

Sonoran Sky Elementary School

Curriculum Highlights

Fourth Grade

Theme: Arizona: A to Z YAHOO!

Sonoran Sky fourth graders saddle up and participate in a year of exploration and adventure as they learn about their home state, Arizona: A to Z. Throughout the busy year, students develop life long skills for independence in learning through cooperative learning techniques. These techniques help students develop positive interdependence and individual accountability.

Programs in **art, music, physical education** and **media/technology** are also provided to students at Sonoran Sky. Trained specialists not only teach essential skills relative to their special areas, but also work with classroom teachers to plan learning experiences, which enrich classroom curriculum and assist children in discovering their own strengths and talents. The fourth grade comprehensive curriculum includes:

Reading/Accelerated Reader

Sonoran Sky fourth graders use the Harcourt's Storytown, which places a great deal of emphasis on vocabulary development, comprehension, and writing skills. Our Reading Renaissance Program (*Accelerated Reader*) is used to increase the volume, quality and enjoyment of reading. Sonoran Sky fourth graders are expected to complete 60 minutes of silent reading per day. A class period of 40 minutes is provided within the structure of a normal fourth grade day. Students read books that meet their individual needs and reading levels. To make reading an even more important and memorable experience, parents are encouraged to continue reading to their children. Another excellent path to developing comprehension, is reading to siblings.

Spelling

Sonoran Sky uses the Harcourt Spelling Program. Each week a different spelling skill is covered. The students are introduced to and master many language arts skills while emphasizing their spelling. Their spelling grade is a combination of their ability to master weekly words and their use of applied spelling.

Handwriting

Even though students in the Paradise Valley School District receive cursive instruction during their 3rd grade year, we feel that to properly develop these skills, instruction needs to be reinforced. Cursive handwriting is practiced throughout fourth grade.

Math

Sonoran Sky fourth graders use the Harcourt Math textbook and cover a variety of topics: place value, greater than/less than, multiplication, division, geometry, solids, logic and reasonableness, graphs, organization of data through charts, graphs, algebraic equations, patterns, fractions, decimals, elapsed time, telling time, measurements -- perimeter, area, volume, distance, and weight.

Social Studies

Arizona is the main thread found in the fourth grade Social Studies curriculum. Students use the Gibbs Smith Discovering Arizona textbook and are exposed to a variety of AZ texts, literature, music and art of the southwest. Major units include Geography and Geology, including the Grand Canyon, Ancient and Modern Day Native Americans, Spanish Explorers, Missionaries and Statehood.

Science

The Scott Foreman Textbook and Foss Kits serve as the foundation of the fourth grade Science program. During the first semester, science instruction is departmentalized. One teacher covers electricity and magnetism by using a hands-on Foss kit, another covers weather, while another will teach about animals. During the second semester, students are back with their homeroom teachers and continue studying these topics as well as character education.

Homework

Generally speaking, homework is regularly assigned in fourth grade. We encourage you to become familiar with your child's assignment calendar. Occasionally, class time is given for homework, but it is unlikely that all students will have time to complete all assignments. As a rule, one hour and 15 minutes of homework is considered appropriate. If your child becomes frustrated or does not understand an assignment, allow them to stop, and please let us know. We will assist them the following day. In addition, we remind our students that they can always study if all their assignments are finished. We stress the difference between homework and studying. Some suggestions are: Practice basic arithmetic facts, practice weekly spelling lists, oral reading, practice cursive, and read!

Field Trips and Celebrations

Several activities throughout the year are celebrated as grade level functions:

- ~Campfire Stories
- ~Native American Arts & Crafts
- ~Arizona's Birthday
- ~Cinco de Mayo

Since the focus of the fourth grade curriculum is on Arizona, it's our desire to expose the students, as much as possible, to many varied experiences in our beautiful state. Students attend the following field trips throughout their fourth grade year:

- ~Flagstaff
- ~Capitol Building
- ~AZ Science Center