

Spruce Street School

Third Grade

Welcome and Curriculum Packet

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Welcome and Overview

September 2019

Dear Families,

This document outlines each content area, as well as, pertinent information about communication, homework and basic classroom routines and policies. This packet contains important information that we will refer back to during the course of the year. *Please keep it in a safe place.* We appreciate your involvement in your child's 3rd grade journey. Our Spruce Street community would not be complete without your ongoing support and dedication.

We would like to express our gratitude for your generous donations to our school-wide supplies. These materials make all the learning that takes place possible.

Our opening weeks have set the foundation for a positive working relationship. We are looking forward to continuing our collaborative work in the 2019-2020 school year and beyond!

Best,
Third Grade Team
Caroline, Jenn, Bari and Paola

Reading and Writing

Reading and Writing Workshops are essential parts of our daily literacy block. This is when we explicitly teach reading and writing strategies through modeling and demonstration. Throughout the year, Reading and Writing Workshops will include different Units of Study. Over the course of these weeks, students will study specific genres, while being immersed in the language and features that pertain to the specific genre.

Below is an overview of our units of study:

Unit	Reading Workshop	Unit	Writing Workshop
1	Building a Reading Life - Establish routines and practices. Explore comprehension strategies. Build a reading life.	1	Crafting True Stories - Establish routines and practices through personal narrative writing.
2	Reading to Learn - Study nonfiction texts, analyze structure and text features, grasping main ideas	2	Changing the World - Write persuasive speeches and petitions
3	Character Studies - Character development	3	The Art of Information Writing - Writing to teach others
4	Research Clubs - Asking and answering questions.	4	Baby Literary Essays - Short essays with a focus on character study
5	Genre Study - Exposure to various genres in preparation for the state test	5	Genre Study - Exposure to various genres in preparation for the state test
6	Mystery - Same-book partnerships or different-book partnerships. Keep track of clues, wondering about suspects, noting points of confusion, and discussing their thinking with their partners. Work on fluency, monitoring for meaning, retelling, envisioning, predicting.	6	Once Upon a Time - Adapting and writing fairy tales
7	Book Clubs (Social Issues) - Examine various social issues, such as, bullying, divorce, being left out, gossip via book clubs.	7	Writing about Research - Persuasive speech on access to resources

Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop

Reading and writing strategies are taught through workshops and many other literacy activities throughout the day. Below is a list of the various ways students practice and engage in reading and writing:

Read Alouds: Students listen to stories that introduce them to texts they may not be able to read independently. Read alouds are designed to foster the joy of reading while developing listening, memory and comprehension skills. Additionally, they provide an opportunity for the teacher to model various reading strategies. Through read alouds students think critically about characters and plot while making inferences and predictions.

Independent Reading: Independent reading provides sustained time for students to practice and apply the strategies they have learned. Reading “just right” books on their level helps a student to practice decoding, comprehension, and fluency. This is also a time for assessment by the teacher through one-on-one conferences and observations. Students are expected to read a variety of genres across the course of the year.

Small Group Work: Students with similar needs and/or strengths work in small groups with the teacher to develop strong, independent reading strategies that maximize comprehension.

Close Reading/Shared Reading: Students and teachers read a text together using chapter books, shared informational articles, or typed text on a Smart Board. This is a time when specific lessons and comprehension strategies are taught and practiced as a group.

Writer’s Workshop: Children are guided as we study and work through the various steps of the writing process (generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). During the year we will focus on publishing pieces from a variety of genres.

Language Conventions: Students explore spelling, punctuation, conventions and vocabulary. Language conventions practice will also focus on parts of speech (verbs, adjectives, pronouns, etc), figurative language and fundamental grammar rules (punctuation, capital letters, verb tense, parts of speech, possessives, etc.)

Math

Students explore mathematical concepts, learn skills and strategies, and explore mathematical representation through concrete and abstract models. Students recognize math in their everyday lives and become curious, capable mathematicians. Our classroom resources include: TERC Investigations, Georgia Math, EngageNY, Math in the City, and Exemplars. We use “number talks” to build mental math strategies and CGI (Cognitively Guided Instruction) to work on representing and modeling math word problems as well as “Table Top” where students work on math games differentiated according to need and interest.

Our units of study for the year will be:

Unit	Topic
1	Launch – Routines/procedures, place value, addition and subtraction within 1,000
2	Multiplication and division within 100
3	Fractions
4	Multiplication and Area
5	Problem Solving with measurement, time, capacity, data
6	Geometry
7	STEM Parachutes

Content Studies

Investigative studies play a large role in our school’s mission statement - fostering inquiry and community-based research.

We will launch our research-based studies by learning about our similarities and differences. We will investigate our family’s country/countries of origin and find these countries on the map. We will learn about different types of maps. In this unit we will also examine our rights and responsibilities as members of a community.

In our World Geography Study we will investigate how geography shapes the development of society. Students will research what life is like in different countries around the world by focusing on the geography, people, and communities. We will make cross cultural comparisons and research

the elements of culture (food, language, art, music, clothes, etc.) and the features of civilizations (governments, public buildings, technology, etc.). Students will use this research to create and present projects.

In our last study we will research how resources such as food, water, and education impact the lives of the individual and the society in which they live.

Unit	Topic
1	Connections
2	Countries
3	Access to Resources

Our goal is to foster an appreciation for cultural diversity. All of our studies will provide rich, meaningful experiences for our students while meeting standards.

Assessment

Teachers assess students in reading, writing, math, and language conventions in an ongoing fashion throughout the year. As a school, we conduct baseline, midline, and endline assessments that allow us to track both performance and progress. We use assessment data to help us better understand students' individual needs and to tailor instruction. Our school wide assessments are directly tied to the Common Core Curriculum Standards.

In writing and math, we use a school-created tracking system to help students meet and exceed third grade curriculum standards. In reading, we use the Fountas and Pinnell leveling system to match students with the appropriate guided and independent leveled books. This chart indicates level expectations at various times in the year.

Grade 3 September 1= K or below 2= L 3= M 4= N or above	Grade 3 November 1= K or below 2= L/M 3= N 4= O or above	Grade 3 January 1= L or below 2= M/N 3= O 4= P or above	Grade 3 March 1= M or below 2= N 3= O 4= P or above	Grade 3 June 1= N or below 2= O 3= P 4= Q or above
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Our classroom library utilizes a color-coded book leveling system:

- Helps students self regulate to find books they can independently read.
- Teachers and students can track progress.
- Color order:

A	red
B	orange
C	yellow
D	green
E	blue
F	black
G	white
H	double red
I	double orange
J	double yellow
K	double green
L	double blue
M	double black
N	double white
O	red orange
P	orange yellow
Q	yellow green
R	green blue

Standardized Tests

New York State Standardized tests are administered to third grade students in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Results from these tests are used to show student progress and measure school performance and accountability.

The English Language Arts Test is administered over two days. For the reading component, students will read a series of passages and answer multiple-choice questions. For the writing component, students will read a passage and respond to short response questions and extended response questions.

The Mathematics Test is administered over two days as well, consisting of multiple choice questions where students select the correct response from four answer choices and short-response/extended-response questions where students are required to explain, in words, how they arrived at their answer to an open- ended question.

Testing Schedule for 2019

English Language Arts Test	March 25, 26
Mathematics Test	April 22, 23

There will be workshops during the upcoming months to familiarize families with the format of these tests and to introduce strategies to assist your child with the tests.

Communication

Take Home folders: Go home and come back to school each day. We encourage you to send notes or inquiries through the folders. We will respond as quickly as possible to your notes.

Class parents: Each class will have class parents. Class parents are an asset to our classroom community. Class parents can help coordinate class wide information and events.

Parent engagement time: We are available to meet Tuesdays from 2:45pm-3:15pm. Please contact us if you would like to arrange a meeting with us.

Parent-teacher conferences: Throughout the course of the year, parents and teachers formally meet twice (11/14 and 3/5) to discuss individual students.

Report cards: This year you will receive report cards three times (December, March, June).

Email: You can reach us via e-mail at:

pb331@sprucestreetnyc.org - Bari and Paola
jc329@sprucestreetnyc.org - Jenn and Caroline

Our goal is to respond as soon as possible. **Please give us up to 2 school days to reply.**

Learning Alongside Your Child: Families are invited into classrooms (11/1, 1/24, 5/15) for collaborative learning experience with their child in writing, math or research.

Classroom Expectations and Behavior

Our goal this year is to foster a warm and safe learning environment that ensures the best possible educational outcome for each child. We expect that every child treat every member of our class and school with respect and kindness. Here are some practices within our classrooms, which we use to reinforce positive behavior and high expectations.

1. **Classroom Agreements:** Teachers and students collaborate to establish class norms that facilitate the Spruce Street School four B's (Be safe, kind, fair and responsible).
2. **Positive Reinforcement of Classroom Agreements:** Classes and students are recognized by peers and teachers for following the classroom agreements. Some ways to follow classroom agreements include sharing materials, cleaning up independently, transitioning quickly between activities, helping a friend, using kind words, and doing your best work.
3. **Community Building and Social Skills Instruction:** In our classroom community, students will engage in conversations and role- plays to learn strategies for solving social and emotional problems. This is time for teachers to focus on class-wide goals for behavior (i.e. walking in the hall safely, treating materials responsibly, etc.). Teachers allow students to have multiple opportunities to practice these skills and reflect on how their actions affect others around them. Spruce Street School follows a Responsive Classroom approach.
4. **Logical Consequences:** When students make choices that interfere with the learning community in the classroom, there will be a logical consequence for their actions. This means that the consequence directly responds to the action taken.

Below are some examples of logical consequences:

Category of Logical Consequence:	Example:
You break it, you fix it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An apology note for hurting someone's feelings ● Spending open work time cleaning up a mess that you made
Loss of privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If student misuses a computer, they lose the opportunity to use it for that period and have a meeting with a teacher about how to use it ● If student talks instead of working, they will spend open work time making up the incomplete work.
Take a break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If student is calling out too much during a lesson, they will take a break in the classroom, or in a buddy classroom.

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, your child's teacher will communicate with you using a form that your child and teacher fill out together. This form will tell you what happened and will ask for your signature and return to school for us to keep on file. If we do not receive the form back from you within the week, you will receive a call from your child's teacher.

5. Home to School Communication: Just as we try to communicate to you things that have happened involving your child at school, please know that we appreciate when you reach out to us to inform us about things your child discusses with you at home, things they are worried about, changes in their home routine, etc. This line of communication helps us better support the social and emotional well being of your child at school.

Homework

We believe homework should be meaningful and directly linked to our curriculum. This is another way to foster independence and the home school connection. Homework is a way for students to practice skills and reinforce familiar concepts at home. It may also be a way to explore a new concept at home in preparation for an upcoming classroom study. Homework is not meant to be burdensome for families, or cause stress for the children. If your child is having difficulty with something please write a

note to let us know what they are having trouble with. Homework will be assigned each night and due the next day unless otherwise specified.

Possible Homework Components:

- **Reading:** Students should read every evening from their individual book baggies or books from your home for 30 minutes. Students will be expected to complete a reading log nightly.
- **Math:** Practice pages that review concepts worked on in school.
- **Language Conventions** Practice spelling patterns, parts of speech, punctuation, and vocabulary.
- **Writing:** Generating ideas for upcoming projects, interviewing, research and responding to literature or informational texts.
- **Study Related:** Visit places related to the study, collecting artifacts or information connected to the study, and/or interview family or friends who may be knowledgeable about the topic.

Helpful tips for home!

- Make sure your child gets to school on time each day.
- Remind your child to check their home folder each day for homework or notes.
- Create a routine for homework.
- Ask your child questions about the books they read (i.e. how a character feels, the authors message, what might happen next, how the book reminds them of their own life, etc.) This will help deepen their understanding of the text.
- Please send a note when there is an alternate pickup person or dismissal time, as well as if you know in advance your child will not be in school.

Thank you all for your enthusiasm and support! We look forward to building the future of Spruce Street alongside all of you.