

## St. Croix Preparatory Academy Middle School Curriculum Overview

### LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Grade 5 - Reading/Literature

Reading class provides the opportunity for middle school students to build foundations in the elements of literature, as well as experience various genres of literature. To deepen comprehension, students learn and practice literacy routines for pre, during, and post reading. Students utilize non-fiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *The Secret Garden*, *The Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Sherlock Holmes Short Stories*, *The Birchbark House*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Little Women*. Vocabulary strategies such as context clues and root recognition will be taught alongside the reading of the novels and other short pieces from the textbook. Students build their writing and thinking skills while learning a text-based constructed response format. Finally, students analyze and synthesize major themes and ideas through seminar discussion.

Textbook: *Literature; Grade 6*, Holt McDougal, 2012

#### Grade 5 - Language Arts

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Language Arts focuses on composition, grammar, and vocabulary skills. Basic parts of speech are reviewed and complex grammatical concepts are introduced. The 6+1 trait writing method is introduced and emphasized to enhance writing ability. Students will be introduced to various writing genres including expository, narrative, and argumentative. Students will expand their understanding of complex vocabulary through the use of *Wordly Wise* spelling and vocabulary work. Formal and informal speaking opportunities are included throughout the course to develop effective communication skills.

Textbooks:

- *Elements of Language; Introductory Course*, Holt, 2007
- *Wordly Wise 5*

#### Grade 6 - Language Arts

Language Arts class focuses on grammar, composition, and speaking skills. Basic parts of speech are reviewed and advanced grammatical concepts are introduced. The 6+1 trait writing method is emphasized to enhance writing ability. In addition, students will continue to develop their understanding of various writing genres including expository, narrative, and argumentative. Formal and informal speaking opportunities are included throughout the course to develop effective communication skills.

Textbooks:

- *Elements of Language: First Course*, Holt, 2007

- *Literature; Grade 7*, Holt McDougal, 2012
- *Worldly Wise 6*

### **Grade 6 - Reading/Literature**

Reading class provides the opportunity for 6th grade students to master the foundational elements of literature through analysis of various genres of literature. To deepen comprehension, students learn and practice literacy routines for pre, during, and post reading. Students utilize non-fiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *The Pearl*, *The Westing Game*, *The Giver*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and *The Prince and the Pauper*. Students further develop their writing and thinking skills through practicing text-based constructed responses. Because it requires students strategically choose evidence to justify their ideas, the constructed response writing is a foundation for critical thinking. Finally, students analyze and synthesize major themes and ideas through seminar discussion.

Textbook: *Literature; Grade 7*, Holt McDougal, 2012

### **Grade 7 & 8 - English Language Arts**

Seventh and eighth grade students examine quality prose, both fiction and nonfiction, drama, art, and poetry with an expectation that students will analyze and construct deeper meaning from what they read, hear, or see. Students utilize multiple reading strategies to become more active readers, including annotating texts. Students work to think critically about what they read, moving beyond surface level connections toward deeper, more meaningful text to world connections.

Students examine the purpose for reading as well as the author's purpose for writing.

Students work toward a deeper understanding of literary elements, focusing on how the elements impact meaning. Along with the common literary elements of simile, metaphor, and personification; students study foreshadowing, flashback, irony, puns, allegory, and more.

#### **Writing:**

Seventh grade students continue to refine their writing skills, with a focus on text-based constructed responses. The expectation is that students will present a cohesive, logical argument with two or more pieces of evidence followed by a coherent explanation that demonstrates analysis and deeper understanding.

Eighth grade students work toward more sophisticated writing, endeavoring to offer analysis that shows deeper understanding of the topic. Students begin to write thesis statements and develop body paragraphs that better support the ideas of the thesis with text based evidence and thoughtful analysis.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade texts:

- *Literature; Grade 8*, Holt McDougal, 2012

**Canon Novels:**

*The Call of the Wild*  
*The Hobbit*  
*Watership Down*

*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*  
*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*  
*Excerpts from The Diary of Anne Frank: The Definitive Edition*

8<sup>th</sup> Grade texts:

- *Literature; Grade 9, Holt McDougal, 2012*
- *Vocabulary from Classical Roots, Book B*

**Canon Novels:**

*Lord of the Flies*  
*The War of the Worlds*  
*The Alchemist*

*Fahrenheit 451*  
*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*

**SCIENCE**  
**Grades 5 - 8**

SCPA has chosen to use *Pearson Interactive Science* for the 5th and 6th grades. Interactive Science allows students to use the textbook as a personal learning tool. Students are able to highlight, add notes to the margins, and answer questions in their personal textbook. Interactive Science has online support tools for students, including an online version of their textbook.

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade science we use three Pearson Interactive books. In *Earth's Surface* we study Mapping the Earth's Surface, Weathering & Soil, and Erosion & Deposition. In *Earth's Structure* we study, Minerals & Rocks, Plate Tectonics, Volcanoes, and Earthquakes. In *Ecology & Environment* we study Populations & Communities, Ecosystems & Biomes, Resources & Living Things, Land, Air, & Water Resources, and Energy Resources. In each unit, we rely on a combination of text resources, online resources and lab experiences to fully grasp these concepts.

Textbook: *Pearson Interactive Online Science Resources*

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade we use *Forces and Energy* and *Sound and Light* from the Interactive Science series. In September, we concentrate on the Nature of Science. Students focus on observation, qualitative and quantitative data, independent and dependent variables, collecting data, and creating graphs. October through January we shift our focus to forces, motion, Newton's Laws, momentum, friction, distance-time-graphs, work, power, inertia, and gravity. In February, students focus on microbes and how they impact our world on both positive and negative ways. Students become familiar with communicable diseases and give a class presentation on a disease. For the remaining part of the year we focus on sound and light. In addition to the curriculum content we conduct many labs that include engineering and elements of nature and science. Students participate in the program Journey North that focuses on photoperiod, data collecting, and seasons.

Textbook: *Pearson Interactive Online Science Resources*

Seventh grade science uses the Prentice Hall *Science Explorer* series. This lab-supported curriculum allows students to study topics hands-on throughout the year. Students are expected to create lab reports and do nightly readings of the material to be prepared for class. Throughout the year, a variety of topics are covered. Within the unit of “Cells and Heredity,” students cover Cell Structure, Function, and Processes (Ch. 1, 2) Genetics and Heredity (Ch. 3, 4) and Evolution/Natural Selection (Ch. 5). Within the unit of “Environmental Sciences,” students cover Populations, Communities, Ecosystems and Biomes (Ch. 1, 2), Natural Resources and Conservation (Ch. 3, 4) and dissections. The year is finished with an introduction to Chemistry, including Elements, Compounds, Chemical Interactions, and the Periodic Table of Elements. Dispersed throughout the year are several activities and labs incorporating both engineering skills and the “nature of science.”

Textbook:

- *Science Explorer*, Prentice Hall
  - *Cells and Heredity*
  - *Environmental Science*
  - *Chemical Interactions*

In eighth grade Earth Science, in addition to the expectations from seventh grade, students have opportunities to work with lower school students and have pop quizzes once per chapter. Within the unit of Geology, students study Minerals, Rocks, Plate Tectonics, and Earth History (Ch. 1-3, 9, 10, 12). Within the unit of Meteorology, students cover the Atmosphere, Moisture, Clouds, Pressure and Wind, Air Masses and Fronts, and finally Climate (Ch. 17-21). Within the unit of Astronomy, students study Moon-Sun-Earth systems, the Solar System and Planets, Light, Stars and the Universe (Ch. 22-25). They have a small unit on Chemistry including Bases and Acids, Balancing Chemical Equations and Chemical Interactions. Eighth graders use a Canon book by Neil DeGrasse Tyson titled *Death by Black Hole and other Cosmic Quandries* at the end of the school year. Dispersed throughout the year are several activities and labs incorporating both engineering skills and the “nature of science.”

Textbook: *Earth Science*, Prentice Hall

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### **Social Studies - Grade 5**

Fifth Grade students use two textbooks throughout their year. Students start off the year developing and building analytical skills and knowledge including how to create and read timelines and how to think using a historical perspective.

From here they analyze the who, what, when, where and how of the following topics and events: early Americans and the discovery of the New World; early civilizations including the Maya, Inca and Aztec peoples; European exploration of the New World; colonization and life during the colonial era; the spirit of independence and unrest leading to the Revolution; the formation of the Constitution and its impact on early American society; pioneers and Westward expansion; tensions between Northern and Southern states; and, the Civil War.

The students end the year starting the first four chapters of *Northern Lights*. This textbook was published by the Minnesota Historical Society and is based solely on Minnesota Native American history. Students reflect on how they view Minnesota, the importance of storytelling and passing down generational traditions. These foundational concepts set the tone for student's learning journey of the Ojibwe and Dakota tribes as they created their lives in Minnesota.

Textbooks:

- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States – Early Years*, McGraw Hill
- *Northern Lights: The Story of Minnesota's Past*, Minnesota Historical Society Press (2003)

### **Social Studies - Grade 6**

Sixth grade history content focuses on two areas:

- Minnesota History from the Fur Trade in the early 1700s; treaties and early settlement; the influx of immigrant; Minnesota in the Civil War; and, the Dakota Conflict.
- Ancient History includes the rise of civilizations in the Fertile Crescent; Sumerian City–States; Mesopotamia; Egypt; Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.

Class skills focus on:

- Developing “historical thinking skills”
- Comprehension strategies for reading and analyzing non-fiction texts
- Note-taking and summarizing
- Analyzing primary documents (prints and pictures, maps and written texts)
- Map skills
- Chronology/Timelines

Texts:

- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the World – Chapters 1 – 10 – Ancient History*, McGraw Hill
- *Northern Lights: The Story of Minnesota's Past*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Minnesota Historical Society Press (2013)

### **World History - Grade 7**

Students in 7th grade cover events in world history from the fall of Rome through the modern age. The course covers historical events dating between approximately 500 A.D. to the late 1700s. Students learn about the significance of major events in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas, and how these events connect to a large scope of history. They also study the influence of cultural diffusion over time and the way that empires interacted with each other.

Units covered during this course include Europe during the medieval age, the rise of Islam in the Middle East, cultures and kingdoms of West Africa, Imperial China, feudalism in Japan, civilizations of the Americas, and the Renaissance, Reformation, and modern age of Europe.

*ConnectEd* is the online resource that allows each student to access the text via internet along with other resources such as video tutorials, links to student worksheets and other online study tools. Each student will have their own account to access these features.

Skills emphasized in World History continue to form what was established in previous grades. Historical thinking skills are practiced throughout the year, specifically making connections to a chronological order of events, the relationship of cause and effect, and writing that analyzes primary sources. Furthermore, students establish comprehension and summarization strategies used while reading non-fiction texts.

Textbook: *Discovering Our Past: History of the World*, McGraw-Hill, 2014

### **U.S. History - Grade 8**

Students in 8th grade cover events in U.S. History from the 1500s to the later part of the 20th century. Students learn about the significance of major events over time, the influence of historical figures on our culture, and the connected impact of these events in the larger scope of history. Students have an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. at the end of their 8th grade year, and learn about the historical monuments and memorials in our nation's capital as they study each major event in U.S. History.

Units covered during this course include early colonization, revolution, the development of the U.S. government, the age of innovation and reform, the Civil War, expansionism, Progressivism and immigration, major world wars and societal reform in the 20th century.

*ConnectEd* is the online resource that allows each student to access the text via internet along with other resources such as video tutorials, links to student worksheets and other online study tools. Each student will have their own account to access these features.

Skills emphasized in U.S. History continue to form what was established in previous grades. Historical thinking skills are practiced throughout the year, specifically making connections to a chronological order of events, the relationship of cause and effect, and writing that analyzes primary sources. Furthermore, students establish comprehension and summarization strategies used while reading non-fiction texts.

Textbook: *United States History and Geography* (McGraw-Hill, 2014)

## **MATH** **Grades 5 - 8**

St. Croix Preparatory Academy uses the following McGraw-Hill texts as the primary guide for our curriculum:

### *Math Connects Course 1*

The Course 1 book covers the following concepts: Multiply & Divide Decimals, Multiply & Divide Fractions, Ratios & Rates, Fractions, Decimals, & Percents, Algebraic Expressions, Equations, Functions, Inequalities & Integers, Properties of Triangles & Quadrilaterals, Perimeter, Area, Surface Area & Volume, Analyze Data & Graphs, and Probability.

### *Pre-Algebra*

The Pre-Algebra book covers the following concepts: converting fractions, decimals and percents, operations with integers and rational numbers, expressions and multi-step equations, inequalities, ratio, proportion, similar figures, graphing, powers, linear and nonlinear functions, real numbers, right triangles, distance, angles, surface area, volume, statistics, and probability.

### *Algebra 1*

The Algebra curriculum covers the following concepts: the relationship between expressions, equations and functions; linear equations, inequalities and functions; systems of linear equations and inequalities; exponents and exponential functions; quadratic expressions, equations and functions; radical functions; rational equations and functions.

### *Geometry*

The Geometry curriculum covers all the preceding concepts from Pre-Algebra and Algebra. In addition it covers all Geometry concepts such as: proofs, reasoning, (inductive and deductive) parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, proportions and similarities, right triangle and an introduction to trig, transformations, circles, areas, surface area, volume, probability and measurements.

*ConnectEd* is the online resource that allows each Math student to access the text via internet along with other resources such as video tutorials, links to student worksheets and other online study tools. Each student will have their own account to access these features.

The typical pathway of our math students requires Pre-Algebra in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Algebra 1 in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and Geometry in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Language and Logic

### **Grade 5 & 6 – Language and Logic (Year 2014-2015)**

This course focuses on the fundamentals and history of language. Students will gain familiarity with classical roots and affixes that broaden student vocabulary and give them useful strategies for comprehending unfamiliar words. Learning Latin also allows students to become familiar with a new grammatical structure and better understand the grammatical structure of English. The study of Latin allows them to understand the classical influence in the evolution and dissemination of language. The parallel study of history, English language arts, and classical mythology gives them the critical foundations for appreciating and recognizing the influence of the classical world.

Texts:

- *Minimus – Starting Out in Latin*
- *Vocabulary from Classical Roots, Book 1*

### **Grade 5 - The Classical World (Year 2015-2016 and on)**

The two year language and logic cycle focuses on the fundamentals and history of language. Students will gain familiarity with classical roots and affixes that broaden student vocabulary and give them useful strategies for comprehending unfamiliar words. Learning Latin also allows students to become familiar with a new grammatical structure and better understand the grammatical structure of English. In the first year of the course, along with studying basic Latin vocabulary and grammar structures, students will gain an understanding of the influence of the classical world. This includes studying the history of the Roman and Greek empire, the history and practice of the Latin language and reading Greek mythology and literature.

### **Grade 6 - Linguistics**

The second year of Language and Logic is designed to build on students' understanding of structure, vocabulary and history of Latin and classical history. Students will continue to learn more complex aspects of Latin grammar and will deepen their Latin vocabulary. This year of the course will include more of an emphasis on the art and science of translation, which develops students' understanding of both the style and structure of literature. The focus of this year will be on linguistics, as students will focus their study on the structure and development of many different languages.

### **Logic - Grade 7**

Logic can be defined as the Art and Science of Reasoning. In Logic class, students learn about and practice the essentials of argumentation: how to utilize vocabulary and grammar for clarity and precision; how to identify and gather strong, sound evidence; how to draw reasonable conclusions from quality evidence; how to spot, correct, and counter Logical Fallacies; and how to successfully engage with various arguments in debate. Through these studies, students develop two foundational abilities: the ability to effectively examine, analyze, and understand the ideas of others and the ability to clearly formulate, support, and articulate ideas of their own. This course also builds a linguistic base for Latin in and beyond eighth grade.

Textbooks:

- *Vocabulary from Classical Roots, Book A*
- *The Art of Argument: An Introduction to the Informal Fallacies*

### **Latin I - Grade 8**

The curriculum for Latin I is divided into three sections: Latin Language, Roman Civilization, and Latin Today. Latin Language focuses on the grammar and vocabulary of Classical Latin and heavily emphasizes translation and memorization. Roman Civilization covers the culture, history, and thought of Ancient Rome. Latin Today explores the many ways in which both Latin and Roman Civilization continue to influence culture and the English language.

Textbook: *Cambridge Latin Course. Unit 1.* 4th ed. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## MUSIC Grades 5 - 8

Students in middle school participate in band, choir, or orchestra. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade meet every other day and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet every day.

Making music cultivates creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and cooperation. These skills are important for success in school, at home, in the community, and in the world. Each ensemble performs several times a year and covers a wide variety of repertoire from different time periods and styles. All students learn the fundamentals of music theory.

Some recent pieces formed by SCPA middle school groups include:

*Marienwürnmachen* (from Kinderlieder) – Johannes Brahms – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
*Gloria* (from Mass No. 6) – György Orbán – 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls Choir

*A Prehistoric Suite* – Paul Jennings – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade  
*Washington Post* – John Phillip Sousa – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band

*Gauntlet* – Doug Spada – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orchestra  
*Dragonhunter* – Richard Meyer – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION Grades 5 - 8

Students in 5-8th grades are introduced to small sided games, activities and lifelong activities that build physical skills, teach strategies, allow opportunities for teamwork and help students shape an appreciation for lifelong physical activity. Often health/fitness concepts including the use of heart rate monitors intertwines with PE units.

Example units: hiking, rugby, speedball, Omnikin ball, ultimate Frisbee, floor hockey, volleyball, cricket, bowling, lacrosse, fitness circuits, physical fitness testing and goal ball.

## ART Grades 5 - 8

Students in middle school explore art through a variety of art experiences, mediums and time periods. The creative process is inherent in all artistic endeavors and has a positive influence in the student's development and stimulation of their imagination. The artwork that students produce is the result of the individual's ability to think creatively, solve problems, and to evaluate. As students gain confidence in their abilities to organize their thoughts and ideas into effective works of art they delve into a deeper understanding of the elements and principles of art and artistic theory.