

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Technology at Home and School.”

As we begin our fifth unit in the Benchmark Advance program, we are approaching the halfway mark! As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

The selections in this unit will get us thinking about technology and its benefits and drawbacks. For example, we’ll consider the idea that while today’s technology helps us do everything quickly, life was simpler and slower long ago. The selections include a variety of genres, such as informational texts, fantasy, poems, and realistic fiction.

This thought-provoking unit will engage both you and your child as you think about the role technology plays in your lives.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Technology at Home and School

In this unit, we'll read selections about technology to understand its benefits and drawbacks and think about the question "Why do we use technology?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about technology and to build on skills and concepts your child has learned in school. Taking a break from using technology is sure to be an eye-opening opportunity!

Topic Connection

Technology Tour

To recognize the major role technology plays in our lives, take a technology tour of your home with your child. Make a list of every form of technology you see, from cell phone and computer to microwave oven and your car. Extend your tour to the neighborhood. Add other forms of technology to your list, such as an airplane flying overhead, or the market door that automatically opens when you step close to the door.

Vocabulary Connection

What Time Period Is It?

In school, your child is learning words related to technology. Some of these words include **future, jet pack, scooter, space pack, spaceship, computer, electricity, science, slate, technology, whiteboard, handwritten, hopscotch, marker, ring toss, text**. On a large sheet of paper or poster board, draw three columns and label them: *Long Ago*, *Now*, and *Future*. Write the vocabulary words on small pieces of paper and review their meaning with your child. Then have your child turn them over one at a time and tape them to the correct column on the chart. Encourage your child to give an explanation for each decision.

Comprehension Connection

A Look Back Interview

Many selections we'll be reading compare and contrast life in the modern world with life long ago. Recognizing comparisons and contrasts is an important reading skill. To practice this skill, have your child interview a grandparent or an elderly neighbor about life before certain technologies, such as cell phones, computers, or even TV. Help your child come up with simple questions, then accompany her on the interview. After, engage your child in a discussion about the similarities and differences between life today and life long ago.

Phonics Connections

Fun on the Run

In our phonics instruction, your child is learning to recognize the short *u* sound, as in *fun*. On separate index cards or small pieces of paper, write the letters *-ub, -ud, -ug, -um, -un, -ut, and -uck*. Shuffle the cards. Turn over the top card and say a word that ends with those letters. For example, for *-ug*, you might say *bug*. Next your child says a different word ending with *-ug*. Continue back and forth until you can't think of any more words that end in *-ug*. Then move on to the next card.