

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 students take different amounts 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 and a focus on developing 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. We begin the year with an exciting nonfiction unit where readers get curious about a topic of interest. They employ the skills and strategies needed to teach about that topic. In our second unit, readers dive into the world of characters, working to interpret their traits, changes, motivations, and themes. Students should be able to select "just right" books independently and read for at least 30 minutes.

Writing

Throughout the year, Grade 4 students work to gain independence and stamina as writers. Within the Writer's Workshop model, students engage in authentic writing tasks, always progressing through the stages of planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing their work. Whole-class mini-lessons teach students specific writing strategies in several genres: realistic fiction, essay writing, and informational text. They develop skills to effectively structure an essay using outlining, paragraphing, and relevant evidence. During the narrative writing unit, students focus on the meaning of their story and how to elaborate with action, dialogue, and inner thought. Workshop conferences provide an opportunity for more individualized instruction based on students' needs. In Grade 4, students practice keyboarding with a focus on learning to type uppercase letters using shift keys, number keys, and other symbols on the QWERTY keyboard. At the end of Grade 4, the goal is for a student to type an A4 page at 15 words per minute with 92% accuracy.

Speaking and Listening

Grade 4 students practice speaking and listening across disciplines to reinforce, build on, and share their learning. Students are encouraged to make eye contact and respond appropriately during a discussion. They are also expected 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

In Grade 4, students extend their number sense to 100,000, building fluency with addition and subtraction, multiplying three-digit numbers by one-digit numbers, and deepening their understanding of division through sharing and grouping. They practice estimation, use area and ratio models to make multiplication more efficient, and begin working with fractions by representing, comparing, and performing simple operations with them. In geometry and measurement, students calculate area and perimeter, explore how these are not always proportional, and apply formulas to rectangular figures. They also measure length and weight with accuracy, practice unit conversions, and represent data in line plots and tally charts, sometimes using fractional values. Through these activities, students strengthen problem-solving and reasoning as they prepare for more advanced mathematical thinking.

Social Studies

Students start the year by discussing how diverse individuals come together to create an inclusive and thriving classroom community. They learn to collaborate and resolve conflict in a respectful and empowering way. In the second unit, students examine cities: how they function and how they may be designed differently in the future. Students begin by examining the impact of geography on American cities. Then, they look ahead, thinking about solving problems affecting our world's cities and improvements that could make cities of the future more enjoyable, safer, healthier, inclusive, and sustainable.

Science

Grade 4 students use the science practices of questioning, developing models, planning, and conducting investigations to identify and combine information to construct explanations. At the beginning of the semester, students investigate different forms of energy and their transfer. Student-led investigations collect data and focus on the cross-cutting themes of cause and effect, systems, and patterning. During the Cities design project, the students research city needs and collaborate in teams to identify problems and generate solutions. Students apply their ideas about renewable and nonrenewable energy sources and engineering processes to design improvements and create a model to explain their ideas, which they will present at the December Learning Celebration. Students have three 60-minute lessons every eight days.

Art

Grade 4 students learn about various art movements and brainstorm multiple approaches to creating 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 their artistic choices. Students focus on clay and discuss culture and context, learning about the use and history of this ancient material. They also study how playful lines, in all forms, can help design and communicate interesting ideas in 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 engage in a comprehensive exploration of music through the three artistic processes: performing, creating, and responding. Students actively engage in performing music through singing and playing instruments. They develop vocal techniques and accuracy, sing in tune with expression, and demonstrate proficiency on various instruments such as recorders, ukuleles, and xylophones. They participate in ensemble playing, following a conductor or leader, and demonstrate proper concert etiquette as both performers and audience members. Students explore the process of creating music by generating musical ideas through experimenting with sounds, rhythms, and melodic patterns using voice and instruments. Students develop active listening skills by identifying and describing the elements of music, including rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, and timbre. Students will participate in informal performances during the first semester. Students attend three 35-minute lessons every eight days.

PE

Grade 4 students build upon the movement patterns, knowledge, and understanding of 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 have units in Gymnastics, Aquatics, and 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 four one-hour PE lessons every eight days.

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. Then, students work on a poem in which they talk about the things that matter most to them and create a presentation about an important person in their lives. 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.

