

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 at least 30 minutes.

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. In our information writing unit, students focus on synthesizing new information, planning an appropriate structure, and writing about a main idea with supporting details. 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. 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 power and how to make communities more accessible, sustainable and inclusive.

Science

Grade 4 students use the science practices of questioning, developing models, and planning and conducting investigations to identify, obtain and combine information to construct explanations. Through observations, analysis and interpretation of data, students investigate two general concepts: Information Transfer and Energy. Student-led investigations centering on cause and effect, structure and function, systems and patterning enable the application of scientific ideas. During the Cities For The Future project, students will research community needs and work in teams to identify problems and generate solutions. Each team will design a model to demonstrate their ideas. Engineering and technology will be highlighted as the students revise and refine their programmed models. Students have three, 60-minute lessons every eight days.

Art

Grade 4 students learn about a variety of art movements and brainstorm multiple approaches to creating both 2D and 3D 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 some tuned and untuned percussion instruments including xylophones, hand chimes and buckets! They learn a number of two and three-part instrumental pieces that also incorporate body percussion. More notes are introduced on recorders as well as more complex rhythm patterns. 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. Movement and listening maps are used to track the form and structure of a wide variety of music. Students have three, 35-minute lessons every eight days.

PE

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 ideas, and offer support and encouragement to their classmates. Students explore gymnastics principles, aquatics activities and a variety of cooperative team games in the first semester. The Aquatics unit focuses on safe and effective pool entries, treading water, streamline body position, stroke development and aquatic games. The Gymnastics unit explores foundational movements to build body awareness and body control. The Cooperative Team Games unit helps students explore cooperation and competition by working with their classmates to apply problem solving strategies. Grade 4 students attend two, one hour PE lessons a week.

Spanish

Grade 4 students continue to develop their Spanish skills through exposure to authentic language, learning about the culture of different Spanish speaking countries and comparing them with their own. We start the semester by reviewing fundamentals from previous years while inviting each individual student to reflect on their Spanish and work on those areas they may need more practice with. The program has a strong focus on speaking and listening skills, but also gives students the chance to read and write at various levels. Students have three, 35-minute lessons every eight days.