



Waldorf School of Lexington

Grade Eight Curriculum Standards

Overview

The central theme of this year is the struggle for human freedom throughout history. In Main Lesson, students explore the role of government in society; the stories of the American, French, and Russian revolutions; and the workings of various economic systems. Particular attention is paid to the industrial age and the lives of workers in the late 19th and early 20th century. In handwork, they produce machine-sewn garments, and in woodwork, they design and carve handmade stools.

In science, the class teacher continues to take a phenomenological approach. Experiment and discovery precede theoretical explanations. The goal is to sharpen the students' own powers of observation, which is the basic requirement for all advanced and meaningful work in the sciences. Eighth grade science blocks frequently cover human anatomy, organic chemistry, meteorology, physics (either hydraulics or electricity), and/or computer science. The science curriculum will vary during this year, depending on which subjects have already been presented in sixth and seventh grade.

In math Main Lesson blocks, new geometric concepts are introduced with an emphasis on solids. Algebra I is taught in a separate math skills class that meets four times per week. After initial presentations of subject matter by the teacher, the students work independently or in small groups to complete sets of problems.

Most eighth graders graduate with confidence and the ability to express themselves in speech and in writing. Years of recitations, dramatic presentations, musical performances, and oral reporting have made them comfortable and articulate before an audience. They have practice writing in narrative, expository, and descriptive styles. English skills classes three times a week provide continued practice with essay and creative writing, grammar, reading comprehension, and research skills.

Socially, eighth graders are leaders in the school community. They develop a particularly special relationship with the new first graders—presenting them with roses at the year's opening assembly, serving as buddies during the Michaelmas games, and helping them master the art of knitting in their handwork classes. Through the Social Inclusion Program, eighth graders have the opportunity to participate in a community service project. Academically, emotionally, and morally, each child has begun to establish his/her own identity.

The eighth grade year is capped with a series of events that celebrate these students' achievements: a dramatic production, a class trip, an art/music evening, and a graduation ceremony.

Grade Eight Skills by Subject Area

Work Habits and Attitude

To be achieved by graduation:

- Assume responsibility for self and work
- Maintain an organized assignment planner and complete homework assignments in timely fashion
- Work independently and quietly with focus on a task for up to 45 minutes
- Work collaboratively and do fair share of the task
- Work neatly with desire to do best work
- Respect teachers, classmates, property, and materials
- Keep personal and school belongings well organized
- Be prepared and ready for class on time
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Work constructively with feedback from teachers and classmates
- Support classmates and the group
- Practice social inclusion and be included in social activities
- Use group process and discussion to work through social issues and class projects
- Participate in class discussion
- Participate in choral recitation and singing

Language Arts

In grade eight, students should be able to:

- Build knowledge base through attention to oral presentations, memory, and comprehension
- Show acquisition of verbally presented material through artistic rendering, daily recall, self-generated reports and essays written for main lesson books
- Build vocabulary
- Participate in class discussions
- Recite poetry, read prose both individually and in group
- Speak clearly with good diction, proper inflection, fluency
- Present oral reports
- Read for information
- Read silently for sustained length of time
- Read aloud, with inflection, both poetry and writing in different styles
- Comprehend and recall what has been read
- Generate writing which reflects sequential organization and complete thoughts with appropriate syntactical structure
- Use dictionary and thesaurus on a regular basis
- Work through written research projects demonstrating skill in note taking, outlining, writing, and editing for final draft

- Edit their work for capitalization, spelling, punctuation, grammatical errors
- Use subordinate clauses, relative clauses
- Explore writing in a variety of styles: expository, narrative, descriptive, short stories
- Continue work with different styles of poetry: epic, lyric, dramatic
- Explore and use figures of speech: simile, metaphor
- Distinguish differences in language: jargon, slang, idiom, formal language

English Skills

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

- Continue use of word processing and internet research
- Write stories with focus on dialogue and narrative voice
- Differentiate between casual and formal tone in writing, particularly colloquialism and cliché
- Write literary analysis and compare/contrast essays on reading material (stories, books, and poetry)
- Understand and recognize the use of irony, satire, mood, tone, theme, symbolism, characterization, and conflict
- Research and write persuasive essays on current events with appropriate citations and bibliographies
- Identify and correctly use parts of the sentence, particularly predicate adjective and predicate nominative; diagram sentences; understand and correctly apply subject-verb agreement and antecedent-pronoun agreement
- Recognize and use iambic pentameter
- Be able to analyze as well as write villanelles and sonnets
- Recognize and use alliteration and assonance

Mathematics

In eighth grade, students work for the first time with a math textbook. By the end of the year, they should demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

- Algebra:
 - Operating with polynomials: combining and simplifying, subtracting and adding, using order of operations
 - Using the distributive, commutative, and associative property to simplify algebraic expressions
 - Factoring of polynomials and binomials
 - Graphing of linear equations and inequalities
 - Solving systems of equations with linear combination
 - Method and substitution method, graphing systems of equations
 - Solving inequalities and equations containing absolute values
 - Simplifying rational algebraic expressions and radical algebraic expressions
 - Analyzing word problems and solving them algebraically
- Geometry

- Platonic solids
- Volume of rectangular solids
- Volume of cylinder, sphere, cone

Students will show understanding and working use of:

- Scientific notation and standard form
- Quadratic formula
- Meaning of functions

Math Skills Class

By the end of eighth grade, students should be proficient in following topics:

- Operations involving integers, variables, terms and expressions
- Solving linear equations, multiplying and factoring of polynomials
- Solving quadratic equations by factoring, and translating word problems into algebraic equations
- Properties of exponents and scientific notation
- Solving systems of linear equations by graphing, substitution, and linear combination method
- Working with expressions and equations containing two variables (the Cartesian coordinate system, slope-intercept form, point-slope form, rapid graphing, and finding equation from graphs)
- Solving equations including absolute value equations and inequalities, simplifying rational and radical expressions, and solving of quadratic equations with the quadratic formula
- Familiarity with functions

Science

In grade eight, students achieve working knowledge in several of the disciplines mentioned below (subject to teacher's choice).

- Physics
 - Hydromechanics and aeromechanics
 - Meteorology
 - Electricity and magnetism
- Organic chemistry
 - Sun energy relationship in plant production of sugar
 - Other sugars in nature, testing for sugar
 - Qualities of starches and testing for the presence of a starch
 - Qualities of proteins and testing for the presence of a protein
 - Qualities of fats and oils, relationship to water and fire, and testing for the presence of a fat
 - Practical applications of the above for cooking, nutrition, and the manufacture of soaps and cosmetics
- Physiology
 - Skeletal and muscular systems

- Brain and nervous system
 - Senses, in particular eye and ear
- Computers
 - History of computing
 - Examples of programming
 - The Internet

History

In grade eight, students will cover the following topics:

- The Age of Enlightenment
- The Colonization of the Americas
- The American, French, and Russian Revolutions
- The Rise of Communism
- U.S. History to the present, with emphasis on:
 - The slave trade, the American Civil War, the civil rights movement
 - Westward expansion and the Native American experience
 - The Industrial Revolution and the continued effects of technology on human life
 - World Wars I and II
 - Recent history and current events

Geography

In grade eight, students focus on Asia and/or Africa, physical features and political boundaries, historical and present culture

Foreign Languages

Eighth grade requires students to think and use Spanish or German in practical ways. By eighth grade students show proficiency in foreign language skills, including listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Students continue to explore and appreciate other cultures and gain a better understanding of their own mother tongue and the multicultural world around us. A comparison of grammar from English to the foreign language is encouraged.

By the end of the year students should:

- Be able to compose longer pieces of writing with reasonable accuracy, including essays, summaries, stories, and reports
- Have acquired a firm grasp of sentence structure
- Be aware of all tenses
- Expand their vocabulary and work independently with dictionaries
- Read with fluency, clear diction, and expression
- Give presentations in the language
- Demonstrate knowledge of geography, culture, and some history of a country where the language is spoken

- Memorize songs, plays, and poems
- Complete regular homework assignments
- Demonstrate comprehension and use of grammar covered in this class
- Be able to express themselves and answer questions clearly in a range of everyday situations
- Show proficiency on tests, dictations, and translations
- Follow directions in target language

Instrumental Music

In grade eight, students should:

- Be able to play major and minor scales in keys with up to three flats and sharps
- Understand how to interpret key signatures in both sharp and flat keys
- Understand the relationship between major keys and their relative minor keys
- Be able to sight read intermediate level orchestral music with few mistakes
- Understand the characteristics of the three types of minor scales
- Be able to execute dynamics and musical gestures within the ensemble setting
- Recognize several important composers and their contributions to music
- Perform at whole school assemblies and concert evenings

Chorus

In the grade eight, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate facility singing in multiple parts
- Continue to develop sight singing in parts
- Participate in choral ensemble
- Explore songs in diverse historical and cultural contexts
- Participate in musical production
- Take solo part in musical production (encouraged, not required)
- Participate in arts evenings and concerts in concert dress

Art

In grade eight, students will be able to:

- Continue painting from a variety of subjects
- Continue to relate color and technique in painting to a particular theme
- Study light and shadow
- Work with composition and proportion in drawing
- Model forms from the human being

Handwork

By the end of grade eight, students will:

- Use and master a variety of sewing techniques on the electric sewing machine
- Have an experience using a treadle machine

- Buy, read, and follow a commercial pattern for clothes
- Construct and sew a garment by machine (dress, shirt, skirt, PJs, vest, etc.)
- Contribute to a community project (ex. quilt for a teacher) if there is time
- Learn the history and social significance of machine sewing
- Be familiar with basic sewing terminology

Woodwork

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

- Practice proper care of and develop respect for tools
- Work within prescribed safety rules
- Design a functional stool
- Apply acquired skills to construct and finish the design
- Work in a relatively independent manner

Eurythmy

In grade eight, students should be able to:

- Know step and gesture and know major/minor mood in music
- Know musical intervals, know gestures for chords and dissonances
- Work with form and verse
- Work with choreography of more complicated geometric forms
- Achieve comfort in spatial orientation with increasingly difficult rod exercises
- Practice concentration exercises in many variations
- Perform on stage

Physical Education

In grade eight, students should be able to:

- Compete in all types of games
- Demonstrate strength and endurance in both individual and team sports
- Be conscious of space around them
- Work with Bothmer gymnastic exercises
- Show good sportsmanship

Overnight Trips

Each year the seventh and eighth grades go on a trip together, alternating between Hulbert Outdoor Center in Fairlee, VT, and Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership in Rockland, ME. At Hulbert, students work on outdoor skills and team building. At Hurricane Island, students participate in marine biology research and learn about environmental sustainability.