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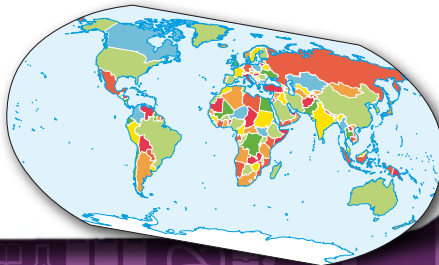
Teacher Created Materials

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Table of Contents

Dear Family	2
Home Habits and Routines	4
Top 10 Things Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know.	14
Language Arts Activities	16
Math Activities	26
Science Activities.	30
Social Studies Activities	32
Learning on the Go	34
Family Fun.	38
Thank you!	40



Dear Family,

Depending on your school system, your sixth grader is either wrapping up the elementary school years or just starting middle school. Either way, it's a time of intense change—a process that will benefit from retaining a sense of humor!

Your “tween’s” brain is continuing the rewiring work that began in fifth grade. The civilized, thoughtful, reasoning part of the brain has been taken over by the risk-taking, emotional part. Your job, besides drawing upon the patience part of *your* brain, will be to help your tween through all the chaos that is going on in his or her body.

Your sixth grader will be changing classes more often, interacting with more teachers, and adjusting to changing groups of peers from hour to hour. That can make for stimulating days. Home can be an important refuge. Take time to learn how to communicate with teachers who may have 100 or more students. Teacher or school websites are especially helpful.

There is good news as part of this period of change! Your sixth grader is more equipped to plan successfully, solve complex problems, reason, and process information.



One last thought...

Your child is essentially walking the tightrope between childhood and adulthood this year. Your tightrope will be balancing tolerance of the not-always-great decisions he or she will make with keeping your child safe and on the right course.

Top 10

Things Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know



1. Reading and comprehending **nonfiction, fiction, dramas, and poems**
2. Writing and revising **research and reflection papers**
3. Meanings of **unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases**
4. **Figurative language, word relationships, and nuances** in word meanings
5. **Ratio concepts** and using ratio reasoning to solve problems
6. **Computing multi-digit numbers** and finding common factors and multiples
7. **Applying math** to algebraic expressions
8. Solving **one-variable equations and inequalities**
9. Reading and comprehending **science/technical text** according to grade level
10. Reading and comprehending **history/social studies text** according to grade level

Growing a Scientist

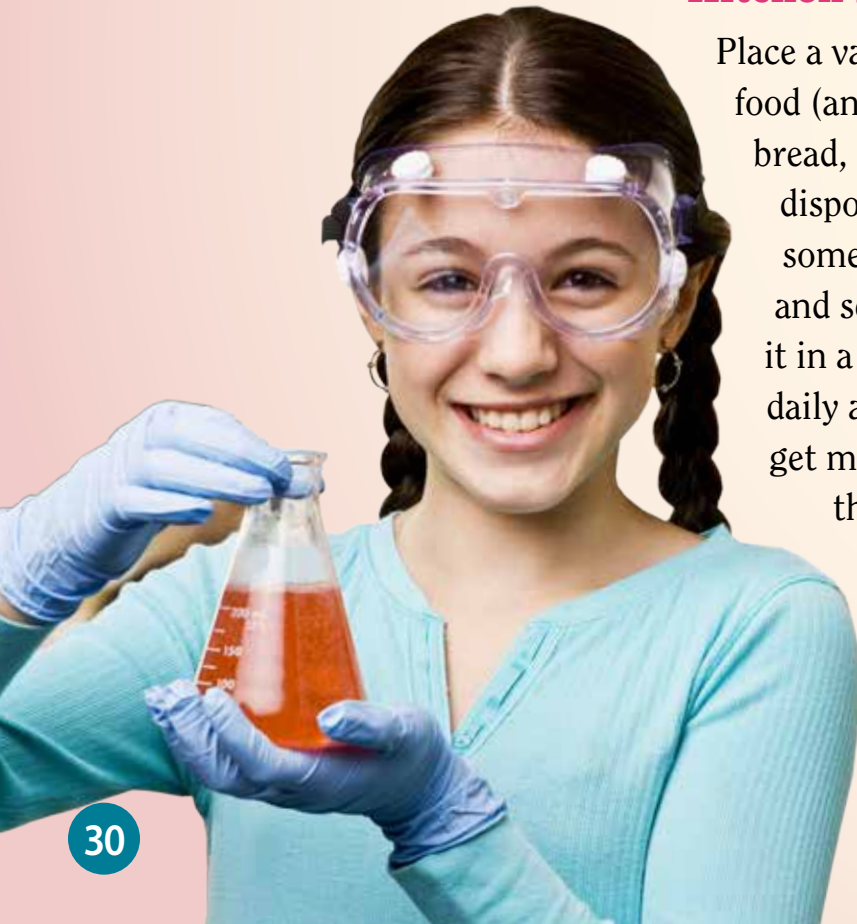
Science, along with technology, engineering, and math (known as STEM), is getting more attention in schools. While curriculum varies within states, your child will be learning more about Earth, while using the same processes that scientists use: observation, investigation, and experimentation.

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Consider *trying some of these* experiments to build the practice of observation.

Kitchen Science

Place a variety of small bits of food (an orange slice, a piece of bread, a small carrot, etc.) in a disposable container. Drop some water on each piece and seal the container. Set it in a warm place. Check it daily and note which items get moldy first and change their colors. Record the changes for about two weeks.



Compost Heap

Even sixth graders like to play in the dirt. Create a compost pile and use the rotted results to enrich part of the garden. Try planting the same type of plant in each type of soil, one in the soil you have, and the other in the compost soil. Compare how the plants grow.

Think about tackling one of these questions:

- Does the amount of air pressure in a basketball affect how high it bounces?
- Does the temperature affect the density of a liquid?
- Does the color of light at night affect the kind of insects that are attracted to it?
- Does the type of soil affect how much water it will retain?
- Does the phase of the moon affect the height of the tides?



One last thought...

When a storm approaches, or a natural disaster occurs (tsunami, volcanic eruption), take time to talk about how science helps people deal with what used to be the unexpected.