

St. Croix Preparatory Academy Middle School Curriculum Overview

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 5 - Language Arts

In 5th 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 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 nonfiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Sherlock Holmes Short Stories*, and *The Birchbark House*. 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 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. Students will also focus on developing the skills needed to write a well constructed paragraph using evidence and a thorough explanation.

Textbooks:

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

- *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 nonfiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *The Giver*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and *The Pearl*. Students further develop their writing and thinking skills through practicing text-based constructed responses. The constructed response writing is a foundation for critical thinking because it requires students strategically choose and cite evidence to justify their ideas. 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 and increase their comprehension. Additionally, students examine the purpose for reading and the author's purpose for writing to foster their analysis skills development. Students work to think critically about what they read, moving beyond surface level connections toward deeper, more meaningful text to world connections.

Students work toward a deeper understanding of literary elements and their impact on the meaning of the text. 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 of the literary text.

Eighth grade students work toward more sophisticated writing, endeavoring to offer analysis that shows deeper understanding of the topic. Students practice writing better thesis statements and corresponding body paragraphs that effectively utilize text based evidence and provide thoughtful analysis.

7th Grade texts:

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

Canon Novels: *Six novels will be chosen from the list below.

The Call of the Wild
The Hobbit
Treasure Island
The Christmas Carol

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
The House on Mango Street
The Book Thief
Watership Down

8th Grade texts:

- *Literature; Grade 9*, Holt McDougal, 2012
- *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots*, Level VIII, Prestwick House, 3rd Edition, 2017

Canon Novels:

Lord of the Flies

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

To Kill a Mockingbird

Fahrenheit 451

The Alchemist

*Sixth canon novel still to be determined

SCIENCE
Grades 5 - 8

In 5th grade science we use the textbook, *McGraw-Hill Education Science: A Closer Look Grade 5*.

Textbook: *Glencoe Physical iScience*

In 6th grade we recently started to use the *Glencoe Physical iScience*. This is a traditional textbook with an online supported curriculum. Students can use the the online curriculum to access the ebook and to get additional help with concepts being taught in the classroom.

At the start of the year we concentrate on the Nature of Science. Students focus on observation, inference, qualitative and quantitative data, independent and dependent variables, collecting data, and creating graphs. October through December we shift our focus to forces, motion, Newton's Laws, momentum, friction, distance-time-graphs, work, power, inertia, and gravity. During January we shift our focus to the seasons, moon phases and planets, but continue to connect physical science ideas to these topics. In February, we explore different concepts surrounding energy. In March, 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 waves, sound, and light.

Another critical component of 6th grade science is learning how to conduct a lab. Students will conduct many labs over the course of the year both in the classroom and online. Each lab will give students an opportunity to practice their lab skills with their peers and fine tune their written communication skills. By the end of the year, each 6th grader should understand how to conduct a lab and be able to respond appropriately to each portion.

Textbook: Glencoe *Life iScience* textbook

Seventh grade science uses the McGraw-Hill Education *Life iScience* textbook. This lab-supported curriculum allows students to study topics in a hands-on manner throughout the year. Students are expected to write lab reports and read the textbook material to be prepared for class. Throughout the year, a variety of topics are covered including Cell Structure, Function, and Processes, Genetics and Heredity, Evolution/Natural Selection, and Taxonomy, which culminates in dissections of several organisms. They will also study Populations, Communities, Ecosystems and Biomes, Natural Resources and Conservation. The year includes 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: *Glencoe Earth & Space iScience*

In eighth grade Earth Science, in addition to the expectations from seventh grade, students have opportunities to work with lower school students. Within the unit of Geology, students study Minerals, Rocks, Plate Tectonics, and Earth History. Within the unit of Meteorology, students cover the Atmosphere, Moisture, Clouds, Pressure and Wind, Air Masses and Fronts, and finally Climate. Within the unit of Astronomy, students study Moon-Sun-Earth systems, the Solar System and Planets, Light, Stars and the Universe. 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 Quandaries* 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.”

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies - Grade 5

Fifth grade 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 including Minnesota in the Civil War.

As the year progresses, students will begin to explore how to analyze primary documents while learning how to “think historically.” Students will also begin learning note-taking strategies to help them disseminate information from their text into smaller chunks of meaningful information.

Textbooks:

- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States – Early Years*, McGraw Hill

Social Studies - Grade 6

Sixth grade history content focuses on two areas:

- Minnesota History from the Early Dakota and Ojibwe to the Fur Trade in the early 1700s; treaties and early settlement; the influx of immigrants; the Dakota Conflict; and Industrialization in Minnesota
- Ancient History includes the rise of civilizations in the Fertile Crescent; Sumerian City–States; Mesopotamia; Egypt; Ancient Greece; Early Chinese and Early India

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*, 2nd Edition, Minnesota Historical Society Press (2013)

World History - Grade 7

Students in 7th grade cover events in world history from the beginning of the Roman Empire through the modern age. The course covers historical events dating between approximately 500 A.D. to the mid 1900s. 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, the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Revolution, Industrialization, and World Wars.

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 curriculum 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 6th grade, Algebra 1 in 7th grade and Geometry in 8th grade.

Language and Logic

Language and Logic-Grade 5/6

This course focuses on a variety of subjects that complement language and classical studies. Students begin the year by studying and practicing executive functioning skills, growth mindset, and foundations of logic, which can be transferred to other subject areas in order to increase student success. Students also study the history of the Latin language. Students gain familiarity with classical roots that broaden student vocabulary. The study of Latin allows them to understand the classical influence in the evolution and dissemination of language. The parallel study of history and English language arts gives them the critical foundations for appreciating and recognizing the influence of the classical world. Students also have the opportunity to study Spanish, a language derived from Latin. Students learn vocabulary and grammatical structures in order to begin reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish. Through the study of both Spanish and Latin, students learn to use roots and cognates to determine the meaning of unknown words in English, which broadens their reading and comprehension abilities. Students also practice the fundamentals of effective public speaking in order to write and deliver speeches, monologues and presentations.

Language and Logic- Grade 5

In this first year of a two-year course, students learn fundamental concepts to help them progress in middle school at SCPA. The course begins with a focus on the academic skills, executive functioning, and growth mindset that students need to be successful in middle school. The course addresses organization, time management, self-reflection, and memory in order fill student toolboxes with strategies and resources. The course also introduces students to language learning by beginning the studies of both Latin and Spanish. In studying Latin and classical roots, students are provided a strong foundation for deepening their understanding of English, continuing study in Latin, and transferring skills to learning languages derived from Latin, such as Spanish. The course will focus on many modes of communication, including spoken language. Students will also apply beginning logical principles in the practice of public speaking and presenting.

Language and Logic-Grade 6

The second year of Language and Logic continues and deepens student understanding of language, communication, and logical problem solving. Students go from learning very basic Latin and Spanish sentence structures and root words to more complicated principles of grammar. As students deepen translation skills, they also begin writing in Latin and Spanish. Throughout the year, students work to demonstrate logical problem solving and use different problem solving methods. Students will learn critical thinking and communication strategies that they will be able to transfer to all academic subjects. Students will also continue to build upon and practice the principles of effective public speaking learned in the first year of this course.

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 Latin and Greek Roots*, Level VII, Prestwick House, 3rd Edition, 2017
- *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, orchestra, or general music. Students in 5th and 6th grade meet every other day and 7th and 8th 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 performed by SCPA middle school groups include:

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

A Prehistoric Suite – Paul Jennings – 6th Grade
*Nathan Hale Trilog*y – James Curnow – 7th and 8th Grade Band

Dragonhunter – Richard Meyer – 6th Grade
Gauntlet – Doug Spada – 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra

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.