

Earth Science Newsletter – November, 2018

(Mr. Williams ~ Rm. C-423)

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Hello from C-423 in the Annex. It is difficult to believe that November is almost here, but I wanted to get this letter out to you as soon as possible because of several important upcoming dates. Perhaps the most important date to note is the end of the 1st grading quarter on Friday, November 9th. One of the things you should be discussing with your child prior to Halloween is his/her progress with the 1st quarter literacy assignment. For honors students, you should ask what they learned from their essay summarizing peer-reviewed research regarding bumblebee habitat and land-use patterns. For academic students, strike up a conversation about the threat of “The Really Big One”, Kathryn Shulz’s Pulitzer Prize winning article about the Cascadia Subduction Zone in the Pacific Northwest. Students have been reading this incredibly interesting article at home, and it is absolutely critical that they turn in their responses to the fifteen questions to me no later than Friday, November 2nd because the assignment is worth 10% of their 1st quarter grade. I posted PDF files of the questions on Google Classroom for any students who may have misplaced their paper copy. Please remind your child to especially put substantial effort into the final question, which requires them to develop an emergency preparedness plan for a coastal Oregon city based on concepts learned from the article.

The second unit exam of the 1st quarter (Earth’s Interior and Plate Tectonics) is also quickly approaching. Depending on the class, it will either be Monday, November 5th or Wednesday, November 7th (students do not report on Tuesday, November 6th due to the Superintendent’s Conference on that day). On Friday, November 2nd, I will post a study guide on Google Classroom that students should use to prepare for the exam (this is a great opportunity for students to boost their grades!).

Students have completed nine labs thus far. Recent labs have included analysis of the formation and age of the Hawaiian Islands, exploration of the features along the seafloor across the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (underwater volcanic mountain

chain), and construction of paper models to illustrate seafloor spreading and subduction zones. However, the highlight of recent lab activity was likely the evaluation of several types of candy as models for the Earth's interior layers. This assignment culminated with students presenting their own designs for new edible treats that would more accurately represent the characteristics of the Earth's five distinct layers. I was VERY impressed with the creativity of student submissions. The next lab exercise will have students using compasses to pinpoint the exact location of earthquake epicenters based on historic seismogram data. During our next unit, we will spend time in the lab identifying rocks and minerals based on their physical characteristics.

Liverpool High School's Expedition Earth Science program is also in full swing. The "Science on Seneca" research cruise was an overwhelming success. Students classified sediment (and mussels!) from three dredge locations, and collected water samples to analyze chemical parameters and plankton diversity with the microscope. We also had a phenomenal tour of the Hobart and William Smith campus (including a visit to the dining hall)! The next expedition is coming up this Saturday, November 3rd. If your child signed up for this trip he/she will be coming home with more information this Tuesday.

As a final note, please remind students to bookmark the link for my weekly homework calendar:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gn_sjw44lGNsw7Eprzx2f9eXnMP3OsUdAzFnB9leQa8/edit?usp=sharing

In general, students have not been checking the calendar often enough. The calendar is there to help students keep track of homework due dates and upcoming quizzes/tests. I update the calendar every Friday for the following week, and recommend that students bookmark the calendar's URL on all devices they use for internet access. Please let me know if you have any questions/concerns.

Finally, shout-outs to Rocco DeGilormo, Alex House, Aiden Gagne, Johnny Pham, Michelle Sacco, Eva Woodworth, and Bianca Nguyen for their perfect scores on the Mapping Exam. Keep up the great work!

Honors Earth Science Only:

The symposium process has begun! Students are choosing their topics, and must submit six articles relating to their topic by Wednesday, November 7th. I have provided instructions on Google Classroom for how to use the free research databases at SUNY-ESF's Moon Library (the only catch is they can only be used at the actual library itself). A visit to Moon Library is absolutely not required, but it can make the research process much easier and more fruitful for students. I have arranged to be at Moon Library from 11:30 AM to 1:30PM on Sunday, November 4th to assist any students who would like additional support with the research process.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email at jwilliams@liverpool.k12.ny.us should you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

Mr. Williams