

**High Peaks Elementary**  
**Fifth Grade Curriculum Guide**  
**Ms. Struble ~ 2011-2012**

The fifth grade Core Knowledge Sequence is both fascinating and challenging. As we work through the broad base of knowledge, subjects will be integrated and used to support one another to bring the learning to life. The students will be writing in math and calculating in their writing. They will learn more about our world and demonstrate their reading skills in social studies and science. Connections across the curriculum will add depth to our studies this year.

### **Language Arts**

**Writing:** Writing is taught in a Writer's Workshop format. Students are encouraged to find authentic purposes for their writing and to write about things that are of both interest and concern to them. At times during the year, some of our writing projects will be linked with other studies, whether literature, science, or social studies. Students will write in a variety of genres including narrative, poetry, essays, and letters. Research projects will help students to synthesize what they read into what they write as they become familiar with the use of source material and create a basic bibliography. We will spend time reviewing and strengthening our paragraphing skills to better organize and express our thoughts. Throughout the year, we will focus on the qualities of excellent writing, including precise word choice and description, sentence fluency, and sound mechanics.

**Reading:** The students will be reading a great deal in fifth grade. It is ideal for them to have the opportunity to choose a large amount of what they read according to their own interests. The students are expected to read at least 30 minutes daily (including weekends) and to record their reading on a Reading Log four days each week. Occasionally, there will be reading assignments sent home. These can also be used for reading log entries.

**Fiction and Drama:** The Core Knowledge 5<sup>th</sup> grade literature program includes a wide variety of fascinating stories, drama, myths and legends. Often these will be tied in directly with our social studies.

**Stories:**           *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain  
                          Episodes from *Don Quixote*, by Miguel de Cervantes  
                          Tales of Sherlock Holmes, by Arthur Conan Doyle  
                          *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, By Frederick Douglass  
                          *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodges Burnett

**Drama:**           Plays by William Shakespeare

Poetry, myths and legends, historical fiction, and speeches complete our year of reading.

**Grammar, Spelling and Word Study:** This year we will be using the Rebecca Sitton spelling and word study program which places an emphasis on high utility words. Students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of proper English usage and spelling in their writing. We will review and practice recognition of the basic parts of speech. There will be grammar, editing, and word study lessons to teach proper usage throughout the year.

### **Social Studies**

**Geography:** Our social studies program will include a study of U.S. and World geography. We are beginning the year with a brief study of the regions of the United States including the capitals of each state. We will also briefly review coordinate geography, climate regions, and time zones. As we progress through our studies in world history, we will learn about the geography of the corresponding regions. Students will become familiar with the countries of Central and South America, Europe, and Asia.

**American History:** The first half of the year will be devoted to the study of American History from approximately 1800 to 1900. This intensely dynamic time in history encompasses Westward Expansion, the Civil War and Reconstruction, as well as the conflicts with the Plains and Western Native American tribes. The influence of geography and climate will be examined in relation to the settlement of the West.

**World Civilization:** The second half of the year will be devoted to the study of World history. We will progress chronologically beginning with European exploration, trade and colonization. The Mesoamerican civilizations of the Aztec, Inca, and Maya will be touched upon as we examine the impact of exploration on native populations. The incredible increase in information and curiosity of this time period will lead us into our study of the Renaissance and Reformation. We will then explore the eastern edges of Europe and the early growth of Russia, and finally travel to the Far East to experience a brief unit on Feudal Japan.

We will be using the [Pearson Learning Core Knowledge](#) textbook for History and Geography along with many supplemental trade books this year. This text has been custom designed for the teaching of the Core Knowledge curriculum and is endorsed by the Core Knowledge Foundation.

## Science

We will begin our science study this year with inquiry-based activities that model and allow students to utilize the scientific method. This work will help them to prepare for the Science Fair which will take place on April 19.

In October, we will begin our study of life-science with a unit on the structures and processes of plant and animal cells. The knowledge gained in this unit will provide a scientific foundation for students to understand the classification of living things. As part of our unit on classification, students will have the opportunity to write a report about the classification of a favorite animal. We will then progress to a comprehensive study of plants, including their life cycles, structures, photosynthesis, growth, and reproduction.

In March, our fifth grade chemistry unit will cover the basic building blocks of matter and chemical notation. Our studies will include states of matter, as well as chemical and physical change. This unit will challenge students to inquire and use the scientific method to explore their world. This year the science fair will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup>. As this date coincides with our study of chemistry, we encourage students to do a chemistry-related Science Fair project.

In the late spring, we will study the endocrine system. We will investigate the importance of the major glands of the body for digestion and chemical balance, and other hormones including those related to human growth and development. This will lead into our last unit of the year which will deal specifically with the changes of adolescence, and human growth and development.

**Cal-Wood:** Our overnight trip to Cal-Wood is planned for April 11, 12, and 13. This fantastic outdoor educational experience provides excellent hands-on opportunities to build upon our studies of geography, classification, plants, and chemistry. Students will also enjoy the enriching opportunities for building social skills, and showing their creativity through art work and writing. Our first field trip of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to Cal-Wood will promote team building among our students and acclimate them to the site.

## Mathematics

We will be using the [Everyday Mathematics](#) program (University of Chicago Mathematics Project) in our math classes. This program, which is supported by a wide range of research, matches up well with the Core Knowledge Sequence as well as the BVSD Standards, and the standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). Using assessment to guide our instruction, the math lessons will be flexible, allowing us to meet the individual needs of our students as effectively as possible.