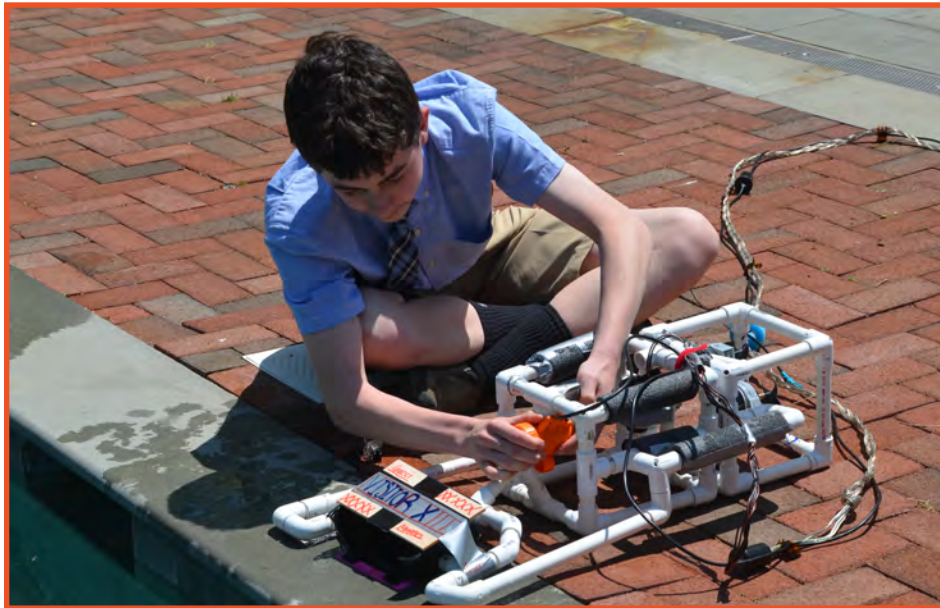


# SIXTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

In Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grades, students have different teachers for each academic class, which fosters an increasing independence as they travel from class to class for different subjects throughout the day. With the exception of math and Eighth Grade science, all of the classes are a heterogeneous mix of abilities. As the students progress across the grades, they are given more responsibility and are able to take on leadership positions, as well as make the most of opportunities to speak in public, study topics in depth, perform on stage, lead on the athletic fields, spearhead community service efforts, and delve into the arts.



## English: Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

The Upper School English curriculum strengthens students' skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking through modeling, repeated practice, reading increasingly challenging texts, explicit instruction in writing skills with frequent feedback, and rich classroom discussions. On each grade level, the students

complete, on average, ten polished written pieces over the course of the year, using the writing process to brainstorm, organize, and outline their ideas, write a rough draft, edit, and revise with input from the teacher and peers, and complete a final draft. Student writing assignments build in length and complexity, and the students display a greater mastery of grammar, spelling,

and writing mechanics as they progress from Sixth to Eighth Grade. By the end of Eighth Grade, students are able to formulate coherent thesis statements and write five-paragraph essays with textual support for their argument. In the spring, each Eighth Grader uses their writing skills and oral language skills to write and deliver a speech to the whole school during assembly.

Students in Grades Six through Eight read texts across a wide variety of genres, and they employ a variety of strategies to understand and analyze what they are reading. The teachers consistently reinforce the idea that reading is an active process, and they involve the students in discussions, projects, and assignments that allow the students to use higher order thinking skills. Over the course of the year, literature may include the following:

- **Sixth Grade:** *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Adventures of Ulysses* by Bernard Evslin, *I am Malala (Young Readers Edition)* by Malala Yousefzai, and *Stories from 1,001 Arabian Nights* retold by Geraldine McCaughrean
- **Seventh Grade:** *The Miracle Worker* by William Gibson, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson, and *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- **Eighth Grade:** *To Be a Slave* by Julius Lester, *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James Swanson, *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, *Night* by Elie Weisel, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

## Social Studies: Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

The main objective of the Sixth through Eighth Grade social studies program is to give students a foundational knowledge of historical content, foster writing, reading, research, and analytical skills, and help the students to become independent thinkers and responsible, active citizens. Lessons utilize both primary sources and hands-on experiential activities. Whenever possible, history is integrated with other disciplines to assist students in exploring topics from multiple perspectives and make connections between concepts. The following time periods and topics are covered:

- **Sixth Grade:**
  - The class focuses on world geography and world cultures. Students start with the premise that all humans have certain basic needs, and that differences in culture are the result of varying strategies to meet these needs. The students use texts, images, and artifacts to understand the similarities and differences between world cultures and gain an appreciation and respect for diverse, global cultures.
- **Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade:**
  - Through reading a variety of primary and secondary texts, conducting research, and participating in class discussions, projects, and debates, the students learn about the significant events and themes in American History. In Seventh Grade, the class focuses on the time period from the Age of Exploration through the Pre-Civil War Era. In Eighth Grade, the class focuses on American History from the Civil War through to modern times.

## Math: Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

The math program in Sixth through Eighth Grade is taught in achievement-based groupings so that each student



can be challenged. Students begin with a middle school math program, progress into Pre-Algebra, and have the opportunity to take Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, depending on the instructional level of each student. Honors placement is determined based on developmental readiness, teacher recommendations, and grades.

The curriculum is designed to explicitly teach foundational skills and concepts while fostering a deep understanding of mathematics as a real-life problem solving tool. The teachers create a dynamic, supportive classroom culture that encourages participation and risk-taking. Through teacher modeling, guided practice, the use of models and manipulatives, interactive activities, projects, games, and class discussions, students learn how to solve different kinds of problems using a wide variety of strategies and demonstrate their ability to explain the thought processes involved. Through daily informal assessments, tests, and quizzes, the teachers assess each student's level of mastery and differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of each child.

### Science: Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

Students in Sixth through Eighth Grade learn to think as scientists and to work

through all of the steps of the scientific process. Students conduct experiments, perform dissections, use interactive websites for simulations and virtual laboratory experiments, create models and diagrams to explain different phenomenon, read books and articles, participate in class discussions, analyze data, draw conclusions, and present scientific information through writing, visuals, and oral presentations. The following units in Life Science, Earth Science, and Physical Science are taught in different grade levels:

- **Sixth Grade:**
  - *Taxonomy, Exploration of the Animal Kingdom, Human Biology, and Earth Studies*
- **Seventh Grade:**
  - *Forces and Projectile Motion, Chemical Building Blocks and Chemical Reactions, and Earth's Characteristics and the Spheres of the Earth*
- **Eighth Grade:**
  - *Living Environment: Grade-Level Class*
    - *Ecology and Biodiversity, Biochemistry, Cellular Biology, Genetics, Animal Kingdom, and Microbiology*
    - *The Eighth Grade science curriculum prepares students to take the Living Environments Regents Examination, if needed for placement in high school.*
  - *Genetics: Honors Class*
    - *Cellular Interactions, DNA Form and Function, Genetics, Biotechnology and Applications in Society*

As part of the science curriculum, all students in Grades Six through Eight complete an independent experiment and participate in the East Woods School Science Symposium. In order to prepare for the Symposium, each student decides on a question or problem to investigate, plans and completes an



experiment, collects data, analyzes the data, and draws conclusions. The students write a formal lab report and create a display board to explain and report their findings. During the Science Symposium event, the students present their work to visiting scientists, parents, teachers, and other students. Many students choose to participate in the Science Symposium school competition which is judged by visiting scientists from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. In addition, each year some students also use their projects to participate in the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair (LISEF), which is a regional contest to identify the best science projects on Long Island. Overall, the Science Symposium projects allow students to engage in the work of scientists and share their learning with the broader community.

### World Languages: Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

Students in Grades Six through Eight take either Spanish or French, five

days per week. By studying other languages, students nourish their ability to think and communicate, gain an understanding of other cultures, and begin to see themselves as global citizens. Throughout the language curriculum, students learn through modeling, repetition, audio-visuals, guided practice, projects, dialogues, role-playing, listening activities, games, and iPad apps and simple programs such as Linguascope, Duolingo, and Makey Makey. Classes are interactive, and teachers assess students' progress and needs through classroom observation, quizzes, tests, and projects. Between Sixth and Eighth Grade, the study of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax gradually intensifies, but the main focus of the program remains on helping students to communicate with fluency and to see themselves as part of a larger world.

### Leadership Program: Eighth Grade

At the beginning of the year students learn about the mission and program of several non-profit organizations. As a group they select one organization to support with a year-long project that they must create and carry out together. Their work includes volunteering time, as well as obtaining donations to support the program. At the end of the year, the students present their completed project to the school community and write a paper discussing what they have learned.