



Journey Middle School

217 Celtic Drive, Madison, Alabama 35758

Environmental Explorations - 7th and 8th Grade

Thomas

Teacher Contact Information	Email: lethomas@madisoncity.k12.al.us Classroom Phone: Ext. 84303
Classroom Digital Platforms	<u>Webpage Link</u> <u>Schoology Link</u>
Textbook Information	This course has no textbook nor required reading. Relevant materials will be accessed in class and through Schoology as needed.
Writing Projects	Any writing assignment will be created in the student's Madison City Schools Google Drive using the Google Platform, which includes Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Sheets.
Course Description	9 Weeks Course Are you a field biologist trapped in a middle school body? Then this is the class for you! The Environmental Explorations elective encourages students to investigate the important roles of plant and animal life in our natural and native ecosystems by focusing on zoology, ecology, and botany. Students will discover, explore, and learn to identify native plant and animal species of North Alabama through various project-based activities and will investigate the ecological importance of these organisms in a functioning ecosystem. They will learn basic field biology sampling methods and use these methods to conduct research on plant and animal life surrounding the school. Students will also actively participate in the development and maintenance of Journey's Outdoor Classroom, a vital component of environmental explorers everywhere!
Credentialing	None
Course Objectives	Students will explore local environments and how its elements interact with one another. They will engage with scientific practices of classification with plant and animal species, with a focus on those native to the region of northern Alabama. They will develop and execute plans for the school's first outdoor space for learning.
Course Outline	Week 1 - Unit 1: Plants Week 2 - Unit 1: Plants Week 3 - Unit 1: Plants Week 4 - Unit 2: Animals Week 5 - Unit 2: Animals Week 6 - Unit 2: Animals Week 7 - Unit 3: Ecosystems Week 8 - Unit 3: Ecosystems Week 9 - Unit 3: Ecosystems

	<i>*This is subject to change.</i>
Classroom Expectations	1. Be prepared to learn each day. 2. Bring necessary materials to class each day. 3. Treat yourself and others with respect. 4. Respect the belongings and personal space of others. 5. Be responsible for all technology and supplies. 6. Set high expectations for yourself. 7. Follow all district-level, school-level, and classroom-level policies and procedures.
Progressive Discipline Procedures <i>(JMS Policy)</i>	All progressive discipline will correspond with the Madison City Schools Code of Conduct regarding Class I and II offenses. Class III offenses are a direct office referral. • Warning • Conference with student with parent notification • Parent Contact • Detention • Referral to administration for repeat Class I violations and initial Class II and III offenses---Consequences determined to be reasonable and appropriate by the school administration.
Electronic Communication Device Policy	Wireless Communication Devices A. Definitions 1. Instructional Day – • When school is open and in session; • During class time, lunch, transitions between classes, and any non-instructional periods; • Any time that students are required to store their Wireless Communication Devices under the Student Code of Conduct, or other school rules; or • Any other time, students are instructed to store their devices by school staff. 2. Wireless Communication Devices – Any portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device, including, without limitation: • cellular telephones • tablet computers • laptop computers • pagers • gaming devices • smart watches • earphones or headphones (Air Pods, ear buds, over the ear headphones, etc., whether wireless or not) B. Possession of Wireless Communication Devices – Students are prohibited from bringing Wireless Communication Devices into school buildings and onto school grounds, except in compliance with this policy. The Board is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage to any Wireless Communication Device brought onto campus by a student. C. Storage of Devices– At all times during the Instructional Day, students who possess a Wireless Communication Device on any campus or in any school must turn the device off and store the Wireless Communication Device off their person in a locker, car, backpack, purse, gym bag, or other storage location approved by school administrators. This storage requirement is subject to the exceptions set out in subsection D below.

	D. Prohibition on Use; Exceptions – Students are prohibited from using, operating, or possessing a Wireless Communication Device during the Instructional Day, except under the following limited circumstances: • The use, operation, and/or possession of the device is specifically included in the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or an Individualized Health Plan; • The use, operation, and/or possession of the device is for educational or learning purposes under the supervision of school personnel; and • The use, operation, and/or possession occur during an emergency threatening the life or safety of the student or another person. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop additional guidelines for implementation of these exceptions. E. Searches – School officials may read, examine, or inspect the contents of any wireless communication device upon reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a violation of Board policy, the Code of Conduct, or other school rules, provided that the nature and extent of such reading, examination, and inspection shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation. F. Disciplinary Action – Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct. G. Additional Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop any additional rules necessary to carry out this policy.
Grading Policy <i>(MCS Policy)</i>	• 60% = Assessments (Tests, Essays, Projects) • 40% = Daily Grades (Quizzes, Homework, Classwork, and Participation) • Testing Days: Mondays and Thursdays
Late Work Policy	Late assignments will be reviewed and considered on an individual basis. As CTE/STEM courses simulate real-world work environments and emphasizes project-based learning, timely completion of tasks is essential. However, if circumstances arise, students are responsible for communicating with the teacher emulating positive employability traits; each situation will be assessed fairly and thoughtfully. Students present in class on the day of instruction are expected to turn in all in-class and out-of-class assignments on time.
Make-up Work/Test Policy	Students are permitted to make up work, tests, and other assignments, activities, etc., when absences are excused. Under normal circumstances, it is expected that students will submit previously assigned work upon return to school after an excused absence. All work missed on the day(s) of excused absence(s) must be made up within three school days after returning to school. However, for extended excused absences when homebound services are not necessary, the teacher may grant additional time, but not to extend beyond two weeks past the return to school. It is the joint responsibility of student and parent to ensure a student makes up work following excused absences. Teachers may alter assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., as necessary to ensure an accurate evaluation of the student's performance after an excused absence. Students will not receive credit for and will not be allowed to make up any assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., missed during unexcused absences.
Technology	Student laptops should not be hard-wired to the network or have print capabilities. Use of discs, flash drives, jump drives, or other USB devices will not be allowed on Madison City computers. Neither the teacher nor the school is responsible for broken, stolen, or lost laptops. Laptops and other electronic devices will be used at the individual discretion of the teacher.

Cheating/Plagiarism	A student who cheats will not receive credit for the work in question. If any other student has cooperated in cheating, that student is also considered to have cheated and will not receive credit. Cheating students will also be subject to disciplinary consequences in Section XXII of this CSC. Cheating is defined to include, but is not limited to: (a) copying someone else's work in or out of class and identifying and submitting it as your own (b) failing to quote and/or list appropriate citations for material derived from published sources (including the Internet) and identifying and submitting it as your own (c) the use of unauthorized notes, other materials, or assistance during the accomplishment of graded work in or out of class (d) any other situation in which the student attempts to or accepts credit for work not his or her own.
Artificial Intelligence Acceptable Use Policy <i>(MCS Policy)</i>	Madison City Schools acknowledges that technology is ever-changing and has a tremendous impact on our global society, local community, and classrooms. Artificial intelligence (AI), including generative forms of AI, is becoming more a part of our everyday lives. It is our responsibility to educate and train students to utilize AI in an ethical and educational way. Therefore, Madison City Schools is not banning the student or teacher use of AI, but each student will need to be aware of the limitations and guidelines of its usage: a. Madison City Schools student email accounts and Chromebook access to specific open AI software, such as ChatGPT, are blocked due to data and security concerns. b. Any misuse of AI tools and applications, such as hacking or altering data, is strictly prohibited. c. Teachers may allow the use of AI for curriculum purposes. Access to specific websites will be granted on an as-needed basis, adhering to specific data and privacy guidelines regarding age restrictions and usage. d. College Board and Dual Enrollment college and university classes may have additional restrictions and limitations regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence. e. Students who use AI software with a personal device and/or personal credentials should do so at their own risk, acknowledging that each platform is collecting various forms of data. f. Students must acknowledge the use of AI in any capacity related to their schoolwork, including text, images, multimedia, etc. The use of AI could be subject to the Academic Dishonesty Policy. h. Students should acknowledge that AI is not always factually accurate, nor seen as a credible source, and should be able to provide evidence to support its claims.
Materials & Supplies	JMS Chromebook and Charger Colored Pencils/Markers Assorted Highlighters Pencils / Pens Glue Stick Individual Headphones / Earbuds with auxiliary jack cord (no wireless) Donations (Optional But Greatly Appreciated!): Index Cards Sticky Notes Loose-Leaf Paper Loose-Leaf Graph Paper
Homework	Students are allotted time in class to complete assignments. In the event that a student

	is absent or does not finish during class time, they will need to complete the assignment for homework.
Parent & Student Acknowledgment Form	Please click this link to find and complete the Parent / Guardian and Student Syllabus Acknowledgement Form for this class. This form acknowledges that you have read and understand the expectations and procedures of the class. Please contact me with any questions!