Earth Science Project for 2014

Due Date: March 14

Your Choice: All students in Benson's Honors Earth Science classes for the third quarter will be required to do either a project (described in this handout) or a paper. The topic of the paper will be a natural disaster or storm. Details for the paper will be available in mid-February. The project (or paper) is worth 50 points (a third quarter grade).

Pick a topic that interests you: A list of possible topics is attached to this handout. Find one that you are interested in that other people will enjoy learning about. Pick 2-3 topics (in case you don't get your first choice). Sometime in mid-February we will have a lottery-style draft. Only one person will be allowed to do a project on any given topic per shift. You may not do group projects.

Become an expert: Use the Internet and other sources to learn more about your topic. If it is a topic that has already been covered in class, a higher level of expertise will be expected.

Make a poster: The poster should be a three-panel "presentation board" (36' x 48"). The target audience for your poster should be adults who stop by with their children. The poster should include the following.

1. A title in the form of a question to draw people in, and a sub-title to help people understand your explanation. The title (and your name) should be prominently displayed on your poster.
2. Visual aids (3-5), such as photos, diagrams, and graphs that will help people understand your topic and help you explain it. One of these should be an original photo, diagram, or graph created by you. The source of each image should be credited on the poster.
3. Come up with what you consider to be the three most important "level 1 questions" and the three most important "level 2 questions". These should be taped to the back (upper, center) of your poster. You might consider using some of these questions on front of your poster as well.
4. Explanations or captions to help visitors understand several aspects of your topic.

Have something to show kids: You must have something to show people as they view your poster at the Science Circus. This can be a model, a device, a demonstration, a collection of items related to your topic, or something else that has been approved by your instructor. If you have something to show on a laptop computer, that's great, but it does not count as "something to show". What ever you show should be interesting (or entertaining), and should be used to help you explain your topic to both kids and adults (especially kids; think "5th graders" as you design this). As you plan, keep in mind that you may not have access to an electrical outlet.

Pass on your expertise: You will display your poster at the Science Circus (in the HHS gym) on March 14 or 15. You can choose Friday evening from 6-9 pm, Saturday from 11 am to 1 pm, or 1 to 3 pm. During that time you will stand by your poster, show your demonstration (and explain) as people come by. Part of your grade will be based on how well you do this. If you can't participate in the Science Circus, you will have to write a paper.

Be original: Use your imagination! Try to include original elements, such as artwork, physical models, videos, costumes, PowerPoint presentations, demonstrations, etc.

KEEP THIS HANDOUT IN YOUR FOLDER for the notebook check at the end of third quarter.

General Suggestions

1. Pick a topic that is interesting! This will make your time at Science Circus much more pleasant. If your topic is boring, it may be a long shift!
2. Focus on a specific topic. Topics such as “tornadoes” or “earthquakes are much too general. The “Fujita scale” or “liquefaction” would be good choices because they allow you to concentrate on a specific area.

Presentation Suggestions

1. Body language is important! Does your body language say, “Come on over, I’ve got something really cool to show you”? . . . or does it say, “Please don’t approach me, I don’t want to talk”? Make eye contact and smile.
2. Anticipate the questions people will ask as they view your exhibit. Do some research and be ready to answer them. Become an expert. Sometimes people as some pretty tough questions!
3. Consult someone (parent, friend) to find out what questions they would ask when they visit your exhibit.
4. It’s OK for your friends to check in with you from time to time, but don’t let them hang around and crowd visitors out.
5. Have a few conversation starters ready. Would you like to see . . ? Would you like to try . . ? Have you ever noticed . . ? Can I show you . . ? Have you every wondered why . . ? Did you know . . ?
6. Spend more time standing than sitting. Shut your #&!@ cell phone and other electronic devices off!
7. Remember that the target audience for your demo is 5th graders, but be ready to adjust your presentation for other ages. “Adults” are the target audience for the poster.
8. Be on time. If you are scheduled for Friday night, be there at 5:30 and have everything set up and ready to go at 5:45 pm. If you are on for 11 am Saturday, be set up by 10:45. If you are up at 1 pm Saturday, find your teacher by 12:45 pm.
9. Last year several students used lap-tops at their stations to help them explain their topics. Some showed pictures (slide shows) and others showed short videos or animations. This is not required, but it is something to think about.
10. Dress appropriately. No hats!
11. Eat before you get there. No suckers or sunflower seeds!

Poster Suggestions

1. Be sure to read the handout section that pertains to the poster. Your title, sub-title, and name should be prominently displayed.
2. The poster should be a 48” x 36” three-panel display board.
3. It is best to type any text that will appear on the poster. The text should be big enough to read from 3-4 ft. away. If you have handwriting on the poster, it should be extremely neat.
4. The poster should include some text (possibilities include captions, answers to questions, basic facts, etc.), but don’t over-do it. People don’t want to spend a lot of time reading.
5. Include 3-5 quality images or graphics. Be sure to clearly cite them in the space below each image/graphic. It would be nice (not required) to include some images/graphics that YOU created.
6. Put some thought into the layout. It should be neat and logical.