

Dear Fox West Families,

Summer is here! Can you believe it's already been 3 weeks since our last day of school?! We hope you're relaxing, thriving, and enjoying your summer days. Although the summer groove has just begun, it's the perfect time to be proactive and make the most of your days away from FWA...in fact, we'd like to offer this COMPLETELY FREE (and OPTIONAL) Summer Learning Challenge to all incoming and returning Fox West students!

The Challenge: 1) Incorporate few activities that connect to things we learn at school and 2) record your experiences through pictures, words, or a combination of both. Our goal is to make learning fun, relevant, and start the upcoming school year in the best way EVER! We want to recognize that learning is happening every day – outside of school! Countless experiences and activities tie into our school curriculum; by striving to recognize, acknowledge, and reflect about the connections we make during our summer fun we bring our learning back to Fox West to enjoy and share with others.

The Rationale: Being aware of how we are surrounded by learning opportunities and sharing a record of our summer learning adventures is not only fun but allows us to make meaningful connections between academics and everyday life outside of school; occasional, purposeful time spent reflecting or engaging in fun skills practice or new investigations can help minimize the “summer slide” that most students experience. Please check out this article for more information: [10 Facts About Summer Slide for a Productive School Break](#).

The Details: Through hand written journal/diary entries, online reflection, or photo journaling (i.e. a blog or photo journal with captions) students are encouraged to consider what they enjoyed or struggled with during the summer and occasionally make connections with areas of academics that are relevant (ideal average of about once per week—or more). Students are welcome to use any medium available, including notebooks, a personal or school email or Google document, a HASD-provided Office 365 account, or even vlogs on Youtube (with parent permission and privacy settings enabled).

The Prize: Students that participate in the summer learning challenge will be eligible to join us for a movie (or other summer learning celebration) shortly after the beginning of the school year (details to be determined with input from students).

Eligibility requirements:

- ✓ 8-10 reflection/experience entries with roughly 1 paragraph summary each
 - May include summer school experiences
 - Ideally includes fun activities and/or travel or vacation experiences
- ✓ Identify possible academic connections to one or more subject areas:
 - Science, Technology
 - Art, Music, Health, Foreign Language
 - Language Arts, Social Studies/History
- ✓ 2-4 hours **total** logged in online math learning or practice (a simple spreadsheet or list of times/dates and program/game used) may include, but is not limited to:
 - Sumdog, Prodigy, Redbird, Khan Academy, Math Help
 - Other math practice games or online sites
 - *At least some math skills—number operations, geometry, vocabulary should be incorporated*

Students are welcome to take up the challenge at any time this summer, but evidence of summer learning is required to enjoy the celebration. Please email danlundstrom@foxwestacademy.org if you have questions or would like more specific information regarding online resources.

The Learning Continues for Fox West Academy Students with Online Interaction

Although another great year of project based learning and investigation has ended at Fox West Academy, the learning can continue all summer long thanks to online learning options for students.

Students, teachers, and parents put incredible efforts into participation in and support of academic practice while often juggling hectic schedules all school-year long. Summer schedules can remain just as challenging with sports, vacations, and any number of activities and organizations. Thankfully, many options for flexible, online learning mean that even though school's out the benefits, practice, and enjoyment of learning can continue, but at times that are convenient to students and families.

Fox West Academy is putting the challenge out to students to remain active in practicing skills and recording experiences that enhance the enjoyment and learning opportunities they are involved in. Through written, online, or photo journaling (i.e. a blog, diary, or photos with captions) students are encouraged to reflect on what they enjoyed or struggled with, and occasionally make connections with areas of academics that are relevant.

For example, if a student is excited about a family trip to Florida, she might make an entry in an ongoing Google or Office 365 document about how excited she is to spend time on the beach. Afterward she would likely record how she liked the waves, found shells, and might even notice that it was easier to float in ocean water than in a Wisconsin lake or pool. Even though a student might not formally recognize or record the names of aquatic life she encountered or consciously consider amplitude and frequency when jumping waves or care at that moment that the density of saltwater is higher than that of fresh water, these are all experiences that students can return to, share, and discuss during the school year to make science more meaningful and relevant when exploring these concepts.

Not only will the memories be more accessible and vivid by keeping a record, students also benefit by processing thoughts through written (or typed) expression. Often times re-reading a journal entry or reviewing a photo record of an experience can serve as inspiration for a new adventure, story, or foster excitement about a topic or project.

In addition to recording experiences and practicing writing skills, students also have access to multiple online resources relating to math and literacy skills such as Khan Academy, Sumdog, and Prodigy. Students will be encouraged to spend time over the summer weeks and months to keep the neurons firing by reading great books, playing online math games, and taking a few moments here and there to be purposeful about learning something new. Any individuals that share evidence of summer learning and practice through a journal, log, or other form of record that shows intentional reflection, reading, academic practice or learning will enjoy a special activity and/or treat in September.

Binge-watching shows on Netflix or Youtube might have its attraction, and there's certainly no harm in taking downtime once in awhile, but in the end it is helpful to consider the value of time spent on the activities we engage in. At Fox West, students are regularly asked the following questions in one form or another: "Is this activity helping to make you a better version of yourself?" and "How does this experience, project, or lesson benefit you or others?"

For more information about the Fox West Summer Learning Challenge, please visit our website: [Summer Learning Challenge](#)