

August 9, 2009

Dear Parent(s) and Student,

Welcome to the fifth grade! I hope that you had a restful and enjoyable summer. I am thrilled to be working with you and your child this year in the fifth grade. This will be a challenging and exciting year. My number one priority is building a classroom community of life-long learners. I believe if we work together this will be accomplished. I know this will be a fun and productive year for all of us.

I have attached a packet that contains an overview of the fifth grade curriculum. I have included a list of behavior expectations and consequences as well as other information and forms that need to be signed and returned. I ask that you read over these carefully with your child and return the signed forms by Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Again, I look forward to working closely with you and your child. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me through note, email, visit, or phone call. Together, we will make this year a great learning experience for your child.

School Phone: 734-2232

Email: [lsharpton@cullmancats.net](mailto:lsharpton@cullmancats.net)

Thank you,

Lacy Sharpton

## Language Arts

In the language arts curriculum, students continue to develop and refine language abilities. Emphasis is placed on comprehending and expressing meaning through reading, listening, viewing, writing, speaking, and presenting. Students will express meaning through descriptive, narrative, and expository writing.

## Word Study

During our weekly word study, we will learn rules and principles of spelling. I will use words from student writing and frequently used words. Students may also help generate words for our mini lessons.

### Buddy Study Cycle

Monday- I will provide a mini lesson geared toward a specific spelling rule or principle.

Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

Tuesday- Making Connections

Wednesday- Buddy Check (Practice Test)

Thursday- Spelling Test

**Note:** A word list will be sent home on Friday with the newsletter so that your child will be able to study for the upcoming week's test. All buddy work will be completed in class.

## Writing Workshop

During Writing Workshop, I will give a mini lesson which will be followed by students writing in his/her writing notebook or working on writing projects, and time to share pieces of our work. Students will be responsible for writing numerous essays in and out of the classroom this year. Students will occasionally be asked to write in his/her Writer's Notebook at home.

Writing Workshop will help us prepare for the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing that will be given to all fifth graders on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Please encourage your child to keep up with all writing projects.

### Language grades will consist of the following:

- ❖ Daily Oral Language and Paragraph Editing Quizzes
- ❖ Spelling Tests
- ❖ Chapter and Unit Tests
- ❖ Writing Projects

### Reading Workshop

During Reading Workshop, I will give a mini lesson, meet with guided reading groups while students are independently reading, and then we will gather as a whole group to share thoughts and opinions.

- ❖ **Mini lesson:** short lesson focused on a specific procedure, strategy, or skill
- ❖ **Guided reading:** small group instruction to reemphasize a procedure, strategy, or skill taught in the mini lesson
- ❖ **Independent reading:** students read or work individually and silently
- ❖ **Share session:** students will gather to show an application of the procedure, strategy, or skill taught in the mini lesson

We will participate in book study groups throughout the year. This would be compared to a book club. Your child will have four to five different books to choose from, written by the same author, or based around a specific theme. Once a student chooses a book, it places them into a group that they will work with during the time of that book study group. These groups change monthly to give your child the opportunity to work with different students and to gather different views and opinions while reading great literature.

### Vocabulary

Each week your child will be responsible for learning a certain number of vocabulary words. These words will come from interactive read alouds, the Vocabulary Workshop book, and words we encounter in class discussions. Please encourage your child to look for these words when reading, use in conversations, and use in his/her writing.

## **Accelerated Reader**

The purpose of AR is to motivate children to read. Given our Reading Workshop setup, the children are held accountable daily and engaged in numerous reading activities. Therefore, students are NOT required to achieve a certain number of AR points. Students will NOT be given a grade based on the number of AR points they acquire for independent AR reading. We will however take AR comprehension test grades from our book club assignments.

## **Reading Log**

Students are required to read nightly for at least 30 minutes and write a short summary of the pages read. Parents should document reading each night on the reading log found in the student's take-home folder. I will check these daily and collect them on Friday.

## **Independent Reading Plan**

The IRP is a reading project that will be completed throughout the months of April and May. Students will have the opportunity to choose books from assigned genres of literature and will be required to complete activities that correspond with each book. You will receive more information on this as time gets closer.

## **Reading grades will consist of the following:**

- ❖ Reading Responses
- ❖ Book Study Groups: Activity Packet, AR Comprehension Test, and Participation (monthly)
- ❖ Skill and Strategy Quizzes
- ❖ Vocabulary Tests
- ❖ Independent Reading Plan (April and May)
- ❖ Reading Log

**Please encourage your child to read at least 30 minutes each night.**

## **Math**

The math curriculum emphasizes fluency in computing and problem solving with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. Students apply basic operations to problem-solving situations with a greater understanding of the

meanings of operations and how they relate to one another. Students are moved toward a more abstract level of thinking.

**Note:** Homework will be counted on completion not accuracy. I believe that homework is the time to make mistakes and learn from them. By test time, students should feel comfortable with that skill. However, I do expect students to try their absolute best on every homework assignment.

**Math grades will consist of the following:**

- ❖ Tests
- ❖ Math Challenges (weekly)
- ❖ Homework points will be totaled at the end of each trimester as one homework grade
- ❖ Daily Oral Math Folder Checks or quizzes

**Social Studies**

Fifth and Sixth grade students are involved in a two-year sequence of courses called United States Studies that focuses on the chronological development of the United States. Fifth grade social studies curriculum mainly consists of the early years of our United State's History. We will begin our journey with geography, discussing land, climate, resources, regions, and people of the U.S. We will work a great deal with maps, globes, and charts. We will continue our journey learning about the Age of Exploration, European Settlements, New England Colonies, Middle and Southern Colonies, Causes of the Revolution, The War for Independence, Creating a Nation, The Early Republic, A Growing Country, Causes of the Civil War, Civil War and Reconstruction, Immigration, and will conclude our journey by discussing America in the early 1900s. This two-year time frame allows for a deeper, richer experience with American literature, art, drama, music, and architecture.

I ask you to encourage your child to talk with you, family, and friends about memories of our country's history. I also ask that if you have anything that you feel will enhance our discussions that you would please send these in with your child. I would love for your child to share a piece of his/her family history with us.

**Social Studies grades will consist of the following:**

- ❖ Chapter Tests
- ❖ Projects and Activities
- ❖ Geography Quizzes

**Science**

The science curriculum involves a full range of scientific knowledge in the areas of physical science, life science, and Earth and space science. Students will perform hands-on, minds-on activities as they conduct scientific inquiries. Concrete experiences remain important as students develop a more abstract level of thinking.

**Science grades will consist of the following:**

- ❖ Chapter Tests
- ❖ Quizzes
- ❖ Projects
- ❖ Labs

## Classroom Expectations

- ❖ Be prepared for class EVERYDAY. This includes materials and all assignments.
- ❖ Be respectful to teachers, classmates, school property, and yourself.
- ❖ Raise your hand if you have a comment or question during a class discussion.
- ❖ Keep hands and feet and all objects to yourself.

## Consequences

- ❖ First offense: Warning
- ❖ Second offense: Loss of privilege (break, music, media, or art)
- ❖ Third offense: Letter home or phone call home
- ❖ Last resort: Office referral
- ❖ **Severe Clause: In any event that a student causes harm to another student or causes major disruption to the classroom environment, it will result in an automatic office referral.**

## Student Information Sheet

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Student's address \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings' names and ages

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Student's parent's or guardian's names

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Place of employment and work number \_\_\_\_\_

Place of employment and work number \_\_\_\_\_

If your child is injured or sick while at school and you cannot be reached at home or work, please list two or more contact numbers that we may call in the event of an emergency.

Name	Number	Relationship to student
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Please list any information, medical or otherwise, that should be brought to my attention.

Parent(s),

I will be using the class website to post pictures of students throughout the year. Names will not be used, only photographs. In order to do this, I need your permission. This will be a neat way of displaying exciting things happening in the classroom.

Thank you,  
Mrs. Sharpton

Please sign and return.

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Child's Name

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Parent Signature

Date

Yes, you have my permission to post my child's picture on the classroom website.

No, you do not have my permission to post my child's picture on the classroom website.

Please read and discuss this packet with your child and return all signed forms by August 14, 2009.

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Parent/Guardian

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Student

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Date

## Other Important Information...

**Arrival:** School begins everyday at 7:45. It is extremely important that students are in the classroom by 7:45 so that they will have plenty of time to finish their morning work and allow us time to check it. If your child arrives between 7:30-7:45, please send him/her to the gym. A teacher will supervise them until the bell rings. No direct supervision is in place before 7:30. If your child would like to eat breakfast at school, the lunchroom will serve from 7:30-7:45 each morning. Students may purchase the "breakfast of the day" or a la carte items.

**Dismissal:** School dismisses at 2:55. Pick up for fifth grade is on 7<sup>th</sup> Street at the side of the fifth and sixth grade building. If your fifth grader has a younger sibling or relative they need to pick up, please send me a note confirming this. Also, if your child is to walk home or ride with someone other than those listed on his/her information sheet, please let me know.

**Take-home Folder-** Your child will have a bright pocket folder that will go home with them daily. In it you will find all graded work, reading log, PTA and school letters, and communication letters from me. Please make sure to go over these with your child daily. If you need to send anything to school with your child, it should also be placed in this folder. (There should be no loose papers in students' backpacks. We are trying to teach organizational skills, which also needs to be reinforced at home.) I will look for this folder daily.

**Homework:** Students are to develop good study habits and be responsible for their materials and homework in the fifth grade. Class work and homework are to be turned in each day unless otherwise specified. All students will receive an assignment sheet weekly. I will write all assignments and tests on the board. It is the student's responsibility to copy down assignments. I will provide time for this at the end of each day. Please look for your child's assignment sheet daily.

**Class Newsletter:** I will send home a newsletter every Friday to inform you of objectives that will be taught and school happenings for the upcoming week. With this, I will also send the spelling list for the next week and a new reading log.

**Reading Log:** As mentioned earlier in the packet, your child will be required to read a minimum of 30 minutes each night. Research has proven that time spent reading is the main indicator of reading success as students progress through elementary school. Students who spend more time independently engaged in text are exposed to more words, more facts, and more background knowledge than their peers who only read when asked to do so at school. I will send new reading logs home on Friday for the weekend and following week. I will collect the logs on the next Friday. (I will also check these daily.) Please make sure to sign the reading log daily to document your child's reading. This will be a weekly grade of 100 points.

**Money:** Please place any money sent to school in an envelope marked with your child's name, the amount of money, and how it is to be spent.

**Snack:** We will have a snack each day following PE. Students may bring items from home or purchase healthy snacks, water, or juice from vending machines on campus. This must be done only during certain times due to lunchroom guidelines. Your child may bring a water bottle to drink on during the day as long as it is in a plastic bottle with a lid. Insulated water bottles work best. Due to food allergies that students may have in the classroom, please let me know in advance if you plan to send a special treat for your child's birthday.

**Conferences:** I will be glad to meet with you to discuss the progress that your child is making and any strengths or weaknesses that he/she may have. Please email me or call the school office to set up a conference.

**Attendance:** School attendance is extremely important. I understand that children get sick or need to be out for certain reasons. If your child is absent from school, I must have a parent note or doctor's excuse. I am required to have these for the office. The state requires us to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. If a note is not

received, the absence will be marked unexcused. After your child misses two days, please call the office, and I will have the missed assignments ready for you to pick up. If your child only misses one day, he/she can get the missed assignments after returning to school the next day.

**Donations:** The donation money that you send in will be used to purchase, Poetry Anthology books, art supplies, other educational materials, and student rewards.

**Websites:** Please be familiar with our school and class website. This will serve as a great resource for you and your child. I will update our classroom website weekly. On our website, you will find the school calendar, homework assignments, pictures of the students, and other useful items. This can be accessed with the following addresses:

School website: <http://ees.cullmancats.net>

Class website:

<http://teacherweb.com/AL/EastElementarySchool/LacyPoore>