

Dear Incoming Fourth Grade Students,

This summer, students will pick one fiction book and complete a multi-part project that helps them think deeply about the story, its characters, and the author's message. The project has a mix of writing, art, and reflection.

 **Step 1: Choose Your Book**

Pick one chapter book to read this summer. Some ideas:

- *Charlotte's Web* – E.B. White
- *The One and Only Ivan* – Katherine Applegate
- *The Boxcar Children* – Gertrude Chandler Warner

 **Step 2: Think About the Book**

Answer the questions below in complete sentences.

1. Character Study

a. Who was the most interesting character? Why?

b. What was one big choice they made? Was it the right one?

2. Problem & Solution

a. What was the main problem in the story?

b. How was it solved? Could it have been solved differently?

Step 3: Be Creative!

Choose **ONE** project to complete. Check the box next to the one you pick.



Story Map Poster

Draw and label the setting, characters, problem, events, and solution.

What is a story map?

A **story map** is a tool used to help organize and understand the important parts of a story. It's like a visual outline that helps you see the key elements and structure of a story. Story maps can include:

1. Characters: Who is in the story?
2. Setting: Where and when does the story take place?
3. Problem: What challenge or conflict do the characters face?
4. Events: What happens in the story? This includes the beginning, middle, and end.
5. Solution: How is the problem solved or resolved?
6. Theme: What is the main message or lesson of the story?

 STORY MAP 	
Title:	
Characters	Setting
Problem	Solution

Letter to a Character

Write a letter to one character in the book. Talk about what they did and how you feel about it.

Mini Puppet Show Script

Write a short play (1–2 pages) showing one scene from the book. Use toys or puppets to act it out!

*If you would like to record your puppet show you will receive 5 extra credit points. You may record your puppet show on an iPad, phone or laptop. You may send this to my email at jwise@clarksvilleacademy.com.



Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections



Dear Rising Fourth Grade Students & Families,

Welcome to your *Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections!*

I am so excited to begin this journey with you as your fourth-grade mathematics teacher and to partner with your family this summer as we prepare for a joyful, confident, and successful start to the 2026–2027 school year at Clarksville Academy.

At Clarksville Academy, learning extends beyond the classroom. We value curiosity, responsibility, excellence, and strong parent partnership, and we know students thrive when home and school work together in supportive and intentional ways.

This summer challenge is a flexible, real-world mathematics experience designed to strengthen foundational skills through everyday life.

Students will:

- Notice math in everyday life
- Spend meaningful time with family and friends
- Practice problem-solving and reasoning
- Build confidence step by step

Rather than completing a traditional packet, students will become Math Detectives—observing mathematics in real-world situations, reflecting on their thinking, and sharing their ideas in creative ways.


By the end of the summer, students will begin developing the mindset of a fourth-grade mathematician: *curious, thoughtful, reflective, and confident.*

The most helpful support from families is simple: help your child *notice, reflect, and explain their thinking.*

Even everyday moments—playing games, cooking, shopping, or planning—can become meaningful learning experiences.

Wishing you a summer filled with discovery and meaningful moments,

Mrs. Gaige



**Notice It.
Experience It.
Think About It.**





Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections



What Is the Math Detective: Real-Life Reflections Summer Challenge?

Students will become Math Detectives by intentionally noticing how mathematics appears in everyday life. They will explore real experiences, reflect on the mathematics involved, and capture their thinking in creative ways.

How to Complete Each Reflection

1. Choose a real-life activity (game night, cooking, shopping, walking, helping at home, etc.)
2. Notice the mathematics (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, time, patterns, or problem solving)
3. Reflect on your thinking (What did I do? What strategy did I use?)
4. Explain the “why” (How do I know my answer makes sense?)
5. Capture it in your own way (writing, drawings, photos, charts, digital slides, or another format).

Students may use:

- Journal or notebook
- Drawings, models, or charts
- Photos
- Digital slides or creative formats

Your Goal

Complete **5 Real-Life Reflections** that show how mathematics is used in everyday life.



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Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections



Ideas for Reflections

Your reflections may come from:

- Playing games
- Cooking or baking
- Grocery shopping
- Walks, outings, or trips
- Helping with family plans or decisions

Guiding Questions

- What did I notice?
- How did I use mathematics?
- What strategy did I use?
- How do I know my answer makes sense?

These questions help students build thinking habits that will support learning throughout fourth grade and beyond, supporting lifelong learning.

How Families Can Support

You can support your child by asking questions such as:

- What math did you notice today?
- How did math help you?
- Can you show me your thinking?
- How do you know your answer is correct?

These conversations help students build confidence, communication skills, and understanding.

Photos (Optional)

Photos are encouraged if they help explain thinking. Ideas include:

- Games
- Recipes
- Store ads or receipts
- Clocks or schedules
- Patterns
- Family activities

Photos can make reflections more personal and memorable.



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Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections



Example Reflection: Game Night Math Detective

What did I do?

"I played Yahtzee with my family."

How did I use math?

"I added scores, compared totals, and used multiplication for repeated addition."

My math thinking

"I rolled three 4s.

$$4 + 4 + 4 = 12$$

$$3 \times 4 = 12."$$

"My total score was 48, and my family member had 42. I compared place values. Both numbers have 4 tens (40). Then I compared ones: 8 is greater than 2, so 48 is greater than 42."

"I also found the difference:

$$48 - 42 = 6$$

I had 6 more points."

Why does it make sense?

"Addition helped me find totals, multiplication helped me see equal groups, and subtraction helped me compare scores. Math helped me understand who was ahead."

Photo Idea

Yahtzee scorecard, dice, or game in progress



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Math Detective Journal: Real-Life Reflections



Looking Ahead to Fourth Grade

When students return to school, they will use their summer reflections in an exciting *Math Detective Escape Room Challenge*. Students will apply their thinking to solve problems, collaborate, and think critically.

Students will use:

- Noticing
- Reasoning
- Problem solving
- Explaining

These experiences will help students begin fourth grade already building strong mathematical habits.

Why This Matters

Fourth grade is a year of growth, discovery, and confidence-building. Students will continue learning how to:

- Solve multi-step problems
- Strengthen multiplication and division skills
- Develop understanding of fractions
- Apply math to real-life situations
- Clearly explain their thinking

This summer experience is about more than practicing mathematics. It encourages connection, discovery, confidence, and preparation for a successful year ahead. Each reflection helps students strengthen skills, deepen reasoning, and recognize that mathematics is part of the world around them.

Aligned with Clarksville Academy's mission and values, this experience supports students in becoming confident, curious learners through tradition-rooted, college-ready, and life-prepared learning grounded in character, scholarship, honor, and community.



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