

Science Resources Class Information

Life Science (2011-2012)

Class Time: Thursdays, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Location: Springton Lake Presbyterian Church, Route 252 & Media Line Road, Newtown Square

Teacher: Lisa Swieson (610.355.9174, LSwieson@science-resources.org)

Textbook: *Life Science* (Holt Science & Technology, 2004 edition)

Class Web Site: www.academy.science-resources.org/lifesci1112.htm

Class Particulars: Each week, the first 30-45 minutes of class will be spent reviewing assignments and preparing for lab. The remainder of the time will be in lab. The last class session of each semester will be devoted to a practical lab exam.

Dress Code: Since each class will include lab work, students should wear comfortable (not baggy) clothing that is easily washable or that you don't mind getting dirty. Long hair should be tied back. No open-toed shoes, bracelets, rings, or loose jewelry should be worn. Protective gloves, aprons, and safety glasses will be provided when needed.

Students are expected to bring the following to class each week: textbook, notebook, pen/pencil, folder/binder for handouts, and all written assignments (see below).

Assignments: Students will be sent home each week with assignments that must be completed on their own each day before the next class. These will include:

- **Readings.** Students will be expected to read 2 or 3 sections (14-20 pages) each week from the assigned textbook.
- **Notebook.** Students should keep a spiral-bound notebook where they write all vocabulary words with definitions, along with other important concepts from the assigned chapter. (More on this during our first class.) This notebook should be brought to class each week.
- **Lab Report.** A short write-up of each lab will be due the week following the lab. I recommend writing up the lab report Thursday afternoon or evening, while everything is still fresh in the student's mind.
- **Lab Prep.** Each week, students will receive instructions to prepare for the next lab. This usually means reading the lab ahead of time to become familiar with the procedure.
- **Other Written Assignments.** Written assignments may include review questions based on the reading assignments or worksheets. If any student encounters difficulty with these written assignments, s/he should contact the instructor by phone or email for extra help.
- **Tests.** After every few chapters, students will be given a take-home test. Tests will consist of questions very similar to the ones the students have been doing for homework. Tests should be taken on the date indicated and mailed to me the following day so that I can score them before the next class. These are not open book, so I ask a parent of each student (please!) to supervise these tests and sign them before mailing them back to me.
- **Projects.** During two of our units, students will complete a short poster project in lieu of taking a test. Details will be given at that time.

Mid-Week Help: In addition to being available by phone or email during the week, as questions arise I will also send emails to parents (check email regularly!) with extra information, clarification, etc. Parents, please make sure to forward this information to your kids!

Grades: Many homeschoolers are not accustomed to getting (or giving) grades, but in a classroom situation it is a helpful way for students (and their parents) to keep track of their progress and note which areas need improvement. In calculating grades, I will drop each student's lowest lab score *each semester* (two per year) and his/her lowest test score for the year. Grades will be calculated as follows:

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| • Homework: 25% | A: 90-100% |
| • Notebook: 10% | B: 80-89% |
| • Labs: 25% | C: 70-79% |
| • Tests & Projects: 25% | D: 60-69% |
| • Lab Practicals: 15% | |

Absence: I realize that students may need to miss class once or twice for illness or family obligations. If your child must miss class, please let me know ahead of time, if possible. Even so, students are responsible for the material they missed – homework assignments must still be completed and handed in, etc. Some labs may be made up at home under the supervision of a parent, but even if the lab cannot be made up, students must understand the concepts that should have been observed during lab. Note that, since the student's lowest lab score will be dropped each term, absence need not affect that portion of the student's grade, unless the student misses more than one lab each term.

Lab Safety: Life science lab has opportunities for injury as well as for observing living creatures, so it is essential that lab rules be followed carefully. Remember, students who repeatedly ignore these rules are putting their classmates at risk and will be suspended from class with no refund. In addition, students will be expected to pay for equipment that they break.

About the Textbook: Your textbook, along with your first assignment, will be available for pickup in early August. For students who live prohibitively far away, I will try to make the first chapter of the book available through the class web site. Details will be emailed to all students at that time.

Life science is a fun class – I hope everyone is looking forward to it as much as I am!

Lisa Swieson