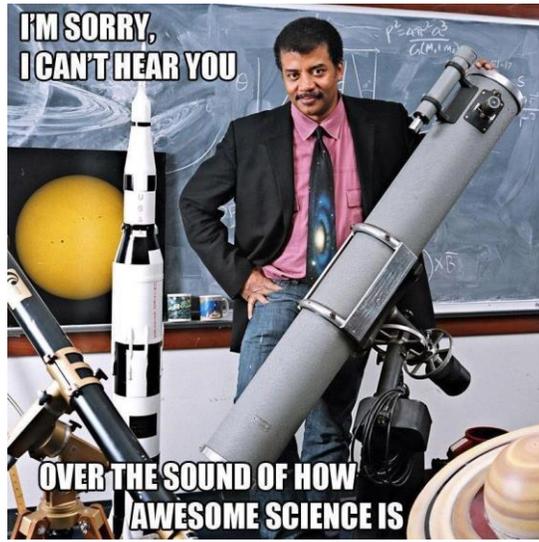


Mr. Strauss' 8th Grade Science



[No this is not me in the picture, it is Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson, renowned Astrophysicist]

Hello and welcome to 8th grade science! I have outlined below a few critical points in how to be successful in this class. I am very passionate in helping you to excel in class and want to make sure I set you up for success.

Keeping Up-To-Date

Knowing what is happening and due in class is a key component for success. Here are some key ways to stay in the know:

- **8th grade website:** The 8th grade team website is updated weekly with lessons along with important information such as project due dates and as such should be visited weekly. This information can be found on the 8th grade team website in the Science section (<http://dvusd.org/ss-8thgrade>).
- **PowerSchools:** Every student and parent has access to grades 24/7 at <https://ps.dvusd.org/public/>. If you need login information simply contact the front office.
- **Email:** paul.strauss@dvusd.org
- **Text Message:** If you ever have any questions just text me at (602) 345-1867 [Please know that this is a Google Voice number and does not accept calls, only texts]
- **Sign up for text blasts:** If you would like to receive periodic text blasts reminding parents and students about upcoming tests, projects and papers, simply:



[Note: normal texting fees apply and when you sign up, your number will remain private even from Mr. Strauss. To learn more about this service go to <https://www.remind.com/faq>]

- **Voicemail:** (623) 445-7861 – note, if you call into the room during school hours your call will automatically go to voice mail – if it is urgent, please call the office.

Course Goals

The general purpose of science is to better understand the world around you and to simply get excited about discovery. This class is designed to cover all the State of Arizona 8th Grade Science Standards but there will be a lot more than just memorizing information. The goal is that by the end of the year each student will better understand how to think critically, how to solve problems and especially learn how to “ask the right questions”.

What Mr. Strauss Expects From Every Student

The following are some things that are expected from every student in class:

- You will try your best on every assignment (even the “small” ones).
- If you do not understand something, you will ASK!!!
- You will respect yourself and everybody else in this class.
- You will not interfere with the learning of any other student.
- You will do all of your own work and realize that it reflects better on your character, if need be, to turn in a failing assignment rather than to cheat. There will be a zero tolerance for cheating!
- If you are absent from class, it is YOUR responsibility to get your missed work from Mr. Strauss and not your from your peers.

What Every Student Can Expect From Mr. Strauss

The following are some things that you can expect from me throughout the year:

- For every assignment you will know what you have to do to be successful.
- If you honestly want to succeed in this class, I will do everything possible to make that happens if you simply ask for help.
- If you really put forth your best effort and follow the instructions that I give for assignments, test, and projects you are **guaranteed** good grades.

- I will not lie to you – for example if I says something is on the test, it will be on the test; when I say something is due with no extensions, there will be no extensions.
- You will not be given “busy work” in this class – everything you do in this class has a purpose.
- There will only be 10-14 assignments a quarter so you cannot afford to “blow off” even one assignment if you plan on doing well in this class.
- If you have any problem with anything that takes place in class, I will honestly listen to your point of view and highly respect you for bringing it up.

Grading

Every activity done in class will directly relate to a testable objective that will be given ahead of time even if it is not taken for an actual assignment grade. As long as the student keeps their notebook current (and of course have it with them every day), they will have all the information needed to successfully pass this course. Grades will be weighted in the following way:

Class work = 25%

Projects/Lab Reports = 35%

Quizzes/Tests = 40%

All assignments will be returned simply with a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) based on a predetermined rubric. In the grade book each assignment is listed as worth 100 points and for work that is turned in **on time**, these letter grades will be entered as:

All A's = 95 points (which is the same as 95%)

All B's = 85 points

All C's = 75 points

All D's = 65 points

All F's = 55 points

Mr. Strauss will pick up all graded work when it is due. If you do not have it or it is not completed, you will come in during lunch to finish the work. The great thing is that there will be no late grades in this class but that bad thing is that if you were not prepared, you will have to give up your recess/social time to complete the work. If you simply do not turn in your work it will be entered as a “zero” out of 100 points so that will pretty much destroy you grade.

There will be no extra credit offered in class nor will you be able to redo any assignment.

Being Prepared

In order to be successful in this class, it is critical that every student is prepared to learn. Throughout the year we will be doing various activities but as a general rule, it is very important that **EVERY DAY** each student has the following supplies with them:

- Science Journal
- Pen/Pencil
- Colored Pencils
- Glue Stick

If you are not prepared with these supplies every day, it will not excuse you from the assignment which means that you may have to recopy your notes or redo the assignment as homework the right way. Why make extra work on yourself?

Classwork

For the most part enough time will be given during class to complete class assignments but if you do not take advantage of this time then you will need to finish the work at home. It is very rare that an assignment will be given and collected on the same day so you will always have the option to take it home and give it your best effort. There will still be long-term projects/papers assigned to be done at home but not anything that is traditionally referred to as “homework”.

Projects/Labs

Generally every quarter will have 2 project grades which will be averaged together to make up 35% of that quarter’s grade. These assignments will be several weeks in length and will require very good time management in order to accomplish them successfully. For each project you will be given a very detailed suggested timeline and you are highly encouraged to follow it as Mr. Strauss is only trying to give you all the tools you need to be successful.

Curriculum

Everything covered in class matches the standards set by the Arizona Department of Education and can be found at <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/science/grade8.pdf>. The main curriculum content will be broken down into 3 blocks throughout the year. Note that these blocks will not correspond directly with the start-stop of academic quarters.

- Block 1: Biology (i.e. heredity, DNA, traits, genes, genetics); Adaptation and Animal Interaction (i.e. purpose of traits in nature, traits that change over time, how changes come about, survival of organisms, relationships between organisms)
- Block 2: Chemistry (i.e. changes in matter, characteristic properties, Periodic Table of the Elements, chemical reactions, elements, compounds and mixtures)
- Block 3: Physics (i.e. Newton’s 3 Laws of Motion)

Besides these topics, throughout the year we will also address: the scientific method, the inquiry process, history of science as a human endeavor, nature of scientific knowledge and learning science from a personal and social perspective.

Preparing for Tests

I think everybody will agree that one of the most stressful parts of school is studying for exams – and I am sure this class will be no different. The most important thing you need to realize is ALL of my exams consist of short answer/essay questions – you will NOT find multiple choice, true/false or matching questions. I am not doing this to be the wickedest teacher on the planet, I am simply wanting to assess what you actually know.

Before you start to panic you need to realize a couple of facts about my tests:

- You will ALWAYS have at least one weeks notice before any test
- I will ALWAYS provide you with a study guide at least 7 days in advance and I give you my word that EVERYTHING on the study guide is on the test and EVERYTHING on the test is on the study guide. These study guides will be posted in class the entire week leading up to the test as well as be on the team website.
- If during class I say something is “on the test” – IT IS ON THE TEST!! There will be tests where, if you were paying attention and took good notes, you will know more than half of the questions on the test before you even take it!

Tutoring

There are no set tutoring times specifically for Science **BUT** I will always make myself available to help any student one-on-one for as long as it takes for them to understand the content. All a student needs to do is come talk to me to set up a time before or after school or even during lunch – but if I am not asked, I will not know that help is needed.



What this all boils down to is that I give you my word that if you are serious about doing well this year, I will do everything in my power to make sure that happens! This is going to be an exciting year and I am stoked to be your science teacher.



Lab Safety Contract

Throughout the year we will be doing various labs mostly in our normal classroom. It is imperative that every student be focused on making smart choices especially when it comes to safety. By signing the Science Syllabus Agreement form, each student and parent will be agreeing to the following lab safety rules and potential consequences:

1. I will use equipment only as I am instructed to use it.
2. I will not take any materials or equipment out of the room without permission.
3. I will not waste or misuse materials.
4. I will never eat, taste or smell any lab material except for under the express direction from the teacher.
5. I will behave in a way that prevents injury to myself or others. I understand that I must report any injury to the teacher immediately.
6. If I see any equipment that is broken I will tell the teacher immediately.
7. If I break or spill anything, I will inform the teacher immediately. I may be responsible for replacing any materials that I break. *
8. I will follow all written and verbal instructions provided by the teacher.
9. I will not leave my assigned station except for the purpose of following these rules or while following the instructions given by the teacher.
10. I will work quietly and will not distract other students or disrupt their work.
11. I understand that this agreement does not replace or invalidate school rules or limit the consequences of breaking school rules or of breaking the law. I understand that breaking the above rules may result in the following consequences:
 - 1) I will lose all credit for the lab assignment.
 - 2) I may lose all lab privileges for a length of time to be determined by the teacher.
 - 3) I may be given additional consequences by school administrators or law enforcement authorities.

*Accidental breakage of equipment, while following all rules and instructions, may be excused IF the student informs the teacher immediately of any breakage or injury and takes responsibility for cleanup.