



Use the different sections of this letter to begin conversations with your child about what he or she is learning.

Big Idea: Why are cycles important in nature?

Ask your child how this week's reading selection helps him or her answer this question.

This week's reading selection: *A Handful of Dirt*

Summary: Although we rarely stop to inspect it, the soil beneath our feet may be the most important substance on the planet. In addition to providing a home for millions of microorganisms, soil also contains nutrients that plants need to survive. Without soil, life on Earth would not exist.

► **DISCUSS** with your child food webs and how different creatures are connected.

Vocabulary Encourage your child to use these words while discussing the reading selection.

succulents	<i>noun</i>	types of plants characterized by their ability to store water
crevices	<i>noun</i>	cracks in the earth
supremacy	<i>noun</i>	the state of authority; to be in a position of power
debris	<i>noun</i>	the scattered remains of something, usually broken or discarded
emit	<i>verb</i>	to give off; send out
excrete	<i>verb</i>	to release waste from the body
lubricated	<i>adjective</i>	covered in a liquid to allow for easier movement and less friction
ruthless	<i>adjective</i>	without pity or mercy
ravenous	<i>adjective</i>	very hungry, often characterized by an impatient need for food
churning	<i>verb</i>	stirring or turning up with force
ratio	<i>noun</i>	a comparison in number or quantity between two things
decay	<i>noun</i>	the slow, natural breaking down of plant or animal matter

Spelling Practice these words with your child.

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. abbreviation | 8. geologist | 15. sensational |
| 2. artificial | 9. historical | 16. similarity |
| 3. attendant | 10. persistent | 17. spectator |
| 4. consensus | 11. perspective | 18. terrain |
| 5. disability | 12. photographic | 19. territorial |
| 6. energetic | 13. professional | 20. year-round |
| 7. exception | 14. self-respect | |

Challenge

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1. centennial | 2. photon | 3. simultaneous |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------|

Language Arts

Writing: Your child will revise, edit, and publish his or her informational writing. Your child will have the opportunity to present his or her writing to the class.

Grammar: Your child will review the concepts discussed throughout the unit, including sentence types, capitalization, end punctuation, compound sentences, and commas.

► **HAVE** your child practice presenting his or her informative writing to you. Remind him or her to speak clearly and to maintain eye contact.