

United Friends School Fifth through Eighth Grade Curriculum at a Glance

Language Arts

Reading/Literature: Read independently to expand reading vocabulary; demonstrate understanding and interpretation of fiction and nonfiction; read recommended 25 books per year in a variety of genre and types of text, and respond through discussion and written response; establish reading goals and maintain reading log. Understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas; use and understand a variety of media. Read, analyze and interpret literature including poetry and drama. Whole group reading and discussion of, for example, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Old Man and the Sea*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Pioneers*, *The House on Mango Street*, *And Then There Were None*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Messenger*.

Writing: Following the writing process and the *Six Traits of Writing* (ideas-content, voice, word choice, organization, sentence fluency and conventions) students write with a sharp, distinct focus in which they clearly identify their topic and audience and establish a single point of view. Apply organizational methods; use relevant illustrations and graphics; utilize dialogue; apply literary conflict and include literary elements and literary devices in their short stories, plays, and poetry. Additional types of writing include letters, descriptions, reports, instructions, narrative and persuasive essays, articles, and interviews. Students maintain a portfolio of their work.

Vocabulary: etymology (origins) of words; definitions of common, learned and foreign words used frequently in the English language (e.g. *carte blanche*, *faux pas*).

Speaking: Children are given many opportunities to express themselves verbally and to gain in confidence and clarity in speaking to individuals and large and small groups. Children throughout the grades are involved in play performances, class discussions, readers' theater, debates, role plays, and formal presentations of their research projects. Teachers work with students in developing skills of projecting their voices, enunciating their words, making eye contact with their audience, and organizing their presentations so that they are cohesive, logical and interesting.

Listening: Children learn how to listen by practicing listening. During Meeting for Worship, which lies at the heart of United Friends School, every child is encouraged to listen to their still, small, inner voice, a task which requires lots of practice and preparation. Children gather for Meeting in their classes where they practice the skills of listening to the voices of others as well as their inner voices. In conflict resolution exercises, children learn how to listen to those with who they are in conflict. In classroom activities, children learn to listen for directions, instructions, and important messages. Children are encouraged to listen for comprehension of general ideas and specific details.

Library: Independent research projects to develop mastery in the research process using the Big6 information problem solving model; critical analysis of sources including text, internet, and periodical databases; proficiency in note taking; exploration of test taking strategies; exploration of media technology including Word, Excel spreadsheets, Power Point, Inspiration, and web page design.

Math

The *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum emphasizes: "Use of concrete, real-life examples that are meaningful and memorable as an introduction to key mathematical concepts. Repeated exposures to mathematical concepts and skills to develop children's ability to recall knowledge from long-term memory. Frequent practice of basic computation skills to build mastery of procedures and quick recall of facts, often through games and verbal

exercises. Use of multiple methods and problem-solving strategies to foster true proficiency and accommodate different learning styles.”

The fifth and sixth grade *Everyday Mathematics* program emphasizes the following grade level goals: number and numeration, operations and computation, data and chance, geometry patterns, functions, and algebra.

Pre-Algebra: Algebraic expressions and integers; solving one-step equations and inequalities; decimals and equations; factors, fractions and exponents; operations with fractions; ratios, proportions and percents; solving equations and inequalities; linear functions and graphing; spatial thinking; area and volume; right triangles in algebra; data analysis and probability.

Algebra: Tools of Algebra; functions and their graphs; algebraic concepts and simple equations; equations and inequalities; graphing and writing linear equations; systems of equations and inequalities; quadratic equations and functions; exponents and exponential functions; polynomials; rational expressions and functions.

Geometry: Exploring Geometry; reasoning in geometry, parallels and polygons, triangle congruence, perimeter and area, shapes in space, surface area and volume, similar shapes, circles, Intro to Trigonometry.

Science

In the study of science, we provide opportunities for our students to learn that “people can figure out how the world works, that the universe is a unified system, that knowledge gained from studying one part of it can often be applied to other parts, and that knowledge is both stable and subject to change.” Benchmarks for Science Literacy

We do this by providing a science program that enables students to be independent learners and thinkers who are engaged in the scientific process of discovery. Students learn to observe, question, organize, research, and connect information as they construct meaning. For example, some topics may include: Micro and macro organisms; ecology of woodlands and streams; astrobiology; scientific methods, lab safety and procedures, SI (metric) units of measure, independent and dependent variables, collecting and graphing data, the procedures and equipment for measuring mass, volume, and density; properties of matter; local geology; catastrophic events; Delaware Bay ecosystems. Science is taught in a rotating three-year cycle as follows:

Yr 1: Earth and Space Science

Yr 2: Life Science

Yr 3: Physical Science

Social Studies

Our primary goals in teaching social studies include: to develop cultural awareness, to improve the ability of students to think critically and analytically about social issues and to empower our students to think from multiple perspectives, especially while developing their own.

We do this by providing many opportunities to explore and understand topics drawing upon such disciplines as history, geography, economics, anthropology, archaeology, sociology, political science, and religion. We seek to integrate the study of the social sciences with the humanities so that students begin to see these topics as complex, interrelated ones. For example, some topics may include: elements of a culture; Thailand and Central Asia; comparative religions; role of religion in politics and culture; comparative political structures; the US constitution; history of slavery; race, culture, and class. Social studies is taught in a rotating two-year cycle as follows:

Fifth and Sixth Grades:

Yr 1:
Physical Geography
Central and South America
Asia

Yr 2:
Economics
Early Civilizations
Europe

Seventh and Eighth Grades:

Yr 1:
American History
Human Geography

Yr 2:
Government
Africa
Oceania

Spirituality

Each class has regular Meetings for Worship in their classrooms and these look different depending on the age of the children. There are Meetings that are periods of silent worship in which teachers help children sit still and listen to their inner voices. Some classes light candles to help children focus, some have centering jars or rocks. There are Meetings that reflect on Quaker history or issues of peace and justice in the world and in the school. Children learn to address immediate conflicts, and all classes work hard to learn the skills of resolving conflicts without violence. Each year, we engage in a community focus of one testimony. We attempt to nourish spiritual growth within each child and inspire a greater sense of self-worth and respect for others.

For information on Spanish, Music, Library, Physical Education, Arts and Technology please see the Enrichment page of our website.