



Waldorf School of Lexington

Grade Three Curriculum Standards

Overview

Third graders love to work. Their self-esteem grows with accomplishment and the mastery of wonderful challenges. In this year the curriculum begins with the Old Testament story of creation and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. New order is achieved on the earth through civilization. Third graders explore the practical aspects of life on earth: the cultivation of food, the building of shelters, and the manufacture of garments. Class activities are enhanced by gardening and building projects outside the classroom. Mathematics studies serve practical needs with the study of measurements (time and distance) and money, while continuing practice in the four operations on ever-larger numbers.

The gradual separation of a child from the unity of the universe around her comes to completion in third grade. At some point during the year third graders will enter a developmental phase referred to by Waldorf teachers as the “nine year change.” With an experience of separateness come self-awareness and a sense of being different from others. Students can feel lonely and misunderstood. The order and harmony of the world previously experienced as certain is questionable, including the authority of the important adults in their lives. Practical work and an interest in life on earth provide the nine-year-old with new focus, another way to feel connected to an orderly world.

As sturdy individuals emerge from group consciousness, teachers call upon the individual with increasing frequency. Building on foundations put down in the previous two years, it is reasonable to expect that most students will read at grade level and practice multiplication tables with the goal of demonstrating mastery. Third graders usually have the voice and the confidence to take on individual roles in the class play. They are ready to take the first week-long class trip away from home and family in order to experience life on a working farm.

Instrumental music is introduced, with each third grader choosing a stringed instrument. Violin, viola, and cello players practice hard within their groups. One day they will be reunited in an ensemble.

With newborn awareness of self and others, third graders can find it challenging to work together as a class. It is important to be able to work out the conflicts that often arise on the playground. Respect for others and opposing points of view is expected. Likewise, participation and a positive attitude are assumed in supporting the needs of the class as a whole.

Grade Three Skills by Subject Area

Work Habits and Attitude

In grade three, students should:

- Demonstrate increasing awareness of group needs and contribute to the class well-being: take turns, speak/listen, support others, classroom chores
- Participate in both individual and collaborative work
- Resolve conflicts with respect and self-control

Language Arts

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Listen to oral presentations, comprehend and recall the next day
- Participate in class discussions
- Speak clearly in class discussions, group recitations, and dramatic presentations
- Improve printing and master cursive writing with care for neatness
- Strengthen sentence composition and write paragraphs (there will be varied abilities in the class)
- Create journals out of student's own experiences
- Begin to recognize parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective, adverb
- Work with basic punctuation as needed in writing assignments
- Practice spelling, words generated from lesson content
- Practice basic spelling rules
- Take dictation, several sentences at time
- Continue reading, arrive at grade level by the end of the school year
- Read aloud fluently with inflection and attention to punctuation cues

Math

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Apply four operations to larger numbers
- Work with place value in larger numbers
- Master telling time and solve problems involving time
- Solve problems relating to money and making change
- Check solutions to calculations using the inverse operation
- Observe number patterns (especially in multiplication tables)
- Discover prime and square numbers
- Master multiplication tables 1–12
- Begin long division with divisor up to 12 and remainders
- Practice reading and solving word problems
- Practice “mental math”
- Begin measurements: linear, liquid, dry, and weight

Natural Science and Social Studies

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Examine primitive house building techniques and the relationship of materials used to the surrounding environment and the cultures of the various peoples
- Observe modern-day construction, trades involved (through field trips and class construction project)
- Understand the origin of a piece of clothing by experiencing the fiber arts
- Observe a working farm: animal husbandry and crop cultivation (farm visit and participation in chores)
- Learn about the cultivation of grains for human sustenance
- Participate in gardening chores

Foreign Languages

In grade three, students should:

- Be familiar with basic items of food, clothing, and furniture
- Be familiar with forms of transportation, places and directions
- Be familiar with times of day (morning, evening...), clock time: full and half hour
- Memorize rhymes, poems, songs, and short plays
- Be aware of noun genders
- Take active part in group recitation, singing, and games
- Become aware of personal pronouns in conversation
- Become aware of verbs, articles, nouns, prepositions, and adjectives
- Be familiar with numbers up to 100
- Practice simple “mental math” problems in the language

Music

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Sing in C-major scale
- Begin singing rounds
- Play C-recorder (soprano)
- Continue folk dancing and rhythmic activity

Instrumental Music

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Be familiar with violin, viola, or cello
- Play songs in two parts and simple rounds
- Know the diatonic scale in two keys
- Learn music aurally through imitation
- Understand basic concepts of reading music

Art

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Develop form and technique in watercolor painting
- Explore: light, polarity (light/dark, above/below), plants, animals, the human figure
- Use color to express a mood
- Continue to develop proficiency in crayon drawings with more attention to detail
- Model in beeswax and clay—create model replicas of houses
- Control line in form drawings, balance symmetries—more complex, symmetries that cross the mid-line, symmetries in four quadrants, forms that evolve and change into another
- Draw geometric figures freehand—circle, square, pentagon, octagon, etc.

Handwork

By the end of grade three, students should be able to:

- Crochet a hat within a certain timeline (about two months)
- Knit an article using ribbing (i.e. knit one/purl one) stitches, such as a headband
- Knit an animal using increases and decreases, casting on and off on the same piece
- Some may learn to develop a knitting pattern for an animal (advanced)
- Some may learn to follow a printed knitting pattern from a book (advanced)
- Recognize and fix minor mistakes (dropped stitches)
- Some may learn simple embroidery (stem stitch, chain stitch as preparation for fourth grade) (advanced)
- Continue to stimulate their imagination through the shaping of the animals, from 2D to 3D
- Experience a connection between the main lesson presentation of the trades etc. and the actual work of a craftsperson

Eurythmy

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Explore expansion/contraction through exercises and spirals
- Explore directions with rod exercises
- Balance copper rod on head, turn around to music
- Step rhythms to poetry
- Walk geometric forms from imagination
- Experience major/minor mood in music, moving to music

Physical Education

In grade three, students should be able to:

- Understand and follow rules

- Work on a team
- Practice gymnastics introduced in previous years, execute with coordination and confidence
- Toss three balls as pre-juggling skills
- Jump rope: forward, backward, with crossovers, individually and with a partner
- Show good sportsmanship