Seneca Valley School District

April 2021

# Middle Years

Working Together for School Success

## Short Stops

### Proofreading tip

Get your middle grader in the habit of proofreading her essays and reports carefully with this idea. Suggest that she look over graded papers she gets back and make a list of common mistakes, such as writing *affect* instead of *effect*. Then, she should check for those errors—and others—before she turns in her work.

### Be a good digital citizen

Downloading music and movies illegally is considered stealing since it robs entertainers of payment for their work. Ask your child how he would feel if he didn't get paid for a job. Then, tell him to steer clear of "peer-to-peer sharing" sites. Explain that not only can he get in legal trouble, he might also download viruses or spyware onto his laptop or tablet.

### Nothing like a good laugh!

"Inside jokes" can be handy tools for lightening up tense moments. For example, saying "No good will come of that" in a silly-dramatic voice might become a family catchphrase when someone's doing something they shouldn't. Or when a conversation gets heated, try freezing, walking backward three steps, and calling out, "Rewind!"

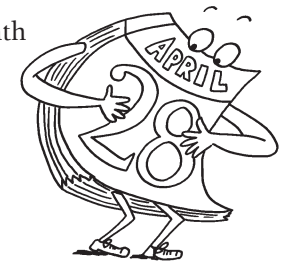
### Worth quoting

"There are always flowers for those who want to see them." *Henri Matisse*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What month of the year has 28 days?

**A:** All of them!




# Reach the finish line

Like athletes running a long race, students may lose steam toward the end of the school year. Try these ideas to motivate your child to dig deep and keep working hard so he can overcome any hurdles and sprint across the finish line!

***Hurdle:*** Self-doubt

***How to overcome:*** If your middle grader isn't sure he can do well on his social studies test or finish his English paper, remind him of times he stuck with something even though it was tough. ("Remember when you thought you couldn't play the guitar? You kept practicing, and now you can!")

***Hurdle:*** Lack of motivation

***How to overcome:*** Knowing what he's working toward can make putting in the effort easier. Encourage your tween to list goals for the rest of the school year (ace his science project, participate more in class). Then, have him think about extra benefits of reaching those goals (having a cool story to share at science camp, getting to know teachers and classmates better).

***Hurdle:*** Difficult material

***How to overcome:*** When your child runs into a challenge, like learning a tough math concept, suggest that he ask himself, "How can I get this done?" Answering the "three Ws" can guide him to a solution: *Who* can help? (A study buddy or teacher.) *What* do I need to do? (Extra practice problems.) *When* will I do it? (Twice a week for 30 minutes.)

## Creative spins on journaling

One way to encourage your tween to write every day is to make it something she enjoys doing. These fun journal ideas will let her express herself while she sharpens her writing skills.

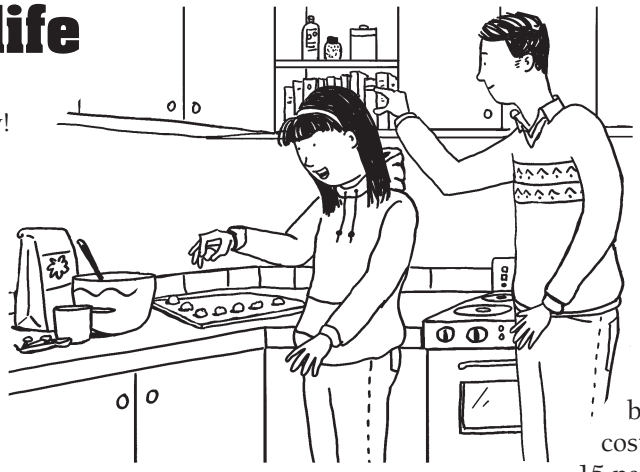
**Nature journal.** Suggest that your child write about the natural world around her. Her journal might include her observations about animals, weather, and constellations. She could also add drawings, quotes, and poems about how being in nature makes her feel.

**Reviews journal.** Tweens have lots of opinions! Your middle grader can write a review each time she finishes a book, watches a movie, tries a new product (like a smart speaker), or orders takeout. She'll practice opinion writing and also have a place to look when friends ask for recommendations.

© 2021 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated

# Math in daily life

When will your middle grader use math outside the classroom? Every day! Here are just two examples.



**1. Cooking.** Can your tween halve or double a recipe for you? (She'll need to divide or multiply fractions.) Convert the oven temperature in an old family recipe from Celsius to Fahrenheit? (She should multiply the Celsius temperature by $\frac{9}{5}$ and add 32°.) Figure out how many baking sheets are needed for 48 cookies if each cookie is 2 inches in diameter and there are 2 inches between cookies? (She will have to find out how many cookies fit along the length and width of a sheet, then multiply the two numbers.)

**2. Shopping.** Ask your middle schooler to help you find the best deals. Can she compare the cost of one coffee maker marked at 15 percent off $25 and another that's 40 percent off $38? If you join a store's frequent buyer club for $25 per year and earn 10 percent off each purchase, how much would you have to spend to recoup your $25?

## Q&A Dangers of "edibles"

**Q** *I heard that some neighborhood kids were trying marijuana edibles. How can I keep my son safe from them?*

**A** "Edibles"—foods and drinks that contain the psychoactive component in marijuana—are sold in specialty shops and medical dispensaries in states where marijuana is legal for adults. Because they're often "sweet treats" like gummies and brownies, they can be appealing to tweens. Kids may also like that the lack of smoke makes using them easier to hide.

Tell your son that edibles carry the same dangers to children as smoking marijuana, including lasting damage to memory and concentration. In addition, the high from edibles comes more slowly as the body digests them, so people may eat dangerous amounts.

Explain that if a friend offers him candy he's not familiar with, he should read the label to make sure it's really candy. If the package isn't available, he'll need to say no.

**OUR PURPOSE**

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5540

© 2021 Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated

## Ways to practice gratitude

Inspire your tween to appreciate the good things in life. He'll feel happier and more optimistic with these projects.

### Springtime gratitude tree

Ask your child to fill a large glass jar halfway with rocks, then insert twigs to make a "tree." Next, have him draw and cut out construction paper "leaves." He could write something he's grateful for on each leaf, then poke a hole in the leaf and hang it on the tree. *Idea:* Encourage him to keep a pile of blank leaves nearby so family members can fill in their own "gratitude leaves."

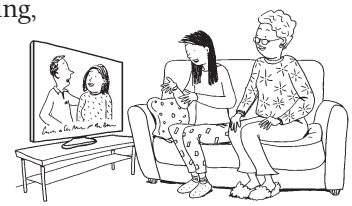
### The ABCs of thankfulness

Give your tween a stack of index cards and a challenge: Write at least one thing he's grateful for each day, starting with A ("Apple pie for dessert") and ending with Z ("Zero trouble with my history test"). He can hole-punch the cards and keep them on a ring.

## Parent to Parent Learning English at home

Our family speaks Spanish at home. Because our daughter Francisca is learning English in school, she has taught us some vocabulary. Her teacher mentioned that teaching others is a great way for kids to practice a new language.

When we watch TV in English, and I don't understand something, Francisca tries to explain. We keep on the English subtitles so if she needs to look something up she can see the words.



She also downloads audiobooks in English for us to listen to in the car. Francisca enjoys finding books she's already read in Spanish that are available in English to listen to. And we sometimes play games like Hangman and Scrabble in English, or in both languages, and ask Francisca to define unfamiliar words.

We continue to speak mostly Spanish, but our daughter is proud of becoming bilingual and sharing what she learns with us.