



## Fourth Grade Curriculum 2009-2010

**Reading:** McGraw Hill/SRA: *Open Court*; Modern Curriculum Press: *Word Study*

The reading program in fourth grade focuses on improving comprehension and developing higher level thinking skills. Students learn to discover the underlying meanings beyond simple surface comprehension, and apply these meanings to their own lives.

The program integrates reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and spelling skills. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to construct meaning by interacting with and responding to outstanding literature. Comprehension skills include: determining the author's point of view, the author's purpose, seeing cause and effect, identifying fact and opinion and main idea and details, and making inferences.

The language arts component teaches grammar, usage and mechanics with a focus on parts of speech, sentence type and structure, and word usage. It offers practice in writing in a variety of formats (writing for entertainment, writing a personal narrative and a story, writing instructions and a research report, writing to express an opinion and writing to persuade) as well as practice in listening and speaking skills. Direct instruction in research and study skills includes practice reading charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, maps and globes, making outlines, taking notes, understanding the parts of a book and using appropriate reference materials (dictionaries, encyclopedias, library resources).

Phonics instruction continues to be structured and systematic, providing word study and more challenging structural analyses for older students. Phonics lessons explore: short and long vowels, hard and soft "c" and "g", blends and consonant digraphs, r-controlled vowels, sounds of /k/, /f/, /s/, silent letters, syllables, suffixes, vowel pairs, diphthongs, plurals, possessives, contractions, prefixes, roots, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and dictionary skills.

Vocabulary instruction uses words drawn from literature and words drawn from science and social studies units. Students learn to identify antonyms, comparatives and superlatives, compound words, contractions, high-frequency words, homophones and homonyms, inflectional endings, irregular plurals, multiple meaning words, prefixes, root words, suffixes, synonyms, time and order words, word families, and use context clues to define words.

Small group and individual instruction are an important part of our reading class time. We use the literature circle model and encourage the habit of independent and extended reading with monthly book reports, silent reading, classroom library and school library time. Our students read widely, explore and discuss frequently, and write and speak effectively.

**Spelling:** SRS: *Spelling*

Our spelling program is organized according to specific spelling patterns, with a focus on dependable English spelling "rules". The program is sequential and systematic. It provides contextual skill development in every lesson so that students learn to spell words they use regularly rather than memorize words in isolation. Spelling lessons focus on: consonant spellings, words ending in silent "e" or "y", silent letters, prefixes, suffixes, short and long vowels, plurals, possessives, consonant blends, contractions, and rules for soft and hard "c" and "g". Students also learn about synonyms, antonyms, sequencing, homophones, signal words, multiple meanings, compound words, idioms, prepositions, similes and metaphors.

## **Religion:** Harcourt: *Call To Faith*

The fourth grader's growing sense of justice and fair play forms the starting point for an exploration of Christian morality as a way of life. Fourth grade religion, with a focus on Christian morality, is concerned with building the character of the students. Emphasis is on our relationship with God and responsibility to the community. The course begins with the concept of covenant with God and the responsibilities that go with it. Students learn the Ten Commandments and explore the meaning of Beatitude living in understandable and practical terms for the fourth grade student. They learn to choose between right and wrong, the effects of sin, and the gift of God's forgiveness in Reconciliation.

**Prayer:** Prayer is both formal and spontaneous, with emphasis on knowing the Nicene Creed, Apostles Creed, Rosary, and traditional Stations of the Cross.

**Mass:** Fourth graders participate in a special way reading, singing, playing recorders and Altar Serving during school Masses.

**Social Justice:** The *Call to Discipleship Through Justice: Service & Advocacy* curriculum provides effective models, strategies and resources for integrating Catholic social teaching into religion, providing examples of how to put faith in action by engaging in the work of justice, service and advocacy in age appropriate ways. All lessons go beyond simply exposing youth to societal issues. The process works toward empowering students to change the situations that harm and oppress.

## **Language Arts/Writer's Workshop:** Houghton Mifflin: *English Workbook Plus*

Writing is taught in fourth grade using a writer's workshop format. Mini lessons are taught on various subjects: procedures for the writing workshop, ideas for writing, the writing process, setting, matching pictures with text, writing that creates mind pictures, writing with a beginning, middle, and end. Lessons in the writing process include:

**Prewriting:** Students use prewriting activities (T-charts, and "what, why, how") to discover topics they know and care about. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of their purpose and the effect they have on their audience.

**Rough Copy:** When writing a rough draft, the focus is getting ideas down on paper. Fourth graders are encouraged to spell as best they can or use a dictionary for help.

**Revising:** Students will be encouraged to share their work for clarification and questions with their peers. They will take feedback and incorporate it into their work. Students are encouraged to underline words they think need to be spelled correctly. At this time students will also check for correct use of conventions.

**Final Copy/ Publishing:** Students will then copy their piece onto publishing paper. They will be required to use their best handwriting and proper writing conventions for published pieces. Periodically their work will be written, revised, and published using word processing.

**Emphasis on the 6+1 traits of writing:** Writing in fourth grade will focus on using the six traits.

1. *Ideas and content:* "This is the heart of my message; my writing is full of the kinds of details that keep the reader's attention and show what is really important about my topic."
2. *Word choice:* "I picked just the right words for just the right places."
3. *Voice:* "My paper has lots of personality. It sounds different from the way anyone else writes."
4. *Organization:* "I've chosen an order that works well and makes the reader want to find out what's coming next."
5. *Sentence Fluency:* "The sentences in my paper are clear and delightful to read aloud."
6. *Conventions:* "There are few errors in my paper. It wouldn't take long to get this ready to publish."
- +1. *Presentation:* "My paper has an illustration, is neat and ready to display."

**Handwriting:** Students continue practice in cursive. Proper formation and spacing of letters are taught. Neatness in handwriting is encouraged in all work.

Mathematics in fourth grade encourages students to further develop their mathematical thinking as they make the transition from concrete operations to thinking and using skills more abstractly.

Partner and small group activities encourage students to share their thinking and ideas with their peers in a structured environment. There is a focus on the origins and language of mathematics. Students are expected to develop quick recall of number facts and arithmetic skills in certain tasks (basic facts, rounding, estimating, mental math, multiplying with multiples of ten, finding equivalent fractions).

Because one of the program goals is to provide students with opportunities to think about problems within the context of everyday experiences, mathematics instruction also integrates with other content areas such as social studies and science.

The program emphasizes the following concept/skill areas:

**Numeration/Number Sense:** Students read and write whole numbers through the millions, decimals through thousandths, negative numbers to  $-20$ , and fractions. Students understand the relation between fractions, decimals and percents, locate fractions and mixed numbers on a number line and generate equivalent fractions.

**Operations and Computation:** Students use paper and pencil algorithms to add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit whole numbers and decimals. Students use mental arithmetic to compute exact answers and to estimate, round from millions to hundredths, model multiplication with arrays and area, and do operations with fractions.

**Data and Chance:** Students create, read and interpret graphs. They identify landmarks in data sets, including range, median, mode and mean; they list possible outcomes in simple situations, use fractions to quantify probabilities and use experimental results to make predictions.

**Geometry:** Students locate points on a coordinate grid, draw and measure angles, classify angles and lines, use transformations including reflections and rotations. They understand the relationship between reflections and line symmetry, build 3-dimensional shapes and compare shapes.

**Measurement and Reference Frames:** Students use tools to measure length, area, volume, weight, temperature and time. They estimate lengths and weights, find areas and perimeters of rectangles, parallelograms and triangles and find volumes of rectangular prisms. They calculate elapsed time, and distances using map scales.

**Patterns, Functions and Algebra:** Students use letters and other symbols for unknowns, simplify expressions containing parentheses, create, extend and describe patterns, use formulas to find the area of simple geometric figures and find missing numbers in tables.

**Problem Solving:** Students learn step-by-step strategies to help them become confident in tackling more complex problems. Strategies include: use a picture or diagram, use a table, make an organized list, guess and check, use or look for a pattern, work backwards, act it out/use objects, logical reasoning, make it simpler, and brainstorm.

In addition to *Everyday Mathematics*, students in fourth grade will be expected to pass a series of math facts time tests to further their review of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts.

## Library & Technology

**Library:** Fourth graders visit the library once per week to check out books of their choice. Students also use the library to learn about reference resources and the research process as they prepare state reports. Students have the opportunity to use the public library (either as it comes to their classroom or through visiting the public library) for book reports. Fourth graders complete a multi-stage book report each month on a book from a particular genre (adventure/survival, sports, science fiction, animal fiction). Library computers provide access to the Internet for on-line research.

**Technology:** Students will either visit the computer lab or use stand alone keyboards two days a week for keyboarding instruction. Fourth graders use classroom or computer lab computers to word process their assignments. Students also visit computer lab for instruction in software applications which are pertinent to other curriculum areas.

## Science: Harcourt: *Science*

Science in fourth grade builds on earlier curriculum. In accordance with the EALRs, WAC and the Archdiocese, science subjects will include:

**Earth Science:** Students study patterns on earth and in space; earthquakes and volcanoes, layers of earth, causes of earthquakes and formation of volcanoes. Students learn about rocks and minerals.

**Physical Science:** Students explore motion and force, and heat and energy. Students learn how thermal energy is produced, transferred and used. Students study sound and sound waves, why sounds differ and how sound waves travel.

**Life Science:** Students study plant and animal classification. They look at plant and animal growth and adaptations, the basic needs of plants and animals, and how plants and animals adapt to their environments. Students study ecosystems: what they are, what makes an ecosystem, habitats and adaptations with an ecosystem and different plant and animal ecosystems. Students also learn about human body systems: how the skeletal and muscular systems work, how the respiration and circulatory systems work, and how the nervous and digestive systems work.

## Specialists

Fourth graders also meet with specialists in the following areas:

- Art:** 45 minutes — once a week
- Music:** 30 minutes — twice a week
- PE:** 30 minutes — twice a week

## Physical Education

*Fourth grade students will assess and set goals for individual fitness. While participating in competitive and non-competitive games, activities and sports, fourth grade students will utilize proper body mechanics, demonstrate sportsmanship, and apply rules and strategies.*

**Fitness Concepts:** Students participate in and enjoy fitness games, activities and sports that promote cardiovascular fitness, strength, and flexibility. Students monitor and assess fitness levels and set goals for improvement as they begin to appreciate fitness as a lifetime priority.

**Movement Experiences:** Students participate in and enjoy games, activities and sports that require a high level of skill. They develop strategies for games and sports.

**Responsibility:** Students follow rules, use equipment appropriately and recognize safety issues. Students demonstrate cooperation and sportsmanship, and utilize teamwork to achieve a goal.

## Social Studies: Harcourt: *Horizons*; Gibbs Smith: *The Washington Adventure*

Units in Social Studies weave together history, geography and civics topics. In accordance with the EALRs, WAC, and the Archdiocese, Social Studies subjects include: states and regions, the northeast, the south, the middle west, the west, and the United States today. There is a focus on Washington State in fourth grade Social Studies.

As each subject is studied, these skills are developed:

**Map and globe skills:** Students learn to read different maps including an elevation map, a land use and resource map, a road map and mileage table, a population map, and an historical map. Students compare maps with different scales, use a time zone map, and read lines of longitude and latitude.

**Examining primary sources:** Sources used include tools of geography, an immigrant experience, photographs, and mail-order catalogs.

**Chart and graph skills:** Students learn to use tables to group information, and read a time line, line graph, double bar graph, cutaway diagram, and flow chart.

**Citizenship skills:** Students practice solving problems, resolving conflicts, making thoughtful decisions, acting as a responsible citizen, and making economic choices.

## Art

The Art curriculum in fourth grade will focus on a different art element each month (based on the art objectives developed by the State of Washington). Students study one or two artists monthly, examining how they use the art element in focus. Students use collage, drawing, paper maché, mosaic, sculpture, painting and additional projects to encourage creativity and skill building.

Elements of Art examined include:

**Line:** identify and demonstrate how lines create movement and the illusion of space, and identify and use contour lines.

**Shape/Form/Pattern:** know and describe the difference between shape and form and use shape to create movement. Students identify patterns.

**Color:** use primary colors to produce the full color range. Identify and use complementary colors and monochromatic color schemes.

**Space:** use shading in drawings.

## Music

- Elements of music taught in fourth grade include beat, rhythm, form, melody, and harmony.
- Students play recorders and percussion and Orff instruments.
- Students create and perform rhythmic and melodic compositions.
- Students expand their knowledge of note reading on the recorder and play duets.
- Students participate in folk dancing, and some creative choreography.
- Students sing in canon, and listen to and identify meter, rhythms, different instruments and musical pieces.
- Students prepare and present written and oral reports on musical instruments.
- Students self-assess musical achievements.