



CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

GRADES 1-8



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Mathematics

First Grade

In mathematics first graders begin with a study of the numbers 1 through 12, learning them through experiences of the senses, including touching, tasting, feeling, and hearing. A major goal is to develop a sense for the quality of numbers. Children look for numbers in the world such as the six sides of a honeycomb or the seven colors of the rainbow. The four mathematical processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are introduced through stories of various characters representing the four operations, and then they are practiced. The children experience the four processes through manipulation of counting gems, drawing, mental math and solving number sentences on paper. The students gain familiarity with counting to 100 and back and explore number patterns on the 100s chart, work with estimation, and practice daily rhythmic counting of the multiples of 2, 3, 5, and 10.

Second Grade

Second grade students continue to learn arithmetic concepts and skills through stories and games, and to review them on a daily basis through mental math. Children practice using the four arithmetical processes and explore the nature of place value. Regrouping

is introduced. Daily rhythmical counting in circle time (stamping, clapping, tapping, hopping, tossing bean bags) by ones, twos, threes, and so on through ten, reinforce number concepts through the body, and provide the basis for learning the times tables. The children are also introduced to the analog clock and the telling of time.

Third Grade

Children learn the ways that we have developed to orient ourselves on the earth through the study of measurement. Working from their own body outward, children gain a firm and grounded relationship to abstract measurement that will serve them well through future explorations in science and math. The third grade curriculum is based on practical applications of arithmetic. Regrouping is practiced and reinforced. Children learn to convert units of time, linear measurement and weight, as well as liquid volume. They continue to practice number facts and multiplication tables (0-12), gaining speed and accuracy, and they begin working with long multiplication and short division.

Fourth Grade

The world, once a magical wholeness, is breaking up for fourth grade students, and to enter the topsy-turvy world of fractions can be an exciting and daunting experience. The study begins by using a hands-on and multi-sensory approach. By cutting up objects (including lots of food that they then eat) and creating parts of a whole, children are given a visual experience of fractions before forming mental concepts. They learn to add, subtract, multiply, reduce and expand fractions, and change improper fractions into mixed numbers. Long multiplication is reviewed and expanded, and long division is introduced. Much care is taken in the fourth grade to teach math so that the students are fascinated with the new concepts, instead being overwhelmed.

Fifth Grade

Building on years of form drawing, freehand geometry is introduced in the fifth grade. Fractions and decimals continue to be emphasized in mathematics, along with mixed numbers and reciprocals. Metric measurement is also a focus in fifth grade. The children have significant opportunities to practice measuring for distance, weight, and liquid volume (or capacity). This helps them to understand how the metric system works in a concrete way. The class solidifies their long division skills and learns how to divide by two-digit numbers. Children often work in small groups to puzzle things out together and to collaborate while problem solving. In addition to the math blocks the children have daily math practice, which allows time for review and mastery of previously learned material.

Sixth Grade

The ongoing study of geometry begun through form drawing and free hand geometry now encompasses the careful use tools, including a compass and protractor. The

students bisect lines and angles, and learn common geometric terms. Students study Business Math and learn how to calculate taxes, discounts, interest and commissions. As part of its Business Math block, the sixth grade class starts their own business. Using funds from their work at an event early in the school year, the class purchases inventory, determines pricing, sells their product, and keeps accurate records. In addition to the practical experience of running a business and the math required for that project, the class continues their study of decimals and percentages and moves into complex word problems, pre-algebra formulas, roots and powers, measurement conversions and estimation.

Seventh Grade

The basic concepts of algebra and plane geometry are introduced. Students learn how the Renaissance artists used geometric principles to develop the laws of perspective, and then practice the application of these laws in their own drawings. Other studies involve business math, graphing, algebra, perimeters, areas, roots, powers, formulas, and the metric system.

Eighth Grade

Math in eighth grade focuses on three critical areas: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. Students also learn the principles of the Fibonacci sequence, Golden ratio, and solid geometry, and platonic solids.



Sciences

First Grade

In first grade students experience the foundations of science through nature stories, nature exploration, and weekly chores on the neighboring biodynamic farm, New Village Farm.

Second Grade

In second grade students continue to experience science primarily through exploration, work, and play. Observation is cultivated through activities such as noting and charting the weather, and regularly writing and drawing about nature walks through the changing seasons.

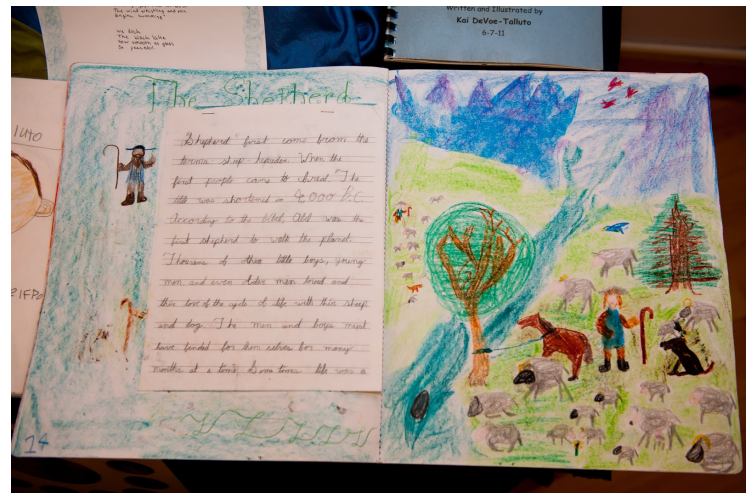
Third Grade

The goal of the third grade science curriculum is to foster in each child an inner confidence in self and in the world; this is delivered through an experiential study of the plant, animal, and mineral kingdoms. The approach is to address how humans interact with the natural world for their survival. This includes a year-long study of animal

husbandry, gardening, food preparation, and shelter building. The class continues its weekly visits to the biodynamic farm and discovers how farm chores change with the seasons. The children skirt, card, and spin a sheep's fleece on handmade drop spindles. The children consider different natural environments and learn how humans have adapted to those environments. In this light they compare and contrast the shelters, food, clothing and communal life of various traditional cultures. The third grade travels to Hawthorne Valley Farm in New York for a week-long immersion in farm life.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade the science curriculum is delivered through the “Human and Animal” block, the first formal experience of the phenomenological approach to science. Through these studies the students begin to develop a practice of detailed and objective observation. This block underlines the vital connections between the animal world and us, but also encourages children to note differences. Students consider how important is the human use of hands, our ability to speak, and our ability to walk upright. Through poetry, clay modeling, and play-acting, children begin to develop a feeling for the fascinating assortment of skills and qualities that the animals possess. They think about what it means to be human, and children often come to a new relationship of responsibility to the animal world and to the human experience. In this block students visit the neighboring biodynamic farm, closely observing and getting to know a particular animal. Through drawing and written observations children learn to “research” a subject first hand and observe as a scientist does. This first-hand experience inspires students to pursue reading about “their animal.” This extends the experience into the intellect, and children bring the study to completion through a written report.



Fifth Grade

As a continuation of their phenomenological study of the living earth, fifth grade students dive into botany. Phenomenological science aims to strengthen skills of observation through the senses. Through observation of living plants in our local environment, students develop an understanding of the life cycle of many classes of plants. Each student chooses a tree on campus to “adopt” and observe multiple times a week over a period of time. Through the careful study of their trees, the children strengthen their powers of observation, and in guided responses to their experiences develop their drawing, descriptive writing and public speaking capabilities. The experiences of this block offer an a subtle mirroring of the children’s own experience of their physical maturation. After experiencing the plant life found in their own

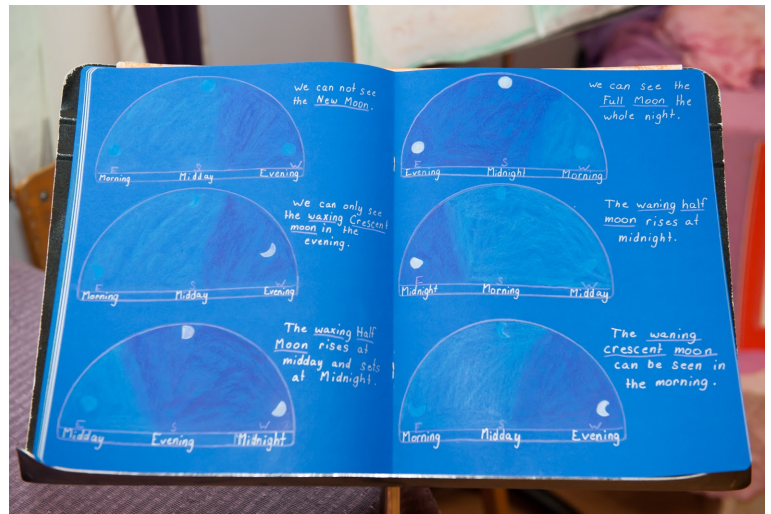
environment, the students' attention is drawn to the insect world in and its symbiotic relationship to the world of plants. The class studies the bee, the ant, and the butterfly.

Sixth Grade

Physics: Through lab experiments and demonstrations, students work to understand the phenomena of sound, light, heat, magnetism, and static electricity. Formal lab experience is used to balance the wonder of our natural world with an analytical understanding of how these forces behave and how matter responds. Students investigate the sources, propagation and properties to bring phenomena into concept rather than applying concept to phenomena. Students also learn how to the differentiate between observations, opinions, and concepts.

Geology: Students study the mineralogy and geology of the earth. The different processes by which rock is formed and transformed, built up and broken down, provides an important metaphor for the budding adolescent. Classes often explore local geological formations and geography, investigating the limestone, granite and slate deposits of our region.

Astronomy: Just as the students look into the earth to better understand their world, in astronomy they turn their attention to the cosmos. Students record their observations of the apparent movement of the sun, moon and stars. Through their observations they recapitulate the evolution of human understanding that lead from a geocentric concept to a heliocentric understanding.



Seventh Grade

Physics: In seventh grade the sciences are designed to awaken a love of the truth and beauty of the laws of the natural world and to see how they are used for good by humans. The main task of the seventh grader is to learn to take in sense perceptions and form sound judgments. In physics the students students begin their study of mechanics and the six simple machines. They also continue their study of light, sound, heat, and electricity, as well as the study of mechanics and the six simple machines. They experience these phenomena through demonstrations and activities, with a greater emphasis on active participation. Seventh graders begin to measure their observations before distilling their experiences to concepts and laws.

Chemistry: In the inorganic chemistry block, seventh grade students discover through observation the properties of various substances and how they interact. They focus on the phenomena associated with combustion, the limestone cycle, and acids and bases.

Physiology: In the first physiology block of their Grade School years, students look at the interconnectedness of the various bodily systems including the digestive, respiratory, and circulatory systems. The students of the seventh grade are newly aware of their own health and wellbeing and are engaged in studies to help them discover what is in their own interest for health. A guest teacher brings a block entitled “Human Fertility and Sexuality” exploring the physiological changes in adolescents, the reproductive cycle, and the development of new life, from egg and sperm to birth. Students also participate in a professionally led course on substance abuse.

Eighth Grade

Eighth Grade Science, as students’ thinking ability unfolds in a new way, the science focus on direct experience and experimentation is a primary tool to develop the thinking. The relevance of the material to the students’ experience and interest in the world is most important.

Anatomy and Physiology: The eighth grade science curriculum provides a picture of the human being as a microcosm of the kingdoms of nature. Recognizing that eighth grade students are more acutely aware of their own growing muscles and bones, the curriculum focuses on the musculoskeletal system and the sensory organs. Students typically observe and handle human bones in their explorations, and sculpt particular bones out of clay. Students also continue their study of fertility with a focus on sexuality and relationships.

Physics: The study of physics continues in the eighth grade with hydraulics, electricity, aerodynamics, and meteorology. Students are actively building, measuring and observing their own work as they proceed through the material. The teacher helps the students relate their discovery of the various physical laws and principles to the development of our modern technological society.

Chemistry: In chemistry, students engage in the analysis of organic substances and investigate their role in human nutrition. The chemistry curriculum focuses on those processes by which organic substances are formed (e.g. photosynthesis) and transformed (as in digestion). The class uses the principles discovered and developed through demonstrations and activities to create common practical substances such as soap and lip balm.



Language Arts, English & Humanities

First Grade

Building on the strong language learning experiences children have with verse, rhyme, and story in the early childhood program, the rising first grader is ready to make the connection to how words are captured in letter forms. This stage of learning is known as “The Alphabetic Principle” and students in a Waldorf school master this phase through a multi-sensory process.

The teacher artfully crafts a story, from which emerges the essential sound characteristics of the consonants, such as the letter “B” in “The Big Brown Bear,” and later, the shorter sounds of the vowels, “A, as in Apple.” Gestures often accompany to reinforce the connection and children may clap, stomp, and move in time to alliterative verses. Out of the story may arise a pictorial image for the children to see the letter form in the main character- the bear, a mountain, or a snake. Tongue twisters are spoken to give the children a feel for the sound in their mouths at the beginning, middle, and end of a word. Children go on to playfully explore how different sounds then string together to make both meaningful and nonsense words, giving rise to the critical skill in reading: the ability to “decode” what they see and “encode” as they write a variety of single syllable words. At the end of year, a typical first grader can spell words with a rhyming pattern, (cat, mat, pat) and to change the pattern with a middle vowel sound (pat, pot, pet). The picture book collection reflects many learning to read skills, via classic titles that reinforce the sound/symbol connection, rhyming verse, and stories that allow the children to predict and confirm “what happens next,” or to make up their own story to match the pictures. Small booklets are available to “read” that

reinforce the new skill and ability that the first grader has learned to read words with lawful representation of sound and symbol.

Second Grade

In second grade, children return to the school eager and able to begin writing in a narrative style, reporting news of their own adventures and everyday experiences. In the very first days of the year, second graders learn that their “telling thoughts” are framed in writing by a capital letter and a stop sign. In their Monday Journals they record, in picture form, an important event, and with teacher support, they begin to write their own stories to “read.” At this point, the children understand that they can engage in the process, independently, of asking, “What do I hear and how do I write that?” as they strive to put together in writing the string of sounds needed to tell their story. “I climb on the monkey bars,” will most commonly appear in the early stages as, “I klim on the mke brs.” Second graders are explicitly taught more Alphabetic Principle rules, such as how consonants may blend to make a sound together, (br... st.... fl...) or combine to make new and different sound, (th, sh, ch....)

Students also begin to learn all the combinations that make for the long vowel they hear in the spoken word, signifying their developmental entry to the “Within Word” phase of spelling. Finally, a multi-sensory instructional approach to help second graders develop automatic recognition of words that appear frequently in both reading and writing, but may not follow the lawful sound/symbol relationship. Visual word recognition of such words from the “RED WORD” list are systematically introduced, starting in second grade.

Reading material in second grade is a mixture of student and teacher created compositions and verses, more of the controlled vocabulary booklets that reinforce pure decoding skills, and “authentic” text that asks a reader to employ a balance of strategies as they encounter increasingly complex sentence and story structure. It is very typical for there to be a range of reading skills development in second grade, but teachers are vigilant for signs of struggle that may indicate that a learner may need additional, explicit instruction to properly master the fundamental skills of decoding. It is a goal for students to independently read stories at the level that allows them to enter the “self extending” phase of reading.

Third Grade

In third grade, the formal study of grammar is introduced with parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective), along with independent reading, comprehension strategies, identifying the problem/solution structure in fictional texts, independent composition skills and basic editing skills. “Framing Your Thoughts,” a functional grammar curriculum within “Project Read,” helps guide grammar instruction in grades three through eight. The children’s writing is primarily based on their own experiences, Hebrew stories, and content from their block on Native American life. Third grade is the beginning of many students’ transition from invented spelling to standard spelling, and much time is spent throughout the year reviewing earlier spelling skills and expanding their knowledge and use of spelling patterns and rules. Regular reading practice becomes part of the class

rhythm and many children graduate to reading popular books in a series, and a range of chapter books. Shared book study often begins in third grade, frequently with a farming or trades-related book. Cursive writing skills, introduced in second grade, are strengthened.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade the students have many opportunities to write creatively. Topics are always experiential and allow children to enter into the worlds they describe. Students practice the process of writing: generating ideas, creating a rough draft, editing it, and writing a final piece. In the “Human and Animal” main lesson they often write about their first formal observation of a farm animal, beginning the journey toward close observation and the kind of detailed writing this requires. This project may also become the first guided “research report” with use of non-fiction sources. Toward the end of the year, writing takes on a more skill-based approach as students focus on sentence structure, punctuation and spelling. The children’s reading grows more fluid and skillful through independent reading, which often takes place on a daily basis. Formal shared book study continues with class readers, typically including a novel about Vermont history and other short, age-appropriate novels. Grammar includes the study of additional parts of speech (adverbs, pronouns), types of sentences, and further study of punctuation and capitalization. Verb tenses are introduced as living concepts and students explore what it feels like to consider the past, the present and the future. The stories told throughout the year are designed to speak to fourth graders and acknowledge their passage through the nine-year-old change. They include Native American quest stories of strife and hardship, stories of animals in the wild and their day-to-day adventures, stories of Vermont history and its early years, and stories of Norse Mythology.

Fifth Grade

In the fifth grade, students write short pieces in varied styles out of their main lesson work, and become increasingly responsible for revising their own work to correct spelling, grammatical, and punctuation mistakes. In main lesson they continue to write compositions and carefully guided, imaginative research reports. Fifth-grade students review all the parts of speech, including prepositional phrases, and continue learning verb tenses. The children practice spelling and vocabulary daily from a program called “Megawords.” This program is a continuation of the “word-work” implemented in grades one through four with “Project Read” materials. Students enjoy a twenty-minute reading period each day for independent reading, and explore journaling both as a form of self-expression and as a way to develop the flow of writing. Class book study often focuses on children’s novels related to the American experience in all its diversity.

Sixth Grade

Students in sixth began to practice taking notes during several Main Lesson blocks. They engage in small group projects and presentations where aspects of history and geography are closely studied and then presented to the whole class. The study of non-fiction is a focus through learning how to read short, age-appropriate articles related to main lesson content. In sixth grade, students have English brought to them as a subject class; the English and class teachers work closely to continue to present reading, writing, and speaking as an integrated subject. Both teachers use “Framing Your Thoughts,” a Project Read grammar curriculum, to support the development of sentence and paragraph structure. Grammar work includes learning about objects, reviewing common grammar mistakes in speech (and the reasons they are wrong), and continued work with diagramming sentences. The sixth grade dives into the structure of the story, studying setting, plot, and characterization (including dialogue and description). Students establish a practice of writing regularly in their Writer’s Notebooks, recording details of their lives that might become part of stories. They learn the fundamentals of argumentation and often write a first persuasive essay. Finally, students spend weeks planning, writing, conferencing about, and revising a short “quest story,” learning new writing techniques.

Seventh Grade

In seventh grade students are introduced to longer compositions and the structure of a formal essay; these are practiced in main lesson and English class. Students continue to work with non-fiction, including longer biographies and articles related to their Renaissance study. A focus of language arts is creative self-expression, mirroring the developing sense of self in the young adolescent. Students write several memoir pieces, learning a host of stylistic techniques for improving writing, including writing interesting leads and conclusions, best use of dialogue, making good word choices, and writing vivid description. The “Wish, Wonder and Surprise” main lesson block supports the development of self and language arts by focusing on poetry. Students work with simile, metaphor, and sound device to express and share their inner life. Students explore classic literature from Jack London to Mark Twain, and read novels related to the curriculum. The year generally culminates in a study of Shakespeare, including reading excerpts from *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Writing response includes book reviews, journal entries, and a first guided literary essay. Grammar work continues with advanced concepts from “Framing Your Thoughts,” including sentence expanding and fine-tuning the structure of the paragraph. Vocabulary work continues through Greek and Latin roots, and word study related to the class books. In the summer between seventh and eighth grade, students are asked to practice word processing skills.

Eighth Grade

In eighth grade students move into the study of modern and American history and literature, with a focus on critical reading of primary sources in history, and the formal study of argumentation. Students prepare for and take part in several debates related to main lesson or current events topics, and write persuasive essays. They continue to

refine their skills in writing literary essays, including citing evidence from the text. Two or three research papers related to main lesson content may be required, often with guided use of internet sources. Grammar study extends to include elements of style including word choice, variety of sentence structure, and writer's "voice." Vocabulary study continues through Greek and Latin roots and word study related to class texts.

The Eighth Grade Research Project and Presentation exemplifies a fundamental tenet of Waldorf education: to cultivate a passion for lifelong learning. Eighth graders research a topic about which they have an interest, acquire new knowledge and new skills, and create something useful, beautiful, or innovative related to their topic of study. The students are required to work with a mentor in the community, develop a community service component, to record their progress through journal entries, write a process paper in English class, and to give a final presentation about their project to the class and the extended community. This project is usually an important milestone.



History

First, Second, and Third Grades

Before storytelling a teacher will often set the historical context of the place and characters of the story, with the purpose of anchoring the students' experience in place and time, helping children access meaning more fully, and teaching about other cultures and eras.

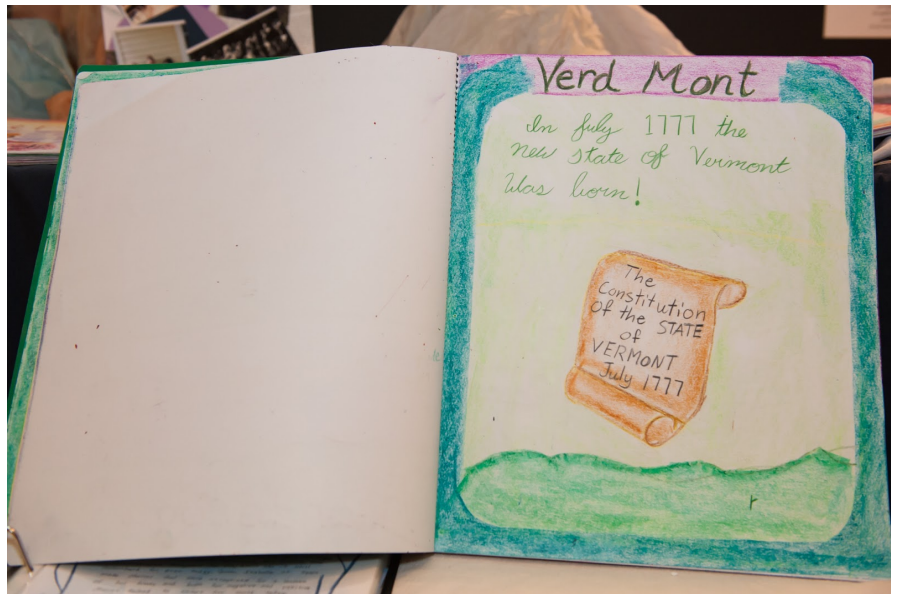
Third Grade

In working with the developmental landmark of the nine-year-old change, the curriculum has many practical and traditional components. Specifically, traditional agricultural methods, trades, and textile uses are taught, spanning historical eras from prehistory through colonial times. Indigenous construction of shelters is also a theme. The first formal study of religion is introduced in third grade through stories and festivals of the Hebrew people and Judaic tradition.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade students are introduced to the study of local and state history. As they learn about heroes and events in our state's past, and read historical fiction, students experience story as an enlivened way to take in information. Students also learn about the Viking era through the study of Norse myths in literature, and Native American history through legend. A unique program with our

neighboring educational farm provides an experiential "Colonist and Native American" history curriculum to complement the classroom work. Weekly over the course of two months in the fall students visit the farm and learn from experts there traditional skills including carpentry, fire-making, basket and mat-weaving, tanning, whittling, and traditional open-fire cooking. This unit culminates in a class overnight camping experience at the farm in which the children cook their own meal over a fire and sleep in the barn.



Fifth Grade

In the fifth grade, the study of ancient cultures and ancient history serves to bridge the gap between mythology and history. Fifth graders look at five ancient cultures. They are first introduced to the childhood of civilized humanity in ancient India, where humans were dreamers. The ancient Persian culture that followed felt the impulse to transform the earth, till the soil, and domesticate animals, while helping the sun god conquer the spirit of darkness. The great cultures of Mesopotamia (the Chaldeans, the Hebrews, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians) reveal the origins of written language on clay tablets. The Egyptian civilization of pyramids and pharaohs precedes the civilization of the Greeks with whom ancient history ends. Every means is used to give children a vivid impression of these five ancient cultures. They read translations of poetry, study hieroglyphic symbols of the Egyptians, sample arts and crafts of the various ancient peoples, trying their hands at similar creations. At this age, history is an education of children's feelings rather than their memory for facts and figures, for it requires inner mobility to enter sympathetically into these ancient states of being so different from our own. Through this study of ancient cultures, the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism are also explored.

Sixth Grade

The study of history begins with the fall of Rome and the early history of Europe. Themes include moving through the causes of Rome's decline, the rise of Christianity, and the culture of the dynamic people of Early Europe. The study of the Middle Ages may include topics such as the invasion of Rome, the role of the monk and the monastery, the medieval castle, knighthood, and chivalry. Students also learn about the lives of Jesus of Nazareth and Mohammed and the rise of Islam and Christianity. Chivalry is brought to life in the spring with a pageantry of Medieval games with sixth grade students from other area Waldorf schools.

Seventh Grade

The study of the Renaissance echoes what children are experiencing within them. Thus students study the leap in Western Culture into individualism, humanism, and scientific learning. Their studies include the Age of Exploration, the Reformation, and Renaissance astronomers and artists. Seventh grade students also learn biographies of great figures who went against the prevailing views of their day in their own search for truth, freedom, and self-expression. Through studying the lives of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Galileo, Martin Luther, Christopher Columbus, Elizabeth I, and others, students find reassurance that in their struggle to become themselves, they also can contribute to the world.

Eighth Grade

The themes of eighth grade history are Revolutions and Modern History as it relates to and is relevant to the emerging adolescent. Recently, teachers have experimented with teaching about the American Revolution with a focus on the Constitution that emerged from that experiment, relating it to rights issues relevant and controversial in our times (Do we still require a right to bear arms? Does the Constitution imply a right to privacy?) Teachers also frequently touch on more recent examples of revolution, including the Arab Spring. Modern history generally includes an overview of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often with a focus on the struggle for civil and human rights for Native Americans, African-Americans and immigrants. Finally, a very successful component of our modern history program is a special short course offered in the spring on technology and social media. This history covers cultural changes brought about by recent advances in communication, and ends with a discussion of social media's advantages and shortcomings. Students then generate their own list of guidelines for social media use. In this course we invite high school seniors and graduates to visit and discuss their own experiences and views on technology.



Geography

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students continue their exploration of the world around them through the study of local geography. Their work in this subject closely mirrors the growth of the child's awareness: after learning how to find the four points of the compass, children study and make maps of their bedroom, classroom, school, neighborhood, route to school, the Champlain Valley, and the state of Vermont. This highly experiential block usually includes simple orienteering in our woods and adjacent nature preserve, as students come to know the familiar forest in a new, more objective way. Map-making is explored through multiple media, usually including clay and paper.

Fifth Grade

North American geography examines every consideration of the earth's physical features and links this with a study of the way human life has been lived in the region, including the use of natural resources. The teaching of Geography in a Waldorf school

has many aims: to help the child appreciate the world, to help the child understand boundaries (physical and political), and to foster interest in culture and people, thus promoting brother/sisterhood. In the case of North America, this means an exploration of the diverse cultures that existed and still to some degree remain distinct according to region. Students study particular regions and states, create detailed maps, and enjoy guest speakers who share their experiences of different geographic regions.

Sixth Grade

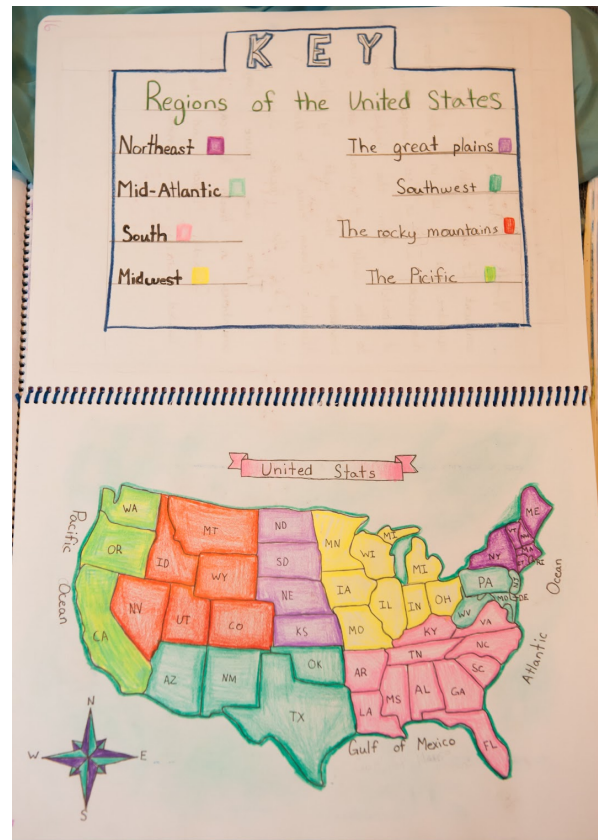
South American geography generally includes the study of the indigenous Mayans, Incas and Aztecs, who reached such a high place of civilization in the “pre-Columbian” era. Students also study the outstanding physical features of South America, from the Andes to the rainforest, and the rich though fragile ecosphere that is so relevant today.

Seventh & Eighth Grade

The upper grades geography blocks are taught jointly by the two class teachers, to both grades at once, in a unique partnership that fosters the outward looking nature of these courses. The blocks are taught in a two-year sequence: first Africa, then Asia. They use a student-teaching format in which mixed groups of seventh and eighth graders take responsibility for teaching aspects of the curriculum each week according to a theme which may include animals, culture, and land.

The African Geography survey course looks at the topography and climatology of the region, and explores some of the influences of these features on vegetation, animal life, and human culture. Students look at the relationship of many of the African countries with Europe and how those relationships served to create, directly or indirectly, many of the political and economic challenges found on the continent today. Guest speakers, including musicians, teachers and immigrants, share their experience of Africa with the students. The students also explore the region through song and literature.

Asian geography includes a focus on Japan, China, and India, and how these ancient cultures were shaped by their divergent landscapes. Students learn about the founding myths and religions that shaped the cultures, study major landmarks, and explore experientially art forms from ink painting to poetry to fine sculpture to sand painting.





World Languages

French at LCWS is an opportunity for children to be exposed to a different culture through language and traditions—to open their eyes to another way of celebrating and speaking. The primary purpose of foreign language study in the Waldorf curriculum is to raise one's social conscience and cultivate an interest in language study as a window into the soul of other cultures. For the first four years the focus is on oral context through verse, song, activities involving rhythm, dramatization and situational vocabulary and language concepts. In later years the innate sympathy for the differing qualities of another language is naturally learned, not only opening the doors in the soul and sensitizing to other people, but helping students understand their first language even better.

First Grade

In the first grade, students are introduced to many elements of the French language through songs, poems, stories, and games. They learn vocabulary for colors, numbers, animals, fruit, and parts of the body. The class takes part in storytelling and short skits. Songs and poetry help the children develop a natural rhythm speaking the language. Games involve listening to act out the directions that were given, and guessing hidden objects. Gestures and repetition are essential to the process of learning a new

language. Emphasis in our work is not on literal understanding, but on understanding the flow of the language.

Second Grade

The curriculum focuses on fables and animal stories from French speaking Africa and Europe. The children learn songs and action rhymes that build on the vocabulary and phrases they are familiar with from First Grade. Their repertoire of songs, poems and games is added to as they continue to play and sing in another language.

Third Grade

In third grade children continue to learn French through many activities pursuing the primary theme of farm life. Songs and stories focus on the farm, harvest and planting. They learn about the practice of farming in French speaking countries and the festivities that accompany these practices. Listening skills and comprehension are stressed.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students work primarily with vocabulary relating to their local environment, from French names in Vermont geography to the places in Shelburne Village. Giving and following directions in the classroom and in the world are the focus of the year.

Fifth Grade

Readers Theatre in French prepares fifth graders to be able to create skits both on the spot, and with practice and preparation. They contribute to the Escalade Celebration in December with a verse about a knight and make their own wooden swords as a prop for their recitation. They read a short French “novel” covering a variety of basic French grammar themes within context. They practice using negative and interrogative structures. They begin to work with adjectives, exploring how they are matched in gender and number to the nouns they describe.

Sixth Grade

Sixth graders are responsible for presenting a re-enactment of the story of the Escalade of Geneva for the school community in early December. Through this dramatization they internalize verb conjugation and learn historical events of early 17th century Europe and the spread of the French language. They write the script and create the scenery. Games and poems continue to reinforce old vocabulary and introduce new. They read a short novel in French in the Spring, which puts grammar into context.

Seventh Grade

The seventh grade curriculum centers around preparing for the four-day trip to Québec City in May. Through short texts they learn the history of the region and prepare a journal for reflection during the trip. Using a large map of the Old Town they create a 3D model of the city showcasing buildings and places of interest they will visit.

They learn to ask for common French dishes and work with menus from Québec. They prepare and rehearse a short interview to conduct with a partner on the trip. While in Québec, the students explore museums, churches, a fortress, the falls of Montmorency, and the streets of the city.

Eighth Grade

In conjunction with their class study of the American Revolution, Eighth graders spend the year learning about the French Revolution, taught in the French language. Through simple biographies of different historical characters, the revolution is brought to life and the Reign of Terror is explored. Vocabulary, grammar, and verb use are developed during the entire study.



Music

First Grade

First grade students enter the world of music through the pentatonic scale. Within the parameters of this scale, all the notes have a harmonious sound in any order they are played. Songs are based on seasonal themes, and the focus is to give the children a joyful experience of making music. Playing the pentatonic flute also develops finger coordination, concentration, and breath control. Rhythm is introduced to first grade children through stomping, clapping and circle movement. Students sing daily, building a relationship to their most basic instrument--their own voice. Singing includes pentatonic, seasonal, folk, and play-party songs.

Second Grade

The second grade continues to sing and play their pentatonic flutes each day. By the end of the year, the class plays songs with two part harmonies on their flutes - a task that requires focus and teamwork. Daily singing continues to build a repertoire of seasonal, festival, and other traditional songs.

Third Grade

Third grade children are ready to experience the full diatonic scale in music. The pentatonic flute is replaced with the recorder, and the children assert their new independence by learning to sing separate parts in rounds. The practice of listening to others (to make sure one is in harmony) while staying true to one's own part is a profound musical and social experience. In singing, partner songs and rounds are introduced, matching the children's new ability to hold their separate part in a group.

At this stage, children also reach the exciting milestone of beginning instruction on a string instrument. The experience of playing a string instrument is essential to a Waldorf curriculum, bringing particular connections to math through rhythmic counting and the complex patterns of music. Third graders begin their group instruction in cello, violin, or viola. The students learn songs that feature concepts in music theory, including three-part harmony in various forms of duple and triple meter utilizing key signatures with up to three sharps. Playing these songs, and the scales upon which they were based, the students learn about scale degrees, broken chords and arpeggios. The students experiment with musical dynamics, utilizing various bow techniques to achieve the desired effect. In addition, the students learn more advanced playing techniques, including slurs and extensions. For those students who have been playing for a while and/or those who want an extra challenge, songs are arranged in such a way that one of the three voices require shifting out of first position.

The third grade concludes the school year with an End of Year assembly—an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have learned, including proper concert etiquette both while playing and while participating as part of the audience. These skills are essential as the students advance through our school's music program in the coming years.



Fourth Grade

In class singing, simple part songs are introduced.

Fourth grade students develop the skills that are needed to successfully participate in a string orchestra. The students play increasingly difficult pieces to cultivate their ability to follow the conductor's beat while still focusing on rhythm and intonation. As the students become more confident players, two-octave scales give them more opportunities to practice shifting into different hand positions. In addition, the students learn and frequently practice good rehearsal technique and etiquette in order to create a productive rehearsal environment.

Throughout the year, the students learn more about harmony and begin to play more challenging music that has different parts for each instrument. They also continue to work with musical dynamics, experimenting with different bow strokes and positions to help achieve the desired timbre and volume. These are skills that will be developed further in the fifth/sixth Grade String Ensemble.

In addition to building on concepts of music theory introduced in third grade, the students learn solfege syllables and the accompanying Curwen hand signs as a method of representing a melody in their general music class. Over the course of the year, each student develops his/her own system for teaching a song without using specific musical notation, and shares it with the class. Together with the teacher, the class works on strengthening each system, developing an appreciation for the various forms of communicating ideas in a non-traditional way while learning skills that will be valuable for the choral experience in fifth grade and beyond.

Fifth and Sixth Grade

Chorus: In Fifth & Sixth Grade Chorus class, the students learn new songs and new methods for warming up their voices in preparation for singing. There is also an increase in the students' exposure to the concept of social responsibility - an integral factor for a successful choral environment. Students learn that it is important for one to sit quietly when the conductor is rehearsing the music with a section other than one's own; this time should be used to review one's own part and/or pay attention to what the conductor is saying as the information may apply to many of the voice parts.



For fifth grade students, this is the first time they attend a class in which there are students of another grade. The size and composition of this class can encourage talking and inappropriate, distracting behaviors, and often students are forced to adopt new levels of self-control to meet the behavioral requirements of chorus. Some students are quite surprised to learn that the quality of their voice is best suited to one specific vocal part or another. All of these new experiences cause many of the students to develop a keen interest in making music with their voice.

The grade-specific challenges for the sixth grade students focus mainly on the concept of change. As students discover changes in their voices, which add or subtract notes from their vocal range, there is often some trepidation in singing loudly enough to be heard because of this, but all of the students eventually become much more comfortable with their voices.

Orchestra: The purpose of this class is to increase the students' familiarity with the orchestral setting that was introduced in the fourth grade and to prepare the students for participation in a formal, performance-based orchestral ensemble. It also serves to introduce more advanced techniques for string players, such as more complicated bowings, hand positions and fingerings. There is a higher focus on the musicality of the pieces performed, rather than their technical difficulty.

The physical structure of the class is that of a standard string orchestra. The students who sat in the first chair of each section are considered section leaders. At the beginning of the year, the section leader's responsibilities are minimal, but as the year progressed, the roles that they are expected to take become more active.

Over the course of the year students begin to assume almost full responsibility for the tuning of their instruments at the start of class. The students perform at two in-school assemblies. They are expected to exhibit proper concert etiquette both while playing and while participating as part of the audience.

Seventh & Eighth Grade

Chorus: The songs selected for the Seventh & Eighth Grade Chorus require the students to explore numerous choral techniques. Some of the concepts that the students learn are: correct posture for singing, how to sustain pitches and affect dynamics through proper breath support, the differences in enunciation and pronunciation between singing and speaking a word, and perhaps most important, to watch the director at all times. These well-learned lessons culminate in an outstanding performance by the students of this class in the Spring Benefit Concert.

Orchestra: The Seventh & Eighth Grade Orchestra requires the students to continue to learn tools that are needed for a successful classroom environment, as well as to develop the skills to set up and check their instruments so as to be ready for class. The students also continue to develop proper rehearsal etiquette, including proper posture, rest position and using the time when the conductor is working with another group to listen attentively, relating what they hear to what will be expected of them. The students end the year with a performance at the annual Spring Benefit Concert for our school.



Visual Arts

First Grade

The first grade child works with a rich array of artistic endeavors including drawing, form drawing, painting, beeswax, and clay modeling. Form drawing engages the children's sense of space and form, practicing universal shapes such as spirals and forms created by straight or curved lines. The children have weekly watercolor painting classes that provide rich and beautiful soul experiences, and opportunities to explore the quality of the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow. Through color stories, students discover how to bring the primary colors together in various ways to create secondary colors. In beeswax and clay, the class models forms from nature, working with space and form in three dimensions.

Second Grade

The children's stick and block crayon drawings in second grade become more detailed and individual. Students create drawings led by their teacher, but experience more freedom to add their own flourishes. They also create visual representations from their own imagination. The class works with plasticine clay as another medium in which to

bring oral stories into concrete form. In painting class the second grade deepens their exploration of the relationships between colors, and how colors can change the mood of a painting. Colors are combined in order to observe the dynamic qualities of their interaction. The children discover the mystery of how complementary colors can appear beautiful when placed next to each other, but are not harmonious when mixed together.

Third Grade

The third grader works with a broader palette of color in their stick and block crayon drawings this year. Greater freedom is given in individual drawing compositions as the children move away from learning by imitation. The class also works with plasticine clay and beeswax to bring oral stories into concrete form. In painting, the relationship with color is brought out of the realm of color stories and into painting concrete forms like trees, animals and people. Paintings typically transition from pure color to colorful forms with the introduction of the Hebrew creation stories. The technique of taking color away from a page is also introduced in third grade.

Fourth Grade

In the fourth grade, colored pencils are introduced. With these the students learn to draw maps, and are also able to complete accurate animal drawings for their observations in "Human and Animal" block. Form drawing continues in fourth grade with intricate Celtic knots. Paintings become more formed as students paint scenes from the Norse myths.

Fifth Grade

Students explore many different styles of drawing in their Main Lesson books, and create detailed images of plants during the study of Botany. They carefully draw artistic maps during their study of ancient cultures and Geography. They celebrate the human body by drawing, with great imagination, the gods and goddesses of ancient mythology. Throughout the year, students also paint with watercolors and sculpt with clay.

Sixth Grade

The students' experience of the arts becomes more formed and precise, with a greater focus on technique. Black-and-white drawing, a more intellectual art form, is typically introduced in sixth grade. Often these charcoal and tone drawings are done in conjunction with the first physics block, which exercises analytical thinking appropriate to the strong contrast of black and white work. Drawings of the human form may come with the study of the Romans, with a greater focus on proportion and accuracy than was the case in connection to the Greek myths. The study of astronomy may include colored pencil drawings or white-on-black drawings, based on mythical constellation

interpretations. Painting of crystals in connection with geology may include the layered technique of veil painting or removing paint.

Seventh Grade

Drawing: In seventh grade crafts the students hone their drawing skills with full size color copies of the Renaissance masters. The students use grids on full color prints to create detailed copies of these impressive works.

Painting: In seventh grade, the students refine their painting skills by learning wet-on-dry (veil) painting techniques. Patience is needed and tested because paint is applied in layers to build color value and the layers must be dry before applying the next layer. This allows for crisp, clean lines differentiating their colors and forms. The students also learn to stretch their paper and are introduced to smaller round brushes that assist with more detailed compositions. The main theme of the class was color (atmospheric) perspective. During the block when painting was taught, the students were also learning about linear perspective in drawing. Expanding upon that knowledge, the students created landscape paintings that demonstrated the effects space has on color, value and clarity of detail. This new painting technique is both challenging and rewarding to the seventh grade students.

Eighth Grade

Black-and-White Drawing: In eighth grade, students work with charcoal to create beautiful black-and-white drawings, focusing on the quality of tone. This class develops the ability to discern subtle visual differences and to control pressure in the use of the tool to create fine shades from light to dark.

Printmaking: The Printmaking Block takes place in the high school art room for their last art block of the year. Students begin the block with simple relief prints made by using layers of fine cardboard to create an image without preplanning. This gives them an initial experience with the printing process. The projects uses both soft blocks and harder linoleum blocks with images that the students design and transfer onto the block before carving. During the printing part of the class, following the completion of each carved block, students are encouraged to experiment with applications, colors, overlays and repetition. The results are exciting for the students, and offer an experience full of discovery. The final project is to create a printed t-shirt. Each student designs and carves a small square block, which represents them in some way. These blocks are then organized into a four by four block square. They print their image on prepared shirts in a specific order to create sixteen hand crafted class t-shirts to celebrate their graduation from eighth grade. They also choose two prints to be mounted and displayed for family and friends to enjoy during their eighth grade ceremony.



Dramatic Arts

A fundamental aspect of Waldorf education is developing the student's expressive abilities through theater. Dramatic arts emphasize the spoken word, the expression of inner feeling, the development of character, control of movement and the body, and memorization. The rehearsal and performance of a class play is meant to be unifying experience for the group, with each child having a healthy experience of him or herself in relation to the others. Class plays require courage, focus, and hard work, and have a natural, built-in reward for effort; as such, they are one of the best social teaching tools a Waldorf teacher has. Each grade presents its own class play each year.

In the early grades, class plays are spoken entirely in unison and verse, mirroring the collective and rhythmic experience of the young child. Children begin to speak individual parts generally in third grade, after the nine-year-old change.

Class play themes are usually drawn from the curriculum until the upper grades, when plays may be chosen from a classic (adapted) repertoire, or from age-appropriate musicals.



Applied Arts & Handwork

First Grade

It is a great accomplishment for a first grader to learn to knit. Both hands work in harmony together, and the children must maintain their focus and watch their work carefully in order to catch mistakes. Handwork exercises the will as the students work over time to complete a project. The first graders begin the year hearing stories about wool and knitting, learning to make slip knots, and finger-knitting drawstrings for their handwork bags. Then they begin making wooden knitting needles out of dowels. Once all of the needles are sanded and oiled the students learn to knit as a class, watching the teacher demonstrate with a pair of huge needles! They learn to knit and purl, cast on, bind off, and sew up a project. Each student completes a few projects (kittens, chickens, turtles, headbands, gnomes and sheep) using their new skills.

Second Grade

The students continue to develop their knitting skills by creating lions and lambs. Then they learn to crochet which can be quite awkward for the children at first because all of

their fingers have specific “jobs.” The first crochet project is a string bag. The students learn to crochet in the round, mastering the basic skills of crocheting. Next, the students make a pot holder. They learn to crochet back and forth to make a square and then work around the square with two different colors of yarn. Finally, a loop is added so the pot holder can hang, and the tails are woven in. Students then begin a flute case with thinner yarn and a smaller crochet hook. After the flute case, some students learn to make Granny squares and/or crochet regular geometric shapes, roses or butterflies.

Third Grade

The third graders work on a variety of projects throughout the year. All students work on crocheted hats and some knit dolls and make them crocheted clothing. Other children knit animals using patterns, and a few students choose an embroidery project. They use the seed stitch and colored floss to embroider over painted cloth and sew this into a beanbag.

Fourth Grade

Students make their own handwork bags and complete cross-stitch pincushions. These pincushions incorporate a mirrored geometric pattern. The mirroring is very challenging for some, requiring concentration, counting and a good spatial sense. Once the cross-stitch is complete, the students turn the piece into a pincushion with a velvet back. A few students have time for a second cross-stitch project. They paint one side of a small piece of paper and fold it in half. This mirrored painting is then used as a guide for a lined case for eyeglasses. Students are encouraged to blend colors as they interpret the paintings.

Fifth Grade

Handwork: In grade five we return to knitting, and students make a pair of socks knitting in the round. This is a challenging, time-consuming project involving several steps. Students are given oral instructions for each step, and then write the instructions down in a notebook once they have completed the step. They begin by knitting samples, which allows the student to learn ribbing while the instructor checks their gauge. They are required to do some knitting at home to complete the pair of socks before the end of the year.



Woodwork: Each student in the fifth grade comes to their first woodworking class with their own experiences and understanding of the natural material, wood. The class serves as a setting to share ideas about where it comes from, what it’s used for, and what tools it takes to form it into a craft object. The students examine and work with small boards, comparing “hardwood” and “softwood” species. They are introduced to

basic woodwork terminology, and foundational techniques on how to clamp working material and properly handle tools such as rasps, files, gouge chisels, and sandpaper. Students start with rough-sawn pieces of cherry and through the practice, create a butter board and butter knife, finely polished to reveal the beauty in the natural material as well as the hand-crafted form.

Sixth Grade

Handwork: The sixth grade handwork curriculum focuses on hand sewing soft-sculpture animals. This is a challenging project that requires transforming a two-dimensional drawing into a three-dimensional form. This year the students will make an African elephant. They begin by sculpting the elephant in clay. The students then draw an elephant and use a simplified version of the drawing to create a paper pattern. Each student selects wool fabric, pins the pattern on and cuts out the pieces. After back-stitching the seams they then turn the elephants right-side out and stuff them with wool fleece. It takes perseverance to stuff them firmly enough so they can stand up on their own. Lastly, they make ears, a tail and tusks.

Woodwork: The sixth grade woodworking class provides a chance for the students to deepen their practice with the tools from their previous projects, while challenging them to use more physically vigorous techniques. Each student starts with a rectangular slab of cherry and methodically measures, scribes, and carves the angular piece into a large sculpted spoon. The gouge chisel plays a prominent role throughout the project, sometimes used with the loud and forceful blows of a mallet, and other times articulated with careful hand strokes. The students are exposed to the versatility of the familiar tools, and the complexities involved in shaping such a seemingly ubiquitous household object. The class is held off-campus in a professional woodshop where they can spread out on large workbenches, fill the space with the rapping or mallet strikes, and let the wood chips fly.



Seventh Grade

Handwork: This year in seventh grade the students are hand-sewing moccasins and also learning how to use a sewing machine. They spend half of the block on each project. Once the sewing machine is introduced, students make a simple bag to hold their handwork supplies. They also make a handwork bag, which will be used by younger students. Finally, they make themselves a pair of flannel pajama pants, using a pattern. These simple projects develop the skills that will be needed for eighth grade, when they will make a shirt on the sewing machine.

Making moccasins gives us the opportunity to focus on the foot, the part of our body most intimately connected to the earth. To make the moccasins, students start by

tracing their bare feet to make a pattern that will fit them precisely. They then cut the pieces out of cowhide and calculate the number of holes they need to punch to sew the pieces together. Once the sole of the shoe is sewn to the instep, students customize the top and closure to make each pair uniquely their own.

Copper: The seventh grade copper block focuses on teaching beginning through intermediate coppersmithing skills. This includes mastering the proper uses of specialized tools, and discovering the properties of soft metals and the techniques for working them. Instruction is given through demonstrations, hands-on learning, and individual instruction.

The students' first project focuses on forming two copper discs into bowl shapes and joining them with a formed piece of pipe to create a candle holder. Each piece is worked until it was symmetrical and smooth. The steps included hammering with a raising hammer, annealing with an oxygen torch, planishing to create a smooth surface, sawing, and polishing. The students individually designed jewelry and other additional projects.

Woodwork: The seventh grade woodworking class introduces a new wood species for the students to craft with, and it comes in the largest slab size they've been offered. The cherry projects from the previous grades involved strategic measuring and scribing with each step. This time, starting with a two-inch section of black walnut, the students are encouraged to lead with their tools first, instead of a pencil line. The gouge chisel and mallet are the primary tools used as each student carves out a sculpted bowl. Each wood layer removed reveals new shapes, new color, and new textures from within. The final products are a reflection of rhythm, revealing the visual and tactile qualities of natural material, but also the refinement of practiced tool work.

Wilderness Skills/Fire Building: The seventh grade fire block invites students to find confidence and comfort in the local landscape through the act of building fires by both modern means and ancient fire-by-friction methods. Students are first taught to identify, harvest, and arrange the best materials for building a healthy fire. Inevitably the weather tests their skills with wind and rain and the students are amazed at their ability to create warmth in all conditions. Next, the students carve a bow drill kit, the exacting demands of which challenge their whittling skills for minute detail. Once created, the students persevere to meet their goal of starting a fire the way humans have for thousands of years before them; and when they do, their faces are truly aglow.

Eighth Grade

Handwork: The eighth grader handwork focus is on the machine sewing. The students make a long-sleeved shirt with a collar. This is a challenging project that requires students to learn many new skills and work with precision. The multi-step project includes: learning how to make a collar, making cuffs with a simple placket, setting in sleeves, sewing darts for the women's shirts, making pockets on the men's shirts, sewing a curved hem, and making buttonholes.

Woodwork: The eighth grade woodworking class challenges the students with a significantly larger and more technical project than previous grades. The three-legged stool is a product created for the body, not merely to experience as an elegant tactile

object, but something to be rugged and strong enough to hold the weight of a person. The stool consists of solid cherry seat and separately formed ash legs, and each student uses a hand-plane to shape all the stool elements. The concepts of joinery are introduced in this class as well, showing just one of many ways two pieces of wood can be connected together, and revealing how crucial precise marking and cutting can be. This is a true construction project, forming simple shapes out of natural material, and joining them in simple ways to produce a complex and competent structure.

Primitive Tools: In this block the eighth grade works to discover the geometric laws of flintknapping (making stone tools) through experience and experimentation. Starting with rocks found around campus, the students attempts to make very primitive saws and scrapers. They are then introduced to obsidian, a beautiful volcanic rock traditionally used for arrowheads. Each strike breaks off a flake of stone and leaves a rippling story in the rock that the students learn to read and control. Flint knapping takes patience, and frequently stone works will break when they are nearly finished. But the students, like our ancestors before us, learn to take each break as a lesson that leads them toward their finished arrowheads. Finally, the students harvest arrow shafts with their stone saws onto which they haft their arrowheads and fletch feathers to create a primitive arrow.



Movement & Outdoor Education

First Grade

Gym, movement education, Eurythmy and circle activities in the classroom all support the physical education of the young child. In first grade, the children continue to learn many social and cultural games that involve running, skipping and tagging. Singing and moving to the spoken word, and rhythmical clapping, are an integral part of circle games. Social games and imaginative exercises help to develop an important sense of personal space, and to facilitate coordination and development of the bodily awareness of right and left, front and back, above and below.

Second Grade

In second grade, the children continue to learn social and cultural games featuring running, skipping and tagging. Singing, moving, and rhythmical clapping are featured in circle games. Social games and imaginative exercises continue to develop students' sense of personal space, and to facilitate coordination. Students begin to develop observation skills in a group setting. In addition, the children learn to master jumping

rope. In this one activity, we see a great deal of physical development in the second grade child. Circus arts are introduced in second grade with throwing and catching silks, in preparation for juggling, and using hula hoops.

Third Grade

Third grade students are encouraged to continue to work to develop teamwork. A good deal of our focus is on games that encourage a sense of unity and team spirit among the children. These activities include playing catch, kickball, Steal the Jewels (Capture the Flag), running as a tag team, and partner games. We also develop the association between movement and verbal speech by incorporating clapping, rhythm and song into the games.

In circus arts, students work on their hand-eye coordination through a progression of juggling exercises designed to develop rhythm and balance. Students also experience hooping, twirling and using Diabolo sticks, which require them to balance their own weight while balancing objects in motion.

Fourth Grade

The focus is now on increasing the children's ability to control their movements with an increased sense of self-awareness. The concept of healthy competition is introduced in order to prepare the children for next year's much anticipated Fifth Grade Greek Pentathlon. Students play various ball games, Capture the Flag, and tag games to allow each child become more adept at ball handling and coordination.

In Circus Arts, fourth graders further develop their hand-eye coordination in juggling exercises with objects of varying shapes, sizes, weights and textures.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders prepare for the Greek Olympics. They begin training with the javelin, channeling their focus and creating awareness for muscle isolation and adjustment innately learning the dynamics of throwing. Next, students learn Pentathlon wrestling, and the skills developed with the javelin are integrated into reactive, balanced muscle isolation. By wrestling each other, students can explore the instincts responsible for creating controlled, explosive movement. In wrestling and running, the element of competition continues. Rather than focus on the concept of an opponent, this competition encourages children as individuals to push past their own comfort zone and exceed their initial expectations.

With the arrival of snow, students are participate in their first school ski program at Bolton Valley, which will continue through eighth grade. The Circus Arts curriculum continues in fifth grade with exercises and games to develop balance, coordination, and rhythmic and spatial skills.

Sixth Grade

In sixth grade, the focus is on learning technical skills, refining and gaining control of body movements. Students play Capture the Flag, Crickickball (a combination of cricket and kickball), Co'o (a relay race game), tag games, and dodgeball. They also measure time, distance and speed in track and field. The children integrate their studies of Geometry as they develop in archery, javelin and discus toss. Sixth graders explore the balance between teamwork and individuality, and work to develop a strong sense of courage and discipline. In addition, we play medieval games (archery, weapon throwing, javelin, and modified jousting) and continue to learn gymnastics, tumbling, and juggling.

Two major events in sixth grade are the winter ski and snowboard program at Bolton Valley and the Spring Medieval Games. Each affords students unique opportunities to explore new movement practices while respecting time-honored traditions.

Seventh and Eighth Grade

The seventh and eighth grades are combined during gym and many of our movement classes to promote a more diverse and healthy social dynamic. The overall gesture for this age group is one of expansion, sending energy from the individual to the periphery. Therefore, we practice javelin and running. Students play soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Capture the Flag, football, spaceball, kickball, and dodgeball. The adolescent experiences centering, balance, and body awareness through the quiet movements of Bothmer gymnastics and Spacial Dynamics © exercises. These calming movements are balanced with active conditioning, building flexibility with stretching, tumbling, juggling, jumping rope, and ballroom dance. Students transform these movements into a variety of circus activities, culminating in a performance at the nearby Field House.

In winter, students continue to participate in our five-week ski program at Bolton Valley. This program provides students with the benefits of healthy physical activity while honoring the rich New England tradition of Nordic sports.



Cyber Civics

This three-year curriculum teaches digital citizenship, and media and information literacy. It is a research-based, Waldorf-inspired approach to technology. With resources for teachers, parents, and student, visit www.cybercivics.com to learn more.

Sixth Grade

The sixth grade receives Level I of Cyber Civics, including peer-to-peer learning activities that call on critical thinking, ethical discussion, and decision making through hands-on projects, problem solving activities, and role play, all surrounding the topic of “digital citizenship”: the norms of appropriate, responsible and compassionate behavior with regard to technology use. The first year of the program is taught without digital devices, since experts agree the most important skills for new media are social and behavioral skills. Years two and three include work on computers, learning about a range of information, and media literacy skills.

Seventh Grade

The seventh grade receives Level II of Cyber Civics, which focuses on information literacy. Students carefully examine their own “digital diets” so that they will be inspired

to seek a balanced approach to their online and offline lives. Students become aware of the opportunities and risks of online activity and learn basic information and tools to keep safe. Understanding how to effectively search the Internet is an essential 21st century skill. Students are introduced to the basics of Internet search, including its terminology, mechanics, how to craft a search query, and how to effectively evaluate search results. They will learn how and why websites and social media networks collect personal information. They will learn that while this exchange allows for a customized online experience, it is also how “filter bubbles” and “echo chambers” happen. Learning the core concepts of online privacy helps students make careful choices about preserving their personal information in the future. Students not only learn to become more respectful of the creative works they find online, but they will also feel inspired to make and share their own creative works with others. Instead of relying on a central authority for knowledge, the Internet offers alternative ways of producing and evaluating information that rely on people working together. Wikipedia is an example of an online community where people pool information and check one another’s claims in order to solve problems and build knowledge. Students become discerning users of this new media tool.

Eighth Grade

In the eighth grade, students will put critical thinking skills to work evaluating media messages, but first they evaluate their own media use. Students discover the difference between “consuming” and “producing” as they learn what it means to live in a “participatory culture” (a term coined by scholar Henry Jenkins). They begin to understand how to participate and contribute to media discourse in powerful and positive ways. Students will learn how to be critical consumers of news media, and helps them understand how misinformation can spread via the Internet and social media, and even find its way into mainstream “news.” A critical media participant should know how to recognize and understand the role media plays in creating and perpetuating stereotypes. Media today is becoming increasingly visual, especially the media that young people use. From Instagram to YouTube, Snapchat and more, many of the messages young people consume and create are visual. Students will learn how to read and create visual media, and also teaches them how to be less susceptible to visual manipulations. Sexting, which is “the sending OR receiving of sexually suggestive, nude, or seminude images,” is a serious digital age issue and in many states individuals who distribute, possess, or produce a sexually explicit image of a minor could be charged under the state’s child pornography statutes. The ultimate purpose of these lessons has been to transition students from “digital citizens” to “digital leaders” who will wield technology with purpose and positivity. We end our digital citizenship work in conjunction with the 8th grade projects where students show how to use digital media to research, write, cite, and create stunning visual presentations using free software. These are all important research skills students will use in high school and beyond.