



EIGHTH GRADE SCIENCE

Mr. Jones

jjones@howell.k12.nj.us

(732) 836-1327 Ext. 6883

www.sciencewithmrjones.com

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students,

CURRICULUM

The eighth grade science program concentrates on the scientific method and offers labs and activities to help the students learn concepts by experiencing them firsthand. The major goal is to enhance the learning experience and encourage students to apply concepts taught to their everyday lives. The varied course topics of Chemistry, Biology, Earth Science, and Astronomy will provide students with a well-rounded scientific foundation for high school and beyond. Furthermore, the investigations and hands-on activities will allow the students to continually practice making observations, inferences, predictions, hypotheses, measurements and analyses, all of which are essential skills for any science course.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to bring a three-ring binder, writing utensil, and a positive attitude daily. The three-ring binder may be shared with other subjects and one will be provided upon request. Students should organize and be responsible for any worksheets or paperwork handed out in class. Additionally, a course website containing many resources is provided and students are encouraged to utilize this resource when necessary. All students are expected to build teamwork skills as they are all working to achieve a common goal in class. I have high expectations for **EVERY** student, and I am looking forward to helping **EVERY** student meet those expectations.

GRADES

Students will be given a quarterly grade and this grade will reflect their assessment in the following:

<i>Alternative Assessments</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Homework</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Major Tests</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Quizzes</i>	<i>25%</i>

The grades will be achieved through use of a point system, where a percentage is calculated by dividing the number of points earned by the total number of possible points for each of the previously highlighted categories. The computer grading program will then perform the necessary calculations to determine the overall grade. **It is important for both parents/guardians and students to understand that students are ultimately responsible for their grades; the grades earned are based on clearly articulated expectations and reflect what the students have provided me with based on these expectations. When there are concerns about grades, the question that should be asked is not, “What grade did Mr. Jones give you?” but “what grade did you earn?”** Along those same lines I do encourage students to submit assignments early or ask questions prior to handing them in for a grade. This provides them with the opportunity to revise an assignment based on teacher feedback and typically results in a better grade. Additionally, students are encouraged to come to me for clarification regarding grades if necessary. I am always more than happy to sit down with them to address any questions or concerns they may have.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Alternative assessments such as labs and projects will be given throughout the year. These activities will help students better understand concepts and give them the opportunity to apply their understanding of these concepts. Students will learn how to formally write up lab reports and they will be required to show their understanding of this process throughout the year. The projects will enable students to cooperatively solve a problem and to utilize their creativity to fabricate a product. Both of these activities will typically require groups. These groups may be assigned or chosen by the students. **It is important for students to understand that the projects allow them to either work individually or in groups of their choice. Throughout the year, careful thought and consideration must go into choosing partners because the final product results in a group grade.** Deadlines/due dates are very important for students to abide by, thus for every day that a lab/project is late, **the grade is lowered by twenty percent** (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

HOMEWORK

Students can anticipate receiving written homework assignments multiple times a week. A small block of time should be set aside every night to review and study material to help the students prepare for quizzes, tests and labs. Homework is to be handed in on time and completed. **No credit will be given for homework handed in late or incomplete. However, if an assignment is not completed by class time, students may earn full credit if they complete it during lunch of that same day (this “extension” only applies to short term homework assignments).** Students should also be

aware that their homework may be graded or counted as a weighted assignment without notice. Thus, it should always be completely done (on time) in a well thought-out and neat manner. Students should exchange phone numbers in class and are responsible for assignments in case of an absence. A log of the assignments and topics covered from the previous day will be available in the classroom and the course website should be referenced to help assist students in their attempts to make up missed work. If any of these options do not provide sufficient help, I will be more than happy to assist. **Homework missed for any reason, including absence, must be made up within the same amount of time missed; so, if the student misses two days of school, he or she has two days from his or her return to make it up. These made-up assignments should be presented to me without me needing to request it.** Late or missing homework will result in a lower grade so be sure to act responsibly. Homework, when done, provides a great practice for concepts learned in class and will help students achieve success.

MAJOR TESTS

Students will encounter a few major tests this year and a cumulative final test. These major tests will be composed of all topics/lessons covered in a unit of study. Major tests contain multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, short answer, and open response questions in order to expose students to a wide variety of the types of questions they will encounter in the years following eighth grade. Major tests will require students to not only have a general understanding of the concepts, but they will typically be required to show their understanding through their ability to apply the concepts to novel situations/scenarios. To prepare for these tests, students will be asked to use some **method of study** (other than notes taken in class or from the computer) which they will show me prior to the test. It is very important that students do not procrastinate when preparing for these tests especially since they are composed of material from a whole unit and because it is thirty-five percent of their marking period grade. Students will also take a cumulative final test at the end of the year, however the information regarding this test will be provided at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

QUIZZES

Students can expect to have a quiz multiple times within a unit of study. Quizzes may be cumulative (more than one lesson) or they could consist of one lesson. Quizzes are simply designed to help students review and keep up with their studying as they prepare for the major tests. Students should also be aware that pop quizzes or open notes quizzes are given sporadically throughout the year, so it is important to do a thorough job on homework and to ask questions when necessary (during class, during lunch, or after school when possible).

EXTRA HELP

Students are encouraged to come for extra help if they do not grasp a concept in class, if they would just like to review material learned earlier, if they would like assistance with organization, or if they would like to work on study skills. It is recommended that I be notified that day in class if a student is planning to come in for help. I am available for help daily during lunch and after school (upon request). Students should take advantage of this opportunity, especially as they prepare to attend high school next year, whereas self-advocacy will be a tremendous tool.

This year I hope to work closely with all of you to make the transition to high school as smooth as possible. I look forward to learning as much from the students as they learn from me. Any thoughts you may have regarding this upcoming school year are welcome. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



John R. Jones Jr.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____

**The classroom policies contained in this course outline may change as needed.*