

LETTER TO PARENTS:

Dear Parents,

We are about to begin a study of objects in the sky – the Sun, Moon, and stars. The unit is titled Space Systems: Stars and The Solar System. We will start with the Sun and use a variety of tools to observe and record its position in the sky. To orient our observations, we will use a **compass** and to monitor the Sun, we will use our **shadows**. While we use the language that the Sun **rises in the east** and **sets in the west**, we know that it really isn't the Sun moving but the rotation of Earth on its axis that makes it appear that the stationary Sun is moving across the sky. We will be studying the predictable pattern of the Sun as it travels across the sky during the day and during different seasons. We will start as a class by observing the Sun during the day and follow that up with a night-sky observation sheet for homework. Since we are not in school at night, this must be a homework assignment. As a bridge to what we have been studying in class, students will look for the Moon and other objects in the **night sky** when they are at home.

Then we will study the Moon and students will be asked to continue making night-sky observations. To help facilitate this please take your child outside at about the same time each evening (when it is dark) and observe the sky. Take a few minutes to enjoy the night sky together. Talk about what you see. For example, if it is clear, you will see **stars** (you may want to point out a **constellation** or two), **planets** (points of light that appear larger and brighter than stars), and sometimes the Moon. Discuss the changes in the night sky from night to night, especially the changing appearance of the Moon, and where you see it in the sky. (You can check your local newspaper or our class website www.homeworknook.com to find out when the Moon rises on the Lunar calendar. If it happens to be cloudy students can still research the night sky using the website or by using a device to download Mooncast or one of the other free moon calendar apps. Have your child record their observations on the Night-Sky Log (sample below). To complete an entry, your child must record the date, time of observation, draw a picture of the moon phase and write a few sentences (2-3) about what they observed. Thanks for your help and continued support!

Regards,

Mr. Briganti

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MONDAY Date February 28 Time 6:10 p.m.

Observations

The Moon was oval. It was high in the sky.

There were lots of stars.

One star in the west was brighter than the rest.

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