

AFS

Grade Level Overviews

AFS

Fifth Grade Courses

Sample Course Offerings

Art

Fifth Grade introduces students to a variety of artistic media, skills, and genres such as proportion, landscape drawing in pastel, political cartooning, fabric dying and more.

English

Students practice reading strategies, engage in book club discussions and write in response to what they read. All students read *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead. Writing includes notebook writing, drafting, revising and editing text, and publicly sharing writing during events like Poetry Night.

Math

Fifth Grade begins with number operations, fractions, and geometry. Topics include building problem-solving skills around multiplication and division, evaluating inequalities, finding the area, surface area and volume of shapes, as well as dealing with ratios, percents, and probability.

Music

Our program primarily seeks to generate a love for making music. We build skills around describing & analyzing music, reading music, and music in relation to history & culture.

Physical Education

Students focus on the healthy development of a person's health triangle - their physical, mental, and social/emotional health.

Science

Students are introduced to the scientific method through immersive, inquiry-based learning. They explore the origins of the universe, Earth's geologic history, the mechanics of motion, food justice and more.

Social Studies

Students explore geography, early civilizations, and Ancient Greece through interdisciplinary projects that promote reading comprehension, note-taking, research, and analytical writing.

Spanish

Students are introduced to grammatical concepts, sentence structure, and the relationship between Spanish and English, all while developing cultural awareness through research and authentic language use.

Theatre

Students will study audience etiquette, theatre history & vocabulary, physical theatre techniques and character development in order to build confidence.

Experiential Learning Highlight

Poetry Night

Each year, Fifth Grade students take to the stage in the Muller Auditorium to recite poetry of their choosing. Each student's unique taste and voice is represented in their selection of three or four poems, at least one of which they write themselves. Throughout the year, students read nearly 100 poems, learning to identify and use figurative language. Students also work with visiting poets who introduce them to unique creative lenses through which to write.



Explore More Online:



Sixth Grade Courses

Sample Course Offerings

Art

Students explore a wide variety of histories, techniques and media through projects like Basqui-at-style self portraits, flipbook animation, architecture & model making, and the study of art in the Benin culture.

English

Sixth grade English is tied to our Social Studies units and includes books such as *Binti* and *Catherine, Called Birdie*. Writing includes work across a variety of genres, including persuasive writing, poetry, long and short form textual analysis, fiction and personal narrative.

Math

Students build problem-solving skills and strategies through exploring topics such as prime numbers, prime factorization, least common multiple, and greatest common factors. This course is designed to cover the skills necessary to be ready for algebra in the following year. Students are expected to explain their answers and reasoning in writing and conversation.

Music

Our program primarily seeks to generate a love for making music. We build skills around describing & analyzing music, reading music, and music in relation to history & culture.

Physical Education

Students focus on the healthy development of a person's health triangle – their physical, mental, and social/emotional health.

Science

We explore environmental science and Earth systems as students study water pollution, habitat destruction, renewable energy, and plate tectonics. Emphasis is placed on applying the scientific method to real-world issues.

Social Studies

Focusing on the Middle Ages and the exchange of ideas across civilizations including West African empires, medieval Europe, and the Maya, students analyze primary and secondary sources, building evidence-based historical arguments.

Spanish

Students are introduced to grammatical concepts, sentence structure, and the relationship between Spanish and English, all while developing cultural awareness through research and authentic language use.

Theatre

Students will study movement, acting, commedia dell'arte, improvisation and character development. We will focus heavily on ensemble building.

Experiential Learning Highlight

Medieval Fair

Sixth Graders take parental visitors on a journey along the Silk Road in this interdisciplinary, culminating event each spring. Working across subject areas, students represent historical civilizations studied throughout the year, including the Maya, West African cultures, the Islamic Caliphates, and Medieval Europeans. With original presentations, dioramas, games, and even mathematically scaled-up historical recipes, each stop offers a rich, multi-sensory experience.



Explore More Online:



Seventh Grade Courses

Sample Course Offerings

Art

Seventh Grade explores the use of watercolors, 3D printing, sculpture, and poster design. Perspective studies help reinforce skills developed in earlier grades, and students are given more independence.

English

Students practice writing across multiple genres, including personal narrative, poetry, persuasive writing, and textual analysis while also engaging in reading strategies to make connections, ask meaningful questions, and analyze complex themes. This year focuses on narratives of trauma through units on the Holocaust and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Math

Beginning in seventh grade, students embark on the study of Algebra concepts such as order of operations, commutative, associative, and distributive laws, solving for variables, inequalities, rate and slope, and an introduction to polynomials. Students gain competence explaining their reasoning both verbally and through written notation.

Music

Our program primarily seeks to generate a love for making music. We build skills around describing & analyzing music, reading music, and music in relation to history & culture.

Physical Education

Students focus on the healthy development of a person's health triangle - their physical, mental, and social/emotional health.

Science

Students delve into forensic science, food chemistry, marine biology, and climate change while honing their skills in measurement, data collection, and independent research.

Social Studies

Students analyze historical events from the Americas, Europe, and Africa through multiple viewpoints in order to explore the inner lives of people living through events far-removed from students in time and place.

Spanish & French

Students taking Spanish read, write, and engage in dialogue using authentic language materials, with grammar taught both explicitly and through use. Beginning in Seventh Grade, students can choose to switch languages to French.

Theatre

Students are immersed in original theatre-making. The culminating project is *House of Horrors*, an annual immersive theatre piece created in partnership with the English department.

Experiential Learning Highlight

Stream Survey

In the spring, students focus on stream ecology, using the campus creek as a living lab. Students gather a variety of data to determine the health of the waterway, starting by identifying and tallying macroinvertebrates. Students also conduct chemical tests of the water, as well as gather physical data such as temperature and turbidity. They next synthesize all of the data to determine the overall water quality and make recommendations for preserving or improving the stream. These "State of the Stream" reports are shared with the Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Watershed Association.



Explore More Online:



Eighth Grade Courses

Sample Course Offerings

Art

Eighth Graders begin with classmate portraits, focusing on perspective, value, and shape. Students also learn silk screening and gain further experience with the wider Adobe Creative Suite.

English

The curriculum emphasizes developing sophisticated critical reading skills through thoughtful annotation and close analysis. Writing instruction focuses on crafting complex sentences, structured paragraphs, and persuasive arguments.

Math

By Eighth Grade, students work with polynomial factoring, quadratic equations, and functions, with regular practice both in class and through meaningful homework assignments that reinforce concepts and extend understanding.

Music

Our program primarily seeks to generate a love for making music. We build skills around describing & analyzing music, reading music, and music in relation to history & culture.

Physical Education

Students focus on the healthy development of a person's health triangle - their physical, mental, and social/emotional health.

Science

Students engage in an in-depth study of chemistry, exploring atomic structure, the periodic table, and chemical reactions through both historical and hands-on approaches. Students also tackle cutting-edge scientific topics, including genetics, cognitive science, and climate change.

Social Studies

This year, students focus on resistance, rebellion, and revolution, examining the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions as well as modern justice movements. They continue to strengthen their abilities to analyze sources, construct arguments, and understand how history is shaped.

Spanish & French

By 8th grade, students are increasingly able to engage in unscripted conversations and are prepared for Spanish II in high school, while enriched Spanish students go even further. Students taking French continue to practice grammar and authentic language production with guided support.

Theatre

Units in creative storytelling, improvisation, playwriting, design and performance allow students to experience the broad range of skills theatre has to offer, skills which can be applied both on stage and beyond.

Experiential Learning Highlight

Eighth Grade Independent Studies

Eighth Graders participate in a year-long independent study which engages students in critical thinking and research skills. Students choose a topic of their own interest and spend time outside of school researching the topic and working with mentors to create a finished project, which is presented to the community. Past project topics have included social justice through rap music, fashion marketing, 3D printing and modeling, video production, acrobatics, Japanese calligraphy, book publishing, music composition and more.



Explore More Online:



Middle School Arts

Music



Students gain independence with music skills and secure knowledge of musical concepts and historical background. All middle school students participate in either Choral or Instrumental music offerings, while Jazz Band, Chamber singers and our 'Roosicians' special ensemble are musical opportunities offered at the club level. This allows students to deepen their interest in instrumental or vocal music, or to participate in both. Classroom work centers on active music-making, while Winter and Spring Concerts provide public performance opportunities for the Choral and Instrumental Ensembles.

Theatre

Units in creative storytelling, improvisation, playwriting, design and performance allow students to experience the broad range of skills theatre has to offer. With an emphasis on ensemble work and group process, students explore their creativity and increase their confidence both as individuals and as part of a team.



Each spring, all Middle School students are invited to take part in the annual Main Stage Production - either a play or a musical. Students can choose to join the production onstage as performers, developing their acting and stage presence, or explore the world of technical theatre by working behind the scenes.

Visual Art

Our program emphasizes connections between artistic and academic disciplines and historical, cultural, and real-world contexts. Students are guided through sequential steps in planning, designing, and choosing effective compositions, techniques, and materials in order to successfully accomplish project goals. Students have the opportunity to build skills and express their understanding and experience of the world through their creations. Over their four years in Middle School, students receive a strong foundation in drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, mixed media, and multi-media sculpture.



Explore More Online:

