

-Namaste!-

"Summer Assignment"

Happy Summer!!! The purpose of the *summer assignment* is to get you ready for what the year will bring us. When we get back to work in the fall, we will be getting into quite a bit of depth and detail about the natural world and the challenges that face humanity as the number one force of change on the planet today. This summer, I hope that rather than focusing on those details, we can take some time to find our inspiration for what we will be doing throughout the school year. To that end, I have put together some activities that will help you become more familiar with the natural world and also help you start to see the connections. Because after all, "*It's all connected.*"

1. **Watch a movie.** or several movies if you wish, that will inspire you, educate you, and perhaps empower you. Some of my favorites include, but are not limited to: *An Inconvenient Truth*; *Food Inc.*; *Capitalism, A Love Story*; *Racing Extinction*, *Chasing Coral*, *A Plastic Ocean*, *Inside Job*; *Supersize Me*; *Before the Flood*; *Thank you for Smoking*; *Wasteland*; and if you can handle it, *Into the Wild*. If I have missed something obvious or if there are any suggestions, please *reply to all* in any mass emails or share a Google doc, so that we all may benefit.

Of course there are the video series, *Planet Earth*, *Blue Planet*, *Fearless Planet*, and *Life*. Some of these are available to you online for free through Discovery Education's streaming video. Simply go to your dashboard on our district home page. From there, conduct your keyword search.

2. **Take a hike!** Seriously, walk, run, bike, or hike one of the many trails we have available to us. I like Peter's Canyon located near Canyon View and Jamboree. Irvine Regional and Santiago Oaks are great, too. Both are near Katella/Villa Park Road and Jamboree, near Santiago Canyon College. We have a bike trail that begins near the corner of Cannon and Katella/Villa Park Road and winds around the reservoir, past Grijalva Park (near El Modena High School/Fred Kelley Stadium), and continues through Hart Park in old Town Orange and finally ends at the Discovery Science Center near Santa Ana's Mainplace shopping center. For the more advanced rider, we have the Santa Ana River bike path which runs from the Green River golf course to Newport/Huntington Beach.
3. **Pay attention!** As you go through your summer, pay attention to your surroundings. Formulate questions about how our activities affect the natural world around us. Ask yourself where goods and services that we use every day, come from. The gas we put in our cars, the food we eat, the water we drink, the electricity we use for any number of things. They all have a natural origin, believe it or not. How do we get them? How do we use them? Where does the waste go? Are we being responsible?
4. **Take a trip.** If you take any trips to new places, take note of their unique challenges. How is life similar and different from the life you have at home? Are there any pressing concerns in the area? Be sure to get off the beaten path so you can truly experience where you are.
5. **Get connected.** I know you use technology ALL THE TIME, so I have tried to adapt. Today we have several ways to stay connected even when we aren't in the same space. I do not use any of the social media platforms but I will use email and Google. Please send me an email introducing yourself (from an account you will actually use). I will put together a contacts list. Also, I do like to use Remind (@vphs-apes).

I am asking you to produce some type of physical record. Note-taking would be wise; a canvas or mural; a photo journal perhaps. Any medium you prefer is fine with me, digital or analog, visual or written. It isn't difficult, won't take much time, but can be tremendously rewarding. We are in for an incredible journey. The work is not easy. You will be challenged both physically and mentally. Laying some groundwork now will pay dividends later. Trust me. I know what I am talking about. I have been doing this for a while and went through it all myself- not too long ago, I might add. Good luck. Have fun. Take care of yourself, your family and friends, and of course, our planet.

"Humans are free to make an infinite number of choices. Those choices always have consequences. We alone are responsible for those consequences."