

Lower School Curriculum

3rd Grade

Language Arts

In third grade, a shift occurs in which children no longer focus on “learning to read” but instead begin to focus on “reading to learn.” The basic underpinnings of reading are expected to have been mastered as children begin to understand the power of reading, exploring new worlds and expanding their horizons. Additionally, the ‘print gets smaller, and the pace picks up’ in third grade as reading becomes instrumental to gathering information. Along with the classroom anthology, students begin to participate in novel studies. Books are chosen for their ability to engage students in meaningful discussion and to inspire them to read.

In third grade, students’ writing instruction also pivots to focus on learning cursive. By the end of the year, students are expected to write short stories, including an autobiography, and use spelling rules and grammar conventions.

Mathematics

Computation and problem-solving skills continue to be refined. Basic addition and subtraction facts are expected to be mastered for quick recall, while memorization of multiplication and division facts are introduced. Even and odd numbers, mixed numbers, decimals, and the addition and subtraction of fractional parts are also introduced. Different types of geometric angles and lines are identified. Metric and customary units of measurement are used to calculate capacity, length, and weight. Perimeter, area, and volume of given objects are determined. Algebraic number sentences and properties are explored to discover missing numbers. The course urges students to use their math knowledge and higher-level critical thinking skills to solve real world problems.

Social Studies

The third grade social studies program broadens students’ awareness of their community within the context of the United States and the world. Students build fundamental skills in U.S. and world geography and learn about the physical features of the Earth, its climate, and how each plays a role in civic development. During third grade students also focus on Native

Americans, specifically the Chinooks, Utes, Seminoles, Yaquis, Cherokees, and Sioux nations.

Art

Concepts and skills learned in previous grades are refined. Students will recognize the uses of the basic elements of art and will develop additional concepts of design, balance, rhythm, and unity. Students will become more aware of proportions and relationships between objects. Students will begin to use functional vocabulary of art terms when describing art pieces. The subject matter is meaningful and creative to encourage enthusiasm.

Drama

In drama education, students analyze and explore the meaning of the human experience through imagined roles and situations, and value the contribution of drama in bringing meaning to ideas and feelings. The nature of drama classes reflects students’ daily lives, as they connect with others, experience tension, resolve conflict, and create meaning in their world. Students gain theatrical experiences in acting, examining roles, exploring relevance, and engaging actively in theater experiences through creating, performing, and responding. They gain insight into life experiences, team building, body awareness, and confidence through structured dramatic play. Students put on a play each year, as they assume roles in a narrated story and execute artistic and technical elements of theater. Skills include using their voice and body to communicate emotions; identifying playing space; using simple objects in dramatizations; creating and performing characters based on imagination; and identifying and exploring character choices and relationships in a narrated story.

Library

The mission of the library is to encourage curiosity and to support instruction through collaboration with classroom teachers. Third grade students learn how to use the online catalog to search for books by title, author, subject, series, and reading level. They learn the sections of the library and how the call number can be used to locate a book. Students’ use of reference sources, including the dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, and encyclopedia is reinforced. Working with classroom teachers, students learn how to create a

basic bibliography. In the spring, students define and explore various genres including poetry, realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, and informational text.

Music

The music curriculum continues with a more specified study of the fundamental, systematic development of musicianship and basic literacy skills through singing, Orff Xylophones, African drumming, hand bells, spoons, and multicultural folk dance while creating, performing, reading, and responding to music. In addition, further enrichment of the arts is provided to learn the basics of strings and brass through unique whole-class programming while developing insights, awareness, and appreciation of people and cultures represented in our world and communities. Students will perform in several programs throughout the year with increasing accuracy in rhythm, pitch, tone quality, and movement. Performances are viewed as an active process involving the development and application of musical skills, knowledge, and perceptions.

Physical Education

Learning the importance of good sportsmanship through individual and team sports plays a great role in physical education. Oftentimes, life lessons such as sharing, taking turns, encouraging, and being a better team player are brought out in a PE environment. Movement and agility are practiced daily as this is valuable in development of every sport and activity in which we participate. Flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular endurance are taught and practiced often, especially as students participate in fitness testing. The Build Healthy Kids curriculum is utilized to incorporate healthy eating topics on a monthly basis.

Science

Each of the three branches of science (physical, life, & earth) is covered in a hands-on, minds-on format using the scientific method. The students explore the concepts of forces, motion, and simple machines in physical science. Life science involves a study of adaptations and life cycles of animals, focusing on butterflies. A short research project on Georgia's natural resources is done as well. A study of the properties of water and its vital role in sustaining life on earth rounds out earth science. The students also develop their scientific observation skills with nature walks throughout the school year.

Spanish

The overall objectives of Spanish in third grade are to develop and reinforce communicative competency in listening, speaking, writing, and culture. Students will gain an intuitive understanding of how the language

is acquired and how they can use this knowledge to express themselves linguistically. By developing and refining their intuitive skills, students also acquire a basic understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in the Spanish-speaking world.

Technology

Beginning in third grade, students are issued a device to use in the classroom. They are taught to care for their device, keeping it charged so it is ready to use when needed. Students may use their device at their teacher's discretion to complete in-class assignments and to work on programs to reinforce basic math facts and skills. In technology class, students are taught how to use digital tools to communicate thoughts and ideas with creativity and innovation. Students will also engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making activities to strengthen these skills. The concept of Digital Citizenship will also be expanded upon as students have access to technology on a more regular basis.