



# PROGRAM OF STUDY

*Middle School*

# Our Mission

Engaging global learners in an education that values them as individuals, integrates their passions and pursuits into academic and career pathways, and fosters inquiry, growth, mastery, purpose, and independence.

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# 6th Grade

## ENGLISH

This research-based course provides structured lessons on reading comprehension, critical reading and analysis, composition, vocabulary, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Lessons are designed to develop comprehension, hone critical reading skills, build vocabulary, and help students evaluate and apply the ideas they have learned from their reading. Students practice writing throughout the course using analysis and critical thinking skills.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### Ancient Civilizations

Students in 6th grade expand their understanding of History, Civics and Government, Geography, Economics, and individuals, society, and culture by studying the people and events that ushered in the dawn of the major Western and non-Western ancient civilizations. Geography is of special significance in the development of the human story. Students will have the opportunity to explore civilizations by learning about the history, culture, citizenship, economy, religions, and government of the different cultures present at that time. In doing so, the students will utilize math, science, technology, and critical thinking skills in daily learning. Students analyze the interactions among the various cultures, emphasizing their enduring contributions and the link between our world today and these ancient worlds.

## MATH

6th Grade Math is designed to provide students with a pedagogically sound math program. Each lesson is created so that students have multiple opportunities to practice the concepts and skills introduced. During this course, students will connect ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and use concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems. They will gain an understanding of the division of fractions and extend the concept to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers and mixed numbers. Students will write, interpret, and use expressions and equations throughout the course. Last, they will develop an understanding of statistical thinking.

## SCIENCE

6th Grade Science is the first in a series of three consecutive science classes. It introduces middle school students to the disciplines of life science, physical science, and earth-space science. In addition, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts are integrated throughout the course. The lessons make real-world connections and require students to apply STEM skills like analysis, problem solving, science knowledge, and engineering practices. Hands-on and laboratory investigations are included throughout the course to provide students opportunities for exploration through scientific inquiry, research, measurement, problem solving, and experimental procedures. By the end of the course, students will be practicing, experimenting, thinking, and talking like a scientist!

## HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In this course, students will learn how to prevent injuries, access valid information to remain safe, analyze situations involving alcohol/tobacco/other drugs, apply decision-making processes to enhance mental/emotional/social health, and continue weekly physical activity to promote overall health. Students will log student-selected activities based on goals set at the beginning of the course. Three hours of weekly physical activity are required to be logged throughout the course.

# 7th Grade

## ENGLISH

This research-based course provides structured lessons on reading comprehension, critical reading and analysis, composition, vocabulary, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Lessons are designed to develop comprehension, hone critical reading skills, build vocabulary, and help students evaluate and apply the ideas they have learned from their reading. Students practice writing throughout the course using analysis and critical thinking skills.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### World Cultures

This course is an exploration of the exciting world we live in. Students will explore the various cultures and geographic regions, and analyze how they affect the people who live around the world. The goal in World Cultures is to broaden our knowledge; and, gain a better understanding of our neighbors wherever they may live on this place called Earth.

## MATH

### Pre-Algebra

The Pre-Algebra program provides students with solid preparation for algebra and geometry. Students will build on previously developed arithmetic skills to expand their algebraic thinking skills. Students will cover topics including solving equations and inequalities containing fractions and decimals, ratios, linear functions, graphing, spatial thinking, finding area and volume of geometric figures, and right triangles. The course also provides numerous opportunities to assess basic skills along with abundant remediation and intervention activities found throughout the course. In all, this is a comprehensive program that will provide students with a solid foundation for higher-level math courses.

## SCIENCE

7th Grade Science is a comprehensive science including the disciplines of life science, physical science, and earth-space science in addition to technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts. The course is designed for middle school students. The lessons provide real-world connections through the application of STEM problem solving, science knowledge, and engineering practices. Laboratory investigations are included throughout the course and provide students opportunities for exploration through scientific inquiry, research, measurement, problem-solving, and experimental procedures.

## HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In this course, students will learn how short and long-term nutritional choices impact health and physical activity, how to prevent injury and violence, in addition to creating a personal-safety plan, and the importance of establishing goals for improving personal and community health. Three hours of weekly physical activity are required to be logged throughout the course.

# 8th Grade

## ENGLISH

During the first semester of this year-long course, students will read and analyze various kinds of written texts, including novels and short fiction, informational texts representing a wide range of topics and forms, and several one-act plays. Lessons in Semester A will also guide students in writing their own narratives and essays, using the readings in the course as both examples and sources of ideas for reflection, analysis, and argument. In Semester B, students will examine the role of historical autobiographies and diaries in our understanding of history. In the process, they'll study the impact of point of view on nonfiction texts. In the second half of the semester, students will study the relationship between poetic expression and several conventions of language, including syntax, voice, sentence types, and punctuation. Near the end of the semester, students will reflect on their own growth and development throughout the year, compiling a portfolio that illustrates the progress they've made.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### U.S. History

This course is an exploration into the history of the United States. Students will explore the area where the United States was formed starting with the Age of Discovery and finishing with the End of Reconstruction. Along the way, students will learn the first stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the Gettysburg Address. The course addresses topics from the discovery of America to the Compromise of 1877.

## MATH

Students select either **Pre-Algebra** or **Algebra 1**.

### Pre-Algebra

The Pre-Algebra program provides students with solid preparation for algebra and geometry. Students will build on previously developed arithmetic skills to expand their algebraic thinking skills. Students will cover topics including solving equations and inequalities containing fractions and decimals, ratios, linear functions, graphing, spatial thinking, finding area and volume of geometric figures, and right triangles. The course also provides numerous opportunities to assess basic skills along with abundant remediation and intervention activities found throughout the course. In all, this is a comprehensive program that will provide students with a solid foundation for higher-level math courses.

### Algebra 1

Algebra 1 is the foundation of upper school math. The skills acquired in this course contain the basic knowledge needed for all future math courses. The content in this course is tied to real-world applications like sports, travel, business, and health. This course is designed to give students the basic skills and problem-solving strategies to work through many types of mathematical problems using critical thinking skills.

Topics include: basic operations, modeling, algebraic properties, functions, expressions, equations and inequalities, polynomials, factoring, exponents, radicals, linear, exponential and quadratic functions, systems, intro to statistics, and word problems. Students are assessed throughout each module to demonstrate their mastery of the course content.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Pre-Algebra**

## SCIENCE

8th Grade Science is the third in a series of three consecutive middle school science classes. It builds on concepts introduced in the first and second courses of the series, including the disciplines of life science, physical science, and earth-space science. In addition, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts are integrated throughout the course. Students learn about properties of matter, physical and chemical changes, atoms and the periodic table of elements, photosynthesis and cellular respiration, the universe, and the solar system. Hands-on and virtual laboratory investigations are included throughout the course to provide students opportunities for exploration through scientific inquiry, research, measurement, problem solving, and experimental procedures. By the end of the course, students will be practicing, experimenting, thinking, and talking like a scientist!

## HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In this course, students will analyze influences affecting personal health practices; apply decision-making processes to a variety of situations that impact mental, emotional, and social health; analyze internal and external influences affecting growth and development, relationships, and sexual behavior; and learn to use effective decision-making skills to avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Three hours of weekly physical activity are required to be logged throughout the course.

# World Languages

## Grades 6–8

### SPANISH 1

This fun, interactive course for middle school students is filled with diverse, multimedia language activities. Students begin their introduction to Spanish by focusing on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices that reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

### SPANISH 2

Students continue their language learning adventure by progressing to the next level of middle school Spanish. Throughout the course, students focus on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School Spanish 1**

### FRENCH 1

This fun, interactive course for middle school students is filled with diverse, multimedia language activities. Students begin their introduction to French by focusing on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various French-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

## **FRENCH 2**

Students continue their language-learning adventure by progressing to this next level of middle school French. Throughout the course, students will focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and task-based activities to reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Students will be actively engaged in their own learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations, compare cultural practices and perspectives of various French-speaking countries and take frequent assessments to monitor progress.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School French 1**

## **GERMAN 1**

This fun, interactive course for middle school students is filled with diverse, multimedia language activities. Students begin their introduction to German by focusing on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various German-speaking countries. They will take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

## **GERMAN 2**

Students continue their language-learning adventure by progressing to this next level of middle school German. Throughout the course, students focus on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various German-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School German 1**

## **LATIN 1**

This fun, interactive course for middle school students is filled with diverse, multimedia language activities. Since mastering a classical language presents different challenges from learning a spoken world language, students learn Latin through ancient, time-honored, classical language approaches which include repetition, parsing, written composition, and listening exercises. These techniques, combined with a modern multimedia approach to learning grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, provide students with a strong foundation for learning Latin. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading comprehension activities, writing activities, multimedia culture, history, and mythology presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on engaging with authentic classical Latin through weekly encounters with ancient passages from such prestigious authors as Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius. The curriculum concurs with the Cambridge school of Latin; therefore, students will learn ancient high classical styles of pronunciation and grammar in lieu of generally less sophisticated medieval styles, making it possible for students to comprehend the most Latin from the widest range of time periods. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, understand and analyze the cultural and historical contexts of the ancient sources they study, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).



## LATIN 2

Students continue their language-learning adventure by progressing to this next level of middle school Latin. Since mastering a classical language presents different challenges from learning a spoken world language, students learn Latin through ancient, time-honored, classical language approaches which include repetition, parsing, written composition, and listening exercises. These techniques, combined with a modern multimedia approach to learning grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, provide students with a strong foundation for learning Latin. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading comprehension activities, writing activities, multimedia culture, history, and mythology presentations, and interactive activities and practices which reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on engaging with authentic classical Latin through weekly encounters with ancient passages from such prestigious authors as Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius. The curriculum concurs with the Cambridge school of Latin; therefore, students will learn ancient high classical styles of pronunciation and grammar in lieu of generally less sophisticated medieval styles, making it possible for students to comprehend the most Latin from the widest range of time periods. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, understand and analyze the cultural and historical contexts of the ancient sources they study, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School Latin 1**

## CHINESE 1

This Chinese course for middle school students is filled with engaging language activities. Students focus on the four key areas of language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and task-based activities to reinforce vocabulary and grammar. Both Chinese characters and pinyin are presented together throughout the course, and specific character practices are introduced after the first quarter. Students will become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices and perspectives of various Chinese-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments to monitor language progression. The course is suitable for other ages, depending on background and experience.

## CHINESE 2

Students continue their language-learning adventure by progressing to this next level of middle school Chinese. With a focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing, each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, multimedia cultural presentations, and task-based activities to reinforce vocabulary and grammar. There is a strong emphasis on providing context and conversational examples for the language concepts presented in each unit. Both Chinese characters and pinyin are presented together throughout the course, and specific character practices are introduced after the first quarter. Students will gain familiarity with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wider range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations, analyze and compare cultural practices and perspectives of various Chinese-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School Chinese 1**

# Electives

## Grades 6–8

### 2D STUDIO ART—SEMESTER

Close your eyes and imagine you're standing in an art studio—the smell of paint, the heat of the kiln, and the infinite creative possibilities that linger in the air. This is where art is born, and in 2D Studio Art, you'll learn how to bring your artistic visions to life. Whatever medium you prefer—painting, drawing, photography—this course will teach you the design elements and principles needed to create a work of art, explore your artistic inspirations, travel back in time to look at art in different cultures, and gain insight about the art of critiquing. If you've ever dreamed about making a living as an artist, this course will give you the tools and background that you need to turn those dreams into a reality.

### CAREER EXPLORATIONS—SEMESTER

How do you pick a career path when you are not sure what's out there? This course allows you to begin exploring options in fields such as teaching, business, government, hospitality, health science, IT, and more! You will align your interests, wants, and needs to career possibilities and gain the required education for each. Let's find a pathway that works for you.

### CAREER EXPLORATION 2—SEMESTER

Imagine that it's 20 years from now. What career do you see yourself in? What do you imagine that you'll be doing? Will you be fighting forest fires or engineering the next rocket into space? With all the careers available, it can be difficult to narrow them down. In Middle School Career Exploration 2 we'll explore more careers and see what it takes to succeed. You'll learn more about what steps are needed to prepare for your career and how to compare the pros and cons of different career choices. Finally, you'll get the chance to try out parts of different careers to see if you're a perfect fit.

### CODING 1A—SEMESTER

Do you find yourself wondering how your favorite apps, websites, and games were made? Maybe you want to try building your own. Well, now you can! In Middle School Coding 1A, you will get an introduction to the basics of computer science, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Python. You will leave the course with a portfolio of work you can show off!

### CODING 1B—SEMESTER

Building on the prior prerequisite course, expand your knowledge of programming languages and web development by further exploring Python, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Analyze the differences between web development and web application development, while growing your portfolio, which will serve to highlight everything you have learned and created in the course.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School Coding 1A**

### DIGITAL ART & DESIGN—SEMESTER

There are so many different types of art in this world—fine art, classical art, visual art—but the impact of digital art and design is all around us, often in ways that you probably aren't even aware of! After taking Digital Art and Design, you'll enjoy a deeper understanding and appreciation for all things digital as you explore this special genre of art found in everything from advertising to animation to photography and beyond. In this course, you'll learn about the evolution of art, the basic principles of art and design, and the role of art in politics and society. Additionally, you will actually create your own digital art and make it come alive. Give your creative side a boost with this Digital Art and Design course.

## **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP—SEMESTER**

The digital world seems to change every day and touch more of our lives. We use technology to communicate with friends and family, find never-ending entertainment options, follow our favorite sports teams and fashion trends, and do our school work. In this course, you will get the tools to navigate this exciting and always-changing world. Learn about real-world issues and how to solve real-world problems through interactive and hands-on assignments. Discover what it means to be a responsible digital citizen, expand your digital literacy, and become a successful online student. You'll consider the best ways to find, create, and share information, learn to maximize information and communication technologies, and explore digital content creation, from emails and blogs to social media, videos, and podcasts.

## **EXPLORING BUSINESS—SEMESTER**

Are you interested in business, becoming a leader, or making decisions to help a business be successful? While there are many different career choices in the field of business, in this course, you'll discover options such as management, human resources, business operations, information management, and accounting. Explore the skills you'll need, common tasks, the technology used, and characteristics of various business careers.

## **EXPLORING HEALTH SCIENCE—SEMESTER**

Where do healthcare workers spend their days? What do they really do? From cruise ships to sports arenas, you can find healthcare workers in many places you may not expect. Explore this field, including what it would be like to work in a medical lab. You'll learn what it takes to keep you and your patients safe, about the human body, and basic first-aid.

## **EXPLORING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY—SEMESTER**

If you've ever dreamed of a job in technology, but aren't sure where to start, then it's time to explore the different career options available to you in the field of IT. You'll examine various IT pathways of web and digital communications, information and support services, network systems, and programming and software development. The world of IT careers is in high demand, so let's get to investigating which career pathway is right for you.

## **EXPLORING MUSIC—SEMESTER**

What comes to mind when you hear the word "music"? Do you think about your favorite band or artist? Or do you think about instruments or scales and chords? The word music means something different to everyone which is why in Exploring Music, there's a little bit of something for everyone! You will learn about how we hear music; how music affects our lives; important elements of music like rhythm, pitch, and harmony; different musical genres; singing and your voice; various instruments; music composition; and the history and culture of music over the years. Tune-up your understanding and appreciation for all things music by signing up for this course!

## **FITNESS—SEMESTER**

Physical fitness is a lot more than just a number on a scale—and that's exactly what you'll learn in this course! This course will help you understand the basics behind what it means to be physically fit, allow you to gain a deeper understanding of how your body functions, learn the complex science behind exercise, explore what it means to be mindful and what inspires you, and determine how you can test your current level of fitness. Being and staying physically fit is a lifelong endeavor and, just like human beings, there are many complexities involved. Learning about and improving your physical fitness is a smart choice to make at any age, and by signing up for this course, you will be doing exactly that. This course is the first step on your exciting journey to understanding and improving your physical fitness.

## **GAME DESIGN 1A—SEMESTER**

We love to play video games but have you ever wanted to build your own? If you are interested in a career in technology and also want a creative outlet, Game Design might be the field for you. Learn how to build a game from the ground up in this interactive, hands-on course that will teach you all the ins and outs of making your own game.

## **GAME DESIGN 1B—SEMESTER**

Building upon the prior prerequisite course, students will further advance their knowledge of game design by taking this course. Delving into the development process, students will create details and add component pieces to a game while learning to prototype, troubleshoot, and test. Additionally, exploring how to critique a game and advertise it will strengthen the student's ability to create a fully functioning game from start to finish.

**Prerequisite:** Successful completion of Middle School Game Design 1A

## **JOURNALISM: TELL YOUR STORY—SEMESTER**

Who? What? When? Where? Journalism provides us with the answers to these questions for the events that affect our lives. In this course, students will learn how to gather information, organize ideas, format stories for different forms of news media, and edit their stories for publication. The course will also examine the historical development of journalism and the role of journalism in society.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY: 1A—SEMESTER**

Photographs are all around us, and each photo helps tell a story. This course teaches students to create their own stories through photos. They will learn the basics of camera, lighting, and how to choose great subjects to create magazine-worthy photos. Students will amaze their friends and family with their newly learned skills.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY: 1B—SEMESTER**

Do you have vacation photos or pics of your pet that need a little editing? How about getting ready to add that new selfie you took to your social media platform? Taking photos is an art, and editing photos is a skill that many photographers seek to master. Explore how to manipulate angles and lighting, the purpose for different types of photo files, how to use different software to edit photos, and safe places you can store them. You'll be well on your way to being an editing guru when you are done with this course.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Middle School Photography 1A**

# Microcourses

Microcourses provide students the opportunity to explore interdisciplinary subjects with real-world applications on an abbreviated schedule. During each three-week course, students have the chance to discover, explore, question, propose, and develop projects of their own creation. Our microcourse offerings are designed to prompt students in being purposeful and playful with their learning, in the hopes they discover a passion with the potential to evolve into future academic or professional pursuits.

## MS ASTOUNDING ARCHITECTURE

Students will investigate the impacts of innovative architecture while exploring their own ideas of what makes a great architect. Through a guided discovery of architectural trends, particularly the Tiny Home Movement, students will seek to understand the cost of architectural creativity and apply what they learn by implementing the architectural design process to their own project proposal and plans.

## MS BRICK BY BRICK

This microcourse is in Minecraft! Humans are pretty small on the face of this planet, yet we strive to great heights by building enormous feats of architectural grandeur that dot the map all over the world. Landmarks have long been a way humans have left a lasting legacy of and snapshot of a span of time. Why are landmarks built? Why are they important, and who gets to decide? Maybe you've been lucky enough to have seen one of these great landmarks in person—The Eiffel Tower, The Statue of Liberty, or the Great Sphinx in Gaza? Tour the astounding feats of human ingenuity as we learn about landmarks around the globe in our digital space. Then try your hand at creating a digital landmark in a Minecraft world. How will your landmark measure up, and will it be capable of standing the test of time?

## MS DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES

Welcome to dystopian fandom! In this course, you will discover the differences between a utopia and a dystopia. You will learn about dystopian literature and why this type of literature is so exciting to read. Through a guided exploration, you will discover how the districts, the reaping, the training, and the main game found in the well-known book/movie series "The Hunger Games" serve the dystopian society, Panem. But, could utopian and dystopian societies be open to interpretation? How different are they really? In the end, it is up to you to decide by creating a project based on a plot of your choosing.

## MS OUTER SPACE

Join us for a virtual space exploration for three weeks where you will discover outer space, space technology, and rocket science. Through an exploration of planets, galaxies, and moments in current events such as the creation of the United States Space Force, students will evaluate the important role of space exploration in our past, present, and future. Together we will observe and apply the engineering design process, conduct hands-on experiments to figure out the how and why of what we observe, and create an out-of-this-world project worthy of a real mission!

## MS FUN WITH PHYSICS

Students begin the course by observing thrilling experiments to spark their curiosity about how and why the world around them works, including everything from electricity to space. By the second week, students are ready to examine the laws of physics that make these phenomena possible and design their own experiment, showing how what they've discovered works in a process or product of their own creation by the end of week three.

## MS SCIENCE OF MY SPORT

Students take the role of inventor in this course as they find a problem in the sport of their choice, take information scientists have provided, and create an object or a process to solve that problem. Anything from protective athletic gear to menu plans for athletes in recovery could be the next discovery one of our students makes!

## MS STRATEGIC MONEY

Students will discover various aspects of the financial world including savings, investments, interest, and stocks, and engage in money management tasks with the goal of increasing their (imaginary) holdings by the end of the course. Students will create a portfolio of how and why they saved, invested, or spent their money.

# ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

## The Academy at Laurel Springs

The Academy at Laurel Springs School is an academic program for distinguished scholars in grades 6-12 who are intellectually curious and driven. As a part of Academy programming, students have the opportunity to select advanced courses and engage with like-minded peers in interactive academic and social settings. To learn more about The Academy, students should contact their Enrollment Coordinators or assigned College Counselors.

### Academy Seminar

As part of the Academy enrollment, each Academy student will take part in grade-level specific college and life planning Seminars which span students' enrollments each school year. Through Seminar, students will have the option to engage in live activities and events with their peers and assigned Academy Counselors.

The Academy Middle School Seminar courses introduce the topics presented in the Upper School Seminar at a level appropriate for Middle School learners, while the Academy Upper School Seminar courses build on the topics presented. In addition, the Academy Seminars include a series of self-assessments, goal setting exercises, career inventories, and related course projects and assignments through which students will identify and attain the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to follow their selected college and career paths. Upper School Academy students earn 0.50 Elective credits per Seminar.

*College Prep*

### LanguageBird

As a part of the Academy enrollment, students may also participate in live Upper School-level world language instruction. Our partner, LanguageBird, is a leader in world language education offering a model of highly personalized, flexible, 1-on-1 live instruction in more than a dozen different languages. Like Laurel Springs' World Language course offerings, the LanguageBird courses are WASC and Cognia accredited, as well as NCAA and UC a-g approved. This is a wonderful option for students who enjoy live instruction and want to accelerate their learning.

### Symposium

The Academy Symposium course is a required discussion-based course where students have the opportunity to hear from guest speakers who are experts in their fields. Students extend their understanding of our speakers' presentations by completing learning activities in conjunction with optional live Symposium Soapbox meetings with like-minded peers and their teacher. The Academy Symposium is designed to facilitate discussion, to build collaboration skills, to foster the ability to support ideas with facts, and to practice civil dialogue techniques with individuals who may share opposing viewpoints. Upper School Students earn 0.25 credits for the full-year Symposium course.

### ADVANCED ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS MS (6TH GRADE)

This Academy Ancient Civilizations course will focus on many places around the world where some of the first groups of people settled into stable communities and developed complex societies, cities, governments, and empires. Students will discover how geography influenced early cultures and how early cultures have helped shape the world today. By studying the people and events that ushered in the dawn of major Western and non-Western civilizations, students will expand their understanding of history, civics and government, geography, and economics. Ancient civilizations are a necessary building block for all future historical studies.

## **ADVANCED 6TH GRADE ENGLISH**

The Academy Advanced 6<sup>th</sup> Grade English serves as an introduction to and enhancement of the writing process that many students entering middle school are familiar with. In the first semester of this year-long course, students read and analyze a science fiction novel to explore themes of individual strengths, and the power of community. Reflection is regularly integrated into writing to help students process their own thoughts about the themes, characters, and plot points of the novel. Classic writing patterns like The Hero's Journey are discussed, paired with meaningful excerpts from literature to enhance a student's understanding of the journeys we all take as we mature into adulthood. Finally, students learn and apply the basics of research writing, identifying credible sources, and broadening their worldview with a culture study.

In the second semester, students dive into fables and folklore, digging into ideas that discuss why we use stories to teach morals and lessons in different cultures. Students dive into non-fiction writing with informational and narrative essays to explore their own culture and understanding of their place in the world. The second semester of this course gives students a chance to practice the responsibility and accountability of reading their novel and completing a novel guide throughout the entire semester. A chance to try their hand at different forms of media to plan and tell stories finishes out the year for a comprehensive foundation for the skills that will be built on as learners progress through their academic journeys.

## **ADVANCED WORLD CULTURES & HISTORY MS (7TH GRADE)**

The Academy Advanced World History focuses on many regions around the world through a thematic approach. A combination of contemporary human behavior heightens students' understanding of modern social issues and promotes a greater understanding of geography, religions, cultures, and much more.

## **ADVANCED 7TH GRADE ENGLISH**

The Academy Advanced 7th Grade English reinforces foundational skills and makes room for students to develop their voice, tone, and style in their writing all while continuing to develop the critical analysis lens alongside classic and contemporary literature. Students will read and analyze fiction, drama, YA literature, and informational texts representing a wide range of topics. Critical reading and analysis, the writing process, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics are woven into learning practiced in collaborative discussions as well as informal journal entries, presentations, and speeches. Writing assignments include a personal narrative, persuasive essays, poetry, myths, and an original one-act play.

## **ADVANCED MIDDLE SCHOOL U.S. HISTORY (8TH GRADE)**

Through an inquiry-based approach to historical exploration combined with the study of contemporary human behavior, the Academy Middle School U.S History course heightens students' understandings of modern social issues, increases their ability to relate history to their own lives, and promotes greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members of society.

## **ADVANCED 8TH GRADE ENGLISH**

In this Academy critical thinking course, students will read and analyze various kinds of written texts, using them as both examples and sources of ideas for reflection, analysis, and argument. Students will learn better ways to discuss their thoughts and perceptions with others by spending some time thinking critically about news and media sources. Students will also examine the role of autobiographies and diaries in their understanding of history, allowing them an opportunity to examine the impact of point of view on nonfiction texts. Students will have a chance to write autobiographical narratives of their own and connect their experiences to universal themes or philosophical positions. Additionally, through the study of poetic expression and its relationship with language conventions, students will hone their understanding and use of syntax, voice, sentence types, and punctuation. Finally, students will consider what high school will ask of them and how they might fulfill those expectations, having gained a better understanding of their strengths and reflecting on their own development throughout the year via the portfolio they will have compiled during this course.

## **MS PROBLEM SOLVING 1—SEMESTER**

Problem Solving 1 is an Academy-only math elective where students learn about growth mindset and the steps followed by strong problem solvers. Students will learn how to identify a problem, break it down into simpler parts, analyze and synthesize, communicate with their peers about possible solutions, and present their final product. The use of logic trees and heuristics will be presented along with other tools that the students will find useful. As the class learns these problem-solving skills throughout the semester, they will be completing a project, which requires them to create their own Start-Up Business Plan. Students will have the opportunity during their workshops to fine tune their problem-solving skills, collaborate and brainstorm with their peers, receive guidance from their teacher, and finalize their final product.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Pre-Algebra A**

**Spring Semester Only—Start date in January 2023**

## **MS PROBLEM SOLVING 2—SEMESTER**

Problem Solving 2 is an Academy-only math elective based in deep understanding and application of math concepts to prepare middle school students for their upcoming math classes. The course focuses on mathematical habits of mind including making sense of problems, modeling, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, and constructing viable arguments. Students will reflect on their process by questioning “Does my solution make sense, is the process justifiable and how do I know?” Students will learn the language and ways of thinking about math in order to uphold and defend their mathematical thinking after completing this problem-solving course.

**Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra 1 A**

**Spring Semester Only—Start date in January 2023**

## **MS WORLD OF COMPUTING—SEMESTER**

World of Computing course is an Academy-only first-year computer science course introducing the basics of programming with Karel the Dog, and the history and impact of computing. Students will learn to code using blocks to drag and drop, but they can switch between blocks and text as desired. With a unique focus on creativity, problem-solving and project-based learning, World of Computing gives students the opportunity to explore several important topics of computing using their own ideas and creativity to develop an interest in computer science that will foster further endeavors in the field.

## **MS PROGRAMMING WITH TRACY AND MICRO:BIT—SEMESTER**

The Intro to Programming with Tracy and micro:bit is an Academy-only course that merges the Physical Computing with micro:bit and the Introduction to Python with Tracy courses. The Tracy course will provide the prerequisite information needed before students apply programming concepts to their physical micro:bit device. Note that the Tracy lessons are in Python and the micro:bit lessons are in JavaScript. While the languages are different, the programming concepts are the same. The micro:bit lessons have videos and examples that provide a bridge between the differences in syntax.

## **MS WEB DESIGN**

In today's world, web pages are the most common medium for sharing ideas and information. Learning to design websites is an incredibly useful skill for any career path. Web Design is an Academy-only, project-based course that teaches students how to build their own web pages. Students will learn the languages HTML and CSS, and will create their own live homepages to serve as portfolios of their creations. By the end of this course, students will be able to explain how web pages are developed and viewed on the Internet, analyze and fix errors in existing websites, and create their very own multi page websites.



## **Courses with Workshop**

The following courses are available in 2022–2023 with an optional synchronous course component meeting once per week per course. See the full course description within this Program of Study.

- ADVANCED 6TH GRADE ENGLISH WITH WORKSHOP
- ADVANCED 7TH GRADE ENGLISH WITH WORKSHOP
- ADVANCED 8TH GRADE ENGLISH WITH WORKSHOP
- ADVANCED MIDDLE SCHOOL ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS (6TH GRADE) WITH WORKSHOP
- ADVANCED MIDDLE SCHOOL WORLD CULTURES & HISTORY (7TH GRADE) WITH WORKSHOP
- ADVANCED MIDDLE SCHOOL U.S. HISTORY (8TH GRADE) WITH WORKSHOP
- 6TH GRADE SCIENCE WITH WORKSHOP
- MS PROBLEM SOLVING 1 WITH WORKSHOP (SPRING SEMESTER ONLY)
- MS PROBLEM SOLVING 2 WITH WORKSHOP (SPRING SEMESTER ONLY)



# LIMITLESS LEARNING

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