

Science At Our House

The Ultimate Science
Resource for Homeschoolers



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Life Science

Upper Elementary Syllabus

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Prepared by:
John Krieger, Rachel Miner, and Scott Powell

Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of Life Sciences with ScienceAtOurHouse for the Upper Elementary class. Its purpose is to give parents an overview of what will be covered during the year, and thus to facilitate the purchase/borrowing of books, planning of projects, anuse of other resources to match with your children's studies in the program. There is no required text, but there will be suggestions provided by the team for supplemental resources during the school year.

As a new course, many aspects of the ScienceAtOurHouse program are a work in progress. While Mr. Krieger, the team's curriculum developer, has taught this curriculum at the VanDamme Academy, there will be new challenges in adapting it to the on-line forum that the team will address throughout the school year. Students and parents who will be joining us in this exciting exploration can expect departures from the syllabus as the year progresses and we learn together. Mrs. Miner, the program's teacher, and the rest of the ScienceAtOurHouse team will be regularly reassessing the nature and precision of the information presented. Our goal will be to provide students with a solid foundation in Life Sciences from which they can build further knowledge.

This is the first year of a three year cycle; the expected courses to come are *Physical Science* next year, and *Earth Science* the following year. As with the HistoryAtOurHouse program, the goal is to "spiral" back through this material at higher and higher levels of abstraction as students graduate from one academic level to the next. This will allow students to grasp science fundamentals with greater familiarity and depth throughout their academic careers.

The ScienceAtOurHouse team is very excited about the year to come, and we look forward to working with you to make this academic year a terrific success.

Best regards,

Mr. Krieger

Mrs. Miner

Mr. Powell

Handwritten signatures of John Krieger, Rachel J. Miner, and Scott Powell.

Course Outline

PART I: THE HUMAN BODY

Muscles and Bones

- Bones, muscles, and tendons in the upper limbs
- Bones, muscles, and tendons in the lower limbs
- Bones and muscles of the head and torso
- Animals with skeletons (vertebrates)
- Quiz

The Sense Organs

- The eye and vision
- The ear and hearing
- Smelling and Tasting
- Skin
- The brain
- Quiz

The Organs in the Torso

- The limbs vs. the head vs. the torso: each has a basic job
- The digestive organs in the belly
- The lungs and breathing
- The heart and the motion of blood
- Kidneys
- Quiz

PART II: NATURE

Animals

- Different kinds of animals, and the need to sort them into groups
- The five families of vertebrate (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish), and how to tell them apart
- Where do these belong? (bats, dolphins, sharks, armadillos, penguins, eels...)
- Families of bugs and other invertebrate critters
- Metamorphosis in insects and amphibians
- Quiz

Plants

- Families of fruits
- Fruit development
- Parts and families of flowers
- Other plant parts, good-to-eat or otherwise
- How plants grow from seeds
- Families of plants (spiky, branchy, with cones...)
- Quiz

Recommended Resources

There is no required text book at the Elementary Level. There will also be no "kits" for the parents to buy. Mr. Krieger's experiments are designed to employ common household items as much as possible. On occasion, specialty items, like dissection specimens, will be recommend. The use of such kits will be optional, and we will provide the purchasing information during the year at the appropriate times.

One of the difficulties with teaching science through an online format is that it will be difficult for students to learn about the world without actually doing things with the world. Students will get much more out of their education if they can observe and experience things first-hand. So although there will be no required textbooks for the upcoming Life Science courses, there will be a few recommended books and supplies.

In the subject of anatomy, which will occupy the first half of the year, there will be a few dissections of animals and animal parts for the students to perform, along with perusal of a detailed atlas of human anatomy. Performance of dissections will not be required, but will be highly recommended. Some of them will be demonstrated by Mrs. Miner during normal class time, but others will simply be suggested. Instructions and a list of required supplies for each dissection will be given at the appropriate times. (Some of them will require specimens to be mail-ordered specially from a biological supply company, but others will require nothing more than a trip to the supermarket.)

For graphics of human anatomy, a few copies from an anatomy atlas will be provided, but students will benefit from having an atlas of their own to look through. Mr. Krieger recommends the [*Atlas of Human Anatomy*](#), by Dr. Frank Netter, because it is highly detailed, full-color, and gives students a realistic idea of what the human body looks like on the inside, without being gory. It is also fully labeled, for those students interested in the technical names of things. The drawbacks are that it is somewhat expensive, and it includes images that some parents may or may not want their children to see. We recommend trying to locate one in your local bookstore or library (public libraries often have a copy), flipping through it, and deciding for yourself if you wish to purchase it or borrow it.

It isn't vital, but if you can afford it, we also believe that students will benefit by having a skeleton of their own to play with. **Learning Resources** has a cheap one, and the **Anatomical Chart Company** has medium and expensive ones. The Mr. Thrifty Skeleton from the ACC, which stands about 2 1/2' tall and costs a little over \$50, makes a decent skeleton. Here are links to those companies:

<http://www.learningresources.com>

<http://www.anatomical.com>