



Grade Level Summary: 1st Grade

Art

Students learn various techniques, skills, and artistic applications by studying historic content and culture through the eyes and hands of an artist. Studies overlap and integrate with other grade-level subjects and classes.

Language Arts

In first grade, the Language Arts curriculum is designed to develop strong foundational literacy skills through a combination of research-based programs and instructional strategies. At the core of phonics instruction is the IMSE Orton-Gillingham approach, first implemented in Kindergarten. This structured, multisensory method is recognized for its effectiveness in building decoding, encoding, and reading fluency skills, making it the leading approach for phonics instruction in early elementary grades.

Alongside Orton-Gillingham, first-grade students use the Wonders program and other supplemental resources to support comprehensive language development. The curriculum integrates phonemic awareness, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and high-frequency words into meaningful reading experiences that promote comprehension. Each week, learning is guided by an essential question that encourages students to explore deeper themes and make connections between the text and themselves, as well as the world around them.

Students engage with a wide variety of texts throughout the year and respond through both writing and illustration to demonstrate understanding. Writing instruction focuses on text analysis, summarization, and organization with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Students produce narrative, opinion, expository, and argumentative pieces. Additionally, they complete two research projects annually, during which they learn to gather information from multiple sources, take organized notes, and present their findings clearly and neatly.

Through this well-rounded approach, first graders build the literacy skills necessary for reading comprehension, critical thinking, and effective written communication.

Library

In first grade, students are engaged in library activities that provide opportunities for them to learn to access, evaluate, use, and integrate information literacy skills into all areas of learning. They continue to understand the organization of the library, learn to check out library materials responsibly, distinguish fact from fiction, and understand who to ask for help in the library. Additionally, students learn to read widely and use resources for information, personal interests, and lifelong learning.

Mathematics

First-grade students use the enVision Math curriculum and other supplemental resources to teach students math concepts. Students fluently add and subtract numbers from 1 to 20 using a variety of strategies such as counting on, doubles, and number lines. Students develop an array of problem-solving skills for solving word problems. Students extend their knowledge of place value and compare numbers up to 100. Students expand their counting sequence to include counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s. Students understand how to collect, record, and analyze data.

First-grade students are introduced to time and money. Students continue to explore the attributes of shapes and expand their knowledge of measurement.

Music

Students continue the exploration of their voices, learn about audiation (inner hearing), and explore beat versus rhythm with the use of rhythmic speech and poems, as well as percussion instruments. Students transfer speech patterns to Orff instruments and start to improvise on these instruments. Students are introduced to listening maps so that they can start analyzing music. They also start to learn musical notation. Lastly, they learn to sing with expression and perform in front of an audience.

Physical Education

In Physical Education, students experience the joy of movement while building skills that reflect our school's core values. Meeting four times each week, classes emphasize teamwork, leadership, and personal growth. Every student has the chance to step into a leadership role, practicing what it means to lead by example, follow directions, and support peers as positive teammates. Through a variety of activities, students not only develop new skills but also gain confidence while developing the muscles of diligence and resilience.

Science

First-grade students participate in a program called Project Lead the Way. The goal of this program is to engage young minds in science, technology, engineering, and math so that they will build confidence, explore interests, and set themselves up for success in middle school, high school, and beyond. The science curriculum taps into the students' natural curiosity and enthusiasm to empower them to become problem solvers. The units of study explore life, physical, and earth sciences. Students discover the design process and how engineers influence their lives. Units in first grade focus on space systems, patterns and cycles, light and sound waves, animal adaptations, and designs inspired by nature. They explore structure and function by identifying products around them designed by engineers. Students apply newly acquired knowledge and skills as they utilize the design process to design, sketch, build, test, and reflect on all of their structures.

Social-Emotional Learning

First-grade Social-Emotional Learning class uses the Toolbox Project curriculum to help students explore and develop their emotional and social skills. Students continue to learn about the 12 "tools" that they can use to understand themselves and interact positively with others. Through practical and relatable activities, children develop an understanding of resilience, empathy, and effective communication, laying a strong foundation for self-awareness and forming meaningful relationships. The ultimate aim of this class is to empower children to navigate life's challenges with confidence and kindness.

Social Studies

In Social Studies, students have the opportunity to read history-focused articles to compare how people lived in the past to how they currently live and to make personal connections to what they are reading. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking and helping students become responsible decision makers. In first grade, students use Studies Weekly and Scholastic News as the basis for their social studies lessons.

Spanish

Students learn and use daily greetings in the first-grade Spanish class. They study vocabulary for calendar terms, seasons, parts of the body, clothing, classroom objects, colors, and family. Students gain an elementary understanding of specific vocabulary for holidays and some customs of Hispanic cultures.

Technology

In Technology, first graders will continue to learn: the various components of different devices and their functions; how best to use technology and when to take a break from it; and how to navigate various interfaces (mostly on the iPad). They will use Scratch Jr. to develop their coding creations and Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org) to learn about digital responsibility.

Workshop

Students work in differentiated, small workshop groups three times a week for 30 minutes. The groups are fluid and develop individualized skills, including phonics, reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing, and math.