



Course Overviews for Grade Seven

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Humanities (World History and Geography) – Grade 7

(This course is offered in English, French and Spanish—see Languages for details.)

Course Overview

This course aims to enable students, through learning about the fundamental concepts of *time and space, cause and consequence, continuity and change, and similarity and difference*, to:

- study history from an international viewpoint, i.e., to be familiar with the history of different regions of the world during the Medieval period
- develop understanding of, respect for and tolerance of different cultures, beliefs, traditions
- develop an understanding of and an ability to apply historical method, including an understanding of different historical interpretations
- understand the dynamic nature of geography, i.e., to be aware of the processes of the physical world and the interrelationship between physical and human geography
- understand the limitations that locations, climate, soil, and ecosystems impose on economic and social development
- develop a sense of curiosity and wonder about the world and its peoples
- develop an interest in and concern for global issues

Information literacy skills are woven into each unit and support the overall aims of the course.

Content / Units of Study

The curriculum explores Medieval World History, 500 C.E. – 1350 C.E. The focus is on:

- Rupture and Continuity of the Roman Empire: Fall of Rome; Byzantium
- Impact of Islam: geography; Arabia before Islam; the life of Mohammed; religious teachings; expansion and split; the Golden Age; towns and trade; decline of the Empire; connections to modern-day issues
- Africa: geography; African kingdoms, particularly Mali and Ghana
- China: geography; religion; background history; examples of dynastic rule under Sui, Tang and Song dynasties
- Europe: geography; Carolingians; the Medieval Church; feudalism and manorialism; towns and trade; the Crusades; Impact of the Black Death

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing. Assessment is divided into formative (35%), summative (45%) and class participation (20%). Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Resources

Grence Ruiz, T. *Geografía e historia, 2 ESO*. Tres Cantos, Madrid: Santillana Educación, 2016. Print.

Ivernel, Martin, and Benjamin Villemagne. *Histoire-géographie, 5e: [nouveaux Programmes 2016]*. Paris: Hatier, 2016. Print.

Spielvogel, J. *Viaje en el tiempo*. Columbus, OH: Glencoe/McGraw Hill, 2006. Print.

Spielvogel, Jackson J. *World History: Journey Across Time*. New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2008. Print.

English (Language A) – Grade 7

Course Overview

The theme for grade 7 is *Community*; our throughline is *With Whom Do I Belong?*

Essential Questions:

- How do we **explore** a work of literature for insight and enjoyment?
- What personal, textual, and global **connections** can we make to literature?
- How can reading and writing about the world help us to **empathize** with others?
- How do we **create** effective communication through written and oral expression?

In grade 7 English, students develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills through formative learning opportunities. They demonstrate an understanding of content, organization, style and language in summative assessment. Assignments range from formal essays to journal writing, dramatic performance to small-group presentations, and informal class conversations to formal discussions.

Our study of literature includes short stories, poetry, graphic novel, drama, and fiction. We use the writing process to create literary essays, graphic essays, flash fiction, research based web-page and poetry. We engage in class discussions and oral presentations to learn to effectively present our interpretations of literature. We study grammar in the context of the reading and writing we do.

Texts

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

March by John Lewis

And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie

A Diary of Anne Frank (the play) by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

Selected short stories and poetry

Assessment

A grade 7 English semester grade is a combination of participation, formative, and summative assessments.

The following weighting is used to determine the final grade:

- 65 percent for summative assessments
- 20 percent for formative assessment
- 15 percent for class participation

Mathematics – Grade 7

(Mathematics 7 and Mathematics Advanced are on offer in grade 7.)

Course Overview

This course aims to:

- introduce students to negative rational numbers
- develop a sense of proportional reasoning through various applications including similarity, percentages and unit rates
- explore relationships between the surface area and volume of 3-dimensional shapes.
- stimulate an appreciation for the value of mathematics in solving problems in the world
- develop good learning habits and a positive attitude towards mathematics

Content / Units of Study

Integers: Students extend the number system to include negative integers and negative rational numbers. They use their understanding and skill in working with positive and negative numbers to solve problems.

Similarity: Students use the mathematical meaning of similarity, explore the properties of similar figures, apply the concept of proportions, and use similarity to solve problems.

Comparing and Scaling: Students extend their knowledge of ratios, proportions and proportional reasoning to concepts including graphing, unit rates and percentages.

Expressions, Equations and Inequalities: Students develop fluency in basic algebraic notation to represent situations in the world and to solve equations.

Geometry: Students explore measurement of surface area and volume for a variety of 3-dimensional shapes.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including classwork projects, quizzes, and tests. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Students are expected to complete their homework every day; time is devoted in each class to reviewing, checking and discussing homework. Completing homework conscientiously is very important for success in math class.

Summative assessments, including tests are given at the end of each unit. They are always announced well in advance and coordinated with other classes.

Integrated Science – Grade 7

Course Overview

The students will continue to develop the skills introduced in grade 6, with special emphasis on practical skills.

Specific objectives are for students to learn to appreciate science and its place in a technological world. They will be introduced to more demanding scientific concepts and be encouraged to use reasoning to solve problems and become more independent in their thinking as scientists.

Content / Units of Study

This is the second year of a three-year MS course program, which reinforces the study of science as an integrated body rather than separate subjects. The theme running through the course is *our environment*. The course is divided into six units:

Water	Water Cycle, Properties of Water, Water Quality and Water Pollution, Conservation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation Field Trip
Ecology	Photosynthesis, Food Chains, Adaptations and Natural Selection, Symbiosis, Design a Species Project
Energy	Types of Energy, Sources of Energy, Nonrenewable and Renewable energy, Calories and Food, Energy by Country Project
Climate Change	Carbon Trends, Greenhouse effect, Climate Change Legislation and Programs, Climate Change Infographic Project
Air and Combustion	Composition of Air, Properties of Air, Gas Laws, Combustion, Chemical Reactions and Balancing Equations
Electricity	Series and Parallel Circuits, Voltage, Resistance, Paper Circuitry

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the MS Science Department are used in evaluating major assignments.

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Languages – Grade 7

The language program in grade 7 focuses on written and oral communication. The more advanced courses, intended for native and near-native speakers, put emphasis on reading and interpreting literature in the target language. Enrichment activities enhance the academic program throughout the year.

There are language options in the elective block as well. Students in the Advanced program may take Spanish or French Enrichment, which in grade 7 focuses on practice of the language and an exploration of topics of interest to the students, or they may continue to take **Chinese** as an additional language.

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values:
7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the MS World Languages Department are used in evaluating major assignments. Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

SEVENTH GRADE LANGUAGE OPTIONS OVERVIEW		
<i>Target Second Language</i>	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Other Language Options</i>
French A-Advanced for advanced or native speakers 5 periods	in French 5 periods	Students may opt for French Enrichment for further exposure to the language and Francophone cultures, or they may continue learning Chinese as an elective option.
French B for beginners in their first or second year 5 periods	in English 5 periods	Students may opt for French Enrichment for further exposure to the language and Francophone cultures, or they may continue learning Chinese as an elective option.
Spanish A-Advanced for advanced or native speakers 5 periods	in Spanish 5 periods	Students can opt for Spanish Enrichment for further exposure to the language and Spanish-speaking cultures, or continue learning Chinese as an elective option.
Spanish B-Foundation for beginners in their first or second year 5 periods	in English 5 periods	Students may opt to continue learning Chinese as an elective option.
<i>Target Third Language</i>	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Note</i>
Chinese B-Foundation for students in their second year of study of the language 5 periods	In English or second target language, depending on French or Spanish placement 5 periods	Students must also be enrolled in either French or Spanish. Chinese B is taken in the elective block.

Visual Arts – Grade 7

Course Overview / Content

The Visual Arts program in grade 7 is organized around three major emphases:

Knowledge and Understanding

Visual Expression: In grade 7, students build upon previous learning from grade 6, continuing to explore the elements of design (line, pattern, texture, value and color) with an emphasis on *composition*.

- Students are encouraged to think analytically and creatively to solve complex problems, and make independent decisions about how to develop their work.
- Collaborative projects will help students to consider and respect the views of others when working together.
- A variety of materials, including graphite, oil pastels, paint, markers, clay and plaster are used to produce two-dimensional work.

Application

Technique: Students in the grade 7 investigate composition as a fundamental element of all art and design work. Parallels are drawn between art, writing, music, math, etc.

- Students work both individually and in small groups to develop two-dimensional works in graphite and oil pastel that deal with space, direction and balance.
- Other areas explored during the year will include clay and plaster relief work, book art and observational drawing.

Reflection and Evaluation

Oral Presentation: At the grade 7 level, emphasis continues to be on approaches to learning, problem solving, and self-awareness about why we make certain choices about work, with regard to formal elements. Students verbalize their choices by presenting critiques of their work to the rest of the class. The overall aim is for students to approach their own, and others' work, analytically, and objectively.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the Visual Arts and Design Department are used in evaluating major assignments. Teachers and students use grading rubrics and written reflections to assess work at the end of each unit.

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Vocal Music – Grades 6 to 8

Course Overview

Vocal Music provides students with the opportunity to learn about the societal, historical, aesthetic, and cultural importance of music by way of experience and studied repertoire. The course also gives students a working knowledge of musical language, theory, and terminology. Each grade level also explores musical elements outside of concert repertoire, such as musical theatre, music technology, music listening, and musical identity.

Aims of the course in grades 6-8 are to:

- Instill in each student an understanding of and appreciation for music
- Train students to use proper and professional performance practices
- Expose students to a variety of music genres, styles, time periods, etc.
- Draw connections between music and our own lives
- Encourage students to be lifelong participants in music

Content / Units of Study

Units of study include guidance through musical concepts, thoughtful listening and analysis, and creative opportunities. Depending on grade level, students will also explore music in theatrical contexts, music technology, and musical identity. Some units of study include singing technique; music theory; and listening and analysis.

Fundamental elements in this course include:

- Music literacy and notation
- Sight-reading
- Music theory
- Vocal techniques - as a soloist and as a member of an ensemble
- Cultural, historical, and aesthetic elements of music
- Music listening and analysis
- Writing about music
- Performance practices

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

In addition to assigned homework, quizzes, and projects, students are informally assessed on a daily basis. Students are primarily assessed on participation. This includes singing in class, being respectful of the ensemble, contributing thoughtfully to class discussions, and putting forth clear effort towards rehearsing concert repertoire.

Instrumental Music – Grades 6 to 8

Course Overview

The aim of Instrumental Music is to instill in each student an understanding and appreciation of music that will enable him or her to be a lifelong participant in music. The course provides all students an opportunity to express themselves musically on a chosen instrument for serious music study and recreational playing, developing music reading and playing skills and allowing for a variety of instrumental ensemble experiences.

Content / Units of Study

Over the course of the three years of Instrumental Music, students will:

- learn and apply proper playing techniques on chosen instrument
- read and play a variety of music in a progression that exposes them to more complex musical concepts, including a wider playing range in different key signatures, and more complex rhythmic patterns and meters, form, dynamics, stylistic ornaments and interpretation
- play major, minor and chromatic scales and arpeggios
- read and play independent parts as members of an ensemble
- sight read
- identify composers and their historical era
- identify historical music eras and various styles
- prepare for winter and spring concerts

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the Performing Arts Department are used in evaluating major assignments.

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Students are formally assessed on their preparation for class, their progress in playing proficiency, various homework and project assignments, class participation, performance exams, quizzes on theory and history, and concerts.

Theatre Arts – Grade 7

Course Overview

Our guiding philosophy across the theatre arts curriculum is how do we create and tell compelling stories through performance? Students will gain a general knowledge of world theatre and dramatic processes.

Essential Questions guiding the course are:

- How do we establish an effective ensemble?
- How do we show not tell when devising and presenting stories onstage?
- How do we create effective and interesting stories?
- How do analyze and perform Shakespeare's texts?
- How do we analyze a script and the characters to create effective set designs?

Content / Units of Study

- **Ensemble-work** – Students will engage in theatre activities that allow them to explore and gain the skills required to effectively work together as an ensemble to create theatre.
- **Storytelling through devised theatre** – Students will adapt their own anecdotes and existing fairy tales for the stage to learn the essential elements of effective story and how to bring stories to life.
- **Improvisation** – Students will engage in short-form and long-form improv in the style of *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, Upright Citizens Brigade, and Second City.
- **Shakespeare** – Students will gain an historical background on Shakespeare. They will then perform a short piece from one of Shakespeare's plays and/or write their own sonnet.
- **Set Design** – If there is time left in the semester, students will gain a basic knowledge of theatrical design concepts and apply them to designing a set for a play of their choosing.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing. Assessment criteria developed by the Performing Arts Department are used in evaluating major assignments. Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Performance Projects – 50%

- Understanding Concepts: demonstrate an ability to articulate practices and methodologies.
- Application: ability to develop and advance use of materials/investigation; developing personally unique methodologies.

Quizzes/Written Work/Reflection – 20%

- Critical awareness: reflection; ability to analyze own/ others' work objectively and use the appropriate vocabulary.

Participation – 30%

- Growth and personal engagement: individual initiative, preparedness and participation; appropriate behavior and use of materials.
- Assessment tools include participation, journal entries, performances, written assignments, self and peer review.

Physical Education/Health – Grades 6 to 8

Course Overview

Students in grades 6-8 take three hours of Physical Education and one hour of Health per 8-day cycle.

The aims of our physical education courses are to develop physically fit, emotionally aware, and socially adept individuals who are comfortable taking risks and thriving in a globally-complex environment. Through inquiry and with an emphasis on personal responsibility, we create learners who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy and embrace a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

The health program aims to explore physical, social and emotional health topics to broaden students knowledge and awareness. Connections to students adolescent development enhance interest, understanding, and inquiry, leading students toward mindfulness regarding their healthy lifestyle. The ultimate goal is to facilitate the development of healthy attitudes and to increase students' knowledge of critical issues they are facing as adolescents.

Course Content/Units of Study

In physical education, students may have the opportunity to participate in the following units while at WIS. These units may not be offered each year due to facilities availability and weather constraints. They include cooperative games, badminton, basketball, flag football, soccer, volleyball, team handball, weight training, Ultimate Frisbee, physical education and technology, conditioning, dance, self-defense, and yoga.

In Health, topics covered will include, but not be limited to, puberty, healthy relationships, self-esteem/body image, diet and nutrition, digital citizenship, peer pressure, and bullying, character education, addictions/drugs and alcohol, and sleep.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the Physical Education/Health Department are used in assessing major assignments. Students in Health receive a pass/fail grade.

Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Design Technology – Grades 6 to 8

Course Overview

Students in grades 6-8 may take Design Technology for one semester as an elective option. Students undertake a variety of challenges and projects, which involve some or all of the five phases of the design cycle: investigate a problem, design a solution or a product, plan the steps through which that solution will be created, create the product/solution, and then evaluate the entire process.

These challenges and projects are specially set so as to encourage the student to use and extend knowledge acquired in science, math, and other courses. While working through the challenges and projects, students learn a variety of techniques, which enable them to work confidently with a wide variety of materials.

Content/Units of Study

In order to learn about the design cycle, grade 8 students will research, design, plan, construct, test, and evaluate a spaghetti tower. Then, given a challenging set of design specifications, they will design and construct a vertical, free-standing marble maze. This project is particularly long and complex and will take most of the semester.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the Visual Arts and Design Department are used in evaluating major assignments.

Students are often assessed formatively in terms of their “work in progress.” Students are primarily graded on the quality of their work during the design process, as well as how productively, efficiently and safely they work in class, and how well their product performs up to the specifications of a particular project.

Most projects culminate with self-assessment, allowing students to reflect on what went well with the design/construction process and what did not.

Digital Media Studio – Grade 7

Course Overview

As an introduction to storytelling with media, featuring digital media tools and techniques, in this hands-on course students will create and publish their own digital media projects with a focus on cities and urbanization. They will discuss the following questions throughout the course: *How is your identity shaped by where you live and work? How do people shape and influence the environment where they live? How can digital media play a role in documenting change and offering alternative solutions to creating a more equitable society?* They will use the following tools: photography, video, audio, blogging, design and coding/programming. Students will use a combination of digital tools in the planning and creation of projects. This course will have a special emphasis on using cities and the built environment as inspiration for digital media storytelling.

Content / Units of Study

In grade 7 students will:

- be introduced to blogs, digital photography, and audio recording and editing
- study how technology has developed over time
- learn the fundamentals of digital filmmaking and editing
- hone digital media presentation skills
- explore the work of artists and media makers across disciplines
- practice the design cycle with regular feedback and opportunities for revision

Each unit will feature a project, giving students the opportunity to build an electronic portfolio of their work.

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

Assessment criteria developed by the Visual Arts and Design Department are used in evaluating major assignments.

Students are often assessed formatively on their “work in progress.” They are graded primarily on the quality of their work during the design process, as well as how productively, efficiently and cooperatively they work in class, and on how well their product performs up to the specifications of a particular project.

Most projects culminate with self-assessment, allowing students to reflect on what went well with the design process and what did not.

Building Your Brain Power – Grades 6 and 7

Course Overview

This semester-long course designed for students in Grades 6 and 7. This course will explore how the brain and nervous system work in order to promote building strong neurological connections that will positively impact learning and memory. Additionally, students will explore different study strategies and student skills that work best for different academic goals.

We will explore using particular note-taking, writing, and reading comprehension strategies, as well as practicing techniques for taking tests and breaking down big projects and tasks. Students will also focus on how they learn best and what tools they can use to support work in their content area classes. Emphasis will be on learning about study skills, metacognition, Growth Mindset, neuroscience, and the function of the brain.

Content/Units of Study

Students will explore the following topics:

- The Brain and the Nervous System – How does the brain work? What are the component parts of the brain?
- Learning and Memory – How does the brain work to build your memory? What strategies can you use to remember things? How does your brain make connections to help your memory?
- Learning about Learning – What is Metacognition? What are your learning strengths? How can you become a more self-aware student?
- Organization and Study Skills – What are study skills? Which strategies work best for you with different types of tasks?
- Facing Challenges and a Growth Mindset – What are fixed and growth mindsets? How does mindfulness and optimism help build your brainpower?

Texts used include:

The Middle School Student's Guide to Study Skills by Susan Mulcaire

Phineas Gage: The Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science by John Fleischman

Assessment

A WIS semester grade includes a variety of assessment tasks, including projects, quizzes, tests and class participation. Assessment criteria developed by the teacher are used in evaluating major assignments. Informal ongoing assessment takes place in every class.

Sample assessments are:

A multimedia project involving teaching others about the function of the brain.

A personal learning journal that summarizes each student's learning strengths and keeps track of study and learning strategies that work best for each student.

A two-page reflection showing how the student used particular study strategies in a content area.

The numbers on the grading scale represent the following values: 7 – Excellent, 6 – Very Good, 5 – Good, 4 – Satisfactory, 3+ and below – Failing.

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