

Middle School – 6th Grade Overview

Language Arts: The goal of Language Arts is to prepare students to become (1) critical readers who can recognize cause and effect relationships in literature and (2) expressive writers who can write effectively about those relationships in literature and in life. In order to facilitate this learning, this course utilizes a variety of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, connected by the following themes: societal roles and responsibilities, oral traditions, cultural views and philosophies, survival, justice, adventure, and the strength and character of the human spirit. Students continue to develop their understanding of the meaning and the significance of narrative elements, literary devices, sentence structure, paragraph structure, essay structure, and reading strategies in both reading and writing assignments. An emphasis is placed on research skills to obtain information for factual writing, as well as a continued practice of presentation and public-speaking skills. A variety of assessments are used to determine each student's level of proficiency and achievement in light of these concepts and skills.

Textbooks and supplements: Prentice Hall Literature (Copper) / Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workshop, Levels A & B, Vocabulary From Classical Roots, Book A and Book B/ Shurley English Made Easy, Level 6 Workbook / Literature – *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Miracle Worker*, *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*, *Devil's Arithmetic*, *The Cay*, *Black Ships Before Troy*, and *Esperanza Rising*.

Mathematics: The Middle School math curriculum reinforces and expands knowledge of the computational skills and problem-solving strategies. The program takes the learner from the concrete stages of arithmetic to those concepts that require more abstract reasoning skills. The program uses a variety of teaching techniques and learning experiences to meet the needs of varying levels of mathematical maturity. Students will move through pre-algebra concepts as early as sixth and seventh grades. Our goal is to provide all middle school students with a solid mathematical foundation for all future upper-level math courses.

Sixth Grade Honors Mathematics is an enriched course designed to help students begin the transition from the concrete concepts of arithmetic to the abstract concepts of algebra and geometry. Topics in this sixth grade class include variables, exponents, mathematical properties, order of operations, equations, inequalities, integers, rational numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, statistics, graphs, ratios, proportions, geometry, and probability. During the entire year, students review and extend their understanding of the four mathematical operations with whole numbers, decimal values, and signed numbers. The curriculum is accentuated by the application of critical thinking skills and the language of the discipline in both written and oral communication. Word problems and projects are used to illustrate practical applications of topics. Classes are structured for independent and collaborative work experiences, deep discussions, and hands-on concept and skill building. This course develops the building blocks for subsequent levels of mathematics.

Textbooks and supplements: Holt McDougal Mathematics Course 1 and 2; Prentice Hall Pre-Algebra / Teacher materials including Curriculum Association, Logic Puzzles / Pre-Algebra and Algebra with Pizzazz

History: In sixth grade, students study ancient civilization and cultures. The history department uses the standards set forth in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies as well as the National Standards for Social Studies. Societies selected for study are different regions of the world: Mesopotamia, Fertile Crescent, Egypt, India, China, Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe. In addition, the sixth graders experience a unit on immigration. This is a broad overview of the geography and culture of early civilizations. Students study the locations and geographic characteristics of selected societies. They identify different ways of organizing economic and governmental systems and learn how

the level of technology for that period affects the development of the selected societies. In the history department, the following objectives are reinforced throughout the year: reading and evaluating information, drawing conclusions, interpreting visual materials such as maps, charts, and graphs, distinguishing fact from opinion, sequencing historical data, understanding cause and effect relationships, using problem-solving skills, applying decision-making skills, and analyzing context clues. Writing skills are used with daily writings and scenarios set by the teacher.

Textbook: World History - Holt, Rinehart, & Winston

Science: The Middle School science curriculum emphasizes and builds upon the life, physical and earth sciences. Students are prepared to use the scientific method by hands-on investigations weekly. During middle school, the proper use and care of lab equipment is stressed. Emphasis is placed on the development of problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and scientific practices, including experimental design. Students also integrate mathematical computation skills through the use of formulas and metric and customary unit conversion. An annual science fair project enhances the students' independent research and investigation skills.

Physical science topics include the physical and chemical properties of matter, atomic structure, energy and energy transformations, electricity, and magnetism. Earth science topics include topography, the interactions of Earth's biosphere, energy resources and conservation, and Earth in space. Life science topics include cell structure and function, classification of living things, genetics, adaptations, and plant processes.

Textbook: McGraw Hill Integrated Science, Level 6

Spanish: Sixth grade Spanish is designed to introduce verbal communication and writing skills specifically in the present and simple future tenses. Students are introduced to the influence of the Spanish culture/language locally, nationally and worldwide. They learn the history of the Spanish language and how it is a common language spoken around the world. Throughout the year, students focus on building vocabulary, as well as learning grammar structures and verbal conjugation based on specific scenarios. At the end of each lesson, the students work on a project in which they get to practice vocabulary and grammar in both written and spoken forms.

By making comparisons and connections to Spanish-speaking cultures with their own, students are encouraged to understand and accept the differences and more importantly celebrate those differences that make us unique. Life, customs, foods, and celebrations in various Spanish-speaking countries are introduced while also studying pronunciation and writing.

Textbook: Avancemos Level I workbook and textbook.

Co-curricular classes: Students rotate once each quarter through visual arts, Life Skills, music, and technology classes. Sixth graders attend a study hall and Sacred Studies once a week, and physical education is three times weekly.