

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Elementary Science

Elementary Science
Frequently Asked Questions
(Updated May 6, 2009)

INSTRUCTION

- 1. Are 100 minutes of science instruction per week required or “suggested” in LAUSD? Are K-3 also required to teach science?**

Per MEM-4340.1, “LAUSD requires science to be taught an average of 100 minutes a week throughout the year” in grades K–5. Due to the nature of experimentation and investigation, more time will be needed some days, less time other days. Schedules should be flexible to provide students with ample opportunities for observation and experimentation.

- 2. Will I be able to enhance ELD time with science? (It’s a challenge to find the required 100 minutes per week to teach science!)**

Consult with your school-site administrator regarding scheduling for the core content areas.

- 3. Is the district expecting us to use FOSS California as the primary means of science instruction?**

Can we still use the Harcourt Science text?

Per MEM-4340.1, FOSS California is the district’s standards-aligned core program in science and is the required curriculum to use. Harcourt Science California Edition 2000 textbooks are now obsolete, thus they are not to be used as the primary source of science instruction. However, some copies (but not a class set) may be kept in classrooms as reference material.

- 4. Are there any instructional modifications for teaching students with special needs?**

The instructional design of FOSS California includes many embedded strategies, such as cooperative learning groups, graphic organizers, structured instructional conversations, as well as multiple exposures to concepts and a hands-on approach that benefit diverse learners, including English learners, standard English learners, and students with disabilities.

- 5. How many weeks does it take to teach a complete module?**

Approximately ten weeks, although timelines may vary from module to module.

- 6. Do all teachers at a given grade level have to teach and assess the same content areas at the same time?**

Due to the need to rotate FOSS California modules, teachers may teach and assess the three content areas in any order. (Teachers at a given school may be teaching and assessing different content areas during the same time period throughout the year.)

- 7. Will every teacher have to teach every unit? Can teachers team and become experts in one content area?**

Students need to receive instruction in all three science content areas each year using FOSS California modules. With the school administrator’s support, teachers may plan to teach all

three content areas or they may team so that each teacher is the designated instructor for a single content area. This is a school site decision.

8. Are we going to be following a specific FOSS pacing plan?

Use the LAUSD Periodic Assessment calendar to determine the number of weeks available before assessments. Then refer to each module's Teacher Guide (TG) for instructional pacing suggestions.

9. Is there a suggested pacing plan available for teaching FOSS California modules? At the end of the Overview section in every TG, there is a section called "Scheduling the Module." This appears on the second to the last page of the Overview section. The former suggested pacing plans for fourth and fifth grade are now obsolete since Harcourt is no longer state-adopted.

10. What happened to the Grade 4 Life Science Immersion Unit, Rot It Right?

The Rot It Right Immersion Unit was incorporated into the FOSS Life Science Environments module. Teachers who received the Rot It Right professional development may supplement the FOSS Environments module with Rot It Right.

11. Will I be able to use the Grade 5 Earth Science/Weather Immersion Unit?

Teachers who have participated in a 5-day Earth Science/Weather Institute may implement the "blended" Water Planet/Immersion Unit format that was modeled at the Institute. The Grade 5 Earth Science/Weather Immersion Unit does not cover the Solar System and Water Cycle standards in grade 5.

MATERIALS

12. Do FOSS California modules have all the equipment, materials and supplies needed to teach the module?

Most materials that are needed to conduct FOSS investigations are included in each module. However, some materials (referred to as "teacher supplied materials" for each investigation in the Teacher Guides, e.g., celery, vinegar, crayons, yarn, potting soil, goggles, etc.) need to be provided by the school site or the teacher. Materials supplied by the teacher are noted with an asterisk (*) on the "Materials" page of each investigation. Schools are encouraged to allocate resources for the purchase of such "teacher supplied materials" through their governing councils and/or discretionary funds. See your principal on this.

13. Do teachers get their own Teacher Guides?

Every teacher including Special Day Class teachers should have a set of three Teacher Guides, one for each content area for their grade level.

14. Who do we contact if we have missing materials?

The first person to contact is your school's Science Lead Teacher (SLT) to let them know your specific need. If the materials are not available at the school, the SLT or the principal's designee can place an order through the LAUSD Textbook Services Website.

15. Some FOSS California modules call for the use of safety goggles but they are not supplied. Where do teachers get them?

Two FOSS California modules, grade 4 Solid Earth and grade 5 Mixtures and Solutions, call for safety goggles as “teacher supplied materials” for some investigations. Some schools may already have goggles from other (or past) science-related acquisitions. Other schools may want to allocate discretionary funds for that purpose.

16. Who is responsible to refill/replenish the modules?

Per MEM-4340.1, “a school-wide plan for the successful storage and maintenance of the FOSS materials should be developed in collaboration with the principal.” The Science Lead Teacher (SLT), principal, and perhaps other key staff members designated by the principal should establish this plan early in the school year.

17. How are consumable items in the modules reordered? Will they be replenished each year?

Consumable item refills are provided free-of-charge for the next two years (until June 2011) as part of the adoption. Enough consumables were ordered (in the form of refill kits) and are being delivered to schools to meet all of this year’s needs. In the spring of 2009 schools will be ordering refill kits at no charge for the 2009–2010 school year.

18. Where do we get composition books to use for the science notebook student pages?

Schools may purchase student composition books through the LAUSD Stores Warehouse Supply and Equipment Catalog.

19. Will we have student workbooks to accompany FOSS California?

Student workbooks are not part of the FOSS California program.

20. What is this green and white striped envelope with cards?

The green and white striped envelope contains “living materials cards” used to order living materials required for each of the K–4 Life Science modules. Inside the envelope you will also find information regarding the warranty for living materials should they expire in transit. Keep these cards in a safe place until you are ready to use them.

21. How soon do I need to request living materials?

A good guideline is to request living materials no later than three weeks before your planned investigation so that the living materials arrive on time. We strongly recommend that orders be phoned in to Delta Education at 1-800-258-1302. Alternatively, cards may be sent via US Mail to the address on the card, or faxed to Delta Education at 1-800-282-9560.

22. It is past the date printed on my living material cards. What should I do?

While the cards come with a pre-printed expiration date, Delta Education will continue to honor any living material cards from LAUSD schools, regardless of expiration date.

23. My living material expired upon arrival. What should I do?

Living material shipments usually include more than the exact number needed to accommodate for any losses or expiration in transit. In the event that living material expired or was damaged during transport, please follow the instructions included with your shipment to request a replacement ASAP. Delta Education will expedite replacement shipments whenever possible.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

24. I have not attended a FOSS Teacher PD, but some teachers at my school have. Will I have the opportunity to attend a FOSS PD this year?

Yes. All K–3 teachers and those 4th and 5th grade teachers who did not receive professional development in a module during the 2007–08 school year will have the opportunity to receive professional development during this school year. This includes all Special Day Class teachers.

25. A colleague told me about FOSS California training videos that are online. What are these about?

These are “Teacher Preparation Videos” produced by FOSS for teachers. Their purpose is to visually walk a teacher through the module so they can adequately use the module to instruct their students. These videos can be accessed by:

- Going to the LAUSD Elementary Science website (<http://elementaryscience.lausd.net>)
- Clicking on the “FOSS CA Teacher Prep Videos” link under the Quick Links box (scroll down, right side of page)
- Clicking on the hot link title of the FOSS module for your grade level. (The video plug-in screen will appear and automatically begin in a few seconds.)

PERIODIC ASSESSMENTS *(for grade 4 and 5 teachers only)*

26. Will my students be adequately prepared for the LAUSD Science Periodic Assessments and the California Standards Test if I implement FOSS California? Will periodic assessments be revised to reflect FOSS California?

Both the Periodic Assessments and FOSS California modules are aligned to California science standards for their respective grades. The FOSS California program covers all standards that would be reflected on the Periodic Assessments and the California Standards Test. Since Science Periodic Assessments in grades 4 and 5 are aligned to the standards, they do not need to be revised in light of the new adoption.

27. Are the FOSS California assessments related to the LAUSD Periodic Assessments?

Both the LAUSD Periodic Assessments and the FOSS California assessments are aligned to grade-level standards in science. LAUSD Periodic Assessments remain mandatory for grades 4 and 5. However, teachers are encouraged to use multiple measures of formative assessment to inform instruction and gauge student learning. FOSS California embedded and benchmark assessments provide “multiple measures” opportunities.

28. When will LAUSD Science Periodic Assessments be delivered to schools?

All science assessment booklets (for Earth, Life, and Physical science) will be delivered directly to schools from Princeton Review according to the following schedule: Multi-track schools in July; single-track schools in September.