

## Third Grade Overview

In third grade, students begin an important transition in their educational careers. The curriculum moves from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” The instructional goal evolves from basic skills proficiency to more advanced skill application. Students are given more opportunities to develop independence as they explore a wider spectrum of educational topics. Teachers work with students to develop quality study habits and time management skills.

### Reading

The reading curriculum utilizes a variety of methods to teach and refine reading skills and to strengthen the student’s ability to process and synthesize information. Reading assignments are often correlated to content being taught in other subjects. For example, when the Titanic is studied in social studies, reading instruction includes a review of passenger letters, historical accounts of the sinking, and an examination of passenger memoirs to deepen the impact of both the reading and social studies lessons. Third graders learn to identify story elements, capture main ideas, find supporting details, recognize sequencing, create summaries, form generalizations, and make inference and predictions. Students read a variety of genres, including realistic and historical fiction, informational text, and biographies in third grade. Teachers conference with students to set individual independent reading goals each quarter.

### Grammar

The *Shurley English* program is a mainstay of third grade language arts instruction. This method follows a step-by-step approach to language arts skills. With the question and answer flow approach, students learn sentence structure by identifying and labeling parts of a sentence. Once they become proficient, students will then apply that knowledge by writing and revising their own practice sentences.

### Spelling

The third grade spelling curriculum, *Primary Spelling by Pattern*, engages students to become more effective readers and spellers by teaching how words are structured and providing multiple opportunities to practice in context. Spelling lessons include words that represent a specific pattern or word-building rule. This allows students to apply those concepts not only to spelling, but reading and writing as well. Prefixes and suffixes are a focus in all lessons. Students will learn different parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The curriculum is a word study approach which allows students to analyze words, break apart words, compare them, use them, and apply them in writing. The activities encourage students to think about words as well as retain the words for personal use.

### Writing

The St. George third grade writing curriculum is designed to expand on learning through interdisciplinary extensions. The curriculum includes a focus on composition of paragraphs, essay writing, and editing in order to strengthen the student’s mastery of language. As they progress, the students will improve their writing by organizing ideas, developing related concepts, and forming connective paragraphs. Using the basis of the grammar program, the year begins with composing descriptive paragraphs. As the year progresses, biographical writing, procedural texts, and fictional writing are mastered. Third graders continue their study of cursive handwriting and, in the second semester, begin to complete assignments in cursive.

### Math

The third grade mathematics curriculum is designed to maintain a linear path of progression from basic operational skills to advanced concepts with a strong emphasis on solidifying number sense. Teachers use *Dimensions Math* methods to help students build strong foundations in number

manipulation, operation execution, and quantitative reasoning, including number patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking as they progress through the year. Basic functions, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are explored through the use of many different learning aids. Students master concepts using concrete manipulatives, pictorial aids, and abstract problem sets. The curriculum extends into the study of fractions, measurement, and probability to prepare students for higher level math instruction.

### **Science**

The third grade science program utilizes the *Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Science: A Closer Look* text to connect each student with their environment and engage students in the knowledge of scientific concepts. Students explore topics such as matter, energy, geology, topography, meteorology, and astronomy and then build on their knowledge by participating in hands-on activities in the science lab. In the lab, students are challenged to think, hypothesize, and use reasoning skills to draw conclusions. In addition to the lab work, students participate in many virtual labs.

### **Social Studies**

The third grade *Core Knowledge* curriculum encompasses units of study on map skills, large world rivers, ancient Rome, vikings, early North American exploration, and the original thirteen colonies. Students develop an understanding of the economic and cultural contributions made during each unit of study. Biographies, primary sources, secondary sources, folktales, legends, artwork, and technology are used to understand the culture of the people and events of the differing time periods. Students have the opportunity to utilize technology creatively to research, develop, and present projects. Third graders end the year with an economics and entrepreneurship unit which culminates with the students managing the sale of water bottles during the school trade fair.

### **Social and Emotional Development**

The third grade social and emotional curriculum is based on the *Responsive Classroom* model, which takes a proactive approach that focuses on creating a loving and respectful classroom community where each child feels valued and known by his or her teachers and peers. Every day begins with a morning meeting where students are greeted by name and invited to share about their lives. During this time, teachers introduce a variety of social skills throughout the year including: identifying feelings of self and others, resolving conflict, showing kindness, listening and responding, regulating emotions, practicing empathy, being a good citizen, and standing up for what is right. These skills are then discussed and modeled frequently by children and teachers alike. This approach provides each student with the tools to grow his or her own emotional intelligence, while also creating an environment of connectivity and care.

### **Co-Curricular Classes**

Students attend a developmentally appropriate chapel daily. They also regularly attend the following co-curricular classes: art, library, music, Spanish, STEAM, technology and physical education.