Mystery Science Alignment with Virginia Science Standards

Mystery Science is a hands-on curriculum that aligns with the Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018).

Mystery Science's units of study contain:

- Hands-on, easy-prep activities with EVERY lesson
- Engaging, real-world investigative phenomena
- Thoughtful discussions to build background knowledge
- Lesson & unit assessments to evaluate comprehension
- Curated, cross-curricular extensions

Mystery Science also offers the Anchor Layer, which enriches the unit with an anchor phenomenon, incorporates anchor connections after each lesson, & concludes the unit with a performance task.

mystery science

Updated 05/31/2024

You may click unit names to navigate directly to each unit's webpage, or click page numbers to jump to the corresponding page in this standards alignment document.

Kindergarten

1st Grade

2nd Grade

3rd Grade

4th Grade

5th Grade

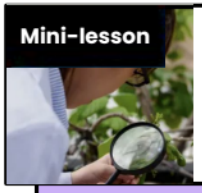
Animal Needs Unit (Animal Secrets)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Animal Needs: Food** Why do woodpeckers peck wood?	Students obtain information through virtual observations of different animal behaviors. They use this evidence to explain that one of the basic needs of animals is food.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.
Lesson 2 	**Animal Needs: Shelter Read-Along** Where do animals live?	Students obtain information through media about how different animal homes are built. They use this evidence to explain that animals need shelter.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.
Lesson 3 	**Animal Needs: Safety** How can you find animals in the woods?	Students obtain information through virtual observations of different animal behaviors. They use this evidence to explain that one of the basic needs of animals is shelter.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.
Lesson 4 	**Animals & Changing the Environment Read-Along** How do animals make their homes in the forest?	Students take a nature walk to look for evidence of animal homes.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.

Virginia Specific Standard:
K.5 Senses allow humans to seek, find, take in, and react or respond to different information. Key ideas include: (a) the five basic senses correspond to specific human body structures; and (b) senses are used in our daily lives.

The following mini-lessons can be used to support Virginia Specific Science Standards.

Mini-lesson



Supports K.5

How do scientists know so much?

Mini-lesson

Supports K.5

How do scientists learn about wild animals?

Plant Needs Unit (Plant Secrets)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Living & Nonliving** Are plants alive?	Students make observations of plants in order to identify their needs and that they are, in fact, living things.	**K.6** There are differences between living organisms and non-living objects. Key ideas include: (a) all things can be classified as living or non-living; and (b) living organisms have certain characteristics that distinguish them from nonliving objects. **K.10** Change occurs over time. Key ideas include a) natural and human-made things change over time; b) living and nonliving things change over time; c) changes can be observed and measured; and d) changes may be fast or slow.
Lesson 2 	**Plant Needs: Water & Light** How do plants and trees grow?	Students investigate to determine the basic needs of plants. They observe to identify ways young plants resemble the parent plant and how the plant changes as it proceeds through its life cycle.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.
Lesson 3 	**Human Impacts on the Environment Read-Along** Why would you want an old log in your backyard?	Students obtain evidence of living organisms by virtually keeping watch of a log and the living things that visit it.	**K.7** Plants and animals have basic needs and life processes. Key ideas include: (a) living things need adequate food, water, shelter, air, and space to survive; (b) plants and animals have life cycles; and (c) offspring of plants and animals are similar but not identical to their parents or to one another.

Severe Weather Unit (Wild Weather)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Severe Weather & Preparation Read-Along** How can you get ready for a big storm?	Students obtain information of different types of severe weather to observe and describe how the weather changes during these events and what students can do to prepare and stay safe.	**K.9** There are patterns in nature. Key patterns include: (a) daily weather; (b) seasonal changes; and (c) day and night.
Lesson 2 	**Wind & Storms** Have you ever watched a storm?	Students create a simple tool that allows them to observe how hard the wind is blowing. They use this tool to observe weather changes and describe the pattern of faster wind speeds right before a storm.	**K.9** There are patterns in nature. Key patterns include: (a) daily weather; (b) seasonal changes; and (c) day and night.
Lesson 3 	**Weather Conditions** How many different kinds of weather are there?	Students obtain information through observations of the weather. They communicate the information by acting as weather watchers and creating drawings of the weather conditions.	**K.9** There are patterns in nature. Key patterns include: (a) daily weather; (b) seasonal changes; and (c) day and night.

Virginia Specific Standard: **K.11** Humans use resources. Key ideas include: (a) some materials and objects can be used over and over again; (b) materials can be recycled; and (c) choices we make impact the air, water, land and living things.

Sunlight & Warmth Unit (Sunny Skies)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Sunlight, Heat, & Earth's Surface Read-Along** How could you walk barefoot across hot pavement without burning your feet?	Students make observations of the pavement heating up after being warmed by the Sun. Then, they design a solution to build a shade structure that can reduce the warming effect of sunlight.	**K.8** Light influences temperature on Earth's surfaces and can cause shadows. Key ideas include: (a) the sun provides light and warms Earth's surfaces; (b) shadows can be produced when sunlight or artificial light is blocked by an object; and (c) objects in shadows and objects in sunlight have different temperatures.
Lesson 2 	**Sunlight, Warming, & Engineering** How could you warm up a frozen playground?	Students carry out an investigation to test which materials can redirect the light and heat of sunlight. (*This lesson has students increase the warming effect of sunlight on an area.)	**K.8** Light influences temperature on Earth's surfaces and can cause shadows. Key ideas include: (a) the sun provides light and warms Earth's surfaces; (b) shadows can be produced when sunlight or artificial light is blocked by an object; and (c) objects in shadows and objects in sunlight have different temperatures.
Lesson 3 	**Sunlight & Warmth** Why does it get cold in winter?	Students construct an explanation for why marshmallows melt in one car and not in another car. Then, they conduct a virtual investigation to determine that the warmth of the Sun is the cause of the melted marshmallows.	**K.8** Light influences temperature on Earth's surfaces and can cause shadows. Key ideas include: (a) the sun provides light and warms Earth's surfaces; (b) shadows can be produced when sunlight or artificial light is blocked by an object; and (c) objects in shadows and objects in sunlight have different temperatures.

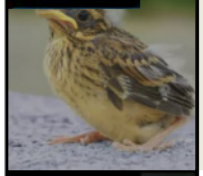
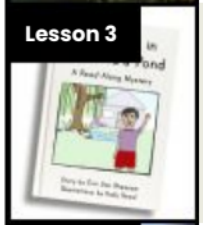
Virginia Specific Standard: **K.4** Water is important in our daily lives and has properties. Key ideas include (a) water has many uses; (b) water can be found in many places; (c) water occurs in different phases; and (d) water flows downhill.

Pushes & Pulls Unit (Force Olympics)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Pushes & Pulls** What's the biggest excavator?	Students observe different machines and use those observations as evidence for why machines make work easier.	**Foundational for K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.
Lesson 2 	**Pushes, Pulls, & "Work Words" Read-Along** Why do builders need so many big machines?	Students observe construction equipment being used in different ways to move objects.	**Foundational for K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.
Lesson 3 	**Motion, Speed, & Strength** How can you knock down a wall made of concrete?	Students carry out an investigation to determine how far back they should pull a model wrecking ball to knock down a wall, but not the houses behind it.	**K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.
Lesson 4 	**Speed & Direction of Force Read-Along** How can you knock down the most bowling pins?	Students play a game of bumper bowling to observe the way that objects can move in straight lines, zigzags, and back and forth.	**K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.
Lesson 5 	**Direction of Motion & Engineering** How can we protect a mountain town from falling rocks?	Students conduct an investigation of how to protect a town from a falling boulder. They design a solution to safely guide the direction of the boulder away from the town.	**K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.
Lesson 6 	**Forces & Engineering Read-Along** How could you invent a trap?	Students define a problem they would like to solve and then design a solution using what they know about the locations of objects and how they can move.	**K.2** Pushes and pulls affect the motion of objects. Key ideas include: (a) pushes and pulls cause an object to move; (b) pushes and pulls can change the direction of an object; and (c) changes in motion are related to the strength of the push or pull.

Virginia Specific Standard: **K.3** Physical properties of an object can be described. Properties include: (a) colors; (b) shapes and forms; (c) textures and feel; and (d) relative sizes and weights of objects.

Animal Traits & Survival Unit (Animal Superpowers)

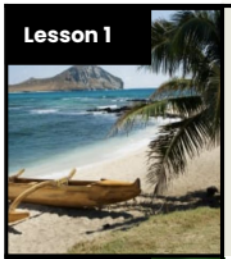
	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Parent & Offspring Traits** How can you help a lost baby animal find its parents?	Students observe the traits of adult and baby animals in order to construct an explanation that most young animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.	**1.5** Animals, including humans, have basic life needs that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) animals need air, food, water, shelter, and space (habitat); (b) animals have different physical characteristics that perform specific functions; and (c) animals can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 2 	**Animal Structures & Survival** Why do birds have beaks?	Students investigate how different bird beaks are well suited for eating different kinds of food. They explain which beak would help a particular bird survive in a particular environment.	**1.5** Animals, including humans, have basic life needs that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) animals need air, food, water, shelter, and space (habitat); (b) animals have different physical characteristics that perform specific functions; and (c) animals can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 3 	**Animal Behavior & Offspring Survival Read-Along** Why do baby ducks follow their mother?	Students obtain information about the behaviors of animal parents that help their offspring survive.	**1.5** Animals, including humans, have basic life needs that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) animals need air, food, water, shelter, and space (habitat); (b) animals have different physical characteristics that perform specific functions; and (c) animals can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 4 	**Camouflage & Animal Survival** Why are polar bears white?	Students use observations of animal parents and their offspring to construct an explanation about young plants and animals being similar, but not identical, to their parents.	**1.5** Animals, including humans, have basic life needs that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) animals need air, food, water, shelter, and space (habitat); (b) animals have different physical characteristics that perform specific functions; and (c) animals can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 5 	**Inheritance & Variation of Traits Read-Along** Why do family members look alike?	Students identify parts of plants such as roots, branches, and leaves. They evaluate these plant parts and apply that information to design an umbrella that won't blow down in the wind.	**1.5** Animals, including humans, have basic life needs that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) animals need air, food, water, shelter, and space (habitat); (b) animals have different physical characteristics that perform specific functions; and (c) animals can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.

Plant Traits & Survival Unit (Plant Superpowers)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Plant Traits & Offspring** What will a baby plant look like when it grows up?	Students observe seedlings and adult plants and use their observations to identify the pattern that young plants are similar to their parent plants.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 2 	**Plant Survival & Engineering** Why don't trees blow down in the wind?	Students learn how plants respond to light. They conduct an investigation to compare how the parts of a plant respond to light.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 3 	**Plant Movement & Survival Read-Along** What do sunflowers do when you're not looking?	Students learn how plants respond to light. They conduct an investigation to compare how the parts of a plant respond to light.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.

***This unit is found under 2nd grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 1st grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Plant Adaptations Unit (Plant Adventures)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Seed Dispersal** How did a tree travel halfway around the world?	Students develop physical models of seed structures. They observe how structure affects the seed's function in dispersing away from the tree.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 2 	**Animal Seed Dispersal** Why do seeds have so many different shapes?	Students develop a model of a furry animal and then use it to test how far seed models with different structures can travel.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 3 	**Water, Sunlight, & Plant Growth** Could a plant survive without light?	Students conduct an investigation to determine that plants need water and light to grow.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.
Lesson 4 	**Plant Needs & Habitats** How much water should you give a plant?	Students plan and conduct a series of virtual experiments in order to determine how much water and sunlight a set of mystery plants need in order to stay healthy and survive.	**1.4** Plants have basic life needs and functional parts that allow them to survive. Key ideas include: (a) plants need nutrients, air, water, light, and a place to grow; (b) structures of plants perform basic functions; and (c) plants can be classified based on a variety of characteristics.

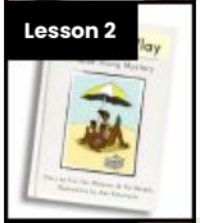
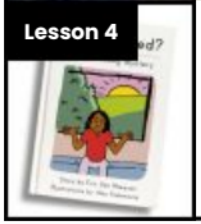
***This unit is found under Kindergarten on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 1st grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Weather Patterns Unit (Circle of Seasons)

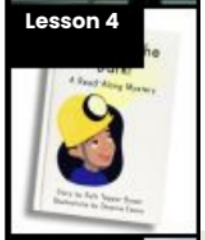
	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Daily Weather Patterns Read-Along** How do you know what to wear for the weather?	Students track the weather daily and analyze the data by collecting, recording, and sharing their observations to observe patterns of weather changing throughout the day and from day-to-day.	**1.7** There are weather and seasonal changes. Key ideas include: (a) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation occur over time; (b) there are relationships between daily weather and the season; and (c) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation affect plants and animals, including humans.
Lesson 2 	**Seasonal Weather Patterns** What will the weather be like on your birthday?	Students evaluate information in a series of unnamed drawings of each season. They use these clues to identify characteristics of each season and describe the yearly cyclical pattern.	**1.7** There are weather and seasonal changes. Key ideas include: (a) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation occur over time; (b) there are relationships between daily weather and the season; and (c) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation affect plants and animals, including humans.
Lesson 3 	**Animals Changing Their Environment** Why do birds lay eggs in the spring?	Students identify the reasons why birds lay eggs in the spring. Then, they develop a bird nest model and use this model as evidence for how animals can change the environment to meet their needs.	**1.7** There are weather and seasonal changes. Key ideas include: (a) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation occur over time; (b) there are relationships between daily weather and the season; and (c) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation affect plants and animals, including humans.

Virginia Specific Standard: **1.8** Natural resources can be used responsibly. Key ideas include: (a) most natural resources are limited; (b) human actions can affect the availability of natural resources; and (c) reducing, reusing, and recycling are ways to conserve natural resources.

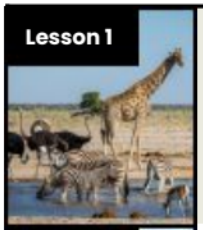
Day Patterns Unit (Sun & Shadows)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Sun, Shadows, & Daily Patterns** Could a statue's shadow move?	Students observe how shadows change as time passes, or as the Sun moves across the sky. They analyze how to move a light source to change the shape and direction of shadows, constructing an explanation of what causes a shadow to move.	**1.6** There is a relationship between the Sun and Earth. Key ideas include: (a) the Sun is the source of energy and light that warms the Earth's land, air, and water; and (b) the sun's relative position changes in the Earth's sky throughout the day.
Lesson 2 	**Sun, Shadows, & Daily Patterns Read-Along** What does your shadow do when you're not looking?	Students conduct an investigation to gather information about how their shadow changes throughout the day.	**1.6** There is a relationship between the Sun and Earth. Key ideas include: (a) the Sun is the source of energy and light that warms the Earth's land, air, and water; and (b) the sun's relative position changes in the Earth's sky throughout the day.
Lesson 3 	**Sun & Daily Patterns** How can the Sun help you if you're lost?	Students develop a Sun Finder, a model of the Sun's movement across the sky. They use this model to reason about how the Sun can help guide them during the day.	**1.6** There is a relationship between the Sun and Earth. Key ideas include: (a) the Sun is the source of energy and light that warms the Earth's land, air, and water; and (b) the sun's relative position changes in the Earth's sky throughout the day.
Lesson 4 	**Daylight & Seasonal Patterns Read-Along** Why do you have to go to bed early in the summer?	Students obtain information about the seasonal patterns of sunrise and sunset.	**1.7** There are weather and seasonal changes. Key ideas include: (a) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation occur over time; (b) there are relationships between daily weather and the season; and (c) changes in temperature, light, and precipitation affect plants and animals, including humans.

Light, Sound, & Communication Unit (Lights & Sounds)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Sounds & Vibrations** How do they make silly sounds in cartoons?	Students explore how to make different sounds with everyday objects. They construct an explanation that objects vibrate when they make a sound, and if the vibration stops, the sound stops.	**1.2** Objects can move in different ways. Key ideas include: (a) objects may have straight, circular, spinning, and back-and-forth motions; and (b) objects may vibrate and produce sound.
 Lesson 2	**Sounds & Vibrations Read-Along** Where do sounds come from?	Students create three different sound makers and construct an explanation about where the vibrations are happening in each sound experiment.	**1.2** Objects can move in different ways. Key ideas include: (a) objects may have straight, circular, spinning, and back-and-forth motions; and (b) objects may vibrate and produce sound.
 Lesson 3	**Light, Materials, Transparent & Opaque** What if there were no windows?	Students investigate the properties of different materials that they can and cannot see through. Then they create a stained glass window using tissue paper to explore how materials interact with light.	**1.3** Objects are made from materials that can be described by their physical properties. Key ideas include: (a) objects are made of one or more materials with different physical properties and can be used for a variety of purposes; (b) when a material is changed in size most physical properties remain the same; and (c) the type and amount of material determine how much light can pass through an object.
 Lesson 4	**Light & Illumination Read-Along** Can you see in the dark?	Students look inside a completely dark box to determine if they can see the shape of the object inside. They allow more light into the box to illuminate the object and allow them to see it. Students use their observations explain that objects need light to be seen.	**1.3** Objects are made from materials that can be described by their physical properties. Key ideas include: (a) objects are made of one or more materials with different physical properties and can be used for a variety of purposes; (b) when a material is changed in size most physical properties remain the same; and (c) the type and amount of material determine how much light can pass through an object.
 Lesson 5	**Light, Communication, & Engineering** How could you send a secret message to someone far away?	Students are presented with the problem that they need to send a message at night, without using noise. They design a solution to create a color-coded message system and communicate with light signals.	**1.3** Objects are made from materials that can be described by their physical properties. Key ideas include: (a) objects are made of one or more materials with different physical properties and can be used for a variety of purposes; (b) when a material is changed in size most physical properties remain the same; and (c) the type and amount of material determine how much light can pass through an object.
 Lesson 6	**Lights, Sounds, & Communication Read-Along** How do boats find their way in the fog?	Students obtain information about light and sound signals. They analyze different sounds with eyes closed to determine which type of sound they hear.	**1.3** Objects are made from materials that can be described by their physical properties. Key ideas include: (a) objects are made of one or more materials with different physical properties and can be used for a variety of purposes; (b) when a material is changed in size most physical properties remain the same; and (c) the type and amount of material determine how much light can pass through an object.

Animal Biodiversity Unit (Animal Adventures)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Biodiversity & Classification** How many different kinds of animals are there?	Students observe the traits of different animals and use that information to organize them into groups based on their characteristics.	**Foundational for 2.5** Living things are a part of a system. Key ideas include (a) plants and animals are interdependent with their living and nonliving surroundings; (b) an animal's habitat provides all of its basic needs; and (c) habitat change over time due to many influences.
 Lesson 2	**Habitat Diversity** Why would a wild animal visit a playground?	Students observe animals, plants, and the physical characteristics of two different habitats. They collect and analyze data to compare the biodiversity between the two habitats.	**2.5** Living things are a part of a system. Key ideas include (a) plants and animals are interdependent with their living and nonliving surroundings; (b) an animal's habitat provides all of its basic needs; and (c) habitat change over time due to many influences.
 Lesson 3	**Biodiversity, Habitats, & Species** Why do frogs say "ribbit"?	Students identify frogs based on their unique calls and use that information to determine the level of frog species diversity within multiple habitats.	**2.5** Living things are a part of a system. Key ideas include (a) plants and animals are interdependent with their living and nonliving surroundings; (b) an animal's habitat provides all of its basic needs; and (c) habitat change over time due to many influences.
 Lesson 4	**Biodiversity & Engineering** How could you get more birds to visit a bird feeder?	Students investigate which kinds of birds are likely to visit a bird feeder based on what they eat and design and build a prototype bird feeder that attracts a specific type of bird.	**2.5** Living things are a part of a system. Key ideas include (a) plants and animals are interdependent with their living and nonliving surroundings; (b) an animal's habitat provides all of its basic needs; and (c) habitat change over time due to many influences.

Virginia Specific Standard: **2.2** Different types of forces may cause an object's motion to change. Key ideas include: (a) forces from direct contact can cause an object to move; (b) some forces, including gravity and magnetism, can cause objects to move from a distance; and (c) forces have applications in our lives.

Virginia Specific Standard: **2.8** Plants are important natural resources. Key ideas include a) the availability of plant products affects the development of a geographic area; b) plants provide oxygen, homes, and food for many animals; and c) plants can help reduce the impact of wind and water

***This unit is found under 3rd grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 2nd grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Life Cycles Unit (Circle of Life)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Animal Life Cycles** How is your life like an alligator's life?	Students create models of several different animal life cycles and compare them to one another. They use these models to discover the pattern that all animals are born, grow, can have babies, and eventually die.	**2.4** Plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes as they grow and develop. Key ideas include: (a) animals have life cycles; and (b) plants have life cycles.
Lesson 2 	**Environmental Change & Engineering** What's the best way to get rid of mosquitoes?	Students obtain and evaluate information about mosquitoes from different sources. They analyze and interpret information about the mosquito life cycle to reduce the number of mosquitoes that live in a certain area.	**2.5** Living things are a part of a system. Key ideas include (a) plants and animals are interdependent with their living and nonliving surroundings; (b) an animal's habitat provides all of its basic needs; and (c) habitat change over time due to many influences.
Lesson 3 	**Pollination & Plant Reproduction** Why do plants grow flowers?	Students model the structure and function of flower parts that are responsible for creating seeds.	**2.4** Plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes as they grow and develop. Key ideas include: (a) animals have life cycles; and (b) plants have life cycles.
Lesson 4 	**Fruit, Seeds, & Plant Reproduction** Why do plants give us fruit?	Students explore the function of fruits in plants and practice classification.	**2.4** Plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes as they grow and develop. Key ideas include: (a) animals have life cycles; and (b) plants have life cycles.
Lesson 5 	**Plant Life Cycles** Why are there so many different kinds of flowers?	Students play a game that models the stages of the plant life cycle. After playing the game students use the model to show how changes to one part of the life cycle affect all other stages.	**2.4** Plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes as they grow and develop. Key ideas include: (a) animals have life cycles; and (b) plants have life cycles.

***This unit is found under 3rd grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching Lessons 1 & 2 in 2nd grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

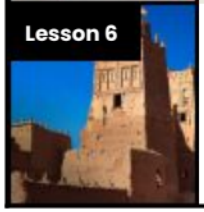
Weather & Climate Unit (Stormy Skies)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Water Cycle & States of Matter** Where do clouds come from?	Students obtain and combine information that water can change from liquid to gas, but that it is always made of tiny drops. Clouds are made of water that has evaporated.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 2 	**Local Weather Patterns & Weather Prediction** How can we predict when it's going to storm?	Students make observations of clouds and develop a tool to make predictions about what kind of weather might happen next.	**2.6** There are different types of weather on Earth. Key ideas include: (a) different types of weather have specific characteristics; (b) measuring, recording, and interpreting weather data allows for identification of weather patterns; and (c) tracking weather allows us to prepare for the weather and storms.
Lesson 3 	*Although this appears next on our site, we **recommend teaching this in 4th grade** if following Virginia Standards.* ***Seasonal Weather Patterns*** *Where's the best place to build a snow fort?*	*Students gather winter temperature data from three different towns. They represent the data in a table to compare the weather and decide which town is the best candidate to host a snow fort festival in future years.*	***4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.*
Lesson 4 	*Although this appears next on our site, we **recommend teaching this in 4th grade** if following Virginia Standards.* ***Climate & Global Weather Patterns*** *Why are some places always hot?*	*Students obtain and combine information to describe the different climate regions of the world.*	***4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.*
Lesson 5 	*Although this appears next on our site, we **recommend teaching this in 4th grade** if following Virginia Standards.* ***Natural Hazards & Engineering*** *How can you keep a house from blowing away in a windstorm?*	*Students design and build solutions that reduce the hazards associated with strong winds that could damage buildings.*	***4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.*

Erosion & Earth's Surface Unit (Work of Water)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Mapping & Earth's Surface Features** If you floated down a river, where would you end up?	Students develop a model of the Earth's surface and use it to discover an important principle about how rivers work: rivers flow downhill, from high places to low places.	**2.7** Weather patterns and seasonal changes affect plants, animals, and their surroundings. Key ideas include: (a) weather and seasonal changes affect the growth and behavior of living things; (b) wind and weather can change the land; and (c) changes can happen quickly or slowly over time.
Lesson 2 	**Rocks, Sand, & Erosion** Why is there sand at the beach?	Students investigate the effects of rocks tumbling in a river. Based on their observations, they construct an explanation for why rocks on the top of mountains are much bigger than the sand at the beach.	**2.7** Weather patterns and seasonal changes affect plants, animals, and their surroundings. Key ideas include: (a) weather and seasonal changes affect the growth and behavior of living things; (b) wind and weather can change the land; and (c) changes can happen quickly or slowly over time.
Lesson 3 	**Mapping & Severe Weather** Where do flash floods happen?	Students use a model (i.e. a map) to examine the different factors, including the shapes and kinds of land, that contribute to flash floods. They use this to predict where flash floods are most likely to happen.	**2.7** Weather patterns and seasonal changes affect plants, animals, and their surroundings. Key ideas include: (a) weather and seasonal changes affect the growth and behavior of living things; (b) wind and weather can change the land; and (c) changes can happen quickly or slowly over time.
Lesson 4 	**Erosion, Earth's Surface, & Landforms** What's strong enough to make a canyon?	Students create a model landform and investigate how some Earth events can occur quickly, while others occur slowly.	**2.7** Weather patterns and seasonal changes affect plants, animals, and their surroundings. Key ideas include: (a) weather and seasonal changes affect the growth and behavior of living things; (b) wind and weather can change the land; and (c) changes can happen quickly or slowly over time.
Lesson 5 	**Erosion & Engineering** How can you stop a landslide?	Students compare multiple solutions for preventing erosion.	**2.7** Weather patterns and seasonal changes affect plants, animals, and their surroundings. Key ideas include: (a) weather and seasonal changes affect the growth and behavior of living things; (b) wind and weather can change the land; and (c) changes can happen quickly or slowly over time.

Material Properties Unit (Material Magic)

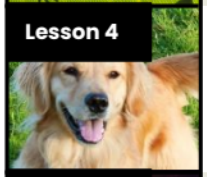
	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Material Properties & Engineering** Why do we wear clothes?	Students investigate different material properties, such as flexibility and absorbency, and use those properties to design and build a hat that protects them from the sun.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 2 	**Classify Materials: Insulators** Can you really fry an egg on a hot sidewalk?	Students conduct an investigation of conductors and insulators in order to determine which are best suited for allowing people to handle hot items.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 3 	**Heating, Cooling, & Phases of Matter** Why are so many toys made out of plastic?	Student conduct an investigation of different materials in order to determine which are most and least easily melted.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 4 	**Inventions & Engineering** What materials might be invented in the future?	Students design a new invention that takes advantage of the unique properties of a futuristic material.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 5 	**Materials, Properties, & Engineering** Could you build a house out of paper?	Students construct an evidence- based account of how a structure built of paper can be disassembled and rebuilt in new ways.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.
Lesson 6 	**Soil Properties** How do you build a city out of mud?	Students conduct an investigation where they examine three different soil models. They use this information to determine which type of soil has the properties that will result in the best mud that can be used to build a house.	**2.3** Matter can exist in different phases. Key ideas include: (a) matter has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.

Fossils & Changing Environments Unit (Animals Through Time)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Habitats, Fossils, & Environments Over Time** Where can you find whales in a desert?	Students explore the idea that the rock under our feet sometimes contains fossils, and investigate how these fossils reveal changes in habitats through time.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
 Lesson 2	**Fossil Evidence & Dinosaurs** How do we know what dinosaurs looked like?	Students learn how we can infer what the outside of an animal looked like by using clues about their skeleton.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
 Lesson 3	**Trace Fossil Evidence & Animal Movement** Can you outrun a dinosaur?	Students learn how fossilized animal tracks can tell us a great deal about the animals that left them.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.

Virginia Specific Standard: **3.5** Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems support a diversity of organisms. Key ideas include: (a) ecosystems are made up of living and nonliving components of the environment; and (b) relationships exist among organisms in an ecosystem.

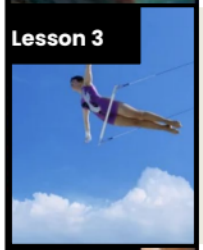
⭐ Heredity, Survival, & Selection Unit (Fates of Traits)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	✨New!✨ **Traits & Inheritance** How do you identify a mysterious fruit?	Students examine plant traits and use that information as evidence to help them identify an unknown fruit. They look for similarities and differences in the leaves, flowers, and fruits of plants to sort them into groups and identify patterns of inheritance.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
Lesson 2 	✨New!✨ **Trait Variation, Inheritance, & Artificial Selection** What do dogs and pigeons have in common?	Students analyze trait similarities and differences among parent, offspring, and sibling pigeons. They interpret this data to discover that the variation and inheritance of traits creates a pattern that explains why we see such extreme traits in artificially selected animal breeds.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
Lesson 3 	✨New!✨ **Trait Variation, Survival, & Natural Selection** How could a lizard's toes help it survive?	Students compare the structures of lizards that live on an island. They simulate multiple generations of these lizards, and analyze and interpret the data to understand how these structures aid in their survival.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
Lesson 4 	**Animal Groups & Survival** Why do dogs wag their tails?	Students observe animals that live in groups in order to obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about animal social behavior. Students use evidence to show how animals form groups to help them survive.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.
Lesson 5 	**Traits & Environmental Variation** How long can people (and animals) survive in outer space?	Students measure and compare their own physical traits (arm strength, balance, and height) and analyze the information to construct an explanation for how the environment can influence traits.	**3.4** Adaptations allow organisms to satisfy life needs and respond to the environment. Key ideas include: (a) populations may adapt over time; (b) adaptations may be behavioral or physical; and (c) fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago as well as the nature of their environments.

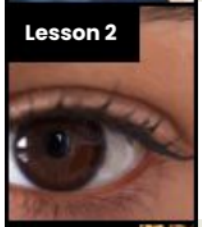
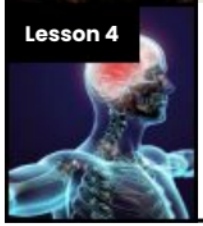
Water Cycle & Earth's Systems Unit (Watery Planet)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Hydrosphere & Water Distribution** How much water is in the world?	Students analyze and interpret data from world maps to determine the relative amounts of fresh, salt, and frozen water. Students figure out that while the Earth has a lot of water, most of Earth's water is not fresh or accessible.	**3.7** There is a water cycle and water is important to life on Earth. Key ideas include: (a) there are many reservoirs of water on Earth; (b) the energy from the sun drives the water cycle; and (c) the water cycle involves specific processes.
Lesson 2 	**Mixtures & Solutions** How much salt is in the ocean?	Students create a model ocean to observe how salt seems to completely vanish when dissolved in water. Students measure and graph quantities to provide evidence that the salt is still in the solution, even though we can't see it.	**3.3** Materials interact with water. Key ideas include: (a) solids and liquids mix with water in different ways; and (b) many solids dissolve more easily in hot water than in cold water.
Lesson 3 	**Groundwater as a Natural Resource** When you turn on the faucet, where does the water come from?	Students learn most people get fresh water from underground sources. Students determine the best place to settle a town by considering features of the landscape & the characteristics of the plants that thrive there.	**Foundational for 3.6** Soil is important in ecosystems. Key ideas include: (a) soil, with its different components, is important to organisms; and (b) soil provides support and nutrients necessary for plant growth.
Lesson 4 	**Water Cycle** Can we make it rain?	Students create a model of the ocean and sky to investigate how temperature influences evaporation and condensation. Students figure out that higher ocean temperatures lead to more evaporation, thus leading to more rain.	**3.7** There is a water cycle and water is important to life on Earth. Key ideas include: (a) there are many reservoirs of water on Earth; (b) the energy from the sun drives the water cycle; and (c) the water cycle involves specific processes.
Lesson 5 	**Natural Disasters & Engineering** How can you save a town from a hurricane?	Students define the problem that a town needs protection from flooding. They design solutions using different types of flood protection. They realize flooding is caused by severe rainfall generated by hurricanes. Hurricanes are created where ocean temperatures are warm.	**3.8** Natural events and humans influence ecosystems. Key ideas include: (a) human activity affects the quality of air, water, and habitats; (b) water is limited and needs to be conserved; (c) fire, flood, disease, and erosion affect ecosystems; and (d) soil is a natural resource and should be conserved.

Forces, Motion, & Magnets Unit (Invisible Forces)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Balanced & Unbalanced Forces** How could you win a tug-of-war against a bunch of adults?	Students develop a mental model of the nature of forces and motion and use that model to explain the behavior of an elastic jumper.	**3.2** The direction and size of force affects the motion of an object. Key ideas include: (a) multiple forces many act on an object; (b) the net force of an object determines how an object moves; (c) simple machines increase or change the direction of a force; and (d) simple and compound machines have many applications.
Lesson 2 	**Balanced Forces & Engineering** What makes bridges so strong?	Students develop and design a bridge to be as strong as possible while working with limited materials.	**3.2** The direction and size of force affects the motion of an object. Key ideas include: (a) multiple forces many act on an object; (b) the net force of an object determines how an object moves; (c) simple machines increase or change the direction of a force; and (d) simple and compound machines have many applications.
Lesson 3 	**Pattern of Motion, Gravity, & Friction** How high can you swing on a flying trapeze?	Students make observations and measurements of a trapeze model. Then, using that information they predict the motion of a real trapeze.	**3.2** The direction and size of force affects the motion of an object. Key ideas include: (a) multiple forces many act on an object; (b) the net force of an object determines how an object moves; (c) simple machines increase or change the direction of a force; and (d) simple and compound machines have many applications.
Lesson 4 	**Magnets & Forces** What can magnets do?	Students investigate the properties of magnets and the fact that they exert forces that act at a distance.	**3.2** The direction and size of force affects the motion of an object. Key ideas include: (a) multiple forces many act on an object; (b) the net force of an object determines how an object moves; (c) simple machines increase or change the direction of a force; and (d) simple and compound machines have many applications.
Lesson 5 	**Magnets & Engineering** How can you unlock a door using a magnet?	Students investigate magnetic attraction and repulsion, and design a magnetic lock in the hands-on activity.	**3.2** The direction and size of force affects the motion of an object. Key ideas include: (a) multiple forces many act on an object; (b) the net force of an object determines how an object moves; (c) simple machines increase or change the direction of a force; and (d) simple and compound machines have many applications.

Human Body, Vision, & The Brain Unit (Human Machine)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Muscles & Skeleton** Why do your biceps bulge?	Students construct a model of the human hand to explain how muscles pull on bones to create movement.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.
Lesson 2 	**Light, Eyes, & Vision** What do people who are blind see?	Students develop a working model of an eye. They use the model to reason about how light reflects off an object and into the eye, helping an organism process information from the environment.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.
Lesson 3 	**Structure & Function of Eyes** How can some animals see in the dark?	Students use their eye model to discover that the pupil controls the amount of light let into the eye. In the dark, pupils get larger to let in more light.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.
Lesson 4 	**Brain, Nerves, & Information Processing** How does your brain control your body?	Students investigate how their own brain works by testing their reflexes. They discover that the brain receives information from the senses, processes the information, and sends signals to the muscles to enable movement.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.

⭐ Animal & Plant Adaptations Unit (Animal & Plant Adaptations)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
	✨New!✨ **Animal Adaptations** Why do some sea creatures look so strange?	Students make observations of underwater animals in order to collect evidence that external structures serve specific functions. They use their observations to construct an argument that an animal's structures work together as part of a system to support their growth and survival.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.
	✨New!✨ **Learned Behavior & Instinct** Why would a sea turtle eat a plastic bag?	Students use models to understand how an animal's senses, brain, and memories all work together as a system to influence their behavior and support their survival.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.
	✨New!✨ **Plant Adaptations** Why don't the same trees grow everywhere?	Students use models of roots and branches to explore their functions and then construct an argument about how these structures must work together in order to support the survival of trees in the unique environment of the frozen taiga.	**4.2** Plants and animals have structures that distinguish them from one another and play vital roles in their ability to survive. Key ideas include: (a) the survival of plants and animals depends on photosynthesis; (b) plants and animals have different structures and processes for obtaining energy; and (c) plants and animals have different structures and processes for creating offspring.

***This unit is found under 5th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

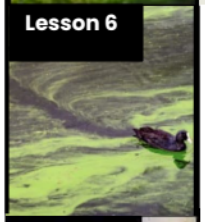
Ecosystems & The Food Web Unit (Web of Life)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Food Chains, Producers, & Consumers** Why would a hawk move to New York City?	Students construct models of food chains by linking cards discovering that different interrelationships exist between organisms.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.
 Lesson 2	**Matter & Plant Growth** What do plants eat?	Students conduct an investigation and interpret data and figure out that water and air account for a plant's weight.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.
 Lesson 3	**Decomposers & Matter Cycle** Where do fallen leaves go?	Students conduct an investigation to test how mold grows under different conditions to decompose food. Students realize that decomposers, like mold, break down and consume dead plant material.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.
 Lesson 4	**Decomposers, Nutrients, & Matter Cycle** Do worms really eat dirt?	Students make observations of worms to realize that worms act as decomposers to eat dead matter in an ecosystem and cycle nutrients into the soil.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.

Ecosystems & The Food Web Unit continues on the next page

***This unit is found under 5th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Ecosystems & The Food Web Unit (Web of Life)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 5	**Ecosystems & Matter Cycle** Why do you have to clean a fish tank but not a pond?	Students develop a model of a pond ecosystem and realize that interrelationships exist between decomposers, plants, and animals. Students discover that each organism must be in balance for the pond ecosystem to function.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.
 Lesson 6	**Protecting Environments** How can we protect Earth's environments?	In this lesson, students learn about what happens in unbalanced ecosystems and how that can lead to an overabundance of algae and harmful algal blooms. In the activity, Bloom Busters, students play a game in which they obtain and combine science ideas in order to help a community respond to and prevent harmful algal blooms.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.
 Lesson 7	**Food Webs & Flow of Energy** Why did the dinosaurs go extinct?	Students develop a model of a dinosaur food web. Students realize that blocking the sun's energy would have disastrous effects on the organisms that rely on this energy in the food web and cause the extinction of some entire species.	**4.3** Organisms, including humans, interact with one another and with the nonliving components in the ecosystem. Key ideas include: (a) interrelationships exist in populations, communities, and ecosystems; (b) food webs show the flow of energy within an ecosystem; (c) changes in an organism's niche and habitat may occur at various stages in its life cycle; and (d) classification can be used to identify organisms.

***This unit is found under 3rd grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching Lessons 3, 4, & 5 in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Weather & Climate Unit (Stormy Skies)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	*Although this appears on our site, we **recommend teaching this in 2nd grade** if following Virginia Standards.* ***Water Cycle & Phases of Matter*** *Where do clouds come from?*	*Students obtain and combine information that water can change from liquid to gas, but that it is always made of tiny drops. Clouds are made of water that has evaporated.*	*has mass and takes up space; (b) solids, liquids, and gases have different characteristics; and (c) heating and cooling can change the phases of matter.*
Lesson 2 	*Although this appears on our site, we **recommend teaching this in 2nd grade** if following Virginia Standards.* ***Weather Prediction*** *How can we predict when it's going to storm?*	*Students make observations of clouds and develop a tool to make predictions about what kind of weather might happen next.*	*(a) different types of weather have specific characteristics; (b) measuring, recording, and interpreting weather data allows for identification of weather patterns; and (c) tracking weather allows us to prepare for the weather and storms.*
Lesson 3 	**Seasonal Weather Patterns** Where's the best place to build a snow fort?	Students gather winter temperature data from three different towns. They represent the data in a table to compare the weather and decide which town is the best candidate to host a snow fort festival in future years.	**4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.
Lesson 4 	**Climate & Global Weather Patterns** Why are some places always hot?	Students obtain and combine information to describe the different climate regions of the world.	**4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.
Lesson 5 	**Natural Hazards & Engineering** How can you keep a house from blowing away in a windstorm?	Students design and build solutions that reduce the hazards associated with strong winds that could damage buildings.	**4.4** Weather conditions and phenomena affect ecosystems and can be predicted. Key ideas include: (a) weather measurements create a record that can be used to make weather predictions; (b) common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and (c) long term seasonal weather trends determine the climate of the region.

***This unit is found under 1st grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Night Patterns Unit (Moon & Stars)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Moon Phases & Patterns** When can you see the full moon?	Students record observations of the Moon's shape using a series of photos collected over the course of four weeks. Using this information, students discover that the Moon follows a cyclical pattern, which they can use to predict when a full moon will appear.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
Lesson 2 	**Stars & Daily Patterns** Why do stars come out at night?	Students develop and use a model of the Big Dipper in the night sky. After conducting a simple investigation, students construct an explanation for why stars are only visible in the night sky.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
Lesson 3 	**Stars & Seasonal Patterns Read-Along** How can stars help you if you get lost?	Students observe that groups of stars in the sky form a pattern: constellations. Even though the Big Dipper changes its spot in the sky in different seasons, it always points to the North Star.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.

This unit was developed for 1st grade so lessons may need modification for 4th grade.

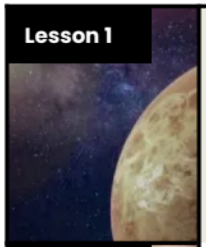
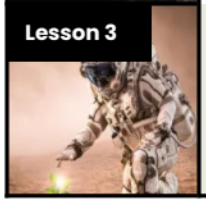
***This unit is found under 5th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

✔ Earth & Space Patterns Unit (Spaceship Earth)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Day, Night, & Earth's Rotation** How fast does the Earth spin?	Students model the rotation of the Earth and investigate why the Sun looks like it's moving across the sky. Using evidence they gathered in the investigation, students build a model that explains how the Earth's rotation around its own axis causes the Sun to appear to rise and set.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
 Lesson 2	**Earth's Rotation & Daily Shadow Patterns** Who set the first clock?	Students make a shadow clock (sundial) and investigate how the direction and length of shadows change with the position of the light shining on the sundial. Students realize that the Sun's position in the sky can be used to tell the time of day.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
 Lesson 3	**Seasonal Changes & Shadow Length** How can the Sun tell you the season?	Students examine photos taken at different times of year and figure out the time of year that each photo was taken. Students discover that the Sun's path changes with the seasons, as does the time of sunrise and sunset. The Sun is always highest in the sky at noon, but that height changes with the season.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
 Lesson 4	**Seasonal Patterns & Earth's Orbit** Why do the stars change with the seasons?	Students build a model of the universe and use it to explain why different stars are visible at different times of year. Using evidence from this model, students make an argument that supports the claim that the Earth orbits the Sun.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.
 Lesson 5	**Moon Phases, Lunar Cycle** Why does the Moon change shape?	Students use a physical model of the Sun and Moon to investigate how the Moon's phase relates to its position relative to the Sun. Students notice that the Moon's phases repeat in a predictable pattern.	**4.6** There are relationships among Earth, the moon, and the sun. Key relationships include: (a) the motions of Earth, the moon, and the sun; (b) the causes for Earth's seasons; (c) the causes for the four major phases of the moon and the relationship to the tide cycles; and (d) the relative size, position, age, and makeup of Earth, the moon, and the sun.

***This unit is found under 5th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 4th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

✔ Stars & Planets Unit (Stars & Planets)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Solar System & Sun Brightness** How can the Sun help us explore other planets?	Students gather evidence to support an argument that the apparent brightness of the Sun is dependent upon an observer's distance from the Sun. They construct a model of the solar system and gather observations of the Sun's apparent brightness from each planet within their model.	**4.5** The planets have characteristics and a specific place in the solar system. Key ideas include: (a) planets rotate on their axes and revolve around the sun; (b) planets have characteristics and a specific order in the solar system; and (c) the sizes of the sun and planets can be compared to one another.
Lesson 2 	**Gravity** Why is gravity different on other planets?	Using mathematics and computational thinking, students calculate how high they could jump on planets and moons that have stronger or weaker gravity than Earth. Students analyze and interpret this data to construct an explanation for why the amount of gravity is different on other planets.	**4.5** The planets have characteristics and a specific place in the solar system. Key ideas include: (a) planets rotate on their axes and revolve around the sun; (b) planets have characteristics and a specific order in the solar system; and (c) the sizes of the sun and planets can be compared to one another.
Lesson 3 	**Star Brightness & Habitable Planets** Could there be life on other planets?	Sun with the right amount of light and heat for life to exist. Students evaluate other solar systems, comparing their stars to our Sun. Based on their analysis, students plan a space mission to a planet with conditions similar to those on Earth.	**4.5** The planets have characteristics and a specific place in the solar system. Key ideas include: (a) planets rotate on their axes and revolve around the sun; (b) planets have characteristics and a specific order in the solar system; and (c) the sizes of the sun and planets can be compared to one another.

Virginia Specific Standard: **4.8** Virginia has important natural resources. Key resources include a) watersheds and water; b) plants and animals; c) minerals, rocks, and ores; and d) forests, soil, and land.

Virginia Specific Standard:
4.7 The ocean environment has characteristics. Key characteristics include: (a) geology of the ocean floor; (b) physical properties and movement of ocean water; and (c) interaction of organisms in the ocean.

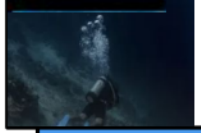
The following mini-lessons can be used to support Virginia Specific Science Standards.

Mini-lesson

Supports 4.7

How deep does the ocean go?

Mini-lesson



Supports 4.7

What's at the bottom of the ocean?

Mini-lesson

Supports 4.7

How are waves made in the ocean?

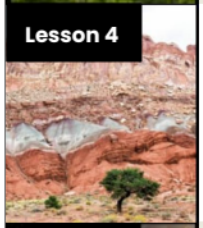
Mini-lesson

Supports 4.7

Why are coral reefs so colorful?

***This unit is found under 4th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 5th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Earth's Features & Processes Unit (The Birth of Rocks)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
 Lesson 1	**Volcanoes & Patterns of Earth's Features** Could a volcano pop up where you live?	Students use coordinates to develop a map of volcanoes to discover a pattern of where volcanoes exist on Earth. Students identify the pattern of volcanoes in the "Ring of Fire."	**5.8** Earth constantly changes. Key ideas include: (a) Earth's internal energy causes movement of material within the Earth; (b) plate tectonics describe movement of the crust; (c) the rock cycle models the transformation of rocks; (d) processes such as weathering, erosion, and deposition change the surface of the Earth; and (e) fossils and geologic patterns provide evidence of Earth's change.
 Lesson 2	**Volcanoes & Rock Cycle** Why do some volcanoes explode?	Students investigate the properties of thin and thick lava by attempting to create air bubbles. Students realize that thick lava will cause a volcano to explode, while thin lava will not.	**5.8** Earth constantly changes. Key ideas include: (a) Earth's internal energy causes movement of material within the Earth; (b) plate tectonics describe movement of the crust; (c) the rock cycle models the transformation of rocks; (d) processes such as weathering, erosion, and deposition change the surface of the Earth; and (e) fossils and geologic patterns provide evidence of Earth's change.
 Lesson 3	**Weathering & Erosion** Will a mountain last forever?	Students make observations of the effects of weathering to discover that rocks will become rounded and break into small pieces when they tumble down a mountain.	**5.8** Earth constantly changes. Key ideas include: (a) Earth's internal energy causes movement of material within the Earth; (b) plate tectonics describe movement of the crust; (c) the rock cycle models the transformation of rocks; (d) processes such as weathering, erosion, and deposition change the surface of the Earth; and (e) fossils and geologic patterns provide evidence of Earth's change.
 Lesson 4	**Sedimentary Rock & Fossils** What did your town look like 100 million years ago?	Students create a model canyon and use the pattern of fossils found in each rock layer to support the explanation that the landscape has changed many times over millions of years.	**5.8** Earth constantly changes. Key ideas include: (a) Earth's internal energy causes movement of material within the Earth; (b) plate tectonics describe movement of the crust; (c) the rock cycle models the transformation of rocks; (d) processes such as weathering, erosion, and deposition change the surface of the Earth; and (e) fossils and geologic patterns provide evidence of Earth's change.
 Lesson 5	**Erosion, Natural Hazards, & Engineering** How could you survive a landslide?	Students generate multiple possible solutions to protect homes from a landslide. Students realize that there are many causes for the erosion that causes rocks to fall in landslides.	**5.8** Earth constantly changes. Key ideas include: (a) Earth's internal energy causes movement of material within the Earth; (b) plate tectonics describe movement of the crust; (c) the rock cycle models the transformation of rocks; (d) processes such as weathering, erosion, and deposition change the surface of the Earth; and (e) fossils and geologic patterns provide evidence of Earth's change.

***This unit is found under 4th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 5th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

✔ Energy & Energy Transfer Unit (Energizing Everything)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Speed & Energy** How is your body similar to a car?	Students learn about stored energy and about the relationship between motion and energy. Students build models of an amusement park ride and discover how energy can be stored in materials. Stored energy can be converted to speed.	**5.3** There is a relationship between force and energy of moving objects. Key ideas include: (a) moving objects have kinetic energy; (b) motion is described by an object's direction and speed; (c) changes in motion are related to net force and mass; (d) when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and can change; and (e) friction is a force that opposes motion.
Lesson 2 	**Gravitational Energy, Speed, & Collisions** What makes roller coasters go so fast?	Students build a model of a roller coaster and carry out an investigation using marbles. Students learn that lifting an object up stores energy in the object. When the object falls, that stored energy is released. They realize that energy is transferred when objects collide.	**5.3** There is a relationship between force and energy of moving objects. Key ideas include: (a) moving objects have kinetic energy; (b) motion is described by an object's direction and speed; (c) changes in motion are related to net force and mass; (d) when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and can change; and (e) friction is a force that opposes motion.
Lesson 3 	**Collisions & Energy Transfer** How can marbles save the world?	Students investigate how energy transfers when objects collide. In the activity, Bumper Jumper, students ask questions and make predictions about how far a marble will launch over a jump after colliding with other objects.	**5.3** There is a relationship between force and energy of moving objects. Key ideas include: (a) moving objects have kinetic energy; (b) motion is described by an object's direction and speed; (c) changes in motion are related to net force and mass; (d) when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and can change; and (e) friction is a force that opposes motion.
Lesson 4 	**Energy Transfer & Engineering** Could you knock down a building using only dominoes?	Students experiment with ways to store and release energy, creating the beginning of a chain reaction machine with a lever and a ramp. Students figure out that a domino standing on end is storing energy, only requiring a small amount of energy (a tiny push) to release the stored energy.	**5.3** There is a relationship between force and energy of moving objects. Key ideas include: (a) moving objects have kinetic energy; (b) motion is described by an object's direction and speed; (c) changes in motion are related to net force and mass; (d) when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and can change; and (e) friction is a force that opposes motion.
Lesson 5 	**Energy Transfer & Engineering** Can you build a chain reaction machine?	Students continue to build a chain reaction machine — identifying a goal, brainstorming and testing multiple ideas, and determining an optimal solution. The chain reaction machine uses multiple components to transfer energy from one part to the next.	**5.3** There is a relationship between force and energy of moving objects. Key ideas include: (a) moving objects have kinetic energy; (b) motion is described by an object's direction and speed; (c) changes in motion are related to net force and mass; (d) when objects collide, the contact forces transfer energy and can change; and (e) friction is a force that opposes motion.

***This unit is found under 4th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 5th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

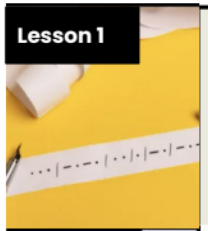
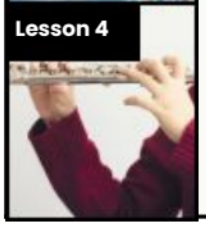
✔⭐ Electricity, Light, & Heat Unit (Electricity, Light & Heat)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	✨New!✨ **Renewable Energy & Natural Resources** What's the best way to light up a city?	Students evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of wind, water, and solar energy to power a town. Students obtain and evaluate information about the needs of each source of energy and analyze and interpret data about the town's resources.	**5.9** The conversion of energy resources is important. Key ideas include: (a) some sources of energy are considered renewable and others are not; (b) individuals and communities have means of conserving both energy and matter; and (c) advances in technology improve the ability to transfer and transform energy.
Lesson 2 	**Electrical Energy** What if there were no electricity?	Students design a flashlight with an on/off switch, using batteries, flights, and tin foil. Students figure out that electricity can be transformed to other forms of energy, such as movement, light, and heat.	**5.4** Electricity is transmitted and used in daily life. Key ideas include: (a) electricity flows easily through conductors but not insulators; (b) electricity flows through closed circuits; (c) static electricity can be generated by rubbing certain materials together; (d) electrical energy can be transformed into radiant, mechanical, and thermal energy; and (e) a current flowing through a wire creates a magnetic field.
Lesson 3 	**Heat Energy & Energy Transfer** How long did it take to travel across the country before cars and planes?	Students build a paper spinner and conduct an investigation to explain how heat makes things move. Students realize that heat energy can be transformed into motion energy using a turbine.	**5.2** Energy can take many forms. Key ideas include: (a) energy is the ability to do work or to cause change; (b) there are many different forms of energy; (c) energy can be transformed; and (d) energy is conserved.

Virginia Specific Standard: **5.6** Visible light has certain characteristics and behaves in predictable ways. Key ideas include: (a) visible light is radiant energy that moves in transverse waves; (b) the visible spectrum includes light with different wavelengths; (c) matter influences the path of light; and (d) radiant energy can be transformed into thermal, mechanical, and electrical energy.

***This unit is found under 4th grade on our site**, but we recommend teaching all lessons in 5th grade if you are following Virginia Standards.*

Sound, Waves, & Communication Unit (Waves of Sound)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Pattern Transfer & Technology** How do you send a secret code?	Students explore how digital devices encode complex information. Students generate their own codes in order to transfer information across the classroom. Then, they compare their codes and evaluate which worked best given the criteria and constraints.	**5.5** Sound can be produced and transmitted. Key ideas include: (a) sound is produced when an object or substance vibrates; (b) sound is the transfer of energy; (c) different media transmit sound differently; (d) sound waves have many uses and applications.
Lesson 2 	**Sound, Vibration, & Engineering** How far can a whisper travel?	Students investigate sound energy using paper cup telephones. Students figure out that sound is a vibration that can travel through a medium.	**5.5** Sound can be produced and transmitted. Key ideas include: (a) sound is produced when an object or substance vibrates; (b) sound is the transfer of energy; (c) different media transmit sound differently; (d) sound waves have many uses and applications.
Lesson 3 	**Sound & Vibrations** What would happen if you screamed in outer space?	Students construct a model of sound vibrations to explain how air is a medium that sound vibrations travel through.	**5.5** Sound can be produced and transmitted. Key ideas include: (a) sound is produced when an object or substance vibrates; (b) sound is the transfer of energy; (c) different media transmit sound differently; (d) sound waves have many uses and applications.
Lesson 4 	**Sound Waves & Wavelength** Why are some sounds high and some sounds low?	Students make observations of vibrations and sound waves to discover that high pitch sounds vibrate faster and have short wavelengths and low pitch sounds vibrate slower and have long wavelengths.	**5.5** Sound can be produced and transmitted. Key ideas include: (a) sound is produced when an object or substance vibrates; (b) sound is the transfer of energy; (c) different media transmit sound differently; (d) sound waves have many uses and applications.

Chemical Reactions & Properties of Matter Unit (Chemical Magic)

	Topic & Guiding Question	Student Objectives	Virginia Science Standards of Learning (2018)
Lesson 1 	**Conservation of Matter** Are magic potions real?	Students observe that a salt and vinegar solution will turn a dull penny shiny again indicating that substances can change other substances.	**5.7** Matter has properties and interactions. Key ideas include: (a) matter is composed of atoms; substances can be mixed together without changes to their physical properties; and (c) energy has an effect on the phases of matter.
Lesson 2 	**Dissolving & Particulate Nature of Matter** Could you transform something worthless into gold?	Students coat a steel nail in copper by placing it into the solution that dissolved bits of the penny. Students realize that substances can change to become particles too small to be seen, but they still exist.	**5.7** Matter has properties and interactions. Key ideas include: (a) matter is composed of atoms; substances can be mixed together without changes to their physical properties; and (c) energy has an effect on the phases of matter.
Lesson 3 	**Properties of Matter: Acids** What would happen if you drank a glass of acid?	Students figure out that acids are very reactive substances. Students investigate reactions between different substances to determine how known acids react with other materials.	**5.7** Matter has properties and interactions. Key ideas include: (a) matter is composed of atoms; substances can be mixed together without changes to their physical properties; and (c) energy has an effect on the phases of matter.
Lesson 4 	**Chemical Reactions** What do fireworks, rubber, and Silly Putty have in common?	Students combine different substances together to discover that chemical reactions can create new substances.	**5.7** Matter has properties and interactions. Key ideas include: (a) matter is composed of atoms; substances can be mixed together without changes to their physical properties; and (c) energy has an effect on the phases of matter.
Lesson 5 	**Gases & Particle Models** Why do some things explode?	Students investigate and model the reaction between baking soda and vinegar. They figure out that gases are made of particles too small to be seen.	**5.7** Matter has properties and interactions. Key ideas include: (a) matter is composed of atoms; substances can be mixed together without changes to their physical properties; and (c) energy has an effect on the phases of matter.