Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about the Maya as part of a domain on early American civilizations. S/he will learn about the importance of farming and the cities that grew where people settled. Your child will also learn about the existence of leaders called kings as well as the importance of the stars and planets in the Mayan religion. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about the Maya.

1. Where Are We?

Have your child locate the region where the Maya lived (Yucatán Peninsula and Mexico) on a world map or globe. If you do not have a world map at home, you may be able to obtain one at your local library. Talk about the geography and climate of this area. (rainforest, hot)

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what s/he has learned about the Maya and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to help your child use the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Sayings and Phrases: The More the Merrier

Your child has learned the saying “the more the merrier.” Talk with your child about the meaning of this saying. (The more people who are involved in something, the more fun it will be.) Point out times when the saying applies in your daily life.

4. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books about early American civilizations, including books about the Maya and Mayan civilizations. A list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is attached to this letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.
It is recommended that you preview all books before presenting them to determine whether the content is appropriate for your child. Because human sacrifice was a common practice in the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan cultures, a number of trade books mention this topic.

**Recommended Resources for Early American Civilizations**

**Trade Books**


**Websites**

The Mayans  
http://www.mayankids.com

Archaeology Game  
http://www.history.org/kids/games/dirtDetective.cfm

American Museum of Natural History  
http://www.amnh.org
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about the history of the earth. S/he will learn about the earth’s surface, the layers of the earth (crust, mantle, and core), as well as volcanoes and geysers. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about this science topic.

1. **The Earth’s Surface**

   Use a globe or map to help your child locate and identify the earth’s continents and oceans. Also locate the North Pole, the South Pole, and the equator. Share with each other any knowledge that you have of these.

2. **Make a Model**

   Make a model of the earth’s layers or a volcano.

3. **Draw and Write**

   Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about the layers of the earth, volcanoes, or geysers, and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

4. **If You Were There**

   With your child, imagine what it would be like to witness a volcanic eruption. Talk about what you would see and hear, and how you would feel.

5. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books on geology and a list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is included in this letter.

   Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning about at school.
Recommended Resources

Trade Book List

ISBN 978-0064450782

ISBN 978-1448885763

*If You Find a Rock*, by Peggy Christian and photographs by Barbara Hirsch Limber (Sandpiper, 2008)
ISBN 978-0152063542

*The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth*, by Joanna Cole and illustrated by Bruce Degen
(Scholastic, 1989) ISBN 978-0590407601


*Volcanoes (Let’s-Read-and-Find-Out Science 2)*, by Franklyn M. Branley and Megan Lloyd

Websites and Other Resources

**Student Resources**

Earth from Space
http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/view_cat.php?categoryID=1484

Caillou the Paleontologist
http://pbskids.org/caillou/immersivegames/?gameID=4

American Museum of Natural History
http://www.amnh.org/

Old Faithful Webcam
http://www.nps.gov/yell/photosmultimedia/webcams.htm

Science Kids
http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/

**Family Resources**

Minerals
http://www.rocksforkids.com/RFK/identification.html

Rocks

Geological Society of America
http://www.geosociety.org

Geology
http://www.geology.com
Dear Family Member,

Today, your child listened to the well-known fable, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” and learned that fables are short stories that teach a lesson that is called the moral of the story. Over the next several days, your child will also become familiar with the fables, “The Maid and the Milk Pail,” “The Goose and the Golden Eggs,” “The Dog in the Manger,” “The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” and “The Fox and the Grapes.” Some of these fables have animal characters that act like people (personification), which is another characteristic of fables.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue enjoying the fables heard at school.

1. **Character, Setting, and Plot**

   Talk with your child about the characters, setting, and plot of the fables. Ask questions about the fable such as, “Why did the shepherd boy play a prank and cry, 'Wolf! Wolf!’?” Also, make personal connections to the fables with questions such as, “If you often don’t tell the truth, will people believe you when you are telling the truth?”

2. **Illustrating Fables**

   Have your child draw or paint a picture of one of the fables and then tell you about it. Again, ask questions to keep your child talking about the fable. Another option is to create a three-part picture that shows the beginning, middle, and end of the fable.

3. **Different Versions of Fables**

   Tell or read to your child different versions of a fable, and talk about how the different versions are the same and how they are different.

4. **Sayings and Phrases: “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing” and “Sour Grapes”**

   Your child will learn about these phrases and their meanings. Once your child has heard the fable “The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” reinforce that the saying “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” means that people are not always whom they appear to be on the outside. On the outside, the wolf looked like a sheep—but he was not. Explain that in the same way, a person can seem very nice on the outside, but may not actually be very nice on the inside. Once your child has heard the fable “The Fox and the Grapes,” reinforce that when he couldn’t reach the grapes, the fox said, “I didn’t want those old grapes anyway. I’m sure they are sour.” Explain that the phrase “sour grapes” describes when someone cannot get...
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about the human body. S/he will learn about five important body systems: skeletal, muscular, digestive, circulatory, and nervous. Below are some suggestions of activities to do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about how our bodies work to keep us alive.

1. What’s Inside My Body?

Ask your child to describe a body organ that s/he learns about each day. Have her/him tell you why the organ is important and the name of the body system to which it belongs.

2. Systems at Work

Ask your child which body systems are at work as you walk, talk, eat, and read together. Encourage the use of vocabulary being learned at school by asking your child to explain how the systems are working together.

3. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about each of the body systems and then share the drawing and/or writing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

4. Words to Use

Below are several of the words that your child will be learning about and using. Try to use these words as they come up in everyday speech with your child.

- **systems**—Human body systems include the digestive system and the circulatory system.
- **support**—The beams of the house support the roof.
- **voluntary**—His participation in the race was voluntary.
- **digestion**—The digestion of food takes the body several days to complete.
- **heart**—The heart is an involuntary muscle.
- **nerves**—The tips of your fingers are full of nerves that allow you to feel.

5. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important to read with your child each day. Please refer to the list sent home with this family letter of recommended trade books related to the human body that may be found at the library, as well as informative websites.
Be sure to praise your child whenever s/he shares what has been learned at school.

**Recommended Resources for The Human Body**

The following is a list of resources relevant to *The Human Body* that you may want to share with your child. The librarian at your local library would be able to direct you to additional resources.

**Trade Books**

- *Oh, the Things You Can Do That Are Good For You!*, by Tish Rabe, illustrated by Aristides Ruiz (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001) ISBN 978-0375810985

**Websites and Other Resources**

**Student Resources**

- Children’s Museum of New York
  - [http://www.cmom.org/explore/exhibits/eat_sleep_play_building_health_every_day](http://www.cmom.org/explore/exhibits/eat_sleep_play_building_health_every_day)
- Digestive System Video
  - [http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_DSmoviesource.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_DSmoviesource.html)
- Food Plate “Blast Off Game”
- Kids’ Biology
- “A Kid’s Guide to Shots”
  - [http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/body/guide_shots.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/body/guide_shots.html)
- Kids’ Health Skeletal System Video
  - [http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_SSmoviesource.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_SSmoviesource.html)
- Muscular System Video
- Nervous System Video
  - [http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_NSmoviesource.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/_bfs_NSmoviesource.html)

**Family Resources**

- The Human Brain
Dear Family Member,

Today your child listened to “Cinderella,” a fairy tale that originated in France. Over the next few days, your child will hear fairy tales with similar themes that originated in Egypt and Ireland. Similarly, your child will hear folktales from around the world that feature people who are no bigger than the size of a thumb: “Tom Thumb,” from England; “Thumbelina,” from Denmark; and “Issun Boshi,” from Japan.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue enjoying the folktales heard at school and to reinforce the idea that different countries or lands tell similar stories.

1. “Cinderella”

Reread “Cinderella” with your child to increase your child’s awareness of the similarities and differences between this fairy tale and the stories that originated in Egypt and Ireland. Although your child will hear several fairy tales that share themes with “Cinderella,” there are many other variations in print. Tell or read to your child different versions of the folktale. Talk about how the different versions are the same and how they are different.

2. Character, Setting, Plot, Conflict

Talk with your child about the characters, setting, plot, and conflict (or problem) of the folktales and fairy tales. Ask questions about the tales such as, “Who became royalty in the end?”

3. Storytelling Time

Have your child orally retell the story that s/he heard at school each day, pointing out on a world map or globe where the folktale originated. Today's fairy tale originated in France. The fairy tales in the next lessons originated in Egypt and Ireland.

4. Sayings and Phrases: “There's No Place Like Home”

Your child will talk about this saying and its meaning at school in relation to “Tom Thumb.” Talk with your child again about the meaning and situations in which you can use this saying and how this saying relates to the folktale “Tom Thumb.”
5. Read Aloud Each Day

Set aside time to read to your child every day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with this family letter, recommending resources related to this domain. Be sure to talk about the characters, setting, and plot of these stories. You may also want to reread one that has been read at school.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.

Recommended Resources

Trade Books

**Rags-to-Riches Folktales**


**Thumb-Sized People Folktales**


**Cunning Animal Folktales**


Websites

**Student Resources**

Cinderella Read-Aloud

www.learner.org/interactives/story/Cinderella.html

Elements of Stories

http://www.flocabulary.com/fivetthings
Dear Family Member,

Over the next several days, your child will be learning about many different types of habitats, including the desert habitat, the rainforest habitat, and several others. Your child will learn that an animal’s habitat provides food, water, and shelter for that specific animal. Your child will also learn about the adaptations that plants and animals have made in order to survive in specific environments.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue to enjoy learning about animals and their habitats.

1. Safari

In class, your child will go on a safari to look for plant and animal life around the school. Go on a safari with your child around your neighborhood. Point out the different types of plant and animal life. Discuss with your child how the plants and animals meet their basic needs in your neighborhood. Point out examples of food and shelter for different animals.

2. Habitat Terrarium

Simulate a small habitat at home by making a small terrarium. Use a small fish tank or some other clear container. (Plastic containers used for food would work well also.) Add one or two inches of soil, sprinkle some grass seed on the surface, and water it as needed. Cover the container with something that will allow the air to flow. (Cheesecloth works well.)

Once the grass has started growing, add small animals like grasshoppers. Observe the habitat for a few days, and talk with your child about how the animals’ needs are being met or are not being met in the mini-habitat.

3. Words to Use

Below are several of the words that your child has been learning about and using. Try to use these words as they come up in everyday speech with your child.

- **habitat**—What kind of habitat do we live in?
- **shelter**—We need to find some shelter so we can get out of the rain!
- **herbivore**—A rabbit is a herbivore, because it only eats plants.
- **carnivore**—A lion is a carnivore, because it hunts and eats other animals.
- **omnivore**—A person is an omnivore if they eat both plants and animals.
4. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books on animals and habitats, and a list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is attached to this letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.

**Recommended Resources for Animals and Habitats**

**Trade Books**

*Afternoon on the Amazon (Magic Tree House, No. 6)*, by Mary Pope Osborne and Sal Murdocca (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1995) ISBN 978-0679863724

*The Arctic Habitat*, by Mary Aloian and Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing Company, 978-0778729815)

*Desert Giant: The World of the Saguaro Cactus (Tree Tales)*, by Barbara Bash (Sierra Club Books for Children, 2002) ISBN 978-1578050857


**Websites and Other Resources**

**Student Resources**

*Animal Habitats*

pbskids.org/wildkratts/habitats

*Continent and Ocean Matching Game*

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/world_G0_Click.html

*Ocean Habitats*

http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/photos/oceans/#/tierradelfuego-745734_15601_600x450.jpg

**Family Resources**

*Arctic Tundra Photographs*

http://www.arcticphoto.co.uk/gallery2/arctic/landscape/tundra/tundra.htm

*Endangered Animals*

www.endangeredanimals.com

*Museum of Natural History*

http://www.amnh.org

Déjenos saber si necesita servicios de interpretación y/o traducción.
Cho chúng tôi biết nếu quý vị cần Thợ dịch viên hay Dịch vụ Thổng dịch.
أو الترجمة如果我们发现您需要，我们将通知。
وأو الترجمة: نستعير ترجمة إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات التفسيرالفورى و
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about fairy tales. S/he will hear classic versions of “Sleeping Beauty,” “Rumpelstiltskin,” “Rapunzel,” and “The Frog Prince.” S/he will also learn about things that fairy tales have in common, such as “once upon a time” beginnings, typical characters and settings, fantasy events, unique solutions to problems, and happy endings. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about fairy tales.

1. **Favorite Fairy Tales**

Have your child tell you about the fairy tales s/he has heard. Share with your child any memories you have of reading fairy tales, and discuss some of your favorite characters or tales.

2. **Draw and Write**

Have your child draw and/or write about the fairy tales heard and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. **If You Were a Character**

With your child, imagine what it would be like to be a character in one of these stories. Despite the happy endings, fairy tales often touch on themes of sadness, fear, and hardship. Talk about what the characters are experiencing, and encourage your child to share any thoughts or feelings s/he may have while listening to these stories.

4. **Sayings and Phrases: The Land of Nod**

Your child has learned the saying “the land of Nod.” Talk with your child about the meaning of this saying. (It is a way of saying that someone is asleep.) Point out times when the saying applies in your daily life, perhaps at bedtime, or when they begin to nod off before bed!

5. **What’s In a Name?**

Your child will hear two fairy tales (“Rapunzel” and “Rumpelstiltskin”) about characters with interesting names. Over the next week, you may wish to talk with your child about how their name was chosen. Write his or her name on a note card; on the other side of the card, write a brief story about how your child’s name was chosen.
6. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child every day. The local library has many classic and modern fairy tales and other stories that you can share with your child. A list of books and other relevant resources is attached to this letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.

Recommended Resources for Fairy Tales

Trade Book List


Websites and Other Resources

*Hear a Story: Jack and the Giant Barbecue*, by Eric Kimmel
  http://ericakimmel.com/hear-a-story

Hansel and Gretel
  http://bit.ly/Wpzo7s

Rapunzel
  http://bit.ly/ZH3oCn

Sleeping Beauty

Rumpelstiltskin

Jack and the Beanstalk
  http://bit.ly/XAxVyA

Elements of Fairytales
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about the events that led to the birth of the United States of America. S/he will learn about the thirteen original colonies, the Boston Tea Party, the shot heard round the world, the Declaration of Independence, and the legend of Betsy Ross. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about this period of American history.

1. **Where Are We?**

   On a U.S. map, have your child locate the thirteen original colonies in America. Share with each other any knowledge that you have of this area. (If you do not have a map, you may check one out from the library.)

2. **Draw and Write**

   Have your child draw and/or write about what they have learned about these events and then share their drawing and/or writing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. **If You Had Been There**

   With your child, imagine what it would have been like to have been at one of the following events: Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere’s ride, signing of the Declaration of Independence, or sewing of the flag. Talk about what you would have seen and heard and how you would have felt.

4. **Sayings and Phrases: Let the Cat Out of the Bag**

   Your child will be learning the saying “let the cat out of the bag.” Talk with your child about the meaning of this saying and when it may or may not be appropriate to reveal a secret.

5. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books on the history of the United States as a new nation, and a list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is attached to this letter.
Recommended Resources

Trade Book List


Websites and Other Resources

Patriot Symbols Lessons and Activities
https://sites.google.com/a/solteacher.com/solteacher/home/first-grade-virginiasol-resources/first-grade-social-studies/sol-1-11-patriotic-symbols

School House Rock: “No More Kings”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-9pDZMRCpQ

School House Rock: “The Shot Heard Round the World”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6ikO6LMxF4
Dear Family Member,

Today, your child has started learning about Daniel Boone, one of the first persons to explore the land west of the Appalachian Mountains. Daniel Boone helped make the Wilderness Road, which allowed other settlers to move west. During the next several days, your child will continue to learn about the westward expansion of the United States and specifically about the travels of Lewis and Clark. Below are some suggestions for activities you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about this period of American history.

1. Where Are We?

Have your child locate the Appalachian Mountains on a map. Share with each other any knowledge that you have of this area. (If you do not have a map, check one out from the library.)

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about Daniel Boone and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school, such as barrier, claimed, settlements, woodsmen, passes, pioneers, trailblazer, and wilderness.

3. If You Were There

With your child, imagine what it would have been like to have been with Daniel Boone when he crossed the Appalachian Mountains through the Cumberland Gap or made the Wilderness Road. Talk about what you would have seen and heard and how you would have felt.

4. Borrow a Book

Set aside time to read to your child each day. The local library has a variety of books about this period of American history. A list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is attached to this letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning about at school.
Recommended Resources for Frontier Explorers

Trade Book List


Websites and Other Resources

Family Resources

Lewis and Clark
Louisiana Purchase
Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase
  [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffwest.html](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffwest.html)
Journals of Lewis and Clark
  [http://www.lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu](http://www.lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu)
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. S/he will learn about the importance of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for farming and for the cities that grew where people settled. Your child will also learn about the development of a system of writing called cuneiform, the existence of leaders called kings, and the importance of religion. Your child will come to understand that it is because of these key components that Mesopotamia is considered a civilization. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about Mesopotamia.

1. Where Are We?

Have your child locate the area known as Mesopotamia (located in the Middle East) on a world map or globe. (If you do not have a map, check one out from the library.) Talk about the geography of this area. (desert, Tigris and Euphrates rivers, etc.)

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about Mesopotamia and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Compare Civilizations

Compare/contrast the farming, cities, writing, leaders, and religion of Mesopotamia and the United States. Talk about the importance of each of these components in any civilization.

4. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books on Mesopotamia, and a list of books and other resources relevant to this topic is attached to this letter.

5. The Golden Rule

Your child will learn the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Talk with your child about the meaning of this saying and ways to follow it. Find opportunities to compliment your child for following the Golden Rule.
Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.

**Recommended Resources for Early World Civilizations**

**Trade Book List**

**Mesopotamia**


**Ancient Egypt**


**Three World Religions**


**Websites and Other Resources**

**Student Resources**

Geography of Egypt
http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/egypt

Ziggurats

**Family Resources**

Brooklyn Museum
http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions

Sacred Sites in Jerusalem
http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/jerusalem-holy-sepulchre-photos

World Religions for Teachers
http://www.bbc.com/schools/religion
Dear Family Member,

Over the next few weeks, your child will be learning about astronomy. Your child will learn about the sun, the moon, the stars, and the eight planets in our solar system. Your child will also learn about space exploration, including the first astronauts to land on the moon.

In the next few days, we will focus our study of astronomy on the sun, the moon, and the stars. The most powerful way you can help support your child’s learning about astronomy is to take him or her outside to observe the sky. Below are some suggestions for ways you can make his/her study of astronomy even more meaningful and fun, and some words s/he is learning that relate to each activity.

1. Sunrise or Sunset

Your child is learning that the earth orbits or revolves around the sun. S/he is also learning that even though it looks like the sun moves across the sky each day, it is actually the earth spinning on its axis that causes day and night. Go outside with your child at dawn to observe the sunrise, or at dusk to observe the sunset.

Words to use: dusk, dawn, atmosphere, revolve, horizon

2. Stargazing

In a few days your child will learn about the stars and the constellations. Take your child out in the evening to observe the stars. The Big and Little Dipper are part of the Big Bear constellation. S/he will learn to recognize the dippers and Polaris (the North Star). Together with your child, try to identify these groups of stars in the night sky. You may wish to obtain a book from the library on constellations to guide your observations.

Words to use: constellation, star, telescope, outer space, meteor

3. Phases of the Moon

Your child will learn about the moon and how it orbits the earth, reflecting the sun’s light. S/he will also learn to recognize four of its phases: the new moon, the crescent moon, the half moon, and the full moon. Look for the moon every few days and talk with your child about how much of it is visible in the sky.

Words to use: crescent, full, reflecting, orbit, craters, man in the moon
4. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books on astronomy and a list of books and other resources relevant to this topic.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.

**Recommended Resources for Astronomy**

**Trade Books**


**Websites**

NASA Kids’ Club

http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html

American Museum of Natural History Resources on Space

http://www.amnh.org/content/search?SearchText=space&amp;x=0&amp;y=0

Photographs from the Hubble Space Telescope

http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/entire/npp/all/
Dear Family Member,

Over the past several days, your child has learned about the Arctic tundra and ocean, the desert habitat, and the savanna habitat. In the next few days, s/he will learn about the temperate deciduous forest habitat, the rainforest habitat, the freshwater habitat, and the saltwater habitat. Your child will continue to learn about adaptations that plants and animals have made in order to survive in the specific habitats mentioned above. Your child will also learn about endangered species and the causes of extinction.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue to enjoy learning about animals and habitats.

1. Habitats

Ask your child which of the habitats s/he likes best and why. Discuss with your child what types of plants and animals live there and how those plants and animals are adapted to that habitat.

2. Animals and Habitats Drawing

Have your child draw a picture of one or several of the habitats s/he has learned about thus far. Talk with your child about the weather and climate of the habitat. Be sure s/he includes the plants and animals that live in that habitat. Have your child think about what s/he would have to do to adapt to the climate, and then draw himself/herself in the picture with his/her adaptations.

3. Where in the World?

Use a world map or globe to locate each of the habitats your child has learned about thus far. [Arctic (tundra and ocean), Sonoran Desert, East African Savanna] Show your child where you live in relation to each of these habitats.

4. Salt Water

In a few days, your child will be learning about the saltwater habitat. As preparation, you may want to help your child differentiate between salt water and fresh water. Mix a half-teaspoon of salt with one cup of water. Have your child dip his/her finger in the salt water and place it on his/her tongue. Then have him/her sip some drinking water. Discuss the difference in taste between the two.
Be sure to explain that people should not drink a lot of salt water because it is not good for their health.

5. Ocean or Saltwater Habitat Collage

Have your child make an ocean or saltwater collage. Have your child paint or color a piece of paper blue. Next, have him/her look through magazines or journals to find pictures of animals that live in the ocean. If no magazines or journals are available, have your child draw and cut out the animals from construction paper and glue them onto the blue paper.

6. Pollution and Habitat Destruction

Your child will be learning about how pollution can cause animals’ habitats to be destroyed. The next time you are out with your child, point out examples of pollution. Have your child also look for examples of pollution.

7. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to animals and habitats.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope you have enjoyed talking with your child about the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. For the next several days, your child will be learning about another ancient civilization, ancient Egypt. S/he will learn about the importance of the Nile River for farming and the cities that grew where people settled. Your child will also learn about the development of a system of writing using hieroglyphs, the existence of leaders called pharaohs, and the importance of religion as key elements or components of a civilization. Your child will be able to compare this ancient civilization to Mesopotamia. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about ancient Egypt.

1. **Where Are We?**

   Have your child locate the continent of Africa and the country of Egypt on a world map or globe. (If you do not have a map, check one out from the library.) Talk about the geography of this area. (Sahara Desert, Nile River . . .)

2. **Draw and Write**

   Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about ancient Egypt and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. **Compare Civilizations**

   Compare/contrast the farming, cities, writing, leaders, and religion of ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. Talk about the importance of each of these components in both civilizations.

4. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to ancient Egypt.

   Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about another ancient civilization called the Aztec. S/he will learn about the importance of farming and the cities that grew where people settled. Your child will also learn about the existence of leaders called emperors. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about the Aztec.

1. Where Are We?

Have your child locate the region where the Aztec lived (central Mexico, around Mexico City, north of the Maya) on a world map or globe. If you do not have a world map at home, you may be able to obtain one at your local library. Talk about the geography of this area. (swampland, lakes)

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about the Aztec and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to help your child use the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books about early American civilizations, including books about the Aztec and their civilizations. Refer to the list of books and other resources relevant to this topic that was sent home with the previous family letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope you and your child have been enjoying talking about the history of the earth. Today, your child learned about minerals and how they are useful to people. Soon, s/he will learn that all rocks can be sorted into three groups: igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic. S/he will also learn about fossils and what they tell us about life on the earth many, many years ago. Below are some suggestions for activities you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about this science topic.

1. Rock Descriptions

If possible, have your child view some rocks from nature and talk about their characteristics. If you do not have access to real rocks, look for pictures of rocks that can be described.

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about minerals, the three types of rocks, fossils, or dinosaurs and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. If You Were There

With your child, imagine what it would be like to discover a fossil. Talk about what you would see and hear and how you would feel.

4. Minerals

Talk about the ways that minerals such as coal or salt are important to you or other people.

5. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to the history of the earth.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning about at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope your child has enjoyed learning about her/his body and how its systems work together to keep us alive. Over the next several days, s/he will learn about health, nutrition, and ways to keep her/his body at its best. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce the healthy habits s/he is learning about at school.

1. **Healthy Eating**

   Visit the USDA website to learn more about a healthy diet: www.choosemyplate.gov. Play one of the learning games with your child, asking questions to encourage the use of vocabulary learned at school.

2. **Menu Planning, Shopping, and Cooking**

   Have your child help you plan a well-balanced meal for the family’s dinner using foods from a variety of food groups. Then, go to the grocery store together to buy the ingredients. Have him/her help in the preparation of the food.

3. **Words to Use**

   Below are several of the words that your child will be learning about and using. Try to use these words as they come up in everyday speech with your child.

   - **diseases**—Scientists work hard to cure diseases that make people sick.
   - **nutritious**—Every day, Luke ate a nutritious lunch with fruits and vegetables.
   - **complicated**—The recipe was extremely complicated and had many steps to follow.

4. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   It is important to read to your child each day. Please refer to the list sent home with the previous family letter of recommended trade books related to the human body that may be found at the library. That list also contains informative websites.

5. **Sayings and Phrases: An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away**

   Your child will learn the saying, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away.” Talk with your child about its meaning. Discuss the importance of going to the doctor for regular checkups and vaccinations.

Be sure to praise your child whenever s/he shares what has been learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope your child has enjoyed learning about some of the important events that led to the birth of the United States. Over the next several days, s/he will learn more about some of the key people who played significant roles during those events. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson.

1. Money Detective: Search for the Founding Fathers

Look on coins and paper bills with your child to find images of the people s/he has been learning about. George Washington’s face is on the one-dollar bill and on some quarters. Thomas Jefferson is on some nickels with his home, Monticello, appearing on the reverse. Jefferson is also pictured on the two-dollar bill with a picture of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the opposite side. Benjamin Franklin appears on the one-hundred dollar bill!

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about the people and events leading up to the birth of our nation, and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to the history of the United States as a new nation.

4. Sayings and Phrases: There’s No Place Like Home/Never Leave Until Tomorrow What You Can Do Today

Your child will learn two common sayings, “there’s no place like home,” and “never leave until tomorrow what you can do today.” Talk to your child about the meaning of these sayings, and try to use them in everyday speech.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope your child has enjoyed hearing some classic fairy tales. Over the next several days, your child will hear two more fairy tales: “Hansel and Gretel” and “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Your child will also have an opportunity to write his/her own fairy tale using the knowledge they have gained from studying classic tales. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about fairy tales.

1. Character Illustration

Have your child draw a picture of his/her favorite fairy tale character. Then have your child explain why this character is his or her favorite character.

2. Fairy Tales Around the World

Many countries have their own unique fairy tales or versions of fairy tales that are similar to ones your child has heard. If possible, visit the library and find a collection of fairy tales from other countries. As you are reading these tales, encourage your child to explore the similarities and differences between the tales of various countries. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Theater at Home

Your child has learned about many different types of fairy tale characters, including royalty, witches, and talking animals. Help your child act out one of the fairy tales s/he has read and encourage him or her to act differently when playing the role of the various characters. Use simple props or costumes, such as a crown made out of paper.

4. What’s Your Favorite Fairy Tale?

Over the next few days, tell your child what your favorite fairy tale was as a child. You might even want to read your favorite fairy tale to your child.

5. Read Aloud Each Day

Remember to read to your child every day. The local library has many classic and modern fairy tales and other stories that you can share with your child. Refer to the list of books and other relevant resources that was sent home with the previous family letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

Today your child listened to the folktale “Little Red Riding Hood,” which originated in Germany. Over the next several days, your child will hear two more folktales that are similar to “Little Red Riding Hood”: “Hu Gu Po” from China, and “Tselane” from Botswana.

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue enjoying the folktales heard at school, and to reinforce the idea that different countries or lands tell similar stories.

1. **Character, Setting, Plot, Conflict**

   Talk with your child about the characters, setting, plot, and conflict (or problem) of the folktales. Ask questions about the tales such as, “Why did Little Red Riding Hood have to walk through the woods? Where was she going?” Also, make personal connections to the folktales such as, “What should you do if you’re approached by a stranger?”

2. **Different Versions of Folktales**

   Although your child will hear a few folktales whose characters have similar adventures, there are many other variations in print. Tell or read to your child different versions of these folktales and talk about how the different versions are the same or different.

3. **Storytelling Time**

   Have your child orally retell the story that s/he hears at school each day, pointing out on a world map or globe where the folktale originated. Countries will be introduced in the following order: Germany, China, and Botswana.

4. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   Set aside time to read to your child every day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to this domain. Be sure to talk about the characters, setting, and plot of these stories. You may also want to reread one that has been read at school.

   Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.
Dear Family Member,

Over the next several days, your child will learn more about the westward expansion of the United States. S/he has already learned about the Louisiana Purchase and will continue learning about Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery. S/he will also learn about Sacagawea, who helped the Corps as a guide.

1. If You Were There

With your child, imagine what it would have been like to have journeyed with the Corps of Discovery as they traveled through new lands and discovered new plants and animals. Talk about what you would have seen and heard and how you might have felt.

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, and then ask him or her to share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school. You may wish to have your child list the three tasks President Thomas Jefferson wanted the Lewis and Clark expedition to accomplish (1. making friends with Native Americans; 2. collecting samples of different plants and animals; 3. finding a water route all the way to the Pacific Ocean).

3. Sacagawea and the Dollar Coin

If possible, show your child a dollar coin and point out Sacagawea.

4. Borrow a Book

Set aside time to read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to Lewis and Clark’s expedition.
Dear Family Member,

We have finished the fables section of the *Fables and Stories* domain and are now listening to and discussing longer fictional stories. Today your child heard “The Little Half-Chick (Medio Pollito),” a Hispanic folktale. Over the next several days, s/he will also become familiar with “The Crowded, Noisy House,” “The Tale of Peter Rabbit,” and “All Stories are Anansi’s.”

Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to continue enjoying the stories heard at school.

1. **Storytelling Time**

   Have your child orally retell the story that s/he heard at school each day.

2. **Character, Setting, and Plot**

   Talk with your child about the characters, setting, and plot of the stories. Ask questions about the story such as, “How did Peter Rabbit get into mischief?” Also, make personal connections to the stories with questions such as, “Have you ever gotten into mischief?”

3. **Illustrating Stories**

   Have your child draw or paint a picture of one of the stories and then tell you about it. Again, ask questions to keep your child talking about the story. Another option is to create a three-part picture that shows the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

4. **Sayings and Phrases: “Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You”**

   Your child has talked about this saying and its meaning at school. Talk with your child again about the meaning and ways to follow this saying. Find opportunities to compliment your child for following this proverb.

5. **Read Aloud Each Day**

   It is very important that you read to your child every day. The local library has folktales and collections of folktales that you can share with your child. Refer to the list of books and other relevant resources that was sent home with the previous family letter.
Be sure to talk about the characters, setting, and plot of these stories. You may also want to reread one that has been read at school.

Remember to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

During the next several days, your child will be learning about another ancient civilization called the Inca. S/he will learn about the importance of farming and the cities that grew where people settled. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning about the Inca.

1. Where Are We?

Have your child locate the region the Inca lived in the Andes Mountains along the Pacific Ocean (present-day countries of Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, and Peru).

2. Draw and Write

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about the Inca and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to help your child use the vocabulary learned at school.

3. Compare Civilizations

Compare/contrast the farming, cities, leaders, and religion of the Inca relative to Maya, Aztec, and present-day Americans. Talk about the importance of each of these components in any civilization.

4. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read to your child each day. The local library has many books about early American civilizations, including books about the Inca and their civilizations. Refer to the list of books and other resources relevant to this topic that was sent home with the previous family letter.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has been learning at school.
Dear Family Member,

I hope your child has enjoyed learning about some of the important events that led to the birth of the United States. Over the next several days, s/he will learn more about some of the key people who played significant roles during those events. Your child will learn about three special symbols representing America as a land of freedom. S/he will also learn that some people, both then and now, still struggle for freedom. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child is learning.

1. **Draw and Write**

Have your child draw and/or write about what has been learned about the people and events leading up to the birth of our nation, and then share the drawing with you. Ask questions to keep your child using the vocabulary learned at school.

2. **Symbol Walk**

Take your child for a walk to look for one of the most prominent symbols of the United States, the U.S. flag. You might also set a greater challenge for yourselves by trying to find two other American symbols your child has learned about: the bald eagle and the Liberty Bell.

3. **Read Aloud Each Day**

It is very important that you read to your child each day. Please refer to the list of books and other resources sent home with the previous family letter, recommending resources related to the history of the United States as a new nation.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he has learned at school.
Dear Family Member,

During the past several weeks, your child has been listening to read-alouds about the ancient civilizations and people of Mesopotamia and Egypt. They have learned that the ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians worshiped many different gods. We have talked about how these beliefs influenced the daily lives of the ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians and helped to shape their civilizations.

On ______________, we will begin the remaining lessons in this unit of study. The read-alouds will extend what students have already learned about the ancient Mesopotamians’ and Egyptians’ belief in many gods. Lessons 13–16 will explain the historical changes that began to take place and how these ancient people developed new beliefs and practices focused on one God rather than many gods. These final read-alouds provide a historical introduction to the development of three world religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—which are all characterized by a belief in a single God.

The Core Knowledge Language Arts program introduces students at various grade levels to the major world religions as part of their study of world history. The intent is to provide the vocabulary and context for understanding the many ways that the world religions have influenced ideas and events in history. It is important to understand that the religions your child will hear about in first grade—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are not being singled out or presented in any way that suggests the merits or correctness of specific religious beliefs.

The read-alouds in first grade focus on teaching students very basic similarities and differences among religions, and fostering an understanding and respect for those similarities and differences. The historical events and ideas leading to the development of each religion are presented in a balanced and respectful manner. If students have questions about the truth or “rightness” of any beliefs or religions, we will encourage them to discuss their questions with you at home, by saying, “People of different faiths believe different things to be true. These are questions you may want to talk about with your family and the adults at home.”
The Core Knowledge Language Arts program’s inclusion of world religions within the teaching of world history is comprehensive and balanced over the course of the elementary grades, presenting historical knowledge from around the world from ancient times to the present. The read-alouds about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that your child will hear in first grade will be elaborated on in later grades. In addition, students in later grades will be introduced to other religions—such as Hinduism and Buddhism—as they learn about historical events in other parts of the world.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if you would like to see any of the read-alouds we are using.