

5th Grade Parent/Student Handbook

Towanda Elementary 09/10



It's a Great Day to be a Bulldog!

Ms. Steinbach – steinbas@unit5.org

Class web page- <http://www.unit5.org/steinbas/>

Fifth Grade Curriculum

Note: For a more specific listing of topics and learner outcomes expected at the fifth grade level, please see a copy of the fifth grade report card in this packet and/or visit the McLean County Unit District No. 5 website page: www.unit5.org.



Language Arts

Most of the weekly reading, grammar, writing, and spelling lessons will be from the Harcourt Reading series textbook, but we will also be using other supplemental resources and techniques as well. A focus for fifth grade language arts is learning writing techniques and mechanics to demonstrate a more mature writing level. Daily Oral Language, spelling dictation tests, mini-grammar lessons, and paragraph/essay/journal/creative/poetry writing lessons are some approaches we take to help fifth graders achieve their goal of more mature writing.

As a whole class we will be reading novels such as: The Forgotten Door and Night of the Twisters. However, students will be working in Literature Circles throughout the year reading a variety of novels. These novels are excellent for enhancing vocabulary and higher-level thinking skills through group discussions, writing activities, and projects. We will also have various book reports throughout the year. Some students may have read some of our whole class novels, and therefore will be reading alternative material in a small group. Students may also work with small groups on literature circle activities. Presentation book projects and reports will also be assigned throughout the school year. This encourages students to develop speaking skills, listening skills, and time management skills.

This year we are focusing on the 7 Keys to Comprehension. The 7 Keys include:

- **Sensory Images-** “the cinema unfolding in the mind making reading 3-dimensional.
- **Background Knowledge-** “making connections”
- **Questioning-** “who, what, where, why, and how”
- **Drawing Inferences-** “going beyond the words on a page”
- **Determining Importance-** “main ideas vs. supporting”
- **Synthesizing-** “ adding your own thoughts to what is important”
- **Fix-up Strategies-** “strategies to help readers when they are stumped”

Independent Reading

Students will be engaged in self-selected reading too. Students are required to read at least one book independently every month, and complete a Speedy Book Report. We will be tying our Speedy Book Reports in with our reading challenge this year. 5th grade students can earn an end of the year field trip by completing reports each month. They are to choose from the classroom library books, from the school library, or the public library. **The Speedy Book Reports are included in the average for a student’s reading grade.** We will spend 15-20 minutes daily on D.E.A.R time. (Drop Everything And Read) We will also spend time during reading class reading to self, and reading to others. This is part of the reading block that occurs

every morning from 8:30-10:00am. The speedy book report forms and reading calendars are available on the class website.



Spelling Activity and Test

Every Friday students take a pretest over the new list of spelling words. Afterwards, the weekly spelling pattern is discussed and the practice packet handed out or students are assigned activities. The spelling packet or the related activity folder is to be completed by the following Wednesday. During activity weeks, students must complete at least 50 points worth of activities. The activities and their descriptions are found in each spelling folder. Students will be given various types of spelling tests including dictated tests. Students may earn a challenge spelling list if they test at 90%-100% on the spelling pretest. On Thursday they will still take the weekly dictation test plus a list test over the challenge words. Challenge spelling lists are designed to offer spelling instruction at your child's level of instruction.



Math

The Everyday Mathematics curriculum will be used to assist in teaching the math learner outcomes. In addition to this curriculum, however, other math resources will be used to assist students in developing stronger basic facts, computation, and problem solving skills. The hard backed Student Reference Book is a valuable resource at school and at home. Your child is encouraged to bring this book home to assist with homework completion and especially when the unit of study involves nontraditional methods.

Students are encouraged to continue to work on basic math facts, and to review computation strategies outside of school. We will continue to take out of the blue multiplication timed tests. There are also some great math websites found on the class website under the link section.



Science

Scott Foresman publishes our science textbooks, and provides a wide range of hands on activities to help students understand the scientific method and various processes of science. This will be our main science textbook, however there will be times when other resources will be used. Students are encouraged to “think like a scientist” as various topics are studied through hands-on activities and experiments, textbook readings, and projects. Units of study include Life Sciences, Earth Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Space and Technology. Students will be

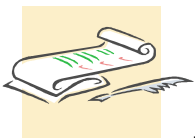
required to keep a science notebook as we progress through our text. This will help them when preparing for assessments and projects. Students will also be given study guides for various units. The fifth grade will also be preparing for an outstanding field trip to the Challenger Learning Center in January. Students will also complete individual science fair projects in early spring and they will be showcased at the annual Education Fair/Portfolio Night. This is a great way for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the Scientific Method.



Social Studies

Social Studies Alive! America's Past is the new textbook that will be used this year in social studies. This resource incorporates an interactive student notebook, multimedia, and hands on activities in order to help students explore the historical events and people that shaped the development of our country. Students will also learn map and geography skills. We will begin with the study of geography and map skills, followed by early Native Americans, exploration, colonization, the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Civil War, and finally with Industrialization. The students have some units which have exciting projects to assist them in discovering the history of our unique and diverse country. The projects offered are in a choice board format to allow students an opportunity to choose projects of personal interest. We will also continue to work on map skills and citizenship. Students will be required to take notes in their interactive notebooks for many of the chapters we study. We will also complete study guides for some chapters prior to the chapter assessments.

Fifth Grade Expectations



Assignment Notebook

An enlarged copy of a page from the Assignment Notebook is displayed in the classroom via the Smartboard. Every day the students are to copy all assignments into their notebook from the assignment board. This helps develop organizational skills and informs parents of upcoming assignments. Parents should ask to see the assignment notebook every night and go over any work requirements with their child. The assignment book will be checked over and initialed by the teacher daily, and it is requested that the parent/guardian do the same at home. There will be times when messages will be written in the assignment notebook. If there are questions regarding homework, the class web page is updated daily with homework assignments.



Homework

Most assignments are listed on the assignment board each day and are to be completed and turned in on the following day. There will be some assignments that will take several days or perhaps weeks to complete. Your child should have an assignment notebook and each day assignments are to be written in the book. I initial notebooks daily, and would like parents to also initial the book daily. There are often times when I will write notes to parents in, or attached to, the assignment book and request a reply.

When your child is absent for any reason, they have twice the number of days they were gone to make up the work. For example, if they were gone for 2 days, they will have 4 days to get the work turned in. However, it is preferable that the work is completed sooner so that your child does not fall behind and that the information and concepts are fresh and relevant.

If you know your child will be gone, please let me know in advance. I can give them at least a good idea of what we will be doing during that time so they can stay caught up. However, I will probably not be able to provide them with all of the work they will miss. Please keep in mind that they may be required to take previously announced tests even if they are absent. Please also keep in mind that it is impossible to reproduce a day in the classroom. Much of what we do is not textbook/workbook type material that can be sent home. Some of the work your child misses will not be able to be made up.

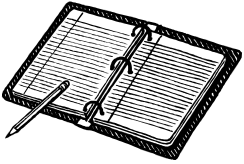
While it will not adversely affect their grade, chronic absences will affect their learning and likely their success.

An appropriate amount of time for an average 5th grader to spend on homework each night is around 40-50 minutes. All students work at different paces. Some will complete work quickly, while others may take more time. Long-term assignments may also require additional time. Efforts are made to provide time at school to begin assignments, if not complete them entirely. Students are encouraged to use time wisely and accomplish as much work as possible during the school day and to seek help during this time. Students are given work time during class and at the end of the school day to get started on work. Please contact me by phone, note, or email if you have any concerns about your child and his/her homework. I do not want any student overburdened by schoolwork.

All homework assignments are due by 8:45 A.M. An assignment is late if it is only partially completed, lost, or left at home. The teacher will write a note in the student's assignment notebook about the late assignment, or the student will be issued a late work slip to attach to the assignment when it is completed. This slip must be signed by the parent/guardian prior to it being turned in for credit. This slip is designed to help keep parents informed about their child's work and prevents unknown surprises at progress report or grading card times. In

addition the student will complete the late work during their recess time. All late homework assignments will be lowered by 10% for each day not completed. Homework and class work that is over 5 days late will not be accepted. It is tremendously important that your child learn to manage their time, set goals, and work with a deadline.

***HOMEWORK IS POSTED ON THE CLASS WEBSITE DAILY. Study guides, spelling lists, and project sheets can also be found on the class website. <http://www.unit5.org/steinbas/>



Class work/Homework Paper Heading

In 5th grade, students are asked to head their papers in a certain way. A proper heading looks like this and should be placed in the top right hand corner of every paper that is turned in:

First and Last Name

Subject & Page number (when applicable)

Date

Mailbox Number



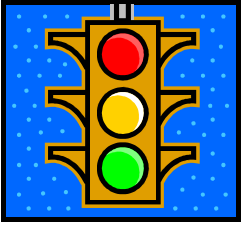
Research Skills

We will be completing a variety of research projects this year. Your child will be exposed to a variety of resources. It is very important that you work with me in teaching your child the importance of copyright issues. Please help your child to put information into their own words and to avoid any appearance of plagiarism. The best way to do this is to keep track of all of the resources used, including websites and their publishers (the entire URL or address as well as the name of the company, organization or individual responsible for the site). This will lend credibility to their research and product, as well as teach them a lifelong skill! They will usually be provided with very specific guidelines for keeping track of and “citing” the sources they use.



Friday Folder

Every Friday students will be bringing home a folder which contains all their graded tests from the week, graded homework, informational flyers, and a parent signature sheet. This will also have a copy of our weekly news letter, unless you have requested an emailed copy. All tests must be signed by a parent and returned in the folder on Monday along with the parent signature sheet.



Classroom Behavior

To help ensure a safe and effective learning environment, we expect certain behaviors from our students. Fifth grade students are expected to follow the school wide expectations and are to be striving to meet the character counts goals. Our classroom rules are simple ones. They are designed to encourage respect for others, responsibility, cooperation, and pride in the work we do and our school community. I cannot foster these goals without your support. I will give students warning for the first offense and begin to take away privileges if the behavior continues. Students are also asked to sign a caution log to document the behavior. If a behavior becomes habitual, students will fill out a letter home about their behavior. You are asked to sign and return the letter to school. If the behavior continues, I will call to discuss the issue with you, and ask for some suggestions that you may have, to solve the problem together. One of the most important things I hope to teach is that students should act in a way in which they and others will be proud of their behavior. Below you will find the three 5th expectations. They are aligned with the school wide expectations of being responsible, respectful, and safe.

Be Responsible

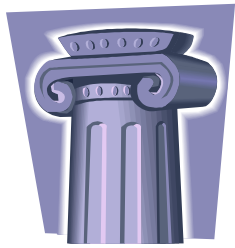
- **Be prepared with materials and homework**
- **Bring and use assignment notebooks**
- **Arrive on time**
- **Use materials and school property correctly**
- **Step back from arguments**
- **Ask permission to leave the room**
- **Pay attention to lessons and assignments**

Be Respectful

- **Help others**
- **Take turns talking**
- **Return borrowed materials**
- **Treat others how you want to be treated**
- **Pay attention to others when they speak**
- **Use kind, appropriate words**
- **Stay in your place in lines**
- **Raise your hand to speak**

Be Safe

- **Sit properly in your chair**
- **Walk**
- **Keep the floor clean and clear**
- **Keep personal space**
- **Ask permission to leave the room**
- **Store and use materials correctly**
- **Push in chairs**
- **Keep hands, feet, and objects to self.**



We will also be continuing with the Character Counts program this year.

. Trustworthiness

Be honest • don't deceive, cheat or steal • be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country

Respect

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • be considerate of the feelings of others • don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Responsibility

Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • be accountable for your choices

Fairness

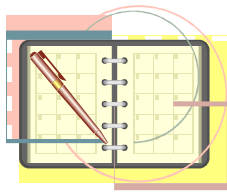
Play by the rules • Take turns and share • be open-minded; listen to others • don't take advantage of others • don't blame others carelessly

Caring

Be kind • be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment



Scheduling

In order to provide the best possible education for your child, I ask that you try to schedule your child's appointments outside of the regular school day. However, I realize that this is sometimes unavoidable, so I have included the following area schedules, so that if you wish you can try to schedule appointments during these non-academic times, rather than regular class time. The special subjects are graded subjects as well, and some meet only once or twice a week. This should also be taken into consideration. Thank you for your continued support in your child's education. Recess is at 11:40, and lunch begins at 12:05.

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
8:35-9 Band/Orchestra	2:30-3 PE	1:25-2:05 Art	10:10-10:45 IMC	10:10-10:35 Music
10:10-10:35 Music		2:30-3 PE	2:30-3 PE	2:30-3 PE
2:30-3 PE				

DARE will also impact our schedule during the second half of the school year.



Birthdays

We love celebrating birthdays in fifth grade! However since our time is so limited, I request that treats be simple, easy to pass out, and hard to spill. When choosing what type of treat to send, please try to make distribution as easy as possible.

Examples are juice boxes, and prepackaged/store bought items. We are really trying to live and eat healthy, so please provide a reasonably healthy treat. Please **do not** send food that contains peanuts, as we have numerous students at Towanda who are allergic to them. We will celebrate most birthdays at the end of the school day.

Some ideas for classroom treats or individual snacks could include:

- Fresh fruits and veggies
- Pretzels, baked products
- Animal crackers
- Low fat yogurts
- Dried fruits
- Graham crackers
- Bread sticks
- Salsa and baked chips
- Whole wheat crackers
- Cheese cubes or string

Also consider sending in nonfood items for birthday treats such as pencils, pens, erasers, notepads, and stickers. A classroom donation of books or board games is also another wonderful option.

As a school community this is one way we can help make healthy living choices for children. Thank you for your support!



Medicine: Any medicine that is to be taken by a student at school must be approved. Forms are available in the office, to be filled out by your physician, and returned to school before the office can administer medication. This includes aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, and even throat lozenges.



Communication: In the future, you may reach me by three different methods. I can be contacted via email at steinbas@unit5.org, by writing a note, or by calling the school and leaving a message. I will return calls, emails, and notes as quickly as possible. You may also link to my email via the class web page at <http://www.unit5.org/steinbas/> I will be sending home weekly newsletters and monthly calendars. These items can also be found on the class website.

Other Information: If you have concerns about your child's progress, and would like to meet in person, I am available before school from 7:15-8:10 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I have morning duty on other days, and therefore will not be available. My after school hours may vary. I request that you please call or email to make an appointment for any meeting. This will ensure that I am available during a time that is convenient for you.