

## **Fifth Grade Curriculum**

The curriculum for 5th grade at Old Mill School is rich and varied. It is designed to teach key elements of the [California Content Standards](#). In a nutshell, parents can expect their Old Mill School fifth grader to learn about:

[English-language arts](#): In 5th grade, students learn about English language structure, including the parts of a sentence structure, appropriate capitalization and punctuation, spelling suffixes, roots, prefixes and contractions. They will be taught to use comprehension strategies when reading a variety of historically or culturally significant literature sources. Writing instruction focuses on preparing clear and focused essays with formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students will continue to develop their oral skills, by giving oral presentations in different forms, including narrative, exposition, persuasion and description.

[Mathematics](#): Fifth grade students apply the four basic arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) to increasingly large and small numbers (such as fractions and decimals). They also use common measuring units to determine length and area, and formulas to determine simple volumes. They acquire a deeper understanding of using visual representations to present information, like graphs, grids and charts. They also begin to practice recording and analyzing information. A fifth grader begins to understand angle measurements, and use of compass and protractor. Students also begin to understand that numbers relate to events in real life, and that math is a tool for describing and comprehending our world.

[History-social science](#): Students learn about United States history and geography, including the development of the United States to 1850 (with an emphasis on when, where and why people came to the continent); the formation of the nation, including the revolution and basis for our Constitutional documents; and the geographic location of the current 50 states, and their capitals.

[Science](#): By the end of fifth grade, students will be familiar with the scientific method, and will have had practice asking meaningful questions, and designing careful experiments to evaluate the answers, through hands on experimentation. Students will learn about life sciences basics, including the overarching understanding that all living beings respire, transport nutrients and waste, and digest food. In fifth grade, they will begin to learn some details about how these activities take place in different organisms. Fifth graders will also get familiar with earth sciences basics, including the global movement of water and wind (weather) due to solar heating, evaporation and condensation, and the physical relationship of Earth to our Sun and the local planetary environment. Students will be exposed to physical science basics, including the concepts that all matter is composed of atoms, that these atoms appear naturally in a limited variety of forms (elements), and that these elements combine in various ways, under

different circumstances, to create products with varying properties. Students will be exposed to beginning Chemistry and the Periodic Table.

[Dance](#), [music](#), [theater](#) and [visual](#) arts: Students will perform in dance, music, theater and art, and will learn basic information about these art forms and their histories.

Fifth graders and their parents can expect longer **homework** blocks, and longer and more detailed reading experiences. Personal organization and time management skills are increasingly important in 5th grade. The 5th grade teachers instruct in these skills by modeling (with lists, organized days and predictable activities), by providing planners and teaching 5th graders how to use them, and by giving longer term assignments that require 5th graders to practice these skills.

Fifth grade instruction takes a myriad of forms at Old Mill School. Fifth graders and their parents can expect conventional classroom learning, but that is just the beginning. Fifth graders are challenged to apply history and social science lessons and the **Tribes** agreements in real life, with such instructional tools as the **Student Council**, and their year-long **Special Friends** kindergarten partnerships. Science education, personal planning and investigatory field work abounds in fifth grade, including an early September overnight field trip at **Walker Creek**, and another overnight trip to **Valley of the Moon** in May. Literature, history and performing arts all come together, culminating in an all class performance of **America Sings**.