

The American School in London

Grade 4: Semester 1 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the first reporting period, these are the ideas, concepts, and skills your child will have learned. We acknowledge that all children learn at different paces, and that it takes students different lengths of time to master skills and concepts. Your child's teacher will update you on their initial social, emotional, and academic progress at October conferences and provide a more formal report card in February.

Approaches to Learning

We expect students in Grade 4 to accept responsibility for their own actions. We value teamwork and cooperation, as well as attentive listening and active engagement. The development of a consistently organized approach to work is fostered throughout the year. We expect quality work that reflects thoughtful practice with a focus on the attainment of self-reflective skills.

Reading

Grade 4 students learn to become metacognitive readers and record and discuss their thoughts about texts. They practice a variety of reading strategies to help deepen their comprehension. These skills include: summarizing, making connections, inferring, predicting, formulating questions, analyzing characters, and identifying main ideas and supporting details in nonfiction. Students should be able to select just right books independently and read for 30 to 45 minutes. By the middle of the year, we expect most Grade 4 students to be reading between Fountas and Pinnell levels R-S.

Writing

Using the Writer's Workshop model, students are led through a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing their work. Whole class mini-lessons teach students specific writing strategies in two genres: narrative and essay writing. Students consider their audience and think of the purpose of their writing. During our narrative writing unit, students focus on the meaning of their story and how to elaborate with action, dialogue, and inner thought. Our essay writing unit focuses on making claims and supporting them with evidence. Workshop conferences provide an opportunity for more individualized instruction based on students' needs.

Speaking and Listening

Grade 4 students practice speaking and listening across disciplines in order to reinforce, build upon, and share their learning. Students are encouraged to use eye contact and respond appropriately during a discussion. They are also expected to be able to follow multi-step instructions independently. Opportunities to speak in small and large groups help students gain confidence as presenters. They practice sharing their ideas and experiences in an organized way while using appropriate body language and gestures.

Math

Grade 4 students develop efficient strategies to tackle complex problems. In alignment with the Common Core State Standards, lessons emphasize problem-solving, requiring students to use multiple approaches, open-mindedness and flexible thinking. Students develop their understanding of the base-ten system up to the millions, are introduced to angle measurements and continue their examination of properties of two-dimensional figures. They also extend their knowledge of multiplication and division with a project-based investigation, focusing on multi-digit operations. Students work throughout the semester to explain their mathematical thinking fully and clearly.

Social Studies

Students learn about identity, diversity and community. They investigate topics that require them to think, research, question and apply their understanding. Students think about the concept of identity and how it relates to individuals and our classroom community. They learn to collaborate and resolve conflict in a way that empowers them. In the second unit, students investigate human made communities and how to make them more accessible, sustainable and happier.

Science

Grade 4 students use the science practices of questioning, developing models, planning and conducting investigations to identify, obtain and combine information to construct explanations. Through observations, analysis and interpretation of data, students will investigate three units: Information Transfer, Energy and Waves. Student-led investigations centering on cause and effect, structure and function, systems and patterning will enable application of scientific ideas. During the Junior FIRST Lego League challenge, students research community needs and problems to create a building and present their learning to a wider audience. Engineering and technology will be highlighted as the students identify mechanical problems to revise and refine their programmed models. Students attend three, 60-minute lessons every eight days.

Art

Grade 4 students learn about a variety of art movements and brainstorm multiple approaches to creating art. Students analyze how past, present and emerging technologies impact the making and presentation of art. They reflect on and evaluate their own work and learn to explain the thinking behind the artistic choices they make. Students focus on art movements including 'Op Art' and discuss culture and context, learning about famous artists including: Bridget Riley, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Jen Stark and Yaacov Agam. They also study how lines can help design and communicate interesting ideas to create art. Students collaborate on group artwork as well as on their own individual work attending two, 60-minute classes every eight days.

Music

Grade 4 students continue to develop their instrumental and literacy skills using tuned percussion instruments such as xylophones and hand chimes, as well as continuing to develop their recorder playing. They learn a number of two, three and four-part instrumental pieces that also incorporate movement or body percussion. Ensemble skills are an important part of the Grade 4 curriculum, and the students discuss form, dynamics and harmony. Basic notation is used for instrumental parts and students become more familiar with melodic direction using a staff. Students perform in several informal settings as a way of demonstrating their understanding of musical concepts. They also continue to develop their singing skills through learning a variety of songs in different genres and languages. Students attend three, 35-minute lessons every eight days.

PE

In semester 1, Grade 4 students build upon the movement patterns, concepts and strategies, and personal and social skills that they learned in previous years. Through a variety of diverse learning experiences, students engage in activities that help them work in groups to organize tasks, communicate their ideas, and offer support and encouragement to their classmates. Students develop foundational movement skills by exploring gymnastics movements, yoga poses, bodyweight exercises, and martial arts strikes and blocks. The aquatics unit focuses on safe and effective pool entries, treading water, streamline body position, stroke development and aquatic games. Grade 4 students also explore tracking, catching, throwing, and offensive/defensive strategies through a unit on modified invasion games. Students begin each class with a warm-up designed to improve their fitness or rhythmic movement skills by completing a partner workout or learning a choreographed dance. Students attend two, one-hour lessons every eight days.

Spanish

Grade 4 students continue to develop their Spanish skills through exposure to authentic language and culture, reviewing fundamentals from previous years while expanding their vocabulary and exploring more complex language structures. Both teacher and student led games, activities and rehearsed situations provide students with scenarios to practice their listening and speaking skills. Students also develop basic reading skills through recreational reading and work on their spelling and pronunciation. Grade 4 learners share and reflect on their learning on a regular basis. The program covers basic vocabulary for greetings, feelings, numbers, colors, food, body parts, clothes, description words, places, weather and activities of interest for young learners. Students attend three, half hour lessons every eight days.