

Dear Parent of Prospective Honors Student,

As the 2009-2010 school year comes to a close and summer break quickly approaches, the WCA faculty is busy preparing for the upcoming school year. We have many exciting plans for next year and we hope they will serve to enrich your child's academic experience. In an effort to provide your student with a rigorous and fulfilling academic schedule, we are continuing to offer an Honors Program for selected High School classes. This program will focus on developing higher-level critical thinking skills, offering research opportunities, and providing hands on learning experiences. It will also serve as preparation for advanced course work in the future.

Only a select group of students will participate in the Honors classes. These students will be challenged to delve more deeply into the subject matter and earn a weighted grade in the process. Based on my past experiences with your child, I recognize his or her academic abilities, motivation and desire to learn. It is for these reasons that I am recommending your student for the Honors Earth Science course.

In Honors Earth Science, we will practice becoming expert mineral and rock identifiers, research and present the geologic evidence of Noah's flood, and delve into the geology, chemistry and physics of the ocean. Over the summer, students will create a geologic photo journal. Whether you travel during the summer or stay here in Williamsburg, aspects of Earth Science will be evident all around you. The summer assignment will be to explore ten Earth Science topics through photography and research and craft a photographic journal of your summer.

By completing the summer assignment, your child acknowledges his or her commitment to the academic challenge offered by the Honors Earth Science Course. The assignment will be collected on the first day of class. Any student who does not have the summer assignment at this time will not be able to continue in the Honors Course. Any student who does complete it will show that they are ready to join me on a journey of scientific inquiry and discovery.

Have a great summer!

Rebecca Elton

Honors Earth Science Summer Project

Welcome to Honors Earth Science! I can't wait to dive into the mysteries of the world and the wonders of God's creation with you! Here is the information you will need to successfully complete your summer assignment.

Over the summer, you will need to create a photo journal that shows how the topics we will be studying during the upcoming school year are all around you! Your journal will include photographs or images that pertain to ten different topics in Earth Science and brief descriptions of each topic. You will need to present these images and descriptions in a creative and artistic way.

Here are the ten topics that I want to you to cover in this photo journal:

1. The Carbon Cycle
2. Topography
3. Elements
4. The Rock Cycle
5. Tectonic Activity
6. Weathering/Erosion
7. Renewable Energy Sources
8. Clouds
9. Precipitation
10. Phases of the Moon

For each topic you need:

1. **A Photograph/Image**

Use your various summer journeys, whether to far away countries, nearby states, or local spots, to gather pictures. I hope that you will start to realize that the topics covered in Earth Science are present all around you and relevant to your life. If you do not get a chance to take a photograph for a certain topic, you may find a relevant image online. However, you should only use the Internet as a last resort because you will lose points for every image you get online. The only exception to this online rule is topic #5. Feel free to use an online source for images in that case.

2. **A Description**

Write two paragraphs which describe why the picture is related to the Earth Science topic. You will need to do some research about each topic and summarize the important findings in order to get full credit. Also, be sure to define at least one term that you learned during your research for each topic. Somewhere on the photographic journal, whether in the description or under the picture, you should let me know where the photograph was taken.

3. Overall presentation

You will need to come up with some creative way to display all of your photos and descriptions. You can do a poster, a booklet, a PowerPoint, or anything else you can dream up.

I hope you will all have fun with this project. After this assignment, we will have a chance to share our photo journals with the other honors students. Hopefully this will give you a general overview of some of the upcoming topics about which we will learn. So, keep your eyes open for the Earth Science around you. I look forward to having you in class next year.

Here is a rubric for the project:

Each topic is worth 10 points:

4 points for a photograph/2 points for an Internet image (except #5)

3 points for the quality of the research and writing in your description

2 points for your relevant definition

1 point for overall presentation and creativity

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me over the summer.

Rebecca Elton

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