



Extraordinary Education. Timeless Traditions. Inspired Lives.

What to Expect: Fifth Grade at Denver JDS

A major focus of fifth grade at Denver JDS is the journey to independent learning. Throughout the year, students engage in hands-on learning with a focus on collaboration and an emphasis on reflection and the process of learning. As the students begin their transition to middle school, they hone their questioning and critical thinking skills. Additionally, the students take on leadership roles within the school, preparing for their transition to the Upper Division for middle school, made official through the Bridging Ceremony at the end of the year.

Literacy

Fifth grade literacy is largely integrated into science and social studies through project-based learning in units such as “Natural Disasters,” “Sustainable Energy,” and “Immigration.” Students analyze characters, plot and settings, as well as recognize an author’s purpose for writing and his organizational strategies. Fifth graders become skillful writers with their own individual styles. They produce and present research projects and write more complex narratives and creative fiction. They edit their writing, using what they have learned about the rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. As in reading, they are encouraged to explore writing for personal expression, putting their often intense feelings onto paper through autobiographical writing, poetry, stories, and song writing.

Our Learning Resource Center and Gifted Learner Program support Denver JDS teachers in challenging students across the academic spectrum and provide direct student support. Inside the classroom, flexible grouping and differentiation allows students to all be supported and encouraged to reach their potential. Additionally, through our Focus on Growth Initiative, teachers work with students to set individualized academic and social-emotional goals for the year, focusing on personal growth.

Denver JDS develops and fosters future-ready skills within our students to prepare them not only for today’s world, but for the world of tomorrow. With an emphasis on creativity, communications, collaboration, critical thinking, and communities, we equip our students with the skills they need for success in any content area.

Math

Fifth graders learn to solve complex problems with complex numbers with place value from thousands to millions. They divide whole numbers with and without remainders. They make connections between decimals, fractions, and percentages and learn to multiply and divide fractions and to do the same operations using the powers of time. They apply these skills to the real world by solving problems about time, measurement, and money. Fifth grade students use a variety of problem-solving strategies to solve increasingly complex word problems.

Social Studies

Fifth graders engage in several project-based units over the course of the year, encouraging their own inquiry and voice in the process. The driving force of fifth grade social studies is questions that inspire students to think deeply about the content they are studying. They kindle an exploration of the American Revolution by asking students “What are you willing to die for?” and continue by asking other questions to engage the students in in-depth exploration of the topics.

Science

Fifth grade scientists exhibit greater independence through in-depth explorations of physical, earth, and life sciences. Each unit incorporates hands-on fieldwork and visits with relevant experts. Students explore living systems through the lens of the ecology and adaptations of Colorado endangered species. They create scientifically illustrated species cards including the characteristics and adaptations of a specific species. Students learn about weather systems and plate tectonics by investigating natural disasters. They write a research paper on a specific natural disaster and use their learning to inform the Structure Build (students work in teams to plan, craft, and test disaster-proof buildings built from cardboard and other simple materials). Students study energy and natural resources by answering the driving question “How and why should we use energy resources wisely?” They learn about types and properties of energy, what electricity is, and how it can be generated and the different sources of fuel available to us. Fifth grade students also work with the building blocks of chemistry. They determine how to separate particles of different sizes and properties from mixtures and solutions and learn about saturation and the properties of molecules.

At Denver JDS, instructional and educational technology are a key means of extending and enriching teaching and learning. **Technology** is infused throughout every one of our classrooms as a vehicle for enhancing student learning.

Judaic Studies

The fifth grade Judaic studies program continues to emphasize character development through *middot* (Jewish values) and skill building. *Parashat hashvuah* (the study of the weekly Torah reading) continues throughout the year and focuses on student-driven discussion, while *Chumash* (bible) studies focus on the Book of Exodus with the commentary of Rashi. Students also study the Jewish holidays using primary sources such as the text of the Torah and *Mishnah* (part of the oral tradition), emphasizing understanding the reasons for the customs and how we relate to them. Additionally, the students are introduced to American Jewish history including World War II, the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel, focusing on their place in this ongoing chain. In *tefilah* (prayer), the students attain proficiency in the daily morning prayer service as well as parts of other services.

Hebrew

Fifth graders continue to work on their Hebrew reading, writing, comprehension, and conversational abilities, continuing to build their accuracy and fluency in Hebrew reading and speaking. Students are expected to write paragraphs of greater complexity and length than in previous years and to compose dialogues, essays, plays, and fables in Hebrew. Students are able to form grammatically correct written sentences using singular and

Our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values) are lived everyday at Denver JDS, both inside and outside of the classroom. They are used as a basis of community building and character development across the curriculum.

plural verbs in past and present tense, both male/female gender. A highlight of this year is the weekly Hebrew Buddies program through which our fifth graders pair up with kindergarten buddies. The fifth graders create and lead wonderful Hebrew lessons, games, and activities for their young friends.