This Week in AP Chemistry

General Information

Hello! My name is Catherine Macek and I will be teaching your child in AP Chemistry this year. This is the first of many class updates I will be sending over the next ten months. I hope that we can use this method of contact as a way to support your child and his/her success in this course. Each week, I will include important upcoming dates, strategies that may help your student, and other general information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am most readily available by email: catherinea.macek@cms.k12.nc.us

AP Chemistry So Far…

The class roster and schedule are finally set after 3 weeks of school! Our final class list is made up of 13 of West Meck's brightest students. This is great! A small class will allow for a lot of individual attention and a lot of opportunity for hands on material.

Although this is the first weekly class update, we have been hard at work since day 1. The class has been busy so far reviewing material from Honors Chemistry: identifying types of chemical reactions, naming binary compounds, assigning oxidation numbers, and completing mass-mole calculations. We look forward to tackling more rigorous AP-caliber material next week. **We will be finishing up our first unit on Atoms, Reactions and Stoichiometry within the next 7 school days and are expected to have our first exam on September 25, 2013.**

Things to look forward to over the next week:

1. Set up of lab notebooks
2. Completion of first lab: density of a penny and titrations
3. Finish Unit 1: Atoms, Reactions and Stoichiometry and start reviewing using AP style questions.
4. Sign up for Castle-Learning.

Important Dates:

1. First Unit 1 exam on September 25, 2013
2. First formal lab report due September 26, 2013

How to Help Your Student

In this week's update, I want to recognize some resources that your student can use in this course. AP Chemistry is very rigorous; it is meant to replace General Chemistry their first year of college. In order to prepare students for the test and for university-level courses, I have designed the course as closely to a college-level course as possible.

In order to adequately cover the entire AP Chemistry curriculum, students will have to do pre-reading and additional studying outside of class. Homework is given on an almost nightly basis. **I hold tutorials on Monday afternoons for additional support**, but there are many other resources that your student can look to for help:

1. Their text book: Your student received a copy to keep at home during the 3rd week of school
2. The AP Chemistry Cliffnotes Review Book (3rd edition): Your student will receive a copy to keep at home during the 4th week of school. This has a lot of problem-sets (with answers) that can be used as additional practice or review
3. Khanacademy.org : This website is an free online teaching tool that goes over individual Chemistry concepts. Students can follow along with these mini-lectures and can rewind and replay them as often as they would like.

Some other strategies for success:

1. Read the chapter BEFORE the lecture. If a student is trying to listen to brand-new material and take notes at once, they cannot fully concentrate on the material. I assign reading prior to lecture so that a student can become familiar with the content and use lecture time to follow along and verify their understanding. Prior knowledge is ESSENTIAL for success.

2. Take Cornell-style notes on reading before the lecture. Cornell-style notes are one major part of West Meck's AVID strategies. The Cornell note-taking is helpful because it will help your student to modify or add onto their notes while I am talking in class. These notes are also designed for review. I would be more than happy to train your student to use them effectively, if they are interested.