

ETHAN A. CHASE MIDDLE SCHOOL



MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 2024-2025

Language Arts

LANGUAGE ARTS 6

Language Arts 6 supports the Common Core Standards with an emphasis on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The course is designed to develop language arts skills including vocabulary, comprehension, reading strategies, literary analysis, critical thinking, writing across genres, grammar, usage, mechanics, spelling, study skills and oral language. Students are required to analyze, identify, define, explain and critique a variety of text.

LANGUAGE ARTS 7

Language Arts 7 offers an integrated reading, writing, listening and speaking curriculum that supports the Language Arts Common Core Standards. The study of literature (including both narrative and expository reading) will provide varied opportunities for learning and for development of critical thinking skills. Writing assignments will allow students to discover their own voice as they experience a wide range of audiences, purposes, and forms. Classroom activities will include frequent opportunities for active speaking and listening. Direct punctuation, usage, and grammar instruction will be included as needed to improve student writing and speaking. Vocabulary and spelling lessons will be linked to literary selections and student writing. Students will be guided and encouraged to become active and willing readers, writers, speakers, and listeners.

LANGUAGE ART 7 HONORS

The 7th grade English Language Arts Honors course will provide students with a rigorous curriculum addressing the same standards as Language Arts 7. At the honors level, extended learning activities require students to increase their use of critical thinking skills to include analysis, synthesis, and problem solving. Students will refine and extend their understanding of the author's craft at a rigorous level of thinking. Students will analyze increasingly complex language to generate oral and written responses and synthesize information from multiple sources as they deepen their understanding of a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. Students will read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topic, genre, theme or author. Students will refine their writing process to produce coherent and interesting writing. Students will develop their ability to speak in front of a group. They will work collaboratively as well as individually to set and accomplish goals while evaluating their own progress.

LANGUAGE ARTS 8

Language Arts 8 offers an integrated reading, writing, listening and speaking curriculum that supports the Language Arts Common Core Standards. The standards-based study of literature will provide varied opportunities for learning and development of critical thinking skills. Writing assignments will allow students to discover their own voice as they focus on persuasiveness and response to literature writing opportunities. Classroom activities will include frequent opportunities for active speaking and listening. Direct punctuation, usage, and grammar instruction will be included as needed to improve student writing and speaking. Vocabulary and spelling lessons will be linked to literary selections and student writing. Students will be guided and encouraged to become active and willing readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. Students will refine their understanding of the author's craft, commenting on and critically evaluating text as they thoughtfully analyze universal themes in literature and the effect of mass media. Students will use oral and written responses to analyze and/or synthesize information from multiple sources to deepen understanding of a wide variety of texts. Students will continue to read for pleasure, sharing and reflecting on their experiences.

LANGUAGE ARTS 8 HONORS

8th Grade Honors Language Arts is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and collaborative strategies are used to build knowledge and skills and to help students become independent readers, writers, and thinkers as they transition into high school. The course is taught with added emphasis on depth, complexity, creativity and critical thinking. Students will integrate a variety of comprehension and vocabulary strategies at a rigorous level of thinking. Students will use oral and written responses to analyze and/or synthesize information from more complex language within literature to deepen their understanding of a variety of texts. Students will refine their understanding of the author's craft, commenting on and critically evaluating text as they analyze universal themes in literature. Students will read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topic, genre, theme or author. Students will continue to refine their writing process to produce coherent and interesting writing. Students will participate productively in groups, use constructive feedback to improve their work, evaluate their progress, and set future goals.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Prerequisite: CELDT 1-3

English Language Development (ELD) is a course designed for English Learners CELDT level 1-3. No more than two CELDT levels are placed together in the same class. This course offers an integrated reading, writing, listening and speaking curriculum. The meaning-based study of literature will provide varied opportunities for learning and development of critical thinking skills. This course is designed to develop students' oral language abilities and basic literacy skills, using English language development curriculum and integrated project based learning. Students develop oral and written competence in understanding and generating simple sentences, questions, and commands. Writing assignments allow students to discover their own voice as they experience a wide range of audiences, purposes, and forms. Classroom activities include frequent opportunities for active speaking and listening. Students learn the essential vocabulary to perform in those skill areas. Direct instruction in punctuation usage and grammar are included, as needed, to improve student reading, writing and speaking. Vocabulary and spelling lessons are linked to literacy selections and student writing. Students ask and answer questions, make interpretations, perform analysis, complete summaries, develop vocabulary and engage in reflections about their readings.

Mathematics

MATH 6

A rigorous grade-level course designed to provide students with a strong mathematical foundation to meet 6th Grade Common Core math standards. Areas of focus include connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems, completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers, writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations, and developing understanding of statistical thinking.

MATH 7

Math 7 is a mathematics course designed to develop the necessary skills for further study in mathematics. This course provides preparation for Math 8 to those students who have already developed a reasonable level of basic computational skills in, and understanding of, basic rational number operations. The focus is on seventh grade Common Core mathematics. Topics include the use and understanding of: rational numbers, expressions, equations, inequalities, functions and their graphs, two-dimensional and three-dimensional geometric measures, collecting, displaying and analyzing data, and mathematical reasoning. The emphasis of this course is to prepare students for Math 8.

MATH 7 – HONORS

Math 7 - Honors is a rigorous seventh grade mathematics course designed to prepare accelerated math students for advanced study in mathematics. The focus is on the seventh grade Common Core mathematics, with more in-depth, problem-solving based study into those concepts and at a faster pace than Math 7. Topics include the use and understanding of: rational numbers, expressions, equations, inequalities, functions and their graphs, two-dimensional and three-dimensional geometric measures, collecting, displaying and analyzing data, and mathematical reasoning. Students will explore and solve mathematical problems, think critically, work cooperatively with others and communicate their ideas clearly as they work through mathematical concepts.

MATH 8

A grade level course designed to provide students with a sufficient mathematical foundation to meet the 8th grade national common core standards. Areas of focus include (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. Successful completion of this course will prepare students for a 9th grade Algebra 1 course.

ALGEBRA 1

This course provides a formal development of the algebraic skills and concepts necessary for students to succeed in advanced courses. All of the basic skills and concepts of Algebra are presented. This is a foundation course to prepare students for all subsequent mathematics courses. In particular, the instructional program in this course provides for the use of algebraic skills in a wide range of problem-solving situations. Algebra I introduces basic algebraic skills in a logical order, including relations, functions, graphing, systems of equations, radicals, factoring polynomials, rational equations, probability and statistics, and quadratic functions. It emphasizes practical methods of solving first- and second-degree equations and inequalities. Each unit includes word problems and real-life applications using technology. Prerequisites to this course is determined by the student's performance on both the pre-entrance exam and a successful completion of the seventh grade honors course.

Physical Education

DANCE

This class is a Physical Education option with a focus on dance designed for students at all grade levels and levels of ability. Emphasis will be on rhythmic activities and a variety of dance styles designed to improve strength, flexibility, and coordination while developing basic dance techniques. There may be performances outside of class time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This course focuses on three major areas of development for the student: motor skills and movement knowledge; self- image and personal development; and social development. Students are able to focus on common group or team goals, working together to solve problems during group activities. The goal of this class is for students to improve their fitness and further develop fundamental sports skills to allow them to successfully participate in many games and activities. Students will participate in fitness activities designed to help them improve their fitness levels. Students will learn safety procedures for all activities and be given the opportunity to practice cooperation, sportsmanship and teamwork skills.

Science

SCIENCE 6

The focus of sixth grade science is Earth Science. This course emphasizes the student's ability to form accurate concepts about the earth systems as a whole and their interdependent components. Physical science is integrated through an investigation of plate and tectonic systems, energy in the earth's system, and the flow of heat energy. Life science is integrated through an evaluation of how earth supports life through the study of various ecosystems. There is a focus on conservation and management of earth's resources.

SCIENCE 7

The purpose of the 7th grade science curriculum is to introduce students to science processing skills through hands-on laboratory activities, problem-solving situations, open-ended investigations, and cooperative/collaborative work. This course will focus on life science concepts and other strands that support various areas of life science. The course content will include: cell biology, genetics, evolution, earth and life history and structure and function in living systems. In addition, science classes will emphasize investigation and experimentation. Science classes are intended to be hands-on courses, which will give students an understanding as well as practical application of science concepts

SCIENCE 8

This course will focus on physical science concepts and other strands that support various areas of physical science. The course content will include: motion, forces, and the structure of matter, earth and the solar system, chemical reactions, chemistry of living things, periodic table, density and buoyancy. Students should begin to grasp four concepts that help to unify physical sciences: force and energy; the laws of conservation; atoms, molecules, and the atomic theory; and kinetic theory. In addition, science classes will emphasize investigation and experimentation. Science classes are intended to be hands-on courses, which will give students an understanding as well as practical application of science concepts.

Social Science

HISTORY 6

History 6 is a study of ancient world history and geography. The course covers the history, culture, geography, politics, and religions of ancient civilizations. Students study the ideas, issues and events beginning with early humans and covering ancient civilizations from approximately 8000 BC to 600 AD. All units include an examination of the impact of economics, politics, and social history on the developing world. Students will develop higher levels of critical thinking by considering why civilizations developed and why they declined. Students analyze the interactions among the various cultures, while emphasizing their enduring contributions. Connections will be made between the contemporary and ancient worlds.

HISTORY 7

Students in grade seven study the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, and Asia from 500-1789 AD. After reviewing the ancient world and the ways in which archaeologists and historians uncover the past, students study the history and geography of great civilizations that were developing concurrently throughout the world during medieval and early modern times. They examine the growing economic interaction among civilizations as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs, technologies and commodities. They learn about the resulting growth of Enlightenment philosophy and the new examination of the concepts of reason and authority, the natural rights of human beings and the divine right of kings, experimentalism in science and the dogma of belief. Finally, students assess the political forces let loose by the Enlightenment, particularly the rise of democratic ideas, and they learn about the continuing influence of these ideas in the world today.

HISTORY 8

Students in grade eight study the ideas, issues and events from the framing of the Constitution up to World War I. After reviewing the development of America's democratic institutions founded in the Judeo-Christian heritage and English parliamentary traditions, particularly the shaping of the Constitution, students trace the development of American politics, society, culture and economy and relate them to the emergence of major regional differences. They learn about the challenges facing the new nation, with an emphasis on the causes, course and consequences of the Civil War. They make connections between the rise of industrialization and contemporary social and economic conditions.

Electives

ART: BEGINNING

The art elective course is designed to introduce students to the basic elements and principles of art. Curriculum and lessons are designed to stimulate and explore the use of our creative brain. Students will work in a variety of mediums and learn specific techniques. Art elements such as line, shape, value, form, space and texture will be explored. Mediums used include but not be limited to: graphite, water color, tempera, chalk, charcoal and acrylic. Current and historical trends will be studied.

ART: INTERMEDIATE

The intermediate art class will be the successor course of our first art elective. The project -based curriculum will make real life connections to careers in art. Techniques learned will be compared to masters throughout history. A survey of art from a historical point will be followed in a chronological timeline throughout the year. Traditional and sometimes unconventional mediums will be used during the course.

ART: ADVANCED

The advanced art class will take a more personable approach to the development of art projects. Students will choose projects that are suited to their liking and maintain a themed portfolio. Some experimental artworks, collaborative projects and campus art endeavors will be a focus for our advanced art students. Experienced artists with a strong desire to pursue art in their future are encouraged to enroll.

ASB (Associated Student Body)

Application/Interview/Teacher Recommendation required: Student Leadership is a class for students who are selected (application process) to lead the Associated Student Body. This class provides opportunities for growth in personal leadership, communication, organization and collaborative skills. Students will plan and lead activities that include field trips, assemblies, lunchtime activities, and student recognition programs. They develop and implement a budget that meets their goals and carry out school wide fundraisers to support the many programs for students at the school. Students will also promote school spirit and develop leadership skills.

AVID

Application/Interview/Teacher Recommendation required: Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an academic elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Each week, students receive instruction utilizing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum provided by the AVID teacher, tutor-facilitated study groups, motivational activities and academic success skills. In AVID, students participate in activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to support their academic growth. Students will refine short and long-term goals, and as a result, focus on their transition to high school as part of a college preparatory path. Their writing will focus on completing all steps of the writing process and varying style, word choice, vocabulary, structure and voice. Students will take an active role in their learning, understanding the roles of all members in assignments and collaborative lessons. They will expand their knowledge bases of note taking, in relation to studying and test preparation. Students will be exposed to different field trips, guest speakers and research, to increase their knowledge of college and career options.

AVID EXCEL

Application/Interview/Teacher Recommendation required: AVID Excel is a pre-AVID middle school program intended to support English Language Learners and prevent them from becoming long-term language learners. AVID Excel accelerates students' academic language acquisition and puts them on a pathway to high school AVID and college readiness.

BAND: CADET BAND

Cadet Band is a class for students who are just starting to learn an instrument, or for students who are learning a secondary instrument. In this class, students will learn music literacy and theory, tone production and technique on their individual instruments, listening, performance skills, and instrument maintenance. Students will demonstrate learning through daily rehearsals, theory worksheets, playing tests, written quizzes, and performances.

BAND: CONCERT BAND

Audition required/placement by teacher request: Concert Band is an intermediate level class for students who are continuing into their second year of music. Students in Concert Band will continue to develop skills in music literacy and theory, tone and technique on their individual instruments, listening, performance skills, and instrument maintenance. Students will demonstrate learning through daily rehearsals, theory worksheets, playing tests, written quizzes, and performances.

BAND: PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Audition required/placement by teacher request: The Percussion Ensemble is a specialized class for percussion students. Students must have one year of experience on a percussion or wind instrument to be eligible for this class. Students in this class will learn music literacy, theory, listening, and performance techniques on concert percussion instruments. Students will demonstrate learning through daily rehearsals, theory worksheets, playing tests, written quizzes, and performances.

BAND: SYMPHONIC BAND

Audition required/placement by teacher request: Symphonic Band is an early advanced level class for students who are continuing into their second or third year of music. Students in this class have demonstrated the foundational skills in music literacy, theory, tone production and technique, listening, and performance, and are ready to explore these concepts at a deeper level. Students will also begin to learn more challenging repertoire. Students will demonstrate learning through daily rehearsals, theory worksheets, playing tests, written quizzes, and performances.

BAND: WIND ENSEMBLE

Audition required/placement by teacher request: Wind Ensemble is an advanced level class for students who have demonstrated exceptional proficiency on their instrument, as well as an understanding of music literacy and theory. Students in this ensemble will explore challenging repertoire with more emphasis on individual parts and higher level musical aspects. Students in this class are expected to maintain a high level of individual motivation and commitment to their practice. Students will demonstrate learning through daily rehearsals, theory worksheets, playing tests, written quizzes and performances.

COMPUTER SCIENCE DISCOVERIES

Computer Science Discoveries is an introductory computer science course that takes a wide lens on computer science by covering topics such as coding, programming, physical computing, HTML/CSS, and data. The course empowers students to create authentic artifacts and engage with computer science as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and full.

DRAMA: BEGINNING

Theater Arts/Drama is designed for students who are interested in developing their acting skills, as well as for those who simply want to build confidence before an audience. Theater games help students learn to work with each other and practice specific skills such as the use of their voices, focus, body movement, and characterization. Students will gain experience in improvisation, pantomime, readers' theater, skits, short scenes, and plays before an audience. This course includes the basic elements of dramatic production. In addition, students will study the history of theater including the works of major playwrights.

DRAMA: INTERMEDIATE

Prerequisite: Drama Beginning. This course builds upon the skills gained in Beginning Drama. Continued focus on the acting process, improvisation skills, historical context, character development, vocal dynamics and inflection, and public performance will prepare students for participation in the spring production, William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Collaboration, perseverance, teamwork, creativity, responsibility, and a positive outlook are the qualities of an ideal Intermediate drama student.

DRAMA: ADVANCED

Audition required/placement by teacher request: Advanced drama students will perform two shows. One show will be in the fall and the other in the spring. This class may produce one or more showcases as well. When not focused on preparation for performance, the class will learn and refine the skills and steps necessary to build a career in the performing arts. Expect audition prep workshops and guest judges as well as resume building and advanced acting skills.

DRAMA: TECHNICAL THEATER

Using a combination of online and hands-on lessons, Technical Theatre students will understand all the elements that come together to support a live theatrical performance. Everything from ushering and stage management to stage crew and costume design will be explored culminating in a stage crew experience for one of the two shows. The students will have the opportunity to put their skills into action as they contribute to the Intermediate and Advanced productions.

EXPLORATORY (6th Grade students)

Students will focus on the following concepts over the course of the school year.

College/Career: The purpose of this program is to allow students to be involved in activity-centered lessons, which utilize technology, develop beginning skills, and explore careers. This course is designed to introduce students to a variety of career fields. Students will take self-interest surveys and proficiency exams to help them identify career fields appropriate to their skills and interests. Students will develop resume writing and interviewing skills.

Computer Technology: Students will learn the digital skills required to be successful in school, college and the workplace. Students will learn how to use productivity tools like work processing, spreadsheets, and presentations and gain experience using these tools to solve relevant, real-life problems.

Student Success: Students will be taught a variety of strategies to assist their success in school. Social skills/communication skills, organization, Cornell note taking, study skills and time management are some of the topics addressed in this course. An important concept will be the support of students as they are introduced to the use of Chromebooks as an integrated component of instruction in all courses on campus.

HISTORICAL INQUIRY (Art History)

Students will understand the principles and elements of art. Introduction of a variety of art within historical, social, geographical, political, and religious contexts for understanding of art and architecture through the ages.

LITERACY SUPPORT

Literacy Support is an intensive reading intervention program designed to meet the needs of students whose reading achievement is below the proficient level at their grade level. The program directly addresses individual needs through direct instruction in reading skills, use of high-interest literature and non-fiction materials. Identified students in 7th and 8th grade will be enrolled in the course.

MEDIA ARTS

Offered to 7th & 8th grade only. In this art course, students will continue to use a variety of mediums to learn specific art techniques, but they will begin to explore the use of technology in the development of their art projects. Persuasive techniques, visual effects, use of sound and music, storyboarding, and script writing are all covered in this class.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT SPANISH

The Advanced Placement Spanish course is a rigorous course designed for students who have strong skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students demonstrate an interest in developing skills that will expand their understanding of the Spanish language and culture. Class is conducted entirely in Spanish and students are expected to speak the Spanish language with both their teacher and peers. Materials will include authentic resources in the form of recordings, films, newspapers, and magazines. Passing the AP Exam will count as college credit.

SPANISH 1A

This elective course provides students with the necessary foundation for the study of Spanish. It presents basic structure and grammar of the Spanish language and encourages conversation with the introduction of basic vocabulary. The course content includes vocabulary for classroom and school subjects, foods, clothing, telling time, reading the calendar, weather, seasons, modes of transportation, and common locations. In addition, students will develop their writing skills through a variety of writing assignments. Cultural activities introduce the student to the customs and geography of the Spanish speaking countries.

SPANISH 1B

This elective course builds on the concepts studied in Spanish 1A and prepares students for Spanish level 2 in high school. Students will practice speaking, reading, listening to and writing in Spanish. The year will begin with students learning to converse in the present tense, and they will finish up the year by learning the simple past tense. Vocabulary concepts to be studied include, daily routine, foods and eating out, shopping and bargaining, and places around town. Cultural activities will enhance student learning and teach students about Spanish speaking countries.

SPANISH FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

Designed for native speakers of Spanish, this course focuses on the development of basic foundational Spanish literacy skills and communicative competence. The course content includes further development of reading and writing skills for students who already have a grasp of the spoken language. Students become cognizant of the linguistic strengths they possess and develop a sense of pride in their heritage by studying their language and culture. Students expand their ability to use Spanish in the communicative, interpersonal, and interpretive modes adding additional skills by using the language in new applications and contexts. Students receive opportunities to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. This course satisfies one year of the 2-year foreign language requirement for high school graduation and aligns the student for the 4-year requirement of the "Seal of Biliteracy" which includes Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - Modules 1&2

This is an integrated Science elective course designed to support the core science classes. Students will investigate integrated science concepts through the use of hands-on lab experiences and the integration of technology. The modules covered during the year are Design & Modeling and Green Architecture. Design & Modeling: Students apply the design process to solve problems and understand the influence of creativity and innovation on their lives. They work in teams to design a playground and furniture, capturing research and ideas in their engineering notebooks. Using Auto-desk design software, students create a virtual image of their designs and produce a portfolio to showcase their innovative solutions. Green Architecture: Today's students have grown up in an age of "green" choices. In this module, students learn how to apply this concept to the fields of architecture and construction by exploring dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability as they design affordable housing units using Autodesk's 3D architectural design software.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - Modules 3&4

This is an integrated Science elective course designed to support the core science classes. Students will investigate integrated science concepts through the use of hands-on lab experiences and the integration of technology. The modules covered during the year are Automation & Robotics and Medical Detectives. Automation & Robotics: Students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and robotic arms. Medical Detectives: Students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they analyze genetic testing results to diagnose disease and study DNA evidence found at a "crime scene". They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, investigate how to measure and interpret vital signs, and learn how the systems of the human body work together to maintain health.

STING CREW LEADERSHIP

"Where Everybody Belongs" (WEB) is a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 6th graders to their first year of middle school. It is built on the belief that students can help other students succeed. This program will train 7th and 8th graders on how to be mentors and role models, as WEB Crew Leaders, who will guide our 6th graders to success. WEB Crew Leaders will provide support and guidance to their "team" of 6th graders all year long. WEB Crew also acts as an anti-bullying program. WEB Crew Leaders will look out for bullying, offer support to students who are being bullied, and will be obliged to report bullying in order to create a safer school environment for everyone. WEB Crew Leaders will also help organize and facilitate activities that contribute to a positive school culture, including: 6th Grade Orientation, lunch activities, after-school activities, and events for honoring their peers.