

Earth Science and Astronomy for the Grammar Stage

Susan Wise Bauer says in her book *The Well Trained Mind* that the goal of grammar stage science instructions is to “foster enthusiasm for science and to expose the child to basic facts about each field”¹. My goal in writing this curriculum was to provide a hands-on science curriculum that would challenge your child and instill a love of science at an early age. I also wanted to provide you with the tools to give your grammar stage child exposure to space and our world so that they will have a knowledge base for future use. For this reason, I have included ongoing projects, experiments every week and narration pages.

I wrote this curriculum to be used in the grammar stage (1st-4th grade). It is designed to be done in 10-15 minute session 5 times a week. Usually you will spend 3 days reading and narrating, one day on an experiment and one day on an activity or project. You can adjust the plans to two 30 min days a week by doing all the readings and narrations on one day, followed by the experiments and activities on the second day. Finally, if you desire, you could set aside an hour a week to be your science day in which you do all the readings, narrations, and activities planned for the week. Please feel free to act as your student’s scribe as you complete the narrations and experiments.

****Special Considerations**:**

In writing this curriculum I ran into two problems with the books available for study. The first is Creation vs. Big Bang theory. I believe that God created the Earth, the Heavens and everything in it in seven days, but many books teach the Big Bang theory. I have endeavored to write each of my curriculums to be religiously neutral, but I find that when it come to earth science and astronomy it is nearly impossible, since your religious beliefs play into your belief of the origins of the Earth. So beware, depending on your beliefs, you made need to explain what you believe and why.

The second problem is Pluto as a planet. You may remember that in August of 2006 Pluto was removed as a planet. The books that are currently in print don’t reflect this change. I have added links to articles concerning the decision in this guide. I trust that you, as parent and teacher, will choose how to explain these differences to your student.

Ongoing Projects:

The ongoing projects are designed to be done over several weeks. For earth science you will be making your own model of the planet Earth, recording the weather, making a volcano and so much more. For astronomy you will be making a map of the solar system, keeping a journal of what you see in the night sky, keeping a moon diary and other projects.

¹ Susan Wise Bauer, *The Well Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home*, (W.W. Norton & Company, 1999) 375

Experiments:

Experiments are easy to do, use common household items and they tie into what is being studied whenever possible. There may be more than one experiment scheduled in a week, but only one will be written up. The write-up's give your student a beginning look at what the scientific method is and how a scientific test is performed. Any time you see a box for a picture of your experiment you can have your student draw what is there or you can take a picture and glue it in the box. All the pages you need for the experiments are included in the student workbook.

Narrations:

The narration sheets are designed to be a record of what you have studied. They are to be completed after you have done the daily reading for a particular topic. Your student can dictate these to you or write for themselves, what they have learned from the reading. You could ask; What was one thing you learned about ___? What do you like the best about ___? Only expect one to two sentences. Then glue the picture of what you studied on the sheet and let your student color it (if your student is artistic you could let them draw this on their own). All the pages and pictures you need for the narrations are included in the student workbook. Review these pages monthly so that your student gets a review of what they have been learning.

Other Features:

- You will find vocabulary words scheduled throughout the curriculum. These are designed to be done orally and are completely optional. I have put together vocabulary cards that you can use to aid your student in recall. These can be found at the Elemental Science yahoo group.
- You will also find that before each unit I have included an overview of the study, a list of materials needed by week and a list of simple poems that you can use to help your child memorize. These poems are included as a resource for you to enhance your students learning.
- You will find the "Want More?" boxes on each of the plan sheets. These are designed to give you ideas for more activities and for additional reading within the planned books.
- You will also notice that Day 5 is usually planned to be rather light. This is so you can easily fit in additional activities or use the time for nature study. For nature study, I recommend using the *Handbook of Nature Study*. Another option is to use day 5 to study the scientists of the Middle Ages. I have put together a book that you could use called *Great Scientists of the Middle Ages*, which is available for free download at www.greatscientistsseries.blogspot.com.
- At the back of this guide I have included supplemental materials for you to use along with the program. They include...
 - Seasons Book: This is a template you can use for the seasons book project.

- Biome Posters: These are templates you can use to create your biome posters.
- Night Sky Journal: This is a template for you to use when you do this project.
- Blank pages: These are blank versions of the narration pages and the experiment page in case your student wants to do more!

Coordinating Resources:

This teacher's guide is designed to be used in conjunction with two other resources put together by Elemental Science...

1. Student Workbook:

The student workbook is critical to the success of this program. It contains all the pages you will need to complete the narrations, experiments and most of the projects. It also includes the pictures for you to use with the narration sheets. The student workbook gives you the tools to create a lasting memory of your studies along with your student.

2. Quiz Book:

Although this resource is not essential, it is extremely helpful in assessing how much your student is retaining. It is a separate resource in the eBook package, but in the printed version it is at the back of this teacher's guide.

What if I have an older student? How do I include them?

If you want your older student to work along with your other students and you feel the resources are to "easy" for them. Simply use the following books instead...

- Usborne's Internet-linked Science Encyclopedia—not all of the topics are covered in this resource, but the articles are written at a higher level and contain more information
- Usborne's Book of Astronomy and Space
- Usborne's Encyclopedia of Planet Earth

Have your older child look up the corresponding section in their book and read it, then look up the websites if applicable. I have included a topical index in this guide to aid you in this. Next have them write about the topic. If you want more than just a simple narration, have them write a mini-report (one to two paragraphs) on a separate sheet and paste the picture to that. I would suggest that you let your older student do all their own writing for this program.

Final Thoughts:

As the author and publisher of this curriculum I encourage you to contact me with any questions or problems that you might have concerning Earth Science and Astronomy for the Grammar Stage. I will be more than happy to answer them as soon as I am able. I hope that you will enjoy Earth Science and Astronomy for the Grammar Stage! You can email me at info@elementalscience.com.

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Book List

I used the following books when planning this curriculum. The Usborne encyclopedias and the Kingfisher Young Knowledge books are essential and I recommend purchasing these. If you intend on performing the experiments listed you will need the Janice VanCleave books since all the experiments are from there. You could check these books out from the library, but you will need them for the 18 weeks, so keep that in mind.

Books for Earth Science:

- *Usborne First Encyclopedia of Our World*
- *Kingfisher's Young Knowledge Rocks and Fossils*
- *Janice VanCleave's Earth Science for Every Kid*
- *a library book on tornadoes and hurricanes*

Books for Astronomy:

- *Usborne First Encyclopedia of Space*
- *Kingfisher's Young Knowledge Solar System*
- *Janice VanCleave's Astronomy for Every Kid*
- *Usborne Spotter's Guide: The Night Sky*
- *Who Was Neil Armstrong* (only need for 1 week)

Abbreviations used:

- JVC Earth Science—Janice VanCleave's Earth Science for Every Kid
- JVC Astronomy—Janice VanCleave's Astronomy for Every Kid
- SG—Student Workbook

Earth Science Scope and Sequence

Ongoing activities:

- Making a model Planet Earth
- Weather and Rain Gauge: For 4 weeks you will measure rain and record the weather.
- Rock Collection: Your student will make their own rock collection.
- Volcano Exploding: You and your student will make a model of a volcano and explode it.
- Narration Pages: Picture if possible and child's summary of what learned.
- Experiment Pages: Fill out an experiment page once a week for the experiment performed.
- Vocabulary

Books used:

- *Usborne First Encyclopedia of Our World*
- *Kingfisher's Young Knowledge Rocks and Fossils*
- *Janice VanCleave's Earth Science for Every Kid*

Sequence for Study:

- Week 1&2—Earth & Moon
- Week 3—Seasons & Weather
- Week 4&5—Natural Disasters
- Week 6—Mountains & Rivers
- Week 7—Oceans
- Week 8—Biomes
- Week 9—Underground
- Week 10-13—Rocks
- Week 14-16—Fossils
- Week 17 & 18—Caring for Earth

Earth Science Lesson Plans Week 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<i>Usborne Our World</i> Pg. 4-5 <i>Our planet</i>	Experiment for Write-Up: <i>Cold 'n Hot</i> (SG pg. 55)	<i>Usborne Our World</i> Pg. 6-7 <i>What's</i>	<i>Usborne Our World</i> Pg. 8-9 <i>on</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin your model of planet Earth • Finish other activities • Do the Internet Quick-links from Usborne for the week • Give Earth Science Week 1 Quiz
Narration Sheet (SG pg. 21) Picture (SG pg. 89)		Narration Sheet (SG pg. 21)	Narration Sheet (SG pg. 21) Picture (SG pg. 89)	
Introduce Vocabulary	Review Vocabulary Daily and look for it in your readings			

Narration Sheet: As you go through the week you will be doing narrations after you read a section. If they have trouble getting their thoughts out, ask questions like... What was your favorite part about ____? What is one thing you learned today about ____? Expect 1-2 sentences a day. When they are finished have them color the picture.

Vocabulary (Day 1):

- Space—the region beyond the atmosphere of Earth

Materials needed this week:

- 2 thermometers
- 2 plastic bags, one large, one small both with twist ties
- Flour and water
- Newspaper
- Balloon
- globe

Want More?

- Make a model moon to go with your earth

Experiment for Write-up (Day 4): Cold 'n Hot

See *JVC Earth Science* pg. 126-127 for directions. This experiment will help your child to understand how the Earth's temperature remains constant.

1. **Model of Planet Earth (Day 5):** This week you will make your model of planet Earth. See the following page for instructions.

Directions for Model Planet Earth

Materials Used:

- Balloon
- Newspaper
- Flour
- Water
- Salt
- Globe
- Paint (blue, green, brown)

Sample from
Teacher's Guide

Recipe for Paste:

Mix one part flour with about 2 parts of water until you get a consistency like thick glue. Add more water or flour as necessary. Mix well to get out all the bumps. Add a few tablespoons of salt to help prevent mold!

Directions:

1. Blow up the balloon
2. Tear Newspaper into strips
3. Make the paste
4. Dip strips in to paste and put one layer on the balloon
5. Add a second layer, as you do this be sure to look the globe and add any topographical features (ie. Mountains)
6. Let Dry
7. Once dry, pop the balloon
8. Paint your planet using the globe as a guide

My Planet Earth Model

A picture of my model

Sample from
Student Workbook

What I learned...

Earth Science Narration Page



Our Planet:

What's in Space:

Sample from
Student Workbook

Moon:

Pictures are included, but they are on a separate sheet to be cut out and colored by child, then pasted in the squares.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Cold 'n Hot: How does the Earth's heat level remain constant?

What we used...

Sample from Student Workbook

What we did...

What happened...

Results Chart

	Thermometer in a Bag	Free Thermometer
Initial Temperature		
Temperature after 30 min. in the sun		
Temperature after 30 min. in a dark closet		

What I learned...

Earth Science Week 1

1. True or False: The Earth is made up of rock and metal.

Sample from
Quizzes

2. The atmosphere helps protect us from the _____ heat and light.

Moon's

Sun's

stars

3. The moon has _____ air.

a lot of

some

no

4. What is the most interesting thing you learned this week?

Astronomy Scope and Sequence (18 weeks)

Ongoing activities:

- Map of the Solar System: As you study a part of the solar system you will put it on the map
- Night Sky Diary: When you observe the night sky use these sheets, at the end of the study put them together in a mini-book
- Moon Diary: For 29 days you will observe the changes in the moon every night, if possible
- Scientist Biography
- Narration Pages: Picture if possible and child's summary of what learned
- Vocabulary

Books used:

- *Usborne First Encyclopedia of Space*
- *Kingfisher's Young Knowledge Solar System*
- *Janice VanCleave's Astronomy for Every Kid*
- *Usborne Spotter's Guide: The Night Sky*
- *Who Was Neil Armstrong* (or another book about Neil Armstrong from the library)

Sequence for Study:

- Week 1-12 Solar System:
 - Sun
 - Mercury
 - Venus
 - Earth
 - Moon
 - Mars
 - Jupiter
 - Saturn
 - Uranus
 - Neptune
 - Pluto
 - Asteroids, Meteors, Comets
- Week 13-15 Stars
- Week 16-17 Seeing into space and space travel
- Week 18 Scientist biography

Astronomy Lesson Plans Week 12

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<i>Usborne Space</i> Pg. 42-43 <i>Bits & Pieces</i>	<i>Usborne Spotter's Guide</i> Pg. 44-45 <i>Comets & Asteroids</i>	<i>Usborne Spotter's Guide</i> Pg. 50-51 <i>Meteor</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Sample from Teacher's Guide</div> t for p:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review what you have learned about the solar system • Give Astronomy Week 12 Quiz
Narration Sheet (SG pg. 48) Picture (SG pg. 107)	Make a comet (directions are below) Narration in SG on pg. 48	Narration Sheet (SG pg. 48) Picture (SG pg. 107)	<i>Plop</i> (SG pg. 82)	
Introduce Vocabulary	Review Daily			

Narration Sheet: As you go through the week you will be doing narrations after you read a section. If they have trouble getting their thoughts out, ask questions like... What was your favorite part about _____? What is one thing you learned today about _____? Expect 1-2 sentences a day. When they are finished have them color the picture.

Vocabulary (Day 1):

- Meteor—a meteoroid that burns up in the planet's atmosphere, also called a shooting star.

Directions for Making a Comet (Day 2): Cut curling ribbon in lengths, curl them and tie them together at one end. Pin the tied end of the ribbon onto the tennis ball using the straight pins. Cut a piece of foil, about 7" x 7" and cover the ball allowing the comet's tail (ribbon) to come out through the foil. You can now play with your comet! Put a picture of your comet on the narration page, SG pg. 48.

Experiment for Write-up (Day 4): *Plop*

See *JVC Astronomy* pg. 116-117 for directions. This experiment will help your child to determine how craters are formed by falling meteorites.

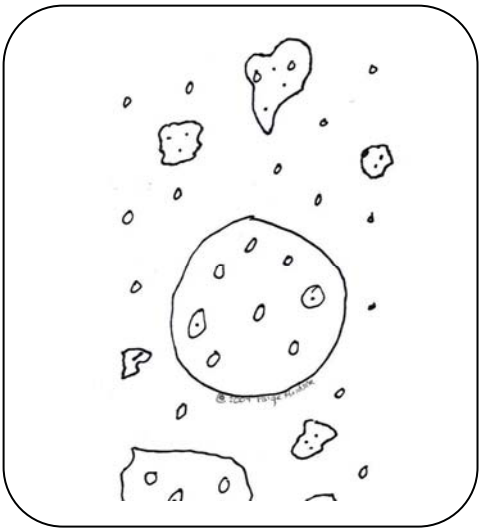
Materials Needed This Week:

- Curling ribbon (about 3 feet long)
- Tennis ball
- Straight pin
- Foil
- Newspaper
- Carbon paper
- Typing paper
- 1 golf ball

Want More?

- Draw a comet on black paper using a white crayon. Then use silver glitter to decorate it.

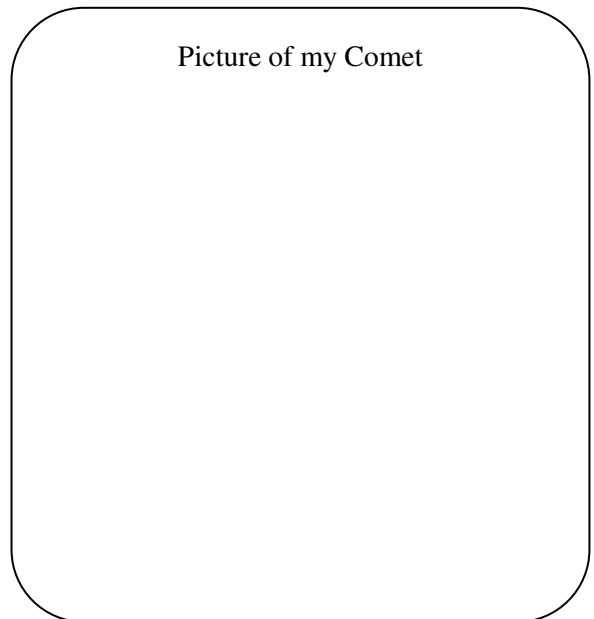
Astronomy Narration Page



Asteroids:

Comets:

	Sample from Student Workbook	
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Meteors:

Pictures are included, but they are on a separate sheet to be cut out and colored by child, then pasted in the squares.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Plop: How are craters formed?

Sample from
Student Workbook

What we used...

What we did...

Paper on hard floor

What happened...

Paper on top of newspaper

What I learned...

Astronomy Week 12

Sample from
Quizzes

Circle the right answer:

1. True or False. Meteorites are dust or small chunks of rock in orbit around the Sun.

2. True or False. Comets are large balls of cotton and sand.

3. Meteors are also called _____.

really cool

shooting stars

planets

4. What is the most interesting thing you learned this week?
