

# Ashley Academy 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Syllabus

---

**Teacher**

Scott McIlquham

**Web Page**

MrMcIlquham.weebly.com

**Email**

smcilquham@ashleyacademy.com

**Classroom Location**

Room 4

**Class Times**

7:45 AM – 3:15 PM

**Overview**

While continuing to introduce and embed a foundation of basic skills, in 4<sup>th</sup> grade we will be aggressively applying those skills to the understanding of a broad and deeply integrated curriculum across all subjects. Authentic real world applications will be modeled and experienced as much as possible to answer that most ubiquitous of 4<sup>th</sup> grade questions: “Why do I need to know this?”

**Major Learning Objectives**

The Tennessee state standards provide the spine for my curriculum plan – this represents the “floor” for what we will cover in class. As a teacher, my over-arching learning objectives for the year (the “ceiling”) are as follows:

Students will demonstrate grade-level or higher automaticity in the foundational skills of reading, writing, math, and keyboarding.

Students will exhibit a joy of learning demonstrated by a love of reading, an appreciation for writing and math, and an insatiable curiosity regarding science, history, geography, art, etc.

Students will demonstrate persistence and utilize effective strategies to satisfy that curiosity.

According to State standards, the specific 4<sup>th</sup> grade major curricular objectives are as follows:

**Language Arts:**

- *Literature*: Students will determine, describe and explain the various aspects, structures and forms of literature and the use of literary devices.
- *Informational Text*: Students will determine, describe and explain the various aspects, structures and forms of informational text and demonstrate comprehension of grade-level informational text sources.
- *Writing*: Students will routinely and over extended time frames write clear, coherent and organized opinion, explanatory and narrative pieces.
- *Speaking and Listening*: Students will demonstrate oral and aural abilities to comprehend, discriminate, discuss, paraphrase, communicate and present information and ideas in formal and informal group settings.
- *Language Conventions*: Students will demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling and vocabulary when writing, speaking, reading, and listening.

**Grading Scale for Language Arts:**

Terms 1&2: Reading & Homework (20%), Class work (40%), Quizzes & Tests (40%)

Term 3: Reading & Homework (20%), Class work (30%), Quizzes & Tests (30%), Newbery Book Report (20%)

Term 4: Reading & Homework (25%), Class work (25%), Quizzes & Tests (25%), Special Topics (25%)

**Math:**

- *Operations*: Students will solve multistep word problems posed with whole numbers using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- *Factors and Multiples*: Students will find factors of whole numbers from 1-100 and determine whether a given number in that range is prime or composite.
- *Algebraic Thinking*: Students will generate and analyze number and shape patterns that follow given rules.
- *Place Value*: Students will generalize place value for multi-digit whole numbers and demonstrate that understanding in multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, comparison, and rounding.
- *Fractions*: Students will explain, compare, order, add and subtract fractions with different numerators and denominators. Students will multiply a fraction by a whole number. Students will solve word problems involving fractions.
- *Decimals*: Students will express fractions in decimal notation and demonstrate addition, comparison and ordering of decimals to the hundredths place.
- *Measurement and Data*: Students will solve problems involving measurement and conversion of measurements from a larger unit to a smaller unit. Students will solve word problems involving distance, time, volume, mass, money, and area and perimeter formulas for rectangles.
- *Geometry*: Students will recognize, measure and sketch lines and angles. Students will draw and classify two-dimensional geometric figures and recognize lines of symmetry.

**Grading Scale for Math:**

Terms 1,2,3: Class work (40%), Quizzes & Unit Tests (40%), Term Test (20%)  
Term 4: Class work (30%), Quizzes & Tests (30%), Million Dollar Project (40%)

**Social Studies:**

- *Geographical representations of the world*: latitude, longitude, mapping skills, landforms
- *Interactions between humans and physical systems*: regions of the world, necessities of life, formation of communities, early civilizations, cultural diversity.
- *Research skills*: sources and resources, report-writing
- *Early human history*: America pre-1492, European exploration pre-1492
- *American History 1492-1861* : Colonization of America, Native Americans, the 13 English Colonies, the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, Sectionalism
- *Governance and Civics*: structures of government, U.S. Constitution, citizenship
- *Economics*: private property, free enterprise, supply and demand, the Industrial Revolution

**Grading Scale for Social Studies:**

Terms 1,2: Class work (25%), Quizzes & Unit Tests (25%), Term Test (25%), Research Projects (25%)  
Term 3: Class work (40%), Quizzes & Unit Tests (40%), Term Test (20%)  
Term 4: Class work (30%), Quizzes & Tests (30%), Special Topic (40%)

Science:

- *Scientific method*: inquiry, technology and engineering
- *Cells, Systems and Environment*: cells to systems, environmental interactions, relationships in ecosystems
- *Reproduction and Survival*: continuing the species, life cycles and metamorphosis
- *Adaptations in Ecosystems*: animal adaptations, plant adaptations, environmental changes and extinction
- *The Sun, the Moon, and Earth*
- *Earth's features and materials*: geological features, erosion and deposition, TN features, the water cycle, climate
- *Matter and Energy*: measuring matter, physical changes, heat, radiant energy and chemical energy, light
- *Motion and Forces*: position, motion and speed, forces affect motion
- *Electricity and Magnetism*: electrical charges, electrical circuits, magnetic interactions

Grading Scale for Science:

Terms 1,2: Class work (40%), Quizzes & Unit Tests (40%), Term Test (20%)

Term 3: Class work (30%), Quizzes & Unit Tests (30%), Term Test (20%), Science Fair Project (20%)

Term 4: Class work (30%), Quizzes & Tests (30%), Science Fair Project (20%), Special Topic (20%)

**Class Rules** (*unabashedly borrowed from Rafe Esquith!*)

- Work Hard & Be Kind
- There Are No Shortcuts

**Class Honor Code** (*also courtesy of Rafe Esquith*)

- 4th graders are honest.
- 4th graders show initiative
- 4th graders take responsibility for their actions
- 4th graders are aware of time and space
- 4th graders are never afraid to ask questions
- 4th graders understand the importance of presentation.
- 4th graders are organized.
- 4th graders are humble

**Books & Materials**

Fortunately, we have a sufficient supply of many classroom items on hand from last year – making this year's student supply list relatively short:

- 3 Marbled Composition Books-sewn margins
- 100 clear plastic push pins (for our week #1 geoboard project)
- 1 bag of colored rubber bands (for our geoboard project)
- 2 packs of No. 2 pencils
- 1 pack of blue or black ballpoint or erasable pens
- 1 pack of multi-colored Expo Markers
- 1 black Sharpie marker
- 1 pack of lined index cards
- 1 pack small post-it notes
- 1 roll tape

Students will be responsible for supplying their own copy of the literature selections being studied throughout the year for use at school and at home. While the list has yet to be finalized, the first 2 selections are:

- *Poppy* by Avi
- *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

### **Attendance**

Every day is important in our classroom – students should be at school on time for the entire day if physically possible. For the safety of all, please DO NOT send your child to school if they have exhibited symptoms of possible communicable illness within the past 24 hours. All lessons and work missed must be completed on the student’s own time in a timely manner determined by the teacher. If the absence is excused, grades will be entered for made-up work – assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be counted as zero.

### **Field Trips**

At Ashley we are uniquely placed to offer real-world and hands-on experiences to help students connect with academic material. Field trips are an exciting and important extension of our classroom and as such attendance is mandatory. Every field trip will have in-class preparation, an assignment to be completed during the trip, and an assessment following our return to class. **Participation in any field trip is a privilege, not a right.** If a student demonstrates that they are not prepared academically or behaviorally for a particular field trip, they will be excused from that trip. If for any reason a student is excused from a field trip, they will be held responsible for reviewing the material covered in the assignment from alternative sources, completing the assigned work on their own time, and will be assessed on the content with the rest of the class.

### **Grades and Tests**

Grades assigned in each subject will be an amalgamation of students’ participation in class and their performance on homework assignments, individual lesson assessments, quizzes, unit tests, exams, and independent research projects. The precise distribution formula is detailed by subject and term under “Learning Objectives”. I have no specific “test days” – they will depend upon the scheduling of field trips, unit completion, holidays, etc.

### **Independent Research Projects**

The purpose of the big project is to engage the students’ interest and to teach them to work independently over time to achieve a goal. These long-term projects require creativity, critical thinking, content knowledge, persistence, and time management. Some projects will integrate several subjects, such as language arts, math, social studies, art or science.

Parents are expected to help their children with projects by being a sounding board for ideas, but should resist the temptation to get heavily involved - the learning experience is what’s important. Many students will need their parents’ help breaking the larger project tasks into manageable parts, staying on schedule and on task, and to gather research materials and supplies.

There will never be more than one independent research project in progress at any one time, and there will be few times during the year when a project is not in progress. The project schedule for this year is as follows:

- Countries of the World - Sep/Oct
- 1796 Reenactment - Nov/Dec
- Newbery Book Report – Jan
- Science Fair – Feb/Mar
- Million Dollar Project – May

After TCAP testing in late April, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will be undertaking “Special Topics” in each subject area to further apply and integrate the knowledge and skills they have obtained throughout the year. These important assignments will be worked on primarily during class time and will form a major component of students’ 4<sup>th</sup> term grades.

### **Competitions**

In the past, Ashley students have distinguished themselves in local, national, and international academic competitions. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students will be preparing for and participating in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, the National Geographic Bee and the Upper East Tennessee Science Fair. We are currently exploring participation in a regional or national mathematics competition.

### **Homework**

Assigned homework will generally be limited to reading and making notes on a chapter of the current literature selection and to working on the current independent research project. Until automaticity is achieved in the various foundational skills, these should be practiced for a short time every day. Time should also be made for pleasure reading every day (perhaps just before bedtime) and is NOT considered homework. Current or pending literature selections should not be read for pleasure as I often ask students to predict what might happen next or for their opinions given what they have read thus far.

- daily pleasure reading (20 minutes) NOT considered “HOMEWORK”
- foundational skills: practice as needed to achieve automaticity
  - cursive writing (5 minutes)
  - spelling (5 minutes)
  - basic math operations (+,-,/,x) (5 minutes)
  - map skills: directions, states, capitals, continents (5 minutes)
  - verbal communication – TELL someone about what you have learned, new vocabulary, etc
  - measurement, time, money (in everyday tasks)
- independent research project (15 minutes)
- literature study (15 minutes)
- quiz/test prep (as needed)