

THE PARK SCHOOL

2019-2020 CURRICULUM GUIDE



GRADE 7

GRADE 7

OVERVIEW

On the cusp of their teenage years, seventh-grade students manifest a vast range of physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Some are still firmly planted in pre-adolescence, while others yearn for more guided independence. The seventh grade program at Park recognizes the strengths and needs of twelve-and thirteen-year-old students, both in and out of the classroom, with increased responsibilities and program offerings.

In the academic realm, Park's seventh grade program fosters the development of abstract thinking skills through assignments that encourage students to formulate opinions, articulate ideas, and make connections in their learning. Increased homework expectations, the introduction of letter grades, and final exams mark the seventh grade year. Group work and long-term projects provide an arena for practicing social interactions, which are important for cognitive development. In Grade 7, students are each assigned a Park School Google Account and a Chromebook for use at school and at home, giving students and teachers the ability to create, share and collaborate on projects.

Extracurricular activities tend to take on new importance at this age, both socially and in developing a specific skill or passion. To this end, Park offers opportunities to seventh grade students for involvement in Student Council, Service Council, community service/service learning, competitive after-school sports, after-school drama, and a variety of clubs. The continuation of the advisory program provides time for students to work with their advisors in becoming more proactive, independent learners.

Learning to recognize one's own strengths and struggles, learning the skill of how to ask for help, and working with and for others are the themes that run throughout Grade 7. While there is a wide range of development at this age, seventh graders at Park are brought together around common interests and goals.

Giving students new freedoms and responsibilities speaks to the independence and interdependence that these young adults need and crave.

ENGLISH: NARRATIVES AND PERSPECTIVES

In Grade 7 English, students are exposed to more challenging texts and learn how to read those texts more carefully and thoughtfully. The year is structured around the importance and significance of stories in our lives: why stories *matter*, and how the study of stories helps us understand our world and the worlds of others. Significant teaching time is devoted to helping students learn to fully engage with texts, and much of class time is devoted to meaningful discussions of literature, with an emphasis on both literal and figurative interpretations.

By using students' summer reading, the year begins with a study of the elements of a story (exposition, rising action, climax, denouement) followed by a study of short-fiction. Students study S.E. Hinton's classic *The Outsiders*, again emphasizing elements of the story as well as the book's messages to understand different perspectives, identities, and stereotypes. Using the text *Poetry Speaks: Who I Am*, students analyze poetry with an eye to multicultural, global identities and perspectives. Students read Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, with a focus on close reading, translation, and thematic understanding.

Writing is part of students' daily experience in English class. Seventh graders free write in journals, work on smaller analytical and creative pieces, and compose multiple formal, analytical essays, and various personal pieces. Emphasis is placed on examining multiple viewpoints, analyzing poetry, writing poetry, and the personal narrative. Students are directly taught the writing process: the skills of outlining, summarizing, and editing. Emphasis is placed on composing logical and well-supported paragraphs.

There is a dedicated grammar unit mid-year in which students review all parts of speech and focus on a concentrated study of several parts of speech, including verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Additionally, class will focus on mastering various types of punctuation, and individualized work on other types of mechanics happens through the writing process and direct instruction. Vocabulary development is generated by the acquisition and study of new words encountered in the literature.

English classes meet five times per week in 45-minute sessions.

MATHEMATICS: PRE-ALGEBRA

In this Pre-Algebra course, seventh graders begin by generating, analyzing and representing data in their statistics and data unit. Students then apply their understanding of data in a unit on the measure of central tendency and probability. A highlight of the year is a “probability carnival” where Grade 7 math students apply their understanding of probability by creating their own games and analyzing the data from the carnival. Students return to their previously developed understanding of integers to create algebraic expressions and solve multi-step equations. Students then use this knowledge of expressions and equations to expand their understanding of ratios, rates, proportions and percents. During seventh grade, geometry is incorporated in a number of areas. Students participate in a unit on 3-D geometry and a unit on the Pythagorean theorem, while also seeing geometry incorporated into other units as a means to deepen understanding of the given concepts. Practical applications are emphasized in every topic. Throughout the year, students hone problem-solving skills and are encouraged to maintain computation skills.

The Pre-Algebra course uses selected units from the *Connected Mathematics Program* as well as additional materials from a variety of sources. Students in the seventh grade are sectioned homogeneously to work with peers who learn at a similar pace and who are performing at the same level in math. All sections are taught the same topics listed above, though some classes may learn some topics at greater depth or in a different order, as well as some additional topics.

For further enrichment, students are invited to participate in MathCounts competitions. Practice sessions are held weekly; all are encouraged to attend. In the winter, a MathCounts team represents Park at an annual regional competition; successful teams advance to future rounds.

This course meets for five 45-minute sessions per week, including one 90-minute double period.

SCIENCE: EARTH SCIENCE

In Grade 7 science, students take a closer look at Earth and how it has changed through time. Through interactive laboratory activities, model-making, and use of simulations, students begin to understand that many of the processes responsible for shaping Earth’s surface can be explained by applying fundamental principles of matter.

Using the development of the Theory of Plate Tectonics as an example, students are exposed to the dynamic nature of scientific thinking and gain perspective on how scientific ideas change over time as new information is discovered. The Grand Canyon is also an example used to explore global and local changes to the surface of our Earth. Students visit a “change site” on Park’s campus each month throughout the year in order to observe and measure changes that occur here at Park. Their final project is an analysis and presentation of all their data and observations.

Science classes meet three times per week in 45-minute sessions.

SOCIAL STUDIES: UNITED STATES

Grade 7 students explore the lives and ideas of early Americans, unfold the rich fabric of American life, and examine the cultural and historical events that shaped the development of the United States from pre-Colonial indigenous peoples through the Civil War and Reconstruction. In considering this history, seventh graders encounter the ways that events in history look different depending on whose point of view is represented, and they discover the importance of considering multiple points of view in understanding history and its relationship to the present.

Students study a number of topics, including American geography in historical context, the American Revolution, the foundations of constitutional government, slavery and the abolitionist movement, westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Acknowledging that people of all races, ethnicities, and walks of life contributed to American development, the course primarily considers the experiences and points of view of three groups: European Americans, African Americans, and American Indians. A variety of historical materials are used to reflect the past and put a “human face” on history. Throughout the year, students grapple with a unifying question: “What does it mean to be an American?” Along the way, students also look at how the country’s past continues to shape and influence its present.

A meaningful class trip to Washington, D.C. complements this yearlong study of American history, occurring just before spring break. Trip highlights include a day on Capitol Hill, a lawmaking simulation, a visit to a Civil War battlefield, and visits to museums such as the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. This is an exciting opportunity

for students to travel and learn together in the nation's capitol.

Students continue to practice and refine essential social studies skills, including discussion and debate, public speaking and presentation, the use of historical maps and chronologies, close reading of texts, analytical and expository writing, and the study of primary sources (both written and oral). Research skills such as note-taking, outlining, synthesizing, making a bibliography, and citing one's sources lead to the drafting and revision of two short research reports. The school year concludes with a current events project that asks students to make clear connections between the historical past and the present day.

Classes meet four times per week in 45-minute sessions.

FRENCH, LATIN, MANDARIN, SPANISH

During Grade 7, language students meet the challenges posed by increasingly complex and demanding linguistic structures. Students continue to build on their foundation of the basic French structures they began in Grade 6. Completion of the Grade 7 language courses generally aligns with a level 1 high school course.

Language classes meet four times per week for 45 minutes.

GRADE 7 FRENCH

The online textbook series *T'es branché (Level 1)* forms the core of the Grade 7 French curriculum at Park. This program is designed to offer students opportunities to learn idiomatic and current, contemporary expressions in French, to focus on three modes of communication (interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive) and to ensure that students become proficient in the four language skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Cultural understanding is at the heart of global citizenship; French students at Park develop an awareness and a positive regard for those in the Francophone world whose language, culture, religion, and views may be different from their own.

In Grade 7, students learn to talk about sporting and leisure-time activities, to make plans for future activities, to order food and drinks in a café, to discuss traditions in Francophone countries, to ask someone's origin and profession, and to purchase food and clothing in stores and markets. Major

grammatical structures covered in the Grade 7 year include the present tense conjugations of regular *-re* and *-ir* verbs and of the irregular verbs *prendre*, *voir*, *offrir*, *venir*, *acheter* and *vouloir*; the interrogative adjective *quel*; possessive adjectives; demonstrative adjectives; expressions of quantity; and formation and usage of the partitive article. As student proficiency increases, the amount of instructional French in the classroom also increases. Lessons are often supplemented with music, art, poetry, video and French-language internet resources, particularly those relating to current events in the Francophone world.

GRADE 7 LATIN

The *Cambridge Latin Course* textbook series forms the core of the Latin curriculum at Park. This program aims to teach comprehension of the Latin language for reading purposes, to develop an understanding of the history and culture of Ancient Roman civilization and to encourage the application of Latin knowledge to the studies of English, history, and science.

Students in their second year of studying the Latin language use the *Cambridge Latin Course Unit 2* as their primary text. Studies build upon the vocabulary and grammatical foundations of the previous year through learning of demonstrative pronouns, relative clauses, pluperfect tense, 3rd declension adjectives, and participles. Students regularly compose writings in Latin, implementing their growing vocabulary and knowledge of complex grammatical structures. Cultural readings focus on Roman imperial influence in Britain and Egypt, including the bath complex at Aquae Sulis, the Villa at Fishbourne, and the Library of Alexandria. Cultural studies will culminate in the research and model construction of ancient Roman artifacts.

GRADE 7 MANDARIN

The textbook *Integrated Chinese, Volume 1* forms the core of the Mandarin curriculum at Park. This program focuses on understanding basic Mandarin spoken at normal speed, speaking well enough to communicate with native speakers, expressing oneself in writing, reading introductory texts, and appreciating significant features of the countries and regions where Mandarin is spoken. As students progress in their proficiency, Mandarin is increasingly the language of instruction.

Lessons four to seven are taught in the Grade 7 course.

Grammar points include word order, verb+object as a detachable compound, time expressions, directional complements, descriptive complements, double objects, the “的” structure, adjectives as predicates, the modal verb “要, 得, 能, 会”, the preposition “在, 给”, the adverb “才, 别, 太, 真, 就”, the conjunction “那么, 要是, 因为, 所以”, the structures “一边... 一边...”, “除了...以外”, the particle “吧, 了, 的”, and the use of “一下, 一点儿, 有一点儿”. Vocabulary includes a focus on school and social life. Students learn to read and write an additional 140 commonly used Chinese characters. Cultural studies include Chinese cuisine, art, urban housing, and the city of Shanghai.

GRADE 7 SPANISH

The textbook series *iAvancemos!* forms the core of the Spanish curriculum at Park. This program focuses on understanding basic Spanish spoken at normal speed, speaking well enough to communicate with native speakers, expressing themselves in writing, reading introductory texts, and appreciating significant features of the countries and regions where Spanish is spoken. As students progress in their proficiency, Spanish is increasingly the language of instruction. Lessons are supplemented with music, poetry, film, and other multimedia resources.

Grammar points taught in the Grade 7 Spanish course include the imperative mood, the preterite tense, reflexive verbs, indirect object pronouns, affirmative and negative expressions, and the present progressive tense. Vocabulary includes household chores and descriptions, sports and body parts, technology, daily routines, vacation activities, and entertainment. Cultural studies focus on the traditions of Ecuador, athletics in the Dominican Republic, extra-curricular activities in Argentina, and crafts in Costa Rica.

ART

Grade 7 students use the characteristics of different media to communicate ideas. They choose a favorite subject matter and create projects with wood, paint, clay, and paper. Students demonstrate visual and spatial planning, invention, and elements of design.

Over the course of the year, students rotate through three distinct art studios, which meet for 45-minute classes twice each week.

Studio I

Seventh graders explore methods of printmaking, focusing on relief printing. Students examine the contrast between geometric and relief patterns and subsequently design a repeating image inspired by forms found in nature. This organic pattern is transferred to a linoleum block and carved out with various carving tools. Students pay careful attention to the juxtaposition between positive and negative space in order to develop a bold and compelling graphic image. A second relief plate is also created, utilizing a zoomed-in, blown up section of the linoleum block image. Students learn the technique of rolling and inking plates, maximizing the transfer of ink to paper. Students experiment with inking and printing individual plates and gradually work toward overlaying plates to create varied images, culminating in a final portfolio of 5 finished prints.

Studio II

Seventh graders study color this term. They begin by creating a colorful cityscape collage with cut paper and then render a thematic “color quilt” or series of color swatches, mixing their own unique colors with paint.

Studio III

Inspired by the Japanese mawari-doro, revolving lanterns popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, students design and construct colorful lamps that move. Also known as a woogie or magic lamp, each lantern consists of three main parts: the light bulb (mounted in the center) surrounded by an inner cylinder with colorful cutouts, and an outer rectangular shade. Without the use of any motors or mechanical parts, heat generated by the light escapes through louvers mounted atop the cylinder causing it to turn and cast a colorful moving image onto the outer rectangular shade, illuminating the room. Basic design principles and concepts, including balance, rhythm, and proportion, are highlighted to guide students in organizing and arranging the design elements inherent in their compositions. Additionally, students build on their prior woodworking experience and practice safe and effective methods for wiring a table lamp.

MUSIC

Music is designed to provide an opportunity for all students to become actively involved in four basic areas of the musical experience: creating, performing, and listening. Attention is given to the historical, cultural, and social context of the music. The elements of music theory – rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre – are studied through listening, singing, composition, and movement activities in music class.

What is the role and impact of music in early American life? Seventh graders look at the influence of Native American Indigenous music and culture, as well as the influence and impact of the slave trade on the musical landscape of America.

Park's music program helps to foster creativity and self-expression, while developing each student's music skills. Performances and informances are used as learning tools and are opportunities for students to demonstrate what they are learning in music class. General music instruction is aligned with the National Association for Music Education standards.

Classes meet two times per week in 45-minute sessions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Units include Ultimate Frisbee, handball, touch football, volleyball, basketball, dance and softball. A variety of cooperative games and challenge activities are also included in the spring term. Emphasis is placed on further development of fundamental skills, basic positioning, rules, and team play. Throughout all activities, students are encouraged to strive for their personal best, to play with good sportsmanship, and to enjoy physical activity.

Seven movement patterns that are key to everyday function are assessed using Gray Cook's "Functional Movement Screen." This informs the quality of individual students' movement in all activities and helps personalize corrective exercises for warm-ups and workouts.

Classes meet three times per week in 45-minute sessions.

GROWTH EDUCATION

The Growth Education program provides an opportunity for students to discuss the difficult issues of pre-adolescence and adolescence in a safe, structured and confidential environment with the understanding that students should be exposed to information and issues at least two years prior to perceived needs. The curriculum is cyclical in nature so that specific topics are revisited with the assumption that students will bring greater understanding, experience and maturity to the discussion. Class discussions are augmented with factual and dramatic videos, group dynamics exercises, and occasional outside speakers.

The Grade 7 course emphasizes the value of individual worth and identity, personal responsibility, the importance of accurate information and wise decision-making, the use of good communication, and the consideration of others. Students examine and discuss identity (especially with regard to culture and race), personal values, finding and holding one's voice within a group, consent, responsibility within a community, and appreciation for differences. Other topics include units on the causes of teasing, bullying, and harassment, and ways to be an ally; conflict resolution; economic diversity; and healthy ways to relieve stress.

Growth Education classes meet once each week for a 45-minute period and are team-taught by two faculty members. The course is not graded and students do not receive written comments.

LIBRARY

Grade 7 students come to the library throughout the year to continue their explorations in literature and expand their knowledge of a variety of information sources and formats. Through extensive use of materials in both print and digital formats, students connect library resources to their studies in all areas of the curriculum and hone their independent research skills. The students continue to explore, curate and engage with material which will serve them throughout their school and professional lives. The librarians and classroom teachers collaborate as specific projects are undertaken. On demand book talks remain a component of the library curriculum, designed to further students' reading enjoyment and discerning use of books and other media for information and pleasure. The Library Makerspace Publishing area is accessible for students to personalize their use and presentation of information.

