

Welcome to 5th Grade

Read a Book • Make Music • Go in the Mountains

Dear 5th Grader,

Amazing! You're a 5th Grader now! I am so excited to have you in class next year. I have lots of incredible things planned – special days like Williamsburg where we dress up and pretend to be a colonial village ALL DAY, or like the Pentathlon where we spend ALL DAY throwing javelins, wrestling and running races. There will be games, songs, plays, stories and fascinating things to learn about in the classroom. Perhaps best of all we go out into the wild, the outdoors. We climb a mountain at the beginning of the year. We go snowshoeing. We visit a bird refuge. And we spend five years going around one of the most beautiful mountains on earth – Mt. Shasta.

So, welcome! I want to get to know each one of you and have fun together next year. To help all that you might want to think about a few things during the summer. Fun things, mostly, things you might be doing already. Things that will help you be ready for 5th Grade.

1. Read a Book

Reading is the magic doorway into other worlds. Go through that magic doorway often this summer. Dive in to reading. Read so much that your parents have to remind you to eat your meals or go to bed! Read for fun and just read.

To help with that, I'm giving you a list of great books to read this summer. I love all of them. Read at least one from the 'required' list, because we will create a short project based on these books at the beginning of 5th Grade. Then read anything else. Just read. Beyond reading I recommend writing letters, journals or stories. Learn to type on a computer. Draw pictures of your friends, your cat, the tree outside, whatever is in your imagination. Most important, though, read!

2. Make music

Have you noticed how we say the word 'play' when we talk about musical instruments? Playing an instrument, once your fingers and body get used to what to do, is just what it says – play, fun. You could put on a CD or the radio, but playing your own music...that is so cool.

I play some guitar, and have even been known to pick up the fiddle. The instrument I love to play the most is the low Irish whistle. It has deep tones like a flute,

and is very ‘trad,’ meaning connected with the mysterious, foot-stomping, catchy stuff that musicians *traditionally* play in Ireland, Scotland or other Celtic places. In 5th, we will be getting out instruments a lot. There will be Music Electives twice a week. We will support each of our plays – on India and Greece – with live music. There will be chances to play in class as well. So, get ready to play some music in 5th. Start playing right now. Just pick up something and play with it, play on it. Make some music!

3. Go in the Mountains

We are so lucky to live in the mountains here. We have forests, creeks, the Yuba River, lakes, and high peaks. You can make forts or tree houses in the woods, swim in the river or the lakes, kayak, bike, ski or snowboard in the winter...the list is endless.

In 5th Grade we will be outside a lot and explore something of these mountains we live in. So, get out now. Summer is the best time for going into the mountains. Take a hike. Go backpacking. Explore the woods behind your house. Sleep overnight somewhere on the Yuba. Look at the stars that fill the sky. Go fishing at a lake 4 miles in by trail. Challenge yourself to get to the top of some mountain. Feel the wind. Listen to the birds. Stand somewhere where you can see all the way to the Coast Mountains or all the way to Nevada. Spend the summer in nature. There’s nothing better.

Well then. If you read, play music and get out in nature, you will be SO prepared for 5th Grade. You notice, I didn’t say anything about Math or Spelling. There will be plenty of time for that. This summer, concentrate on having fun. Oh, there is one last thing, though. Go over the supplies list for 5th Grade. I love it when students start the year prepared! Try to come to school the first day with ALL your supplies.

We’ll have a class get together sometime during the first week of school, when we have those minimum days. I’ll check in with parents to arrange something and send you more info closer to that time. Parents, I will also be working on an email list and phone tree so that we can all stay in touch. Until then, have a fantastic summer! I’m looking forward to a great year. You are going to be an awesome class. Go 5th Grade!