Jaime Riddle

Life Science

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Welcome to Life Science!

Life science is the study of living things and what makes life possible. This year will include major units on animals, plants, microorganisms, and human beings, in preparation for high school biology. We will be doing all kinds of experiments and activities to make this subject come alive for students!

Students will need:

1. BJU Press “Life Science” textbook, **fourth edition**

2. Life Science Lab Manual, fourth edition

3. A three ring binder with notebook paper in it.

Students will need to bring these supplies to class every session. The lab fee of **$45.00** is due by Aug 23, which covers all lab materials for the year. Cash, check, or **Paypal me at theriddles@gmail.com**

**Structure of the Class**

For some students, this class is their first “real” science class, or their first class in a school setting. That is completely fine. The text is tough, but getting a routine down is the key. Students will study one chapter per week, taking the weekend to read and answer questions in the text. Mondays will be for discussing concepts and making sure everything in the chapter was understood. Wednesdays will be for experiments and other activities which explore the key ideas further.

Homework is the largest part (50%) of student’s grade. Reading the text is the most important part of mastering this subject, so the majority of homework assignments will be weekly section review questions and vocabulary from the text. Occasionally there will be a lab to do at home, or other homework besides the weekly questions from the chapter. At this age, completeness and quality matters more than accuracy, so make sure your child does not stress if they do not understand something—but do encourage them to do work carefully and completely.

**Homework will be collected at the start of class every Monday**, and returned to the student on Wednesday. **Homework must be handed in on time.** Half-credit will be given for any late homework, except in the case of absence. This is to foster good habits for high school, and also because of time pressure; with 24 chapters, the student cannot make up missed parts of the text easily. Parents are welcome to contact me about sickness, vacation, etc., to work out what is appropriate in those situations.

Several tests will be given in class this year, after a larger unit is complete. Brief pop quizzes will be given in class on a regular basis to make sure students are keeping up with the reading. Tests and quizzes will comprise 25% of the student’s grade.

The remaining 25% of the student’s grade will be a participation grade which includes things like participation in class & labs, attitude, and work ethic. A rubric for the participation grade will be provided to students, so they can get a sense of what is expected from them. The general idea is for middle schoolers to be rewarded for diligence, helpfulness, doing work well/completely—even if science is not their best subject or they struggle with tests. Extra credit opportunities may also become available if the need arises.

To sum up, the student’s grade consists of:

Homework (50%)

Tests/Quizzes (25%)

Participation (25%)

**Class Rules**

1. Please **do not use cell phones** in class. Put them on silent in your backpack, or they will be sequestered in a basket until the end of class.
2. Please do not disrupt class. Correction will eat up a lot of class time.
3. Please turn in homework on time, as neatly as possible. Either handwritten or typed is fine, but make sure handwriting is neat. **Sloppy work will not receive full credit**. Anything typed needs to be printed out and brought to class, not emailed.

Brighton policy requires teachers to write up a discipline notice if students are struggling with behavior in class. Cheating and poor grades must also be reported. If you have any concerns about how your child is doing, at any time, I welcome you to contact me at [jaimeriddle@alumni.duke.edu](mailto:jaimeriddle@alumni.duke.edu). Otherwise, I will contact you if issues arise.

Please also be aware of some other important Brighton rules, per the Code of Conduct. I am obliged to speak to students in class regarding the following:

1. No hats in class

2. No immodest clothing or inappropriate images/messages on clothing

3. No eating/lunches—(but drinks with lids are fine)

4. No peanut products of any kind on the premises

Absences should be reported that day to the administrator at 816-500-7763.

**Other Issues**

Please be aware that the BJU Press textbook teaches life science from a creationist perspective, and evolutionary theory will be critiqued in Chapter 8. Feel free to alter or augment your student’s education on this subject according to your own family’s convictions. They will not be tested on the details of any particular creationist perspective.

For several reasons, the earthworm and frog dissection labs will not be conducted this year—we will be watching a video on those dissections instead. If it is important to you that your student do a live dissection, please let me know. Alternatively, these will be done in high school biology.

**Final Words**

In closing, thank you so much for the opportunity to teach your child! This is a great year to explore biology and make a big deal about scientific opportunities. I will be covering the basics, but this is a prime time to let them watch documentaries, get involved with health issues that arise, take the pet to the vet, experiment with lawn care or address a bug infestation… ANYTHING science! This will help the subject come alive for your kids. And who knows? You may find that you have a budding doctor, nurse, arborist, or researcher on your hands!

**Tentative Fall Syllabus**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Monday Class** | **Date** | **Wednesday Class** | **Textbook Chapter** |
| 8-21 | *NO SCHOOL* | 8-23 | Welcome |  |
| 8-28 | Discuss Ch2 | 8-30 | Labs Ch2 | 2-What is Life? |
| 9-4 | *NO SCHOOL* | 9-6 | Discuss Ch1 | 1-What is Science? |
| 9-11 | Discuss Ch3 | 9-13 | Labs Ch3 | 3-Cell Structure |
| 9-18 | Discuss Ch4 | 9-20 | Labs Ch4 | 4-Cell Activities |
| 9-25 | Review | 9-27 | Exam 1 |  |
| 10-2 | Discuss Ch5 | 10-4 | Labs Ch5 | 5-Cell Division |
| 10-9 | Discuss Ch6 | 10-11 | Labs Ch6 | 6-Heredity |
| 10-16 | Discuss Ch7 | 10-18 | Labs Ch7 | 7-Genetic Changes |
| 10-23 | Discuss Ch8 | 10-25 | Labs Ch8 | 8-Creation |
| 10-30 | Discuss Ch8 | 11-1 | Labs Ch8 | 8-Evolution |
| 11-6 | Review | 11-8 | Exam 2 |  |
| 11-13 | Discuss Ch9 | 11-15 | Labs Ch9 | 9-Microbiology |
| 11-20 | Open | 11-22 | *NO SCHOOL* |  |
| 11-27 | Discuss Ch10 | 11-29 | Labs Ch10 | 10-Plant Structure |
| 12-4 | Discuss Ch11 | 12-6 | Labs Ch11 | 11-Plant Reproduction |
| 12-11 | Review | 12-13 | Exam 3 |  |