

**Sweet Gum Upper Elementary Community
Distance Learning Plan & Digital Resources
Week of April 27, 2020**

Dear Sweet Gum Community,

Below you will find details for the Week Five Distance Learning Plan.

The following subject areas include new activities and projects this week:

- **Reading** - Book Clubs Week Two and Tracking Characters in Relationship
- **Writing** - Text Merge Writing Activity
- **Math and Geometry** - Off-Screen Options (in addition to Khan Academy)
- **History** - *Who Knows What?* (Big History Project)
- **Science** - EPA Food Waste Challenge Week 2
- **Geography** - Rivers & Watersheds

If your child has not tried every activity from Weeks 1-4, you can find downloadable links to these plans under the “Downloadable Weekly Plans and Resources” panel on the webpage. Previous weekly plans from Specialists are also available on the Specials webpage.

In service,

Ms. Isaza and Mr. Kendall

Daily Reading and Response Journal:

- Read a fiction book for a minimum of 1 hour per day. This book could be your new book club book, or an independent book you are already reading.
- Keep a response journal each time you read.
- If you are a member of one of the book clubs, we will discuss our journal focus at our weekly meeting!
- If you are reading an independent book, write your observations of **relationships** between characters in your specific book. If you track a main character, or if your narrator is a part of the storyline, who do they spend the most time with? Are their relationships strong, or fraught with conflict? Does your main character forge new relationships in the story, perhaps meeting a new character and making some meaningful connection with them? Does your main character ever experience loneliness? What conflicts arise in relationships and how does your main character handle those conflicts?

Writing Activity: Text Merge

This week, to help get your creative juices flowing, try an activity called “text merging.” Some of you have done this activity in the classroom before. It is a great way to generate ideas and connect to favorite books and other writing we keep around our homes. A text merge starts as a book and magazine scavenger hunt. Below is a demonstration of how to do this from home. I am very excited to see your work!

Book Scavenger Hunt Poetry with Amanda Gorman of 826 National:

Inaugural Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, finds inspiration for a poem from the books on her shelf. Beginning with her inspiration book (Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*), Amanda walks us through her entire poem's process, and invites you to join in the fun.

Watch this [YouTube video](#) to learn about the text merge poem process and then, try it for yourself!

For fresh writing prompts this week, visit Ms. Navarro’s section of the Specials page. She posts a new prompt for each day of the week!

Writing Conferences:

Please reach out to Ms. Navarro by email at e.navarro@aidanschool.org if you would like to schedule a writing conference with her. She would love to hear what you are writing about these days and support your creative work!

Weekly Spelling List and Activity:

Parents, the lists attached are suggestions for the children. An old fashioned dictionary or independent reading books work fine to scout for new and interesting words instead of using the PDF lists.

Children, choose ten words to learn this week. Ideally these are words you use often but notice that you don’t feel comfortable spelling in your own writing, or they can be words that trip you up while reading. As a backup, you can choose words from one of the high frequency lists, or new vocabulary you encounter through your own research.

Remember, new words will only stick if you use them, so practice multiple times and make sure they are going to be applicable in your work.

Once you have chosen words, practice spelling them correctly. Options for this include:

- **Word Wall Card**
- **Tiles:** spell with bananagrams tiles
- **Shaving Cream:** write in shaving cream using a silpat or tray

- **Skin/Air Writing:** trace the letters on your skin with a finger, tap each letter down your arm and then say the whole word, or write them in the sky using your whole arm
- **Stamp:** use an alphabet box to stamp the words with ink or into dough
- **Sand:** trace the words with your finger in a sand tray
- **Word Hunt:** search a book or the environment around you for each word and then record
- **Cirque du Soleil:** form each letter on the rug with your body
- **Chant:** chant each letters in a rhythmic pattern
- **Rainbow:** choose 3-5 colors and write the word in each
- **Story:** write a story/poem that includes all of the words
- **Teach:** teach someone else how to spell the word

Each time, make sure you:

1. Read the word aloud (while looking at it in written form).
2. Spell the word aloud, one letter at a time.
3. Attempt to spell without looking at the word (using one of the above methods).
4. Check that you spelled the word correctly.
5. Create a sentence that uses the word (aloud).

High Frequency Word Lists (see PDF)

Grade 4 List (see PDF)

Grade 5 List (see PDF)

Math and Geometry:

The ancient Greek mathematician Thales figured out how to measure the height of the Great Pyramid of Egypt in an unconventional way. He stuck his walking stick into the ground and watched its shadow as the sun rose and set in the sky. At a very particular point in the day, the stick's shadow equaled the exact height of the stick (which he had measured). Thales was so excited and realized that if he measured the Great Pyramid's shadow at that exact same time of day, he would know its true height without having to scale the pyramid himself. *Can you replicate what Thales did with a tree perhaps? Or a building?*

Practice finding the average (mean), median, mode, and range of various number sets. Make up your own number sets, or collect some data next week and analyze it (daily outdoor temperatures, pet sleeping habits, amount of preventable food waste per day, etc.). Track your data and consider constructing a graph.

Don't forget to visit Mr. Hurwitz's curriculum supplements on the Specials page! He has shared a number of printable packets that are grade specific.

Khan Academy:

Parents, you are encouraged to create an account on Khan Academy for your child. The accounts are FREE. You may click the grade level links below to subscribe your child to a course under my teacher account page, where they can access learning content (video tutorials and activities) and I can view their progress through course content. Content is not lock-step, and it is self-paced. If you do not subscribe your child to the “courses” via the links below, I will not be able to view their progress or work, but the children will still be able to access the various tutorials and content.

Each day, your child should choose an appropriate topic to review/learn and practice. If this is their first experience on the Khan Academy platform, they may need some guidance finding an appropriate topic of study. In general, grade level topics should be familiar territory (e.g. a 4th Year should look through the 4th Grade content and select a topic).

If for any reason your child does not have access to a computer or you prefer to support their work differently, there are plenty of alternative ways to build math appreciation, number flexibility and to practice building skills. Please see the links below with further ideas (I recommend “Numbers Talks” at this [link](#) - once a parent knows how to have a number talk, these can make for fun, spontaneous conversations).

If you have simple tools at home (e.g. geometry compass, ruler, measuring cups, graph paper, protractor, thermometers, etc.) your child is encouraged to put those tools to good use! If you have workbooks at home (e.g. Kumon, Spectrum, Common Core Math) please feel free to use those instead of Khan Academy for skill practice.

Because each child’s math and geometry work is individualized at school, I understand that supporting this work can be a challenge outside of school. Please feel free to drop me a note for some guidance or assistance identifying the best fit for your child.

Khan Academy information letter to parents: [link](#)

Grade 4 Math Essentials Course [link](#)

Grade 5 Math Essentials Course [link](#)

Grade 6 Math Essentials Course [link](#)

If you are nostalgic (as I am) for our Montessori Math Materials, have a try at [extracting the square root or finding common multiples on the pegboard](#) VIRTUALLY, a new resource coded by a Montessori teacher’s husband! This resource might be most fun for parents, to get a glimpse at how our materials work. A little tutorial can be provided if you request :)

History: *Who Knows What?* from Big History Project

In this activity, you'll start to explore how examining the same event from different perspectives can result in drawing varied conclusions surrounding that event. This should help you better understand what it means to use interdisciplinary perspectives and how you can use a variety of disciplines to help you understand events throughout history.

Think about this current COVID-19 pandemic we are experiencing right now. Imagine you could fast forward the clock to a time when life resumes as we “normally” experience it, with school and sports and playdates and parties! Your job is to examine this pandemic through the eyes of different people, and even through the eyes of different versions of yourself. First, write down answers to the following questions:

1. What are the questions a historian would ask about what is happening, years from today?
2. What would the kindergarten version of you ask about this event?
3. What would the third grade version of you ask about this event?
4. What would a doctor, a lawyer, a police officer, or a politician ask about this event?

Take a look at the Disciplines Chart (see pdf attachment), which you can use as a resource. Be sure to consider the idea that when you put all of these different perspectives together to create a narrative, that story will be a combination of all the perspectives!

There are also Discipline Cards (see pdf attachment) that you might print and cut out and study. Consider what type of discipline you might be drawn to study.

Now, choose one of the disciplines from the chart and take on that perspective. For example, if I was a biochemist, I would be focused on the study of molecules that make up living things. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I would be asking questions like, “what are the causes and cures of diseases?” and “how do genes mutate over time?” I would use tools for research like: electron microscopes, lasers, laboratory instruments, and the scientific method. I would collect evidence from DNA and enzymes. I would talk with nutritionists, agriculturalists, and chemists to share ideas. Write a paragraph from the perspective of someone who studies one of the disciplines from the chart. What would you contribute to the story of history years from now, when this pandemic has ended?

Science: *Food Waste Challenge Week 2: What Can We Do With Our Data?*

Last week, you measured and collected data about preventable food waste in your home. This week, it is time to analyze your data and reflect on your experience. If you would like to spend another week collecting data to compare to your baseline, you can certainly do that, and do this analysis next week!

To analyze your data: make sure you've completed your baseline data collection from week one, and start thinking about actions to take at home. Remember all data is interesting data! There is no judgment about how much food is discarded, and we will not be sharing any individual baseline data with identifying information.

Now it's time to think: *What did you waste and why?*

Reflect on your experience. See the optional questions in your Baseline Report (data tracker) such as, what items were wasted and why, whether your "baseline" data reflects a typical week for you, what you learned, what challenges you had and how you addressed them, and any other significant thoughts.

Then, consider ideas for action. Based on your own data, brainstorm ideas with your family for reducing waste at home. Connect with a friend and discuss your results together. Is there a most common item that you noticed that you want to take action on? Use your knowledge of your own habits to think about what might work for you at home.

Learn from others! Check out this helpful website if you are ever wondering if your produce is better to eat or toss: <https://www.eatortoss.com/>

Report about your experiences and your solutions at our Friday morning meeting!

Here is a reminder of how we are defining preventable food waste:

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *Food: Too Good to Waste Toolkit*, this is "food you bought to eat but has since spoiled and food that was prepared but not eaten and was then thrown away." This does not include food scraps you wouldn't normally eat or liquids.

Examples of Unprepared Preventable Food Waste: a moldy onion, squishy grapes, freezer burned corn.

Examples of Prepared Preventable Food Waste: stale bread, or leftovers on your plate (a.k.a. S.L.O.P.!).

Egg shells, fruit pits, fruit peels, and liquids are generally considered regular food waste.

Additional Food Challenge Resources:

- Food Challenge Overview (see pdf)
- Food Challenge - Smart Shopping (see pdf)
- Food Challenge - Smart Storage (see pdf)

Other: Select a science project from this [link](#). Make sure you have the materials at home that are needed for your project of choice. Follow the instructions, collect data and observations, and write down your conclusions. Send photos of your process, or share your conclusions with me by Friday at j.isaza@aidanschool.org

Geography Activity: Rivers & Watersheds



PHOTOGRAPH BY DARREN LEECH, MYSHOT

Using a map or atlas from a book or online, find the area where you live. Use your finger to trace a nearby river or stream on the map along its path to the ocean. Then, trace all of the streams and rivers that flow into that river. We know these smaller river or stream systems that flow into a larger river are called tributaries.

All land on Earth is part of a watershed. A watershed is an entire river system or an area drained by a river and its tributaries. When it rains, or when snow melts, water soaks into the ground and becomes part of the groundwater, or it runs off of the land or through storm drains into the nearby streams or rivers. Watersheds connect us to the ocean because much of the water that falls within a watershed as precipitation "drains" into nearby streams and rivers. This water then flows in rivers to the ocean.

Now, choose two rivers from the list below. This might be a great opportunity to collaborate with a partner, and each of you can focus on one of the rivers and share your data. First, trace the path of a river from its start to end, where it meets the ocean. Then, trace all of the tributaries that flow into that river. Once you have studied the tributaries, use your finger to connect the points from where all of the tributaries start and the point where the major river joins the ocean.

You can imagine this as an outlined "bubble" around each major river and all of its tributaries. You have outlined a watershed!

To see your watershed most clearly, use tracing paper or carefully trace on top of an atlas or map, so you can copy the course of a river and its tributaries onto your own paper. Then, you can color code your own traced river system: river in blue, tributaries in black, and the outline of the watershed in red.

Do the same exercise with your second river (or share your work with your partner)! Compare and contrast the shapes of the two watersheds. Ask: *How are the shapes of the two watersheds similar? How are they different? Why do you think watersheds are shaped the way they are?*

Try to picture what the land within your watersheds looks like. *If a watershed is large and wide, how might the land be shaped? If a watershed is small and narrow, how might the land be shaped?*

Record the differences and similarities you found between your two watersheds and share with the rest of the class on Friday!

Suggested Rivers:

- Amazon
- Amur
- Columbia
- Congo
- Kolyma
- Lena
- Mackenzie-Peace
- Mekong
- Mississippi
- Murray-Darling
- Niger
- Nile
- Ob-Irtysh
- Orinoco
- Parana
- Saint Lawrence
- Yangtze
- Yellow
- Yenisey-Angara
- Yukon

Care for the Home and Others:

- Plan a meal to cook or a recipe to bake. Be sure to clean the kitchen thoroughly upon completion, and return any tools and utensils to their proper home.
- Offer to care for any houseplants or family pets.
- If you have your own bookshelf, organize it by genre (e.g. fantasy, literary fiction, nonfiction, science fiction, poetry, etc.) or by author last name, or help a sibling organize their shelf.
- Wash and fold your own laundry.
- Offer to set the table for a family meal.
- Fix something broken (e.g. darning a sock).
- Ask an adult how you can help with a task (carrying groceries, taking out trash, etc.)
- Write a list of questions on paper slips and have the family draw questions from a bowl or hat to make for some interesting dinner conversation.
- Call someone lonely.
- Play with a sibling.
- Read aloud to a younger sibling.

Care for Self:

- Take a mindfulness break
- Do something creative (e.g. paint, draw, write a poem, build something, play music, make a booklet and decorate the cover)
- Prepare a healthy snack or smoothie
- Get some exercise (e.g. practice yoga)
- If you have the resources nearby, try some handwork (kumihimo, knitting, crochet, embroidery, origami, sewing)
- Learn something new from YouTube (see links below)
- Learn something new from someone else!
- Wash your hands often :)

Enrichment Websites and Videos:

Please check back here as we plan to add to the content as we scout for new resources!

Current Events:

*[Newsela](#) (customizable, child-friendly current events articles. An account is free to access content. Parents can even customize reading level. Quizzes and writing prompts are also an option.)

[IndyKids](#) (a free paper for kids, by kids)

History/Geography:

[NativLang](#) (history of written and spoken languages)

[Primitive Technology](#) (be sure to turn on captions!)

[Native Land](#) (explore an interactive world map to learn more about Indigenous territories, languages, and treaties)

[MetKids](#) (need adult to help child subscribe and access interactive art history site)

[Jas. Townsend and Son](#) (18th century cooking and culture)

[Fashioning a Nation Art History Gallery](#)

[1619 Project](#) (includes link to the podcast from NYT which examines the legacy of slavery in the U.S. - the children have listened to episode 1 of the podcast together and we have discussed it as a class. Any new content should be previewed before sharing with your child, and discussions are encouraged throughout the episodes - recommended for trips in the car!).

[Big History Project](#) (a framework for history exploration - beginning with the origin of the universe - a great complement to our Montessori history studies and full of timelines and videos for inspiration)

[CIA World Factbook](#) (great resource for collecting data and statistics about countries, can use data to make maps, charts, graphs)

[Teaching Tolerance Student Texts](#) (searchable library of short texts offers a diverse mix of stories and perspectives)

Science:

*[Scientific American's Bring Science Home Collection](#) (science experiments and demos, many easy to replicate at home)

[Kurzgesagt - In a Nutshell](#) (well-sourced animations exploring a wide range of scientific ideas)

[SmarterEveryDay](#) (charismatic engineer "explores the world using science")

[Domain of Science](#) YouTube Channel (scientist and children's book author has a channel that some might also enjoy)

[Deep Sea](#) (scroll down and discover the animals living in different zones of the oceans, some you might never see with your own eyes!)

[Super Charged Science](#) (free online science classes at specific times, e.g astronomy)

[Wall of Birds](#) from Cornell Lab of Ornithology (a beautiful mural of all known families of birds and it is to scale. You can explore the mural by zooming in or you can click on the name of a specific bird and it will zoom in on the illustration along with information about the bird)

[National Geographic Kids Science Lab](#) (in case you need more ideas for easy experiments at home)

Math and Geometry:

*[Number Talks](#) (Parents should watch the video tutorial and can implement quite easily at home for some great logical reasoning and number flexibility work.)

[Codecademy](#) (learn to code for free)

TEDEd "[The Infinite Life of Pi](#)" Video - Enjoy a Belated Celebration of Pi Day (3.14)

[Mathigon](#) (a treasure trove of math and geometry activities and resources. Use class code **U3MW-LECH** to access content)

Writing:

The Learning Network NYT (adults should preview content first and can access additional writing prompts, current events, contests, and more curated content)

Mentor Texts NYT (explore a new writing technique from this collection by the NYT - parents should preview content first)

Cooking:

Bon Appetit (many different voices and opinions about cooking and food)

Art:

Instructables (a maker and crafter gold mine full of project ideas!)

Museums with Virtual Gallery Tours can be found through this [link](#)

Join Artist Mo Willems at 1PM daily for his "[Lunch Doodles](#)" tutorial videos

Mindfulness:

Mindful School Free Mindfulness Practice for Kids Online (1PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)