



# Waldorf School of Lexington

## Grade Four Curriculum Standards

### Overview

As fourth graders emerge from the “nine-year change” they are sturdy, self-confident, and robust. One can picture each student standing at the crossing point of two universal coordinates. From this vantage point the study of geography begins looking outward in ever widening circles. The first map may be a scale drawing of the classroom or the student’s bedroom. From there the geographical outlook is extended through the school/home environment into neighboring towns all the way to the state boundaries of Massachusetts. Historical vignettes enliven the fourth grader’s connection to the land and its use over time.

The crossing point appears as a theme for fourth grade in handwork classes where students learn the cross-stitch. Form drawings emphasize a crossing in intricate patterns of braids and knots. The bold, strong use of color creates a sense of three-dimensional weaving on paper. Weaving and crossing forms are a part of choreography in eurythmy classes. In language, grammar is the focus, and students learn correct terminology for parts of speech, verb tenses, punctuation, and the four types of sentences.

Mythologies from Nordic Countries depict the creation of the world out of fire and ice. Fourth graders enjoy the grandeur of characters that inhabit this world: gods and giants, dwarfs and humans. They see these characters march unmistakably, step by step, toward their doom. As one world is destroyed, another emerges. Students experience themselves in the new humans that inhabit the dawning world.

In mathematics, fourth graders are introduced to fractions—the realm of “less than one,” where everything is split into ever-smaller pieces. Looking outward into nature, science studies become more focused and objective. Fourth graders study the animal kingdom. They look at animal forms and attributes and view them in relation to human form and function. Often students choose a particular animal to study as part of a first research project.

In music classes, division into smaller groups is bridged by harmony. Each group can take part in a round. One group sings while the other echoes.

The social life of fourth graders is active. They play hard and loudly dispute the rules of a game if fairness is at stake. While a good referee ensures a happier outcome to the games, students are expected to practice self-control and respect for others. Teachers guide students through a process of resolving conflicts when they arise. Fourth graders are expected to be supportive of classroom activity and classmates even if the assigned task is challenging.

# Grade Four Skills by Subject Area

## Work Habits and Attitude

In grade four, the students should:

- Participate in individual and collaborative work
- Participate in social activities and practice social inclusion of others
- Demonstrate awareness of group needs and respond with appropriate action and willingness to help
- Show respect for teacher, classmates, property, and materials
- Work with positive attitude and be open to feedback even through difficulties
- Exhibit self-discipline and personal responsibility

## Language Arts

In grade four, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate oral comprehension and recall
- Follow a series of directions
- Memorize and recite poems and verses with clear diction and fluency
- Perform in assemblies and plays
- Apply capitalization and punctuation rules
- Understand four types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, command, and exclamation) and use corresponding punctuation
- Write three sequential paragraphs with an initial sentence, supporting material, and closure
- Compose an informal letter
- Do first research project and make oral presentation
- Understand parts of speech and verb tenses
- Begin to use spelling rules, put words in alphabetical order, use dictionary
- Vocabulary and spelling; dictionary use
- Write in cursive
- Write and edit compositions on main lesson themes
- Decode more complex words
- Read aloud with fluency, clear diction, and inflection
- Read independently for half an hour
- Comprehend, recall, and discuss what was read
- Compose book report and related projects

## Math

Grade four skills and topics include:

- Master four operations with multiple-digit numbers using estimation and rounding off
- Long division with multiples of 10 and two-digit numbers

- Place value and signs of operation
- Problems using measurement of time, linear, dry/liquid
- Practice “mental math” without manipulatives
- Word problems with choice of operation
- Fractions: numerator/denominator, equivalent fractions, expand and simplify fractions, find simple common denominators, proper/improper fractions and mixed numbers
- Add and subtract fractions
- Number patterns and prime numbers
- Simple averages
- Factoring
- Calculate and construct scale drawings

## Natural Science and Social Studies

In grade four, students should be able to:

- Animal physiology; compare and contrast with human physiology
- Mapping skills: classroom, home, and surrounding area
- Orient with compass directions
- Learn state geographical regions, the original peoples to settle the area, and the influence of the environment on these peoples
- Local history and geography

## Foreign Languages

By the end of grade four, students should:

- Know and write the alphabet
- Spell their names and common words
- Begin to write, read, and become aware of grammatical structure
- Retain longer texts, recite long poems, and sing in rounds
- Give simple descriptions
- Practice finding nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions
- Begin to recognize sentence structure
- Write simple sentences
- Use numbers up to 500
- Practice simple “mental math” and written arithmetic

## Instrumental Music

By the end of grade four, students should:

- Have a basic facility on the violin, viola, or cello, playing scales and simple songs/rounds in first position
- Understand finger patterns and how to play in different parts of the bow and execute rhythms effectively with a nice sound

- Begin reading music; time signatures; notation of basic rhythms
- Imitate melodies by ear on their instruments
- Develop regular practice habits and care for instruments and materials
- Perform at whole-school assemblies and concert evenings

## Chorus

In grade four, students should be able to:

- Sing with rhythm instruments
- Sing rounds, call/response songs

## Art

In grade four, the students should be able to:

- Develop animal forms and landscapes using wet-on-wet watercolor painting
- Develop spatial imagination and awareness with lines that cross over each other in form drawing: braiding, knots
- Model with clay
- Continue to develop drawing skills using main lesson themes (Norse Myths, animals, etc.)
- Begin scale drawings

## Handwork

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

- Embroider with a hoop
- Show appropriate mastery of running stitch, back stitch, chain stitch, blanket stitch, whip stitch
- Cross stitch, with the element of symmetry supported by color and form
- Macramé a cord
- Sew on buttons and snaps
- Be familiar with basic sewing terms, seam allowances, etc.
- Show correct use of pin, scissors, and needles
- Some may learn to knit a bag with five double-pointed needles (advanced)
- Thread a needle without help
- Knot a thread without help
- Show age-appropriate focus, concentration, and hand-eye coordination

## Eurythmy

In grade four, students should be able to:

- Begin facing forward in choreography, coming out of circle formation
- Continue dexterity/concentration exercises, combining movement with numbers
- Recognize major/minor mood (musical)
- Move forms that include crossing and weaving

- Execute rod exercises with quick dexterity: directions, waterfall, finger exercises
- Practice mirror exercises, work with alliterations in poetry, question and answer
- Move as an individual in larger group (Planetary Dance)
- Begin on stage performance

## Physical Education

In grade four, students should be able to:

- Develop very good eye-limb coordination, spatial orientation
- Control movement in all types of games
- Follow rules
- Approach gym equipment with confidence
- Develop basic juggling skills
- Handle basics of devil sticks and diabolos
- Show good sportsmanship