials" student edition is \$28. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing materials that include pen (black or dark blue ink), sharpened pencils, red correction pen and eraser | <input type="checkbox"/> Glue & calculator are optional | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 1/2" by 11" white lined binder paper | <input type="checkbox"/> White-out tape is optional | |
| | (Please, do NOT bring liquid white-out) | |

Instructions: Please sign below and fill out the *Science Permission & Information Slip* (other side of *Student Data Sheet*) and return it to let me know that you and your parents have read this course information. **Keep this in your notebook permanently to use as a reference.**

Student name & period _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Parent Signature _____

Study Buddy telephone numbers – Call them when absent to find out what you missed!

Study Buddy name _____ Phone _____

Study Buddy name _____ Phone _____