



Learning at Home

[HS English / Grades 9 and 10]

Week of March 30th - April 3rd

Portage Public Schools
THE FUTURE LEARNS HERE

Parent Information

Portage Public School District is providing students and families with *Learning at Home* packets with activities in specific content areas and courses. The goal of these packets is to maintain retention of a few previously taught concepts and skills, not to introduce new concepts/skills. These packets have been developed with the intention for students to have the option to complete one packet each week from the content courses..

Learning at Home packets will be available each week at the food distribution sites listed below. Additionally, we have developed an online *Learning at Home* site with these materials, as well as links for a variety of online learning platforms. Both the printed and online resources will be continually updated. The online *Learning at Home* site is available at: <https://portageps.org/learningathome>

Additional Family Resources

ONLINE RESOURCES

Learning at Home Site

<https://portageps.org/learningathome>

The Learning at Home site contains optional learning opportunities, simple games, strategies, and videos that you can use to help maintain a daily structure around learning, exploring, physical activity, and free time while you are home. All activities shared on these pages are optional, used as review or extension, and ungraded.

FOOD SERVICES

PPS is providing food service to any student aged 18 or younger, as well as any special needs adults aged 26 or under who are part of an education program. Take and go meals will be available at the following locations:

MOBILE ROUTES

We have the following mobile routes that are running through the neighborhoods stopping approximately 6 times in various spots a neighborhood. Stops will be approximately 10 – 15 minutes. Vehicles will be honking their horns in the neighborhoods or using their PA system to let you know they are there.

- **Roanoke neighborhood and the State Streets near Northern’s campus.** Look for the PPS School Bus. Service route begins at 11:45 am.
- **Peachtree and Palm Street Neighborhood.** Look for a silver PPS van. Service route begins at 11:45 am.
- **Colonial Acres, Lexington, Capri / Jamaica Neighborhoods.** Look for the PPS School Bus. Colonial Acres locations are at the maintenance garage near the Kilgore Rd entrance and at the corner of Ragay / Monroe. Service route begins at 11:45 am.
- **Newells Lane Neighborhood, E. Centre Apts., Austin View Apts.** The “Fabric” Streets off of S. Westledge. Look for a silver PPS Van. Service route begins at 11:45 am.

STATIONARY SITES

We also have 2 stationary sites at the following locations (look for the Meet Up and Eat Up signs at the entrances). Service times are from Noon – 1 pm at these sites.

- **Portage Community Education Center – 1010 W. Milham** – enter at the Constitution / Milham light. Look for the silver van in the back lot between PCEC and NMS.
- **Milham Meadows Apts. – Laundry / Playground Facility.** The community is located at the corner of W. Milham and Oakland. Look for the silver van.

We are also able to serve meals for Saturday and Sunday, so on Friday, students can request a Friday, Saturday and Sunday lunch, along with a Saturday, Sunday, and Monday breakfast. Since this is an emergency closure, some of the rules regarding meals have been relaxed: The child does not have to be present, and they do not have to eat on site.

LOW COST / NO COST INTERNET

- Comcast Internet Essentials
 - <https://www.internetessentials.com/>
- Charter Free Internet Access Offer
 - <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>
- Spectrum Internet Assist
 - <https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist>
- Access from AT&T
 - <https://www.att.com/shop/internet/access/#!/>
- Verizon Innovative Learning
 - <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/verizons-covid-19-relief-efforts>
- FCC's Lifeline Program
 - Put in your zip code and find low-cost options from providers in your area
 - <https://data.usac.org/publicreports/CompaniesNearMe/Download/Report>



Read the following article “Otters play a vital role in ecology of rivers” and choose which activities to complete at the end!

Otters play a vital role in ecology of rivers

By Ann Cameron Siegal, Washington Post on 03.26.20

Playful North American river otters often sound like squeaky toys as they wrestle each other, slide down riverbanks or frolic in water. Spotting these cute, furry animals is good fun. It is also good news for the environment.

North American river otters are a species whose population can indicate how healthy (or not) the environment is. The otters experienced a steep drop in numbers in the 1900s. This was due to fur trapping and pollution. They are not considered endangered today, though. The nomadic animals often travel miles over land or through rivers and streams. They seek habitats with clean water and a healthy fish population.

River otters are high on the food chain. They eat fish, clams, snakes, turtles, small mammals and birds. Researchers look for contaminants and parasites in otter spraint, or poop. This helps scientists learn about the health of the surrounding environment and its food sources.

River otters don't need music to do a funny rhythmic two-step with their short hind legs, while raising their long tails and wiggling their butts as they defecate. This funny motion, known as "the poop dance," releases spraint that serves as an identification among otters. Spraint is one of the things scientists look for to track the presence of otters.

Karen Sheffield is the manager of Huntley Meadows Park in Virginia. She notes that while otter sightings are unpredictable, recent tracks and spraints show there has been increased otter activity there. A wetlands restoration project finished six years ago at the park. It is minimizing invasive species, making way for healthy native ones.

The Elizabeth River is a key Chesapeake Bay tributary flowing between Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia. It was long considered a "dead river" because of toxins. It's now flourishing after a decade of community efforts to keep out chemicals and waste.

"In the past five years, we have seen a great many more otters," said Marjorie Mayfield Jackson. She is the director of the Elizabeth River Project. "It means we are doing our job in the community and for the otters."

Nonprofit organizations are raising awareness of river otters' importance.



The Elizabeth River Project helped develop an otter display at Nauticus science center in nearby Norfolk, Virginia. Wild otters are often seen hanging around the docks there. An "Otter Spotter" program encourages volunteers within the river's watershed to document any other sightings or signs of activity.

A newly formed Smithsonian Institution project is looking for people, including kids, to help scientists learn more about the animals.

"No one has ever done scientific research on otters in the Chesapeake Bay area," said Karen McDonald. She is part of the Chesapeake Bay Otter Alliance. The alliance is the Smithsonian's citizen-science project. It is designed to help people understand otters and their important role in the food web. Anyone can email sightings of river otters or their spraints.

And everyone can help provide a good home for the otters.

"Otters need a clean watershed to live," McDonald said. "We are all watershed neighbors, and we need to be good neighbors."

Short answer question for everyone:

Write a paragraph that explains the central idea of the text. Use at least two details from the article to support your response. When you're done, share your new learning with someone at home!



Reading comprehension questions for students who want an additional challenge:

1. Select the sentence from the article that suggests scientists study otters to understand the overall health of river habitats.

- (A) The nomadic animals often travel miles over land or through rivers and streams.
- (B) Researchers look for contaminants and parasites in otter spraint, or poop.
- (C) Nonprofit organizations are raising awareness of river otters' importance.
- (D) Wild otters are often seen hanging around the docks there.

2. Read the conclusion below:

It is possible for dedicated organizations and citizens to remove pollution from their local waterways.

Which selection from the article provides the BEST support for the statement above?

- (A) The otters experienced a steep drop in numbers in the 1900s. This was due to fur trapping and pollution.
- (B) River otters are high on the food chain. They eat fish, clams, snakes, turtles, small mammals and birds.
- (C) It was long considered a "dead river" because of toxins. It's now flourishing after a decade of community efforts to keep out chemicals and waste.
- (D) The alliance is the Smithsonian's citizen-science project. It is designed to help people understand otters and their important role in the food web.

3. Read the following selection introducing the Elizabeth River Project.

"In the past five years, we have seen a great many more otters," said Marjorie Mayfield Jackson. She is the director of the Elizabeth River Project. "It means we are doing our job in the community and for the otters."

What does the author MOST likely want the reader to think about the Elizabeth River Project based on this selection?

- (A) The Elizabeth River Project is finding new ways to locate otters.
- (B) The Elizabeth River Project is doing important work to help otters and the environment.
- (C) The Elizabeth River Project is the only effort of its kind in the United States.
- (D) The Elizabeth River Project is doing more harm than good for otters and other river animals.

4. What is the MOST likely reason the author included information about the Chesapeake Bay Otter Alliance?

- (A) to illustrate how the Chesapeake Bay has gotten healthier for otters
- (B) to show how the public can help study and learn about otters
- (C) to explain why the Chesapeake Bay was so polluted in the 1900s
- (D) to compare the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and Elizabeth River



Extension writing for students who want even more challenge!

Write an extended paragraph in which you explain how the author builds an argument to persuade their audience that the presence of otters is one way to tell if a river ecosystem is healthy. In your writing, analyze how the author uses items from the list below to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of their argument:

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
 - reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
 - stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.
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Answer key for the multiple choice questions:

1. B 2. C 3. B 4. B

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