

## Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Overview

**Language Arts:** Eighth Grade Language Arts students refine and master previously learned grammatical and writing skills in more complex presentations. Their writing is held to a more mature, error-free standard, and they are expected to thoroughly edit their own work based on their knowledge of grammar and usage, spelling, punctuation and other conventions of written language. Eighth graders' writing must be free of vagueness and ambiguities, and their formal essays follow guidelines found in the MLA Handbook. They gain an understanding of the influence Greek literature has on the classic and contemporary selections they read. From classic, epic and contemporary literature selections their projects include mask-making, drawings, creative and formal written and oral presentations.

Textbooks and supplements: Vocabulary from Classical Roots, Books B & C/ Shurley English Made Easy, Level 8 Workbook / Literature – *Antigone*, *The Odyssey*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Prentice Hall Literature* (Silver)

**Mathematics:** The Middle School math curriculum at Saint George Episcopal School 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. Saint George accommodates new students by reviewing current and past math scores, previous test scores, and teacher recommendations and then places them into the math section that appears to be the best match. Our goal is to provide Middle School students with a solid mathematical foundation for all future upper level math courses.

Algebra I covers basic algebraic topics including evaluating expressions, combining like terms, solving word problems algebraically, working with positive and negative numbers, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing algebraic fractions, working with ratios, proportions and percentages, graphing on the coordinate plane, solving systems of linear equations, working with slope, solving inequalities, and working with radicals.

In addition, Pre-AP Geometry is offered to qualifying students.

Textbooks: Prentice Hall General Math 3, Algebra and Honors Algebra, enVision Algebra 1 / Regular: Algebra 1 (Algebra 1 test at end of year) / Prentice Hall and enVision Geometry

**History:** Eighth grade students study the history of the United States from the early colonial period through World War II (approximately). It is a very broad overview of the geography, history, and the beginning of government in the United States. 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. Students analyze the various economic factors that influenced the development of colonial America and the early years of the Republic. They also examine the founding American beliefs and principles, including limited government, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, and individual rights, reflected in the U.S. Constitution. Eighth graders evaluate the impact of wars, influential figures, reform movements, and various Supreme Court cases of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They study the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States as well as the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society. In addition to rights and responsibilities, students learn about the diverse cultural groups that formed and continue to shape the nation. The history department uses a variety of rich primary and secondary source materials such as the complete text of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Writing, discussion, and critical thinking skills are highly emphasized throughout the year. At the end of the eighth grade year, the class takes an educational trip to the Washington, D.C. area. Students experience firsthand the history of our country and the workings of the government.

Primary Textbook: United States History – Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. (Many other resources, both print and digital, are used in conjunction with this textbook.)

**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.

The eighth grade science curriculum includes topics in physical science such as atomic structure, chemical reactions and equations, trends of the periodic table, solubility, acids/bases, principles of sound and light, the laws of motion, energy, and simple machines. Topics of study in the area of earth and space science are the sun/moon/earth systems, stars and galaxies, rocks and minerals, plate tectonics, weather and climate, and human impacts on ecosystems. Students write lab reports and a research paper. Students are also exposed to dissection.

Textbook: McGraw Hill Integrated Science, Level 8

**Spanish:** The eighth grade Spanish curriculum builds on material learned in seventh grade and is designed to further develop verbal communication and writing skills specifically in the past tense with stem-changing verbs. The imperfect tense is also introduced towards the end of the year. Students continue to gain an understanding of the influence of the Spanish culture/language locally, nationally and worldwide. 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 examined, all while also continuing to work on pronunciation and writing. 8th grade students also participate in the National Spanish Exam where they get the opportunity to showcase their Spanish.

Textbook and workbook: Avancemos Level II

**Co-curricular classes:** Students have physical education three times a week and Sacred Studies once a week. Elective choices include Digital Arts, Music Drama and Improvisation, Computer Science, Studio Art, and Wordsmiths (middle school newspaper).