

2020-2021
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Course
Description
Booklet

English

English 5—“Choices and Changes”

“Sometimes life is like a long road leading from one ‘if’ to another,” is a line from the novel *A Handful of Stars*, but also applies to the rising fifth graders, as they begin their Middle School journey, facing choices and changes. The Grade 5 English curriculum is meant to be a transitional year, as students are moved from the Reading Workshop curricula of the Lower School to whole class readings and literary discussion of various genres. Using novels, short stories, poems, and nonfiction texts, students will further develop reading strategies and critical thinking skills. As we begin the year, discussion of the summer reading book, *A Handful of Stars*, will provide opportunities for dialogue about the themes of acceptance, love, and loss. In the next reading unit, *The Mighty Miss Malone*, students will continue to explore these themes, as they get acquainted with Deza Malone and her family during the Great Depression. Later in the year, various mysteries will be read and discussed in Literary Groups. Linking with the History curriculum will be the classic, *D’Aulaires’ Book of Greek Myths*. Each trimester, students complete an Independent Reading Project based on novels of their choice. Writing instruction will focus on the planning, revising, and editing of narrative, informative, and opinion pieces. MLA formatting of documents and the use of Noodletools for the research process will be introduced. Throughout the year, several cross-curricular projects will be integrated with other subject areas. The Project Based Learning (PBL) unit will provide opportunities for real-world English connections. Grammar and vocabulary instruction will aid in strengthening the complexity of each girl’s writing.

English 6—“Someone Else’s Shoes”

Sharon Creech wrote, “Don’t judge a man until you have walked two moons in his moccasins.” In this course, students will practice critical reading, writing, and thinking skills as they engage in texts from a myriad of genres including short stories, novels, poetry, and drama, as well as non-fiction. While we build these skills, we will use the texts to help us understand what it means to be an empathetic individual, and to figuratively step into “someone else’s shoes.” As we begin the year, discussion of the summer reading book, *Stargirl*, will provide opportunities for dialogue about this theme, as well as the topics of friendship and acceptance of differences. Subsequent novels will include Newbery Medal book, *Walk Two Moons*, and the classic, *A Christmas Carol*. *Catherine, Called Birdy* will connect with medieval studies in the History curriculum. *A Long Walk to Water* will be read as part of the Project Based Learning (PBL) unit. Each trimester, students complete an Independent Reading Project based on novels of their choice. Writing instruction will continue to focus on the planning, revising, and editing of narrative, informative, and opinion pieces. Students will continue to practice MLA formatting of documents, and further develop their knowledge of Noodletools for the research process. Cross-curricular projects will be integrated with other subject areas, including Science and History. Grammar and vocabulary instruction will aid in strengthening the complexity of each girl’s writing.

English 7 : “Inquiring”

Students will read a variety of texts that cross the genres of fiction, nonfiction, drama and poetry. This year’s anchor texts are reflections of American history. *Fever 1793* and *Under a Painted Sky* tell powerful stories about sacrifice and suffering expressed through the lens of young female protagonists. John Lewis’s graphic novel *March* supports our literary exploration of Dr. King’s dream and the fight for civil rights. Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee’s play *Inherit the Wind* and S.E. Hinton’s novel *The Outsiders* are literary classics that enable the girls to explore conflict and the evolution of thought as they develop their ability to analyze literature in more meaningful ways.

A variety of class activities, both individual and collaborative, encourage critical thinking and an in-depth analysis of texts. Writing practice is used as a means of questioning, cataloguing, analyzing, evaluating, reflecting and creating. Students will learn to craft strong thesis statements, and will gain practice composing within the various essay structures. By becoming adept at these foundational formulas, students will strengthen their academic and imaginative voices as critical readers and thinkers. Writing is treated as a process as well as a product, and editing and revision are a major point of emphasis. Finally, students will regularly engage in grammar and vocabulary study. By the end of the year, students will become stronger in reading, writing, research and oral communication. Additionally, students will expand their understanding of themselves and their peers. They will possess a new appreciation for the richness, complexity and interconnectedness that inquiry reveals.

Required Texts

Fever 1793 Laurie Halse Anderson

Under a Painted Sky Stacey Lee

March I John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell

The Outsiders S.E. Hinton

Inherit the Wind Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee

Wordly Wise 3000 Book 8 Kenneth Hodkinson and Sandra Adams

Additionally, students will explore a variety of short stories, poems, and short non-fiction texts.

English 8 - “Voicing”

What is “voice”? What does it mean to have a voice in the world? What are the potential consequences of not sharing one’s voice? How does one find and exercise one’s voice?

These are just some of the questions that eighth grade students explore during their study of literature. These questions guide students as they are challenged to understand the complex realities of the world through the lenses of literature, civics, theology, science, psychology, world languages, art, theater and digital technology. The rich interdisciplinary curriculum offers students a range of texts under this thematic umbrella. *A Diary of A Young Girl* and *To Kill A Mockingbird* illuminate the struggles that people have faced due to race and religion. Students will come to learn that courageous men and women use their voices as catalysts for

transformation in personal essays, biographies and memoirs. Additionally, the analysis of non-fiction texts will enable students to engage in discourse about the ever-evolving social and cultural landscape of modern life. In all of these dimensions, the girls will discover the voices and stories of others. Most importantly, they will discover the power of the voice that they each possess.

Students in eighth grade will read from a variety of genres and continue their formal study of grammar and vocabulary throughout the year. In addition, they will have opportunities to write and respond creatively, and to develop and expand upon the analytical writing skills learned in seventh grade. By the end of the school year, students will feel confident and well prepared for ninth grade English. They will know how to think critically and will have built a solid repertoire of writing skills. Additionally, by the close of eighth grade, students will become more insightful and introspective. Each student will develop a greater awareness of her own voice and her role in society. Ultimately, each girl will be prepared to take on the challenges that lie ahead, and will be ready to journey forward as an agent and advocate of positive change.

Summer Reading

The Secret Life of Bees (2001)

Piecing Me Together (2017)

Echo

Grade 8 Major Novels and plays

The Diary of a Young Girl (1947)

Farewell to Manzanar

To Kill A Mockingbird (1960)

A Raisin in the Sun

Warriors Don't Cry

Grade 8 Short Stories (four or five of the following titles)

“Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe

“The Open Window” by Saki/“The Storyteller” by Saki

“To Build a Fire” Jack London

“The Speckled Band” by Arthur Conan Doyle

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson

“The Monkey’s Paw” by W.W. Jacobs

“To Build A Fire” by Jack London

Nobel Prize Acceptance speeches from King, Malala and Elie Weisel.

Poetry: “Strange Fruit” by Abel Meeropol

Poetry will be selected based on themes and big ideas that are associated with each of the pieces of literature studied

Grade 8 IRP

One book each trimester. Choices should include a novel, a mystery and a biography/autobiography of a person who fought for social justice.

Wordly Wise 3000 Book 8

GrammarFlip

Science

Science 5

Fifth grade science encourages our students to begin seeing the world like scientists and engineers. Students will learn the importance of observing phenomena, asking questions, recording data, and analyzing results through hands-on experimentation. Topics from across life, earth, and physical science disciplines are integrated to build a firm foundation for continued science learning. Topics include Earth's place in the solar system, Earth's systems, animal adaptations, matter and energy in ecosystems, waves, light, and sound, and electricity. A strong emphasis is placed on scientific applications in the real world. Through the integration of technology and the engineering process in many units, students will research and identify possible solutions to real-world challenges and then create and test a prototype of their design, making improvements as needed.

Science 6

In sixth grade science, students delve deeply into the world around us by exploring the applications of structure and function in the real world. From the tiniest atoms to the most damaging hurricane, students will wonder what makes the world around us work the way it does and dissect our questions to find answers. In this integrated curriculum, students will explore topics in life, earth, and physical sciences as well as technology and engineering design. Topics include states of matter, water as a natural resource, cells, microbes, weather and climate, and simple machines. Throughout the course, students will practice important science skills including: making observations, gathering data, developing hypotheses, designing controlled experiments, analyzing results and drawing conclusions. Class activities stress the scientific method of problem solving and allow students to see how inquiry and experimentation are the foundations of scientific investigation.

Science 7

Seventh grade science is driven by several essential themes in life, earth and physical sciences. We will enhance our studies using the McGraw Hill/Glencoe Integrated iSCIENCE textbook series. This course is designed to give young scientists a greater appreciation of the world around them and beyond, as well as a deeper understanding of how scientists think by becoming scientists themselves through exploration in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. Utilizing a blended approach of hands-on experimentation and digitally interactive technology, our seventh graders embark on a journey to enhance their prior knowledge of making observations and gathering scientific data into meaningful conclusions centered on personal

and global responsibility. Student investigations are based upon cell biology, human body systems, the periodic table of the elements, atomic structure, plate tectonics, atmospheric science, forces and fluids. A variety of scientific skills are taught this year, such as exploring cutting-edge science articles; gathering, utilizing, and analyzing data and observations; creating high quality graphs and tables; researching and designing experiments; creating collaborative lab reports; presenting their work in a variety of modes; and giving and receiving constructive feedback. At the end of seventh grade, students will have learned and cultivated some of the fundamental skills and techniques to “do” science by conducting experiments in class and performing long-term projects. These projects require student collaboration and help students develop their organizational skills. Throughout the year, students will gain an appreciation of science and nature, as well as study their role as stewards of the environment - and beyond. During the year, students prepare and present a science independent research project (SISP) focusing on a question of interest drawn from across their three years of Middle School science curriculum.

Science 8

Eighth grade science provides an opportunity for students to take a deeper dive into the three major studies of life, earth, and physical science. We will enhance our studies using the McGraw Hill/Glencoe Integrated iSCIENCE textbook series. This course is designed to empower students to employ the skills they learned in previous years to enhance their abilities to become capable, creative scientists and effective caretakers of the world around them. Utilizing a blended approach including hands-on experimentation and digitally interactive technology, our eighth graders will continue to strive to answer important questions and solve engaging problems. These exercises are all intended to foster the idea that our science students are destined to become leaders in the quest for a healthier environment on planet Earth. Student investigations are based upon ecosystems, environmental impacts, human physiology, genetics, motion, chemical bonds, chemical reactions and equations; the fossil record; continental drift and geologic history. A variety of scientific skills are taught this year, such as exploring cutting-edge science articles; gathering, utilizing, and analyzing data and observations; creating high quality graphs and tables; using basic concepts in statistics to determine the validity of collected data; researching and designing experiments; creating collaborative lab reports; presenting their work in a variety of modes; and giving and receiving constructive feedback. During the course of eighth grade, students learn how to work as scientists via successfully conducting experiments that are not only generated by the instructor, but that are also generated by themselves. These projects require student collaboration and help students develop their organizational, research and communication skills. Throughout the year, students will continue to foster an appreciation of science and nature, as well as study their role as stewards of the environment - and beyond. Toward the end of the year, students prepare and present a science independent research project (SISP) focusing on a question of interest drawn from across their three years of Middle School science curriculum. Because they will be conducting their SISP for a second year in a row, students will have the opportunity to not only further hone their skills using the scientific method, but also the ability to build on relevant concepts acquired during the previous school year.

History

Grade 5 - Ancient World

This course involves the study of Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Through their continued study of the ancient world, students come to appreciate the special significance of geographic places in the development of the human story. Additionally, students acquire a sense of the everyday life of the ancient people (i.e. government and religion), the tools and technology they developed, and the art and architecture they created. With this knowledge, students are able to develop an understanding of the contributions ancient civilizations have made towards current civilizations, leading towards a stronger awareness of our multicultural world. Throughout the course of the year, students learn and develop critical thinking, map and timeline skills, nonfiction reading and writing skills, how to collaborate with their peers and express their creativity. Additionally, students are assigned a variety of hands-on and technology based projects throughout the school year. Our textbook is *History Alive! The Ancient World*.

Grade 6 - Medieval World and Beyond

This course will introduce students to the history of the European Middle Ages through The Reformation (400 C.E.-1648 C.E.). Students will study the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the two successor civilizations of classical Greece and Rome--Western Christendom and Byzantium, with particular emphasis on the former. The year will end with a study of the Renaissance and Reformation periods. By the end of the course, students will understand how Europe transformed from a collection of barbarian kingdoms into a sophisticated continent. Throughout the course, students will continue to develop their critical thinking, map and timeline skills, read a variety of nonfiction sources, practice their writing/oral presentation skills, and collaborate with their peers and express their creativity. Additionally, students will research/present a specific topic relevant to the Middle Ages. Students will be assigned a variety of hands-on and technology based projects throughout the school year. Our textbook is *History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond*.

Grade 7 and Grade 8 - Citizenship- A Right And A Responsibility

This two year course serves as an introduction to American government and our political process, while offering opportunities to broaden the lens and understand our role as a global citizen in the wide world around us. Students will study the roots of the American political system and the modern application of traditional ideas such as civil rights, voting, civil dialogue, and community activism. We examine the three branches of government and how they check and balance one another. The course will involve significant research, writing, debate, public speaking, and civic involvement to make both our local communities and the world a better place.

Mathematics

Grade 5 - Developing Number Sense and Problem Solving

Fifth grade is a transitional year in mathematics where students begin to progress from the curriculum used in the lower school to the pre-algebra program in Grade 6.

The year begins by ensuring that students develop a deep conceptual understanding of operations, an in-depth study of number theory in base ten and fractions. Students will then be introduced to ratios, proportions, and percents as well as statistics and probability and specific topics in measurement and geometry. The focus throughout the year is for students to develop themselves as deep thinking mathematicians with a strong and thorough understanding of numbers and operations. Utilizing experiential problem solving strategies such as estimation, math modeling, and repeated reasoning as they apply to real world math contexts will help ensure the student's preparation for the three year Algebra sequence in grades 6 through 8.

Grade 6 - Pre-Algebra

This course develops confidence in mathematics and prepares students for the algebra curriculum. Students develop a complete understanding of the real number system using the four mathematical operations involving integers and rational numbers. They learn how to use the mathematical properties and are able to solve basic algebraic equations and inequalities. Students become proficient in ratio, proportion, percent, and measurement. Basic concepts in geometry, probability, and statistics are learned. Much time is spent using mathematical concepts to problem solve.

Grade 7 - Algebra I Part I (Regular and Honors)

Algebra I Part I is a student's first experience with the power of mathematics as a language and a tool. Students move beyond a concrete grasp of numerical operations to an understanding of more abstract, higher order mathematics. Using the mathematical practices as a guide students develop a deep conceptual understanding of the foundations of algebra through linear functions. Students work daily on applications of their mathematical skills through numerical, graphical, symbolic, and verbal explanations of problems. Students will be prepared to not only use these ideas in other courses, but will also be prepared for the more advanced study to come in Algebra I Part II. Specifically, students will explore topics in geometry, probability, statistics, solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities, real numbers, radicals, and exponents.

Grade 8 - Algebra I Part II (Regular and Honors)

This course enables students to become proficient in algebraic reasoning, to make connections between mathematics and other curriculum areas, to use algebra to solve real life problems, and to improve logical thinking. It emphasizes operations with rational numbers while working with equations, inequalities, powers, polynomials, factoring, linear/exponential/quadratic functions, graphs, lines, slopes, systems of equations and inequalities, radicals, number and set theory, geometry, and solving quadratic equations.

Computer Science

Video Game Design (8th Grade)

What makes a good educational video game? Eighth grade students explore this question throughout the trimester. Students learn various strategies to help solve problems in this ever changing technological world. They learn how to build their own digital literacy as they explore an understanding of computers and the logic of programming. As a culminating project, the girls create educational video games which are entered in the STEM Video Game Challenge.

World Language

French and Spanish 5

Fifth grade world language students develop the four language skills through communication of: greetings, expressing likes and dislikes, commands and varied themes of daily family and school life. Communication begins in a structured format and ‘scaffolds’ toward more complex and open-ended conversations. Hands-on projects and the use of authentic texts, internet tools and videos complement the world language program. Throughout the program, activities are aimed at engaging the students in discussion of relevant topics pertaining to our world. As students explore diverse Hispanic and Francophone cultures, they arrive at their own cultural comparisons and contrasts while acquiring a love for their respective languages.

French 6

In French 6, students practice conversational skills, including asking and responding to questions. Building on the foundations of discussing personal information such as activities, likes and dislikes and family members, students will learn about locations around cities and towns, making plans, and talking about the near future. The students will discuss leisure time and engage in a classic sporting event - soccer! - in the target language. As the class delves into these different bodies of vocabulary and accompanying grammar pieces, the students will do so through the lens of the French-speaking world, drawing on authentic texts and broadcasts to supplement learning.

French 7

In French 7, students build upon the foundations studied during the past year. In addition to strengthening sentence structure, correct agreement and authentic intonation and pronunciation, students learn the past tense (le passé composé) and begin to speak and write about events in the past. Students will examine celebrations around the French-speaking world as well as clothing and fashion. Travel and vacation will also be studied as students work with a variety of sources to compare and contrast life in the United States with several Francophone countries. Students will create a variety of projects, develop their reading comprehension skills, and sharpen and further their grammatical breadth.

French 8

Students in French 8 strengthen their understanding and use of the French language through

the study of *Le Petit Nicolas*, a French children's classic featuring a series of vignettes about a French boy and his classmates. Students grow in their understanding of the plot, character development, vocabulary and grammar throughout the year. They create a character and assume that character's persona in certain projects over the course of the year. Students also study thematic units including family and friends, holidays and celebrations, shopping, school and education and daily routine. Class discussions often include cultural comparisons and links to current events. Simultaneously, students study the *passé composé* and the *imparfait*, the future tense and work on direct and indirect object pronouns.

Spanish 6 - ¡Nos Gusta Hablar Español!

In 6th grade Spanish, students practice conversational skills, including asking and responding to questions. Continuing with the foundation from 5th grade, the girls will add more vocabulary and complexity. Topics such as sports and hobbies, travel and shopping, are explored to increase communication skills in speaking and in writing. Students will be introduced to vocabulary about towns and cities, transportation and vacation travel. Along with the vocabulary topics, students will be introduced to cultural aspects such as regional cuisine, sports and travel using a multimedia approach. Through the short novel, *Enrique y Maria* (the story of two high school students in the United States), the girls will be exposed to a variety of cultural and historical information and give them confidence in reading in Spanish. A variety of resources including the comprehensive textbook *Descubre I* by Vista Higher Learning, provide opportunities for ongoing practice of the language with the goal of gaining confidence in speaking in the target language.

Spanish 7 - ¡Adelante!

Students go deeper and wider in their mastery of language and cultures in seventh grade Spanish. Continuing with the *Descubre I* text, students explore cultures of the Hispanic world. While continuing to strengthen the fundamentals of the language, i.e. solid sentence structure, correct agreement and authentic intonation and pronunciation, the girls go on to the use of the past tense (preterite). Vocabulary topics include daily activities as getting up, getting dressed, going to bed.... Foods and celebrations are additional topics. Students will continue to be exposed to authentic conversations about these topics while preparing their own projects to support this learning. Projects may include dramatizations of daily activities, food or restaurant conversations and creating a menu. Students will also be exposed to readings of short stories to supplement the vocabulary introduced. The introduction of additional pronouns (direct, indirect and reflexive) as well as many Spanish idioms add to the increasing richness of the students' language repertoire.

As the students explore linguistic and cultural topics, the emphasis is on putting their knowledge into action by integrating the course's linguistic and cultural concepts in a communicative way. The other skills of listening, reading and writing are interwoven as well into each unit. In addition to the text, students acquire language mastery through a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines, websites, movies, songs, art and literature.

Spanish 8 - *El Mundo Hispanoparlante*

Eighth grade Spanish students advance in all skill areas of the language and delve deeper in their cultural explorations. Continuing with the Descubre text series as the framework, along with a host of other resources, students expand their thematic vocabulary, including many Spanish idioms, resulting in both richer and more authentic communication. Each trimester, the students will be exposed to a group project to promote cultural knowledge and grammar knowledge. Students will continue work with the preterite tense from 7th grade Spanish along with the introduction of the imperfect tense. Emphasis is placed on speaking and writing in the target language as well as external readings. The classic 'picaresca' novel, Lazarillo de Tormes is introduced in the latter part of the year to explore the disparity of classes in Spain in the 1500's. The overarching goal of the World Language program is to facilitate communicating about the variety of topics that we explore in each unit.

Latin 8

This is a combined course with a mix of eighth grade and Upper School students. Students expand their knowledge of tenses and cases and also begin conjugating verbs. Translation is a large part of the course as the material becomes more complex. Students continue to be exposed to the history and culture of Ancient Rome and take the National Latin Exam for the first time. Derivation of English words from their Latin roots is emphasized throughout the year including abbreviations and mottoes

Theology

Theology 5

The goal of the fifth grade theology course continues to be an emphasis on the personal faith of the student as she engages the stories, symbols, teachings, rituals and witnesses of the Catholic/Christian tradition. Through the investigation of stories of faith in the Christian community and beyond, liturgical celebrations, art, music, prayer, Church history, social teaching and community service opportunities, students are introduced to new ways of understanding and participating in the practice of their faith. The course uses the Call to Faith (Harcourt) textbook and several appropriate online resources. The specific areas of concentration are on revelation, God's covenant with humanity, the mystery of the Trinity, the human responsibility to be wise stewards of the earth, Jesus as both human and divine, the theological and cardinal virtues, moral values and the commandments, the mission of the Church, the lives of some of the saints, an overview of the sacraments, liturgical celebrations and calendars. Additionally, students are introduced to Christian seasonal celebrations as well as the celebrations of other faith traditions such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, Diwali, etc. Students engage in thematic and topic-specific activities designed to deepen knowledge and lead to a living out of faith. Through writing, sharing reflections, group discussions, skits, drawings, independent research and in-class presentations, students engage the content and topics of the course in a way that allows them to deepen their understanding and discern the meaning for their own lives.

Theology 6

The sixth-grade curriculum immerses students in a full year of study of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Christian Old Testament). Students learn and practice the skills needed to read, understand and appreciate God's inspired Word. By examining how God revealed Himself, students are able to investigate the history and faith stories of the Hebrew people. Sixth-grade theology focuses on the covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel. Major topics include the following: Creation and the Fall of Humankind; the stories of Abraham and the other patriarchs; Moses and the Exodus (with particular attention paid to the Ten Commandments and their continuing role as God's law for the people); the period of the judges in Israel and also the prophets and their role in God's saving plan. Several small cross-curricular projects are planned which will link theology with social studies, world languages, art and science. Maps and timelines help students relate the Bible to its geographic and historic reality as interdisciplinary connections are made. Viewing of the related films, *Joseph, King of Dreams* and *The Prince of Egypt*, deepens understanding. The sixth graders are encouraged to illustrate and act out the stories of the Bible and to see how the meaning of Scripture informs their own present-day faith.

Theology 7

This Seventh Grade religion course is called Christology. Students study about the life of Jesus and the impact he had on the world. Emphasis is placed on studying the teachings of Jesus as well as the geography, culture, and politics of first century Palestine. Students will develop the skills needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of Scripture and how to apply it to their lives today.

Skills that are developed in Christology include: creative writing, public speaking, teamwork, critical thinking and technology. The *Glo Bible* is an interactive Bible App used in class that helps students gain a deeper understanding of Biblical times through pictures, videos and virtual tours of important sites. Toward the end of the year, students work on a project where they research St. Paul and early Christianity.

Theology 8

This course explores various religious traditions and the ways in which people express faith. Students will learn how people use prayer, sacred architecture, music, art, clothing, and rituals to express their religious beliefs and spirituality. Through hands on activities, students will participate in things such as creating mandalas, learning about praise dance, and designing houses of worship. Students will have the opportunity to not only explore religious traditions but to learn more about their own faith traditions and relationship with God. Additionally, the course will focus on global cultural awareness and the developing the skills of critical thinking, writing, reading comprehension, public speaking, and geography. A variety of articles and texts will be used including, *The Religions Book* from DK publishing.

Fine Arts

Art 5

The focus of 5th grade art will be two dimensional art. We will look at art from around the world and throughout history. We will discuss movements in art and cultural differences and similarities. Students will draw, paint, print and work with the elements of art and principles of design.

Art 6

Emphasis: Three dimensional design. Students will study clay forms from various countries, time periods, and styles. They will create a ceramic vessel reflecting a culture. One specific culture we investigate is the Mimbres tribe which was located in New Mexico between 200 - 1200 c.e. Students design and build an object for a specific client. In the past they have designed chairs for a small stuffed animal. Imagination will be emphasized while learning some of the principles of sculpture and construction. A final project is to design and build houses inspired by Southeast Asian Spirit Houses. Possible materials to be used during this trimester: clay, cardboard, boxes, packing materials, foam core, paper, fabric, mosaics, plaster, paper mache, wire mesh, plaster cast.

Art 7

Each student studies an animal of her choice through a variety of media including graphite drawing, watercolor, pastel and Totems inspired by the Pacific Northwest Native American totems. Each student is directed to capture the gesture, proportions, textures, and colors of her chosen animal. Girls use iPads and books to find visual resources from which to study. The skills that are developed in seventh grade include drawing from observation, research, painting and constructing. They develop skills while using materials such as watercolor, pastel, graphite and paper mache.

Art 8

Project 1: Large grid drawing. Students will photograph each other. They choose an image and crop it. Grid the photo and create a grid twice as large on a grey paper. Students use a range of values to create the illusion of form in a large, cropped image.

Project 2: Linoleum print. Students create a black and white collage. This image is transferred to a linoleum block and carved. An edition of 3 prints will be completed and signed.

Project 3: Group project responding to a need at Stuart. This project will be designed by the students and supervised by Ms. Wright. It could be an outdoor sculpture, earth art reflecting the impermanence of all, or something installed inside Stuart as an interactive work of art.

Drama 5

Let's begin to Understand Theatre

The goal of this course is to empower students to engage on a personal level with the artistic experience. The course will cover three primary units of study: communication and improvisation, research and study of theatre history, and implementation of acquired skills in a public performance. Beginning the trimester with a study of improvisation, students will practice effective communication through group activities and creative use of the voice and body. The focus will shift to the qualities and practice of theatre traditions as is evident in Greek Theatre. This allows students to further understand concepts of design, namely, properties and costumes. Finally, we will explore Greek Mythology by performing short written plays for the lower school. Also embedded within the curriculum is the use of professional theatre vocabulary, ranging from stage directions to professional roles within the theatre world.

Drama 6

How to Create a Production

Drama class continues to include theatre vocabulary, stage movement, memorization, theatre history, performance opportunities, collaboration and leadership, and group and self critique. Students learn the skills necessary for writing in a dialogue format, understanding characterization and plot. The class will include a research project focused on theatre history within the Middle Ages, Early Renaissance, English Restoration, and early twentieth century Realism. We expand our knowledge of plot, characterization and performance with improvised skits and the creation and performance of a short play. The class focuses on group collaboration, improved verbal skills, self-confidence in performance and finding one's own voice, and creative problem solving.

Drama 7

Let's write a PLAY! Drama class includes the skills of theatre vocabulary, plot creation using problem- solution training, dialogue and structure in playwriting, technical theatre (lighting design, props, costumes design, set design, dramaturg, stage management), stage movement, motivated characterization, memorization and blocking. The class collaborates to create an original play and designs, produces and performs the piece for the Lower and/or Middle School within class time.

Music/Drama 8

THE MUSICAL - Drama and Music are combined to create an appropriate musical. The entire grade learns the process of auditioning, theatre vocabulary, stage movement, theatrical dance, character development, singing techniques, memorization and rehearsal techniques. The final performances are at the end of a trimester. There is a performance for the Lower School and a performance for the general public. The performance is supported by an Upper School tech class, a choreographer and a small professional band. The show is fully staged. The cast has a group critique following the show. The class focuses on group collaboration, verbal skills, characterization, musicianship, dance movement, improved self-confidence, leadership skills and creative problem-solving.

Music 5

This music course will be based on timbre and composition through the construction of an original instrument. We will first explore instrumental timbre through the study of wind, string, brass, and percussion instruments. Then the students will construct an instrument using Makey Makeys, a technology tool used for coding. The students will be asked to create an instrument out of conductive materials and the Makey Makey. Students will be asked also to consider aesthetic value when creating their instrument. The physical 'instruments' made by the students will vary greatly. Some may choose a more artistic line of thought with lead pencil, while others will create objects out of foil, tape, and other materials. Their instrument will be used in composition of a piece of music. The culminating project will be to play a short original composition on their Makey Makey instrument. If time allows, the students will compose and play an ensemble composition with other classmates and their instruments. Through these hands-on, STEM-integrated projects, students learn music theory and composition skills, sound quality and construction, and the value of teamwork.

Music 6

This course is designed to build interest in composition by using critical listening skills, conducting and finally using GarageBand to compose their own pieces. The students will first review the basics of melody and rhythm with a focus on ostinatos/loops. Students continue their rhythm studies by learning conducting patterns and expressive conducting techniques. Using various multimedia resources as a guide, students learn about composing techniques and experiment with GarageBand to put together premade loops. Finally, the sixth graders utilize their knowledge by spending the rest of the trimester composing pieces individually and in groups with the GarageBand app. This course should help students understand and implement Classical composing techniques that are applicable to current musical styles.

Music 7

This course reinforces music theory, music history and performance skills by focusing on basic guitar skills as the center of our music study. Students begin by learning the basics of tuning, resonance and pitch as related to the guitar. Students develop the skill of chord playing as they learn basic guitar chords. Appreciation and understanding of music history grows as students simultaneously learn to sing international and popular songs with the accompanying guitar chords. Students work on their own and in pairs to carefully play each chord and rhythm accurately while simultaneously singing the melody. The final project is to successfully play and sing a song of their choosing that is appropriate to their level and abilities.

Chorus/Instrumental Music

Students have the option to choose either choral or instrumental music at each grade level. In these classes students rehearse beginner to intermediate choral or instrumental pieces for possible performances at Evensong, Spring Concert, and Middle School Prize Day. The objective is to reinforce music and vocal/instrumental skills and to build community by rehearsing and performing to their highest potential.

Families are responsible for providing their own instrument and must take individual lessons on campus or with a private teacher. Advanced ensemble students will rehearse and perform with additional rehearsal times within the Stuart daily schedule. Students improve their note reading and notation skills throughout the year with play and rehearsal and through these practices, enhance their understanding of musical performance.

Physical Education

All students acquire motor skills to perform a variety of physical activities, physical fitness knowledge, and intrinsic motivation to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle.

Over the course of the four year MS sequence, the physical education department will measure growth in eye-hand coordination, balance, speed, agility, endurance, spatial awareness and body control. The instruction and application of field sense, strategy, knowledge of rules, safety measures, teamwork, and sportsmanship is developed during all cooperative activities. In addition, the curriculum incorporates emotional IQ by modeling and encouraging healthy risk taking, collaboration, cooperation, compromise, and communication.

Physical education is an important and unique part of the daily instructional program. Not only does it contribute to the overall goals of education, but it also contributes to the development and maintenance of fitness, motor skills, social skills, health and brain development. Physical activity is the method by which learning takes place through team games and individual exercises. Quality instruction in physical education involves the whole child by providing psychomotor, cognitive, and affective benefits. The physical education curriculum provides and promotes lifelong fitness and wellness tools.

Sports/Activities include: Low ropes course, Physical Fitness Challenges, Soccer, Tennis, Field Hockey, Football, Basketball, Volleyball/Newcomb, Rockwall, Cooperative Games, Track and Field, Ultimate Frisbee, and Softball.

Health

In Middle School, the formal health curriculum promotes behaviors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and improved quality of life for all students through various areas. Lessons on basic emotional well-being cover topics such as: communication skills, manners, emotional intelligence, decision making, conflict resolution, goal setting, and relational aggression. Preventative measures include educating students about substance use, misuse, abuse, addiction, and developing refusal skills. Physical, emotional, and social aspects of human relationships and sexuality are also explored. Sexual health is also part of the curriculum, which includes: puberty, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, maternal health, healthy fetal development, and childbirth. Self-health promotion concepts and skills are also stressed and include body systems, basic hygiene, disease prevention, nutrition, boundary setting, refusal skills, and positive body image. Students are encouraged to apply to themselves the positive concepts studied for balanced health and wellness.

Flex Period Courses

Personal Guidance

During the pre-teen and adolescent years, the prefrontal cortex is still developing. The prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that helps to organize information, plan and formulate strategies, solve problems and make decisions. With this in mind, adult personal and socio-emotional guidance is essential for young people to develop resilience and to function at an optimal level. While counselors are available to provide individual and personal support, not every student seeks counseling and those who do seek counseling often wait until they are in crisis. In this course, students are guided through the process of their socio-emotional development using collaborative small-group discussions and exercises as well as relevant literature and films. A safe and minimally stressful environment allows for genuine student-designed discussions.

Study Skills

Study Skills is a fifth grade course offered during the first trimester. It is specifically designed to ease the transition from Lower School to Middle School. The faculty of the Learning Center, the Middle School librarian, and the technology integrator share the instructional time. Homework involves the application of what is learned in class to the student's academic life.

The Learning Center teacher focuses on organization and time management, learning styles, and strategies to maximize each student's ability to study and learn. The students are introduced to a variety of study strategies and then guided to match the strategies to their individual learning style.

The librarian introduces students to research and information literacy skills that will help them in the classroom, as well as the practice of citation and academic integrity. The librarian teaches students about the resources that are available in the Library, both physically and digitally through Library subscriptions. Students learn how to evaluate research resources and how to electronically record information in the appropriate format.

The technology teacher guides the students to make best use of technology as a learning tool, introduces new apps, and teaches students uses for the apps. The curriculum is matched to the demands and assignments of the Middle School courses.

Digital Citizenship

Every student takes digital citizenship one trimester each year while in Middle School. The course focuses on the ethical use of technology with an emphasis on understanding intellectual property, safety, security, etiquette and understanding your digital footprint. This is an ungraded course and is intended to keep the students updated on the ever changing digital landscape.

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is a one trimester course taken by every student in the Middle School. The goal of the course is to ensure each student has a solid understanding of personal finances, interest rates and budgeting. It is an ungraded course designed with many hands on projects to engage and excite the girls about finance and economics.

Leadership

Trimester classes in leadership explore and promote leadership skills that include: identifying strengths and challenges, team building, collaboration, civil discourse, active listening and communication, mediation, perspective acknowledgement, and conflict resolution. Beginning in grade 5, each class builds upon these relevant skills through grade 8. Peer mentors, student government, and Project Based Learning experiences compliment leadership classes as our students take on leadership opportunities at Stuart.