

# Mrs. Wilson's Fourth Grade Newsletter

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## Science, Environments

Did your fourth grader tell you? Our class size grew by 180! Yes, we've got mealworms. We've started a new science unit, Environments. I made the decision to skip the big unit test on energy (weekly quizzes, daily assignments and science notebooks serve as my assessments) and continue with hands on experiences. In the Environments Unit will investigate plants and animals to discover the structures and functions that serve in growth and survival and the environments that support their well-being. We also attempt to determine the optimum environment for some of the organisms. Fourth graders will ask the fundamental question: What is an ecosystem? Ecosystems can be analyzed in terms of nonliving components (temperature, moisture, light) and living components (organisms). This analysis takes time and requires close observation and interpretation of results. Ecology is the study of interactions among organisms in food chains and food webs and interactions of organisms within the nonliving environment. We'll be working with mealworms to start understanding how organisms flourish when provided with an environment that is just right for them.

### Topics Assigned, Research Begins:

Thank you for helping your child choose a topic they are interested in and can easily research. Fourth graders now begin independent research, done at home. Each student has a folder with pages outlining the process of researching a topic, creating speaking notes and google classroom slide visuals. These are meant to provide structure but not limit creativity. I do require that students have specific research targets, a visual component (google slides) to go with their presentation and have note cards to help guide their speech. My expectations for content are clear, but I love to see how students take ownership of their project, adding props, music or costumes.

This project has been revised over the years to better reflect common core state standards. Check out <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/4/> and <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/4/> for grade level expectations in research and presentation.

Students will receive three grades for this project: Research, Presentation and Listening. Grading criteria is included in the folder but will become more meaningful later next month, after I have time to discuss and teach specific skills. While there is still much to learn, fourth graders should begin at-home research right away

### Dates to Remember:

**Tuesday, May 11, 6:30 PM:** Parent Org Meeting via zoom

**Thursday, May 20:** All School Mass, 4<sup>th</sup> attends via livestream and zoom.

**Thursday, May 27:** Field Day, More information to come

**Monday, May 31:** Memorial Day, No School

**Wednesday, June 2:** Light of Leadership Mass, All School Mass, 4<sup>th</sup> attends via livestream and zoom.

**Friday, June 11:** Last day of school, more information to come!

Helpful links:

Oral Presentation Project, Folder in Digital Form

<https://classroom.google.com/e/MTI3MjM2NzIxODk0/a/MzExODc4ODg1Nzky/details>

Video to explain presentation

<https://youtu.be/BK-f45ORiuQ>