



Curriculum Guide

GRADES 5-8

2026-2027 Course Offerings



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ENGLISH.....	2
HISTORY.....	6
HUMAN RELATIONS.....	9
MATH.....	13
PERFORMING ARTS.....	17
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	22
SCIENCE.....	23
SPANISH.....	27
VISUAL ARTS.....	30

ENGLISH

OVERVIEW

Poetry, building toward public voice: A poetry thread runs through every year and always ends in a public-facing product, escalating in demand across the progression. Where I'm From poems in 5/6 Year A, broadsides in 5/6 Year B and 7/8 Year A, and a live poetry slam in 7/8 Year B. The through-line is a student voice made public. The fifth grader who writes "I am from" is the same student who, several years later, stands and performs original spoken word from memory.

Language and craft taught at the point of use: Grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and literary terminology are not a separate strand. They enter daily lessons exactly where a text or a piece of student writing makes them necessary: foreshadowing arrives when the story in hand demands the word, a usage focus arises from that week's writing. The effect is cumulative. The close-reading vocabulary a fifth grader meets in myth becomes the working language of an eighth grader's comparative thesis.

5TH & 6TH GRADE

NARRATIVE AS A MADE THING: HOW STORIES ARE BUILT

The mechanics: what a narrative is made of and how it works.

Poetry thread: Where I'm From.

UNITS OF STUDY

Trimester 1: The Shape of Story

Essential question: What are the parts of a story, how do we recognize them, and how are they built?

Students begin with myth, where structure is most visible, but meet more than one structural tradition from the outset. The Greek plot arc and its archetypes sit beside Anansi tales (episodic, trickster-driven, cumulative) and Pacific Northwest Coast Indigenous stories (cyclical, tied to place and season). The lesson is taught explicitly: the three-act arc is a convention, not a law of narrative. A wordless text such as *The Arrival* closes the unit and proves structure can exist independent of language.

Target skills: Plot arc and archetype; the Hero's Journey as one pattern among many; non-Western structure as legitimate architecture; recognizing when a story is built to climax versus to cycle or accumulate.

Trimester 2 : Journeys and the Long Arc

Essential question: How do authors use a shared structure to tell very different stories?

Mapping the full Hero's Journey onto two long narratives reveals that the same skeleton yields radically different stories, and that character growth is itself an authorial choice: one protagonist transforms, another largely does not. Alongside this, students learn genre and the craft of sustaining tension, foreshadowing, and motif across length.

Target skills: Full journey analysis; genre distinction; character change as authorial decision; sustaining a long narrative.

Trimester 3: Genre and Play

Essential question: How does the way a story is built create its effects on the reader?

Mystery makes structure felt. Through the fair-play contract, the function of clues and red herrings, and the manipulation of what the reader knows and when, students consciously feel the author building them.

Target skills: Mystery conventions and the fair-play contract; how ordering reveals and withholding manufactures effect; retrospective command of the year's narrative vocabulary.

7TH/8TH GRADE:

FROM SYSTEMS TO SELVES: HOW SYSTEMS SHAPE US

Power, structure, and human consequence.

Poetry thread: broadsides at higher difficulty.

UNITS OF STUDY

Trimester 1: How Power Works

Essential question: How does power consolidate, and how do systems outlast the people in them?

Allegory and satire become analytic tools: The core lesson is the progressive editing of a set of governing commandments, tracked word by word: the foundational rhetoric-and-propaganda skill of the year. The allegory is then tested against documented history. Native American termination and relocation policy and Japanese American incarceration show the same mechanics of consolidation, erasure, and control of language operating in real systems, so students leave able to name systemic power in more than one history rather than in a single fable.

Target skills: Allegory and satire; rhetoric and propaganda; systems thinking; recognizing systemic power across multiple histories.

Trimester 2 : Power and the Person

Essential question: What happens to individuals when the system holding them together fails?

One text centers rhetoric as a political weapon, with competing funeral orations studied line by line as instruments aimed at a single crowd. A paired text runs the parallel experiment in the absence of any system: the decay of order, group psychology, and symbolism. Across both, students study ambition, consequence, and the collapse into violence, and read persuasive language in earnest.

Target skills: Rhetoric as political weapon; decay of order and group behavior; symbolism; forensic close reading of persuasion.

Trimester 3: The Cost of the System

Essential question: What is the human cost of a system, and how do we begin to answer it?

A past account of systemic power is set against a current or projected, dystopian one, teaching students to read the same question in two registers and to see dystopian fiction as an argument about the present. Voice and testimony are introduced as the beginning of a response, carried into op-eds, spoken statements, and banned-book defenses delivered to a live audience.

Target skills: Systemic power in a real present-day setting; dystopian control and awakening; two registers of one question; voice and testimony as response.

PERSONAL SKILLS

- Intellectual patience: holding a question open across weeks in 5/6, applied to unresolved moral ambiguity in 7/8.
- Perspective-taking as discipline: empathy as concrete cognitive work, raised to reconstruct the interior logic of characters who do harm without excusing them.
- Productive disagreement: interpretive argument in 5/6 becoming genuine civic argument in 7/8, held with force and without contempt.
- Self-authorship: defending a reading in 5/6 becomes the subject itself in 7/8, carried most directly by the poetry thread.
- Moral agency: moving from analyzing characters' choices to articulating what the student would owe.
- Public voice: exhibitions, broadsides, and the slam require standing behind one's work in public, a capacity distinct from private competence.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Structural analysis: Plot arc, archetype, and non-Western structures in 5/6, extending to allegory, satire, dramatic structure, and systems thinking in 7/8.
- Close reading: Introduced gently in 5/6, forensic by 7/8, where a single edited commandment or a pair of funeral speeches rewards word-by-word attention.
- Rhetoric and propaganda: New and load-bearing in 7/8: dismantling persuasive language as a civic defense skill.
- Comparative analysis: Two texts on a shared structure in 5/6 grow to fiction against nonfiction making one argument across time in 7/8.
- Poetic craft. Sustained across all four years: image, line break, sound, anaphora, metaphor, and the gap between page and performance.
- Writing: Paragraph claims grow to sustained thematic essays, then to comparative thesis-driven analysis, reflections.
- Composing across form: Wordless graphic narrative, verse novel, and prose extend to drama, memoir, long-form nonfiction, broadside, and spoken word.

ASSESSMENT

Exhibition as the culture of assessment: Because Hyla operates without traditional grades, assessment is narrative, formative, portfolio-based, and frequently public: gallery walks, seminars, performances, published anthologies, installations. The 8th-grade capstone is engineered to be read against the student's earliest 5th-grade portfolio pieces, so four years of growth become legible in a single arc. Every trimester also carries a Challenge by Choice independent study option, letting a student extend the trimester's skill under teacher-scaffolded support.

DEIB INTEGRATION

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are structural rather than supplemental. "Whose story gets told?" is an explicit analytic tool, not a sentiment. Marginalized experience is read as expert craft first, resisting the move of reading it only for its lesson. Non-Western narrative structure is foundational, not comparative: Anansi and Pacific Northwest Coast Indigenous storytelling stand as co-equal architectures from the first trimester. Systemic power is taught across more than one history rather than a single national frame. The Holocaust's specificity is deliberately protected from dissolving into a generic displacement

theme. And where a canonical text has a known flaw, the flaw becomes curriculum, as when the white-savior problem in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is made an object of study rather than a silence.

Some books might include:

A Long Walk to Water — Linda Sue Park

All Thirteen — Christina Soontornvat

Animal Farm — George Orwell

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

The Arrival — Shaun Tan

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe — Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Born a Crime — Trevor Noah (YA edition)

Fahrenheit 451 — Ray Bradbury (optional)

Ghost Boys — Jewell Parker Rhodes

The Giver — Lois Lowry

The Hate U Give — Angie Thomas

The Hobbit — J.R.R. Tolkien

To Kill A Mockingbird — Harper Lee

Julius Caesar — William Shakespeare

Just Mercy — Bryan Stevenson

Long Way Down — Jason Reynolds

Look Both Ways — Jason Reynolds

Lord of the Flies — William Golding

The Marrow Thieves — Cherie Dimaline

The Odyssey — graphic novel adaptation by Gareth Hinds

The Outsiders — S.E. Hinton

Paper Wishes — Lois Sepahban

Refugee — Alan Gratz

Romeo and Juliet — William Shakespeare

Seedfolks — Paul Fleischman

The Westing Game — Ellen Raskin

*Various other nonfiction articles, short stories, essays, and poems.

HISTORY

5th/6th - CULTURE AND ARCHEOLOGY

OVERVIEW

This course is meant to be roughly chronological, the course focuses on five key themes (see below) of this extensive period. Students will learn that history is full of patterns, such as cause/effect and continuity/change, that can be learned with the right tools. For this reason, each unit is like a three-layered cake in which we first analyze the past, then make connections to the present, and lastly predict the future.

During the course, students should expect to learn academic methods for analyzing both primary and secondary sources. They will participate in first-person simulations and socratic-style seminars, learning the art of inquiry through personal and guided discussion. With each unit, students will create final products, from research papers to board games to puppet shows. Overall, Culture and Archeology is designed around the unique needs of growing minds and active bodies; traits that make for a fascinating class.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Notetaking
- Organization
- Close reading/Annotations
- Class Discussions
- Teamwork
- Research
- Expository Writing

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Timeline Analysis
- Terminology
- S.P.I.C.E Analysis (Social, Political, Interactions, Cultural, Economic)
- Compare/Contrast
- Historical Significance
- Primary and Secondary Sources

UNITS OF STUDY

Scales of Time (September - October)

- o Timelines and Compare/Contrast (Final: Interactive Timeline)

Evidence & Artifacts (November - December)

- o Early Agricultural Societies and Museum Studies (Final: Design a Museum)

Global S.P.I.C.E Tour (January - February)

- o Different Foods, Different Societies (Final: Global Buffet)

Culture Creation (February - March)

- o Group brainstorm of secret culture and artifact building (Final: Cultural Artifact)

Archeology Dig & Museum Night (April - June)

- o Fieldwork and presentation of findings (Final: Museum Night)

ASSESSMENTS

As indicated in the above content, each unit has a culminating piece that allows students to showcase their “best selves”, highlighting their content mastery, skill development and creative instincts. These final projects are meant to be both celebrations of learning and performative assessments.

DEIB INTEGRATION

This course is grounded in the work of understanding how societies change and adapt over time. We look at how different cultures have built distinctive ways of living, which have blended with other societies throughout history to create a global society with diverse, yet overlapping traits. During the year, students will be asked to explore new ideas and peoples, with an openness that allows for understanding across differences.

7th/8th Overview- OUR PLACE IN HISTORY; FROM GLOBAL TO NATIONAL TO LOCAL

OVERVIEW

If the previous two courses can be characterized by comprehension and analysis, then the final year is a time of evaluation and argumentation. Building on previous themes and skills, United States History focuses primarily on the last 200 years, with a greater emphasis on how this country developed in relation to global changes and regional/local growth. Students can expect to delve into many of the most contentious events of the 20th century, such as industrialization, war, governmental power and personal responsibility. Moving past simply describing the significance of an event and its place in time, the class will question the ethics of judging the past and considering how these views shape the future, from a personal to a societal level.

Students are expected to effectively research, compile and present their historical findings in a variety of formats, written and/or oral. Success in the class dictates a focused, considerate, open intellect, willing to grow, learn and make mistakes within the process of historical studies.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Notetaking
- Research
- Argumentative writing
- Presentation
- Debate
- Reflection

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Cause/Effect
- Change/Continuity
- Historical Significance
- Primary and Secondary Sources
- Historical Perspective
- Ethical Dimensions

UNITS OF STUDY

Industrial & Global Consequences (September - October)
o Societal Impacts and Urbanization (Final: Changing Cities)

Government (November - December)
o The Fight for Constitutional Amendments (Final: Co-lead Class Lesson)

War & Morality (January - February)

- o Conflicts of 1900-1950, Globalization (Final: Research Paper)

March Madness (March)

- o Most Influential Debate Series, Rotating Topic (Final: Debate)

A Local Tale (April - May)

- o Re/telling History (Final: Oral Story)

ASSESSMENTS

As indicated in the above content, each unit has a culminating piece that allows students to showcase their “best selves”, highlighting their content mastery, skill development and creative instincts. These final projects are meant to be both celebrations of learning and performative assessments.

DEIB INTEGRATION

United States History is grounded in the work of contemporary global thinking. The course explores a range of topics that ask students to consider backgrounds far different than their own, often with a blend of academic and personal work. In asking students to engage in a diversity of culture and thought, we are focusing on helping students develop open hearts and minds.

HUMAN RELATIONS

ALL GRADES

OVERVIEW

The social and emotional elements of Human Relations are central to the Hyla student experience throughout each year. For early adolescents, understanding themselves as humans is equally as important as their academic growth. Having a safe space to share and listen with their peers while navigating the incredible joy, challenge and growth of the middle school experience helps make the whole Hyla program more successful.

The purpose of the Human Relations class is, using words from the Hyla mission statement, "to encourage students to respect and value themselves and others," which includes forming caring relationships and developing as individuals with integrity. The underlying goal of the Human Relations curriculum is to assist students in developing a healthy identity. Through a blend of interactive, informative, and experiential learning exercises, students develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to more effectively interact with other people. Students will increase awareness of themselves and their role and responsibility in the world around them. The curriculum focuses on the following topics:

5TH/6TH GRADE

STUDENT SKILLS

- Teamwork and leadership: games, group challenges, collaborative projects
- Active listening and sharing verbally: monthly Council sessions, reading discussions, weekly shares
- Interaction with community: organizing school events, cross-grade project collaboration, school beautification, public service projects
- Self-reflection: journaling, creating an academic portfolio, examining personal growth

UNITS OF STUDY

September - October

- What does community mean at Hyla?
- What other communities are you a part of (family, friends, activities)?
- Understanding anger
- How to give and get advice
- Navigating conflicts
- Developing friendships
- Gossip and rumors

November - January

- When and how to speak out - being a bystander
- Societal pressure
- Where to turn when we need help
- Talking with adults
- Double Standards
- Goal Setting
- Success, Learning and Failure
- Time Management

January – April

- Managing technology
- Sharing online
- Technology and gaming
- Crushes and Rejection
- Respecting ourselves and each other

April - June

- Stress and Stress Management
- Changing the voice of your “Self-Talk”
- Sleep and screen time
- Nutrition
- What to do when we are worried about someone
- Changing bodies
- Healthy choices
- Boundaries

ASSESSMENT

Because Human Relations is participation based, the quantitative and qualitative assessment is based on how students engage over time. This observational assessment over time gives a picture of how a student engages and interacts with the understanding that students in general have days where they feel more or less comfortable sharing verbally or engaging in active play.

Evaluations based on participation:

- Listening
- Cooperation
- Tolerance
- Patience
- Respect for others
- Leadership
- Accountability to group
- Reflection

7TH/8TH GRADE

STUDENT SKILLS

- Teamwork and leadership: games, group challenges, collaborative projects
- Active listening and sharing verbally: monthly Council sessions, reading discussions, weekly shares
- Interaction with community: organizing school events, cross-grade project collaboration, school beautification, public service projects
- Self-reflection: journaling, creating an academic portfolio, examining personal growth

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Council
- Group Discussion
- Videos and audio sharing
- Guest speakers and workshops
- Books and articles
- Writing and Art

- Games
- Creative projects

UNITS OF STUDY

September - October

- What does community mean at Hyla?
- What other communities are you a part of (family, friends, activities)?
- Understanding anger
- How to give and get advice
- Navigating conflicts
- Developing friendships
- Gossip and rumors

November - January

- When and how to speak out - being a bystander
- Societal pressure
- Where to turn when we need help
- Talking with adults
- Double Standards
- Goal Setting
- Success, Learning and Failure
- Time Management

January – April

- Managing technology
- Sharing online
- Technology and gaming
- Crushes and Rejection
- Relationships
- Positive Self Image and reflection
- Drugs and Alcohol

April - June

- Stress and Stress Management
- Changing the voice of your "Self-Talk"
- Sleep and screen time
- Food and eating disorders
- Signs of self-harm, what to look for and how to help
- What to do when we are worried about someone
- World Wisdom: practices/traditions from other cultures centered around community, wellness, identity
- Rituals, Practices, Symbols and Traditions
- Changing bodies
- Healthy choices
- Respecting ourselves and each other
- Boundaries

ASSESSMENT

Because Human Relations is participation based, the quantitative and qualitative assessment is based on how students engage over time. This observational assessment over time gives a picture of how a student engages and interacts with the understanding that students in general have days where they feel more or less comfortable sharing verbally or engaging in active play.

Evaluations based on participation:

- Listening
- Cooperation
- Tolerance
- Patience
- Respect for others
- Leadership
- Accountability to group
- Reflection

DEIB INTEGRATION

Students engage socially, emotionally and physically in a way that challenges them to grow their personal awareness while supporting others to do the same. By asking questions, finding compromise, and developing trusting relationships, we learn in HRel that everyone has different experiences, perspectives, strengths, and personal boundaries.

MATH

ALL GRADES

OVERVIEW

Hyla Middle School recognizes that in every adolescent there is a mathematician, and that in each of us there is a love for language, art, and mathematics. Hyla's challenging and innovative math program fosters student independence and engagement while building a solid mathematical foundation. The main goal of this program is to provide a strong foundation in mathematics for every student using coursework that is appropriate to the ages, abilities, and needs of that student. We want students to be well prepared for the mathematics found in their future schooling or careers, but also ignite and nurture an appreciation for the subject and how it relates to language and art. And we achieve that through lessons, practice, projects, applications, and cross-curricular studies. This type of thinking requires a high degree of independent exploration. Teachers, textbooks, and materials will always be important resources, but the student skills they create for themselves and the knowledge of how they learn best in a mathematics class are the most enduring. We ask students to solve problems mentally as well as with paper, pencil, calculator, and computer, and to then communicate their results effectively. Students do much of their homework independently, so we find it essential to use class time for group collaboration and teacher guidance.

PLACEMENT

When students begin at Hyla, they are assessed on their previous math experiences, ability, interest, and achievement. Most students begin the coursework in either 5th grade core curriculum or 6th grade core curriculum. The multigrade sections allow for fluidity between grade curriculums to create natural opportunities for differentiation. Some students will benefit from a review of the basics, while others will seek advancement. A small group of students who have proven to master 6th grade math content at the beginning of the school year will begin their coursework in Jousting Armadillos, our pre-algebra course (see 7th grade).

5TH/6TH GRADE

In this course, students explore the patterns and relationships that lie at the heart of mathematics. Students are given a variety of different problem solving opportunities where they can observe patterns and relationships and begin to find a more abstract way of expressing this knowledge. This course integrates a variety of projects to practice and utilize newly learned math skills. Students are also taught how to be effective middle school math students. Coursework requires students to employ organization, note-taking, homework procedures, and correction and revision of work. Students balance collaborative work done in class with independent practice at home.

Developing fluency with basic math facts, fraction/decimal operations, and problem solving techniques is emphasized all year in both courses.

The topics covered in the 5th grade curriculum include: Volume and surface area of shapes; place value, multiplication and division with two-digit divisors and fraction/decimal remainders; all operations with fractions and decimals; statistics and graphical representations, shapes on a coordinate plane.

The topics covered in the 6th grade coursework include: area, volume and surface area of shapes; ratios and proportional relationships; percent; factors, multiples, primes, composites, prime factorization, exponents; fraction operations; operations with positive and negative numbers; variable expressions.

7TH/8TH GRADE

Arbor Algebra Series: The Arbor Algebra Series (AAS) is an algebra curriculum written by two teachers from our sister school, the Arbor School in Portland, Oregon. The trilogy is a writing-based, common sense, whimsical, and engaging introduction to algebra written directly to the middle-grade student. The AAS books integrate compelling narrative, inductive reasoning, and deep, imaginative problem solving while satisfying common core standards. The books are called: *Jousting Armadillos*, *Crocodiles and Coconuts*, and *Chuckles the Rocket Dog*.

In AAS, the students work in small self-paced groups through an algebra sequence designed to meet every student at their current level of understanding and then challenge them to grow. The students are divided organically into small groups. Each cohort proceeds through the math curriculum more or less at its own self-governed pace. Hyla teacher videos have been created to accompany each lesson in the book, and to provide one more modality for learning. The teacher's work in the classroom is to meet with small groups or individuals and talk with them about the material, work problem sets with them, set student goals, and to generally buoy their understanding. There are very few moments when the teachers are standing up in front of the whiteboard talking to the whole class.

Most Hyla students begin their work in *Jousting Armadillos* in the spring of their 6th grade year. They complete *Jousting Armadillos* during 7th grade and then begin *Crocodiles and Coconuts*. In 8th grade students quickly finish *Crocodiles and Coconuts* and spend the rest of that year working toward completion of *Chuckles the Rocket Dog*.

The Hyla math curriculum takes students through the equivalent of a high school Algebra I course sometime by the end of eighth grade. Some students needing more support will experience an introductory level of Algebra I. The small cohort of students who began *Jousting Armadillos* at the beginning of 6th grade will complete and master Algebra I by the end of their 7th-grade year. Then in 8th grade that cohort will study high school level geometry.

At the end of 8th grade, Hyla students may be recommended for Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II for 9th grade math.

Pre-Algebra
Jousting Armadillos & Other Equations: An Introduction to Algebra

Topics covered in this book include: Inductive and deductive reasoning; the language of algebra; negative numbers; algebraic functions; single-variable equations; problem solving.

Pre-Algebra/Algebra

Crocodiles & Coconuts: Equations in Two Variables

Topics covered in this book include: The Cartesian coordinate plane; graphing two-variable equations; functions and formulas; solving simultaneous equations; graphing circles, ellipses, parabolas, and hyperbolas.

Algebra

Chuckles the Rocket Dog: Polynomials & Quadratics

Topics covered in this book include: Negative exponents; scientific notation; exponential functions; manipulating polynomials; factoring polynomials; solving quadratic equations; solving and graphing higher-degree equations.

Geometry: Seeing, Doing, Understanding, by Harold R. Jacobs

Topics Covered in this book include: logic and proofs; coordinate geometry and transformations; theorems and postulates for triangles; trigonometry; and properties and theorems for other polygons, circles, and solids. The course is an advanced honors level course typically taught in high school.

PROJECTS

Projects are incorporated into the four years of Hyla math. All students participate in the projects. Some are cross-curricular, and most are collaborative. Projects include: Tessellations, 3-D Global House Construction, Proportional Action Figures, Electoral College, Real World Budgeting, Proportional Comics, Mandalas, Stock Project, Programming, Zipline Barbie

TECHNOLOGY

Students are issued scientific calculators to use sometime in 6th or 7th grade. We use those calculators to build the skills that will be needed when they advance into high school math courses and use a graphing calculator. Students are also introduced to using spreadsheets in Google Sheets. This is done with school issued Chromebooks and can be completed during class projects.

ASSESSMENT

There are a variety of opportunities for students to show me what they have learned throughout a unit. I will informally assess students each day in class while I work with them on problems or questions they have with the work. There are formal assessments as well with mid-unit quizzes and end of unit tests. All students are given practice tests as a chance to practice preparing for the unit assessment. Students can always retake a test or revise a test to improve their score. I do not give cumulative course grades, but I do give students test and quiz scores in the forms of fractions, percents, and letter grades. In addition, student projects

are another form of assessment where students can show their understanding through alternate modes like building, constructions, using spreadsheets, and beginning programming.

DEIB INTERGRATION

In math class, we honor diversity, equity, and inclusion in several ways. Each course offers a variety of learning modalities throughout the year. This allows students to experience variety in how they learn and to highlight the strengths of every learner. It also helps students to identify the ways that they learn best and open their mind to different methodologies. There is not one way to be successful with math, and it is important that every student see that firsthand by hearing from their peers, teachers, and the broader community. We celebrate the contributions of mathematicians of all ethnicities, gender, cultures, and languages from a historical perspective and from modern day people in the field of mathematics.

PERFORMING ARTS

5th/6th Grade: Stage Acting

OVERVIEW

This section of drama focuses on stage acting with the use of condensed works of Shakespeare, mythological tales, or vignettes, depending on the year. The focus is to use appropriate works to improve students' analytical skills, understanding of character (and therefore personal motivation), and to give them the opportunity to simplify something that, at first, seems foreign yet in the end becomes manageable and understood, thereby working on their ability to dissect and engage with material for the intent of comprehension and performance. The course presents acting and improvisational exercises which build student skills effectively as a byproduct of the work they are having fun with.

Successful completion of the course will see the student capable of reading, performing, and understanding complex characters and ideas, working as a functional team, and expanding their comfort zone in the areas of public speaking and presentation. The overall idea is to allow the student to be more autonomous than they were previously used to at the elementary level and, using the tools and techniques utilized, provide in them a knowledge of personal capabilities, possibilities, and achievements in order to obtain stronger speaking and expression skills as well as a heightened sense of confidence.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Confidence
- Public Speaking
- Character Analysis
- Sociological Understanding
- Responsibility/Autonomy
- Teamwork

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Text Analysis
- Enunciation/Projection
- Presentation Skills
- History
- Autonomous Problem Solving
- Memorization

UNITS OF STUDY

- Acting Fundamentals (Speaking Effectively as Self)--September into October
- Shakespeare: His Time & Work--October; Mythological Tales & Lore: Origins & Implications; Fairy Tales: Origin Stories and Perspectives
 - o Historical Applications
 - o Condensed Script (retells, assignment of roles)
- Play Production
 - o Role Assignment and Breakdown
 - o Rehearsals

- o The culmination of this class will be a school-wide presentation of the play onstage.

SAMPLE OF DRAMA COMPONENTS TO BE LEARNED

- Two-Person Scene Study
- Character Motivations
- Projection/Enunciation
- Emotive Acting
- Performing
- Dialogue
- Blocking
- Costuming

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of students is twofold. The script study and rehearsal process allows for real time feedback between teacher and student as to where their comforts, strengths, and challenges lie and how they may push themselves further in the work. The final performance serves as a final assessment of progress made in comparison of speaking skills, comprehension, and teamwork-based progress. Focus is not on the quality of talent but quantity of growth.

DEIB INTEGRATION

Given the study of Shakespeare, mythology, and fairy tales, we are able to have open discussions About the differences of gender representation, social norms, and status during various time periods and the changes in modern society. In the casting of the play, we are able to open up the barriers that were present back then by allowing for the possibility of any player to portray any role. What is stressed is the importance of teamwork and fair representation in the performance as well as the acknowledgement of audience awareness.

7TH GRADE: IMPROV

OVERVIEW

This unit focuses on improv and using improvisational tools in order to increase students' abilities to communicate, present, create, and work together as a team. Improv as a teaching tool is a wonderful way for the students to have fun while at the same time gaining an understanding of and reliance on one another, while also gaining confidence in presentation, performance, and public speaking. The very nature of basic improv, such as "Yes, and-" exercises and speaking in "You" format rather than "I" inherently creates an atmosphere of teamwork and empathy.

Successful completion of the course will see the student gain confidence not only in their speaking skills but in their ability to think under a variety of situations, thereby gaining confidence in their voice as well as their thought process. The goal is to not allow students to shy away from problems but to embrace our human stumbles as challenges to overcome and learn from, thereby making us stronger in each experience we face. The teacher, in this case, acts as a motivator, but the student provides the self driven impetus to guide them through their own personal blocks in a manner that is conducive to strength building and not shutting

down.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Confidence
- Public Speaking
- Interpersonal Skills
- Sociological Understanding
- Responsibility/Autonomy
- Teamwork

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Communication
- Enunciation/Projection
- Presentation Skills
- Sociological Understanding
- Cooperative Process
- Autonomous Thinking

UNITS OF STUDY

- Building skills of well-rounded performers and speakers.
- Improvisational games.
- The culmination of this class will be a school-wide improv performance.

SAMPLE OF DRAMA COMPONENTS TO BE LEARNED

- Two-Person Scene Study
- Character Motivations
- Projection/Enunciation
- Performing
- Multi-Person Scene Goals
- Quick Thinking/Problem Solving

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of students is again twofold. The class process allows for real time feedback between teacher and student as to where their comforts, strengths, and challenges lie and how they may push themselves further in the work. The mix of games speak to a variety of strengths and challenges to bring out the appropriate results. The final performance serves as a final assessment of progress made in comparison of speaking skills, comprehension, and teamwork based not on the quality of talent but quantity of growth as a speaker in front of others without the comfort of scripts.

DEIB INTEGRATION

The very nature of improv is to be open to all varieties of information, partners, and situations. Any time a player may cross a line, intentionally or accidentally, that may not consider the diversity of an audience or fellow player, it opens immediate discussion on the responsibilities of the performer. Priority is given in instruction to be self-aware of what language we use in our communication and that everyone is held to the same standards of participation and speaking.

8TH GRADE: PUBLIC SPEAKING

OVERVIEW

8th grade drama focuses on putting together the skills the students have touched upon so far in order to

create stronger presenters and communicators for their continued work in upper school and beyond. The focus here will be creating presentations and one act scenes that allow for them to hone skills in writing, teamwork, personal expression, presentation, and the problem solving inherent with creative collaboration, performed production, and material creation.

Successful completion of the course will have the students displaying a stronger presence and voice on stage during presentation along with a style that engages an audience rather than reads to them. The final presentation of short scenes and monologues will have a multi-fold effect of strengthening creative collaboration, structuring voice and story for a desired effect, and further honing presentation and performance skills in front of an audience. Also included in this experience are the Transition Conferences (a reflection of their time at Hyla in front of faculty and parents) and the Testimonial Ceremony (a ceremony that culminates at the end of 8th grade with a presentation of appreciation for a peer).

STUDENT SKILLS

- Confidence
- Public Speaking
- Character Analysis
- Sociological Understanding
- Collaborative Skills
- Presentational Skills
- Teamwork

- Emotional Expression

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Text Analysis
- Enunciation/Projection
- Presentation Skills
- Narrative Storytelling
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Writing

UNITS OF STUDY

- Presentation
 - Voice
 - Attachment to Topic
 - Engagement with your Audience
- Scene writing--March-April
 - Scriptwriting
 - Collaboration
 - Stage work: vision and execution
- Rehearsal & Performance
 - Scene Night
 - Exit Conferences
 - Testimonials

SAMPLE OF DRAMA COMPONENTS TO BE LEARNED

- Two Person Scene Study
- Character Motivations
- Projection/Enunciation

- Performing
- Multi-Person Scene Goals
- Quick Thinking/Problem Solving

ASSESSMENT

Beyond the ongoing in class assessment of regular on-stage and in-class presentations, there will be a final presentation of written scenes as well as a student-led transition conference and testimonials. The completion of these three elements, before audiences of faculty, family, and

friends allows for a practical assessment of the skills acquired over the student's entire time at Hyla, most especially focused on the skills honed in the eighth grade trimester which caps off a culmination of all three years of skills and techniques.

DEIB INTEGRATION

In the same vein as improv allowing for the expression of one's own voice and experience and relation to the experience and understanding of the audience, here the words and creative expression is as diverse as the student writers and performers of the materials. The editing process and discussion of written work alongside the feedback portion performed in class work allow for direct feedback and discussion of all contemporary topics that are present within the students' interests. Because they are student-generated materials, overseen by faculty, the program is inherently set up for allowing a healthy integration of DEI ideals.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

ALL GRADES

OVERVIEW

Hyla's Middle School Physical Education program is designed to help students become physically educated, confident, and motivated to care for their health and fitness—both now and throughout their lives. PE at Hyla fosters an appreciation for physical activity and the connection between a healthy body and a sound mind, while providing experiences that build self-esteem, cooperation, self-discipline, resilience, and sportsmanship.

Through a diverse range of activities, including team sports, fitness, and outdoor recreation, students develop physical skills while learning how to set goals, challenge themselves, work with others, and make healthy choices. Elective courses expand these opportunities with engaging movement and exercise experiences such as dance, mountain biking, rock climbing, yoga, running, and HIIT workouts. Together, these experiences help students discover activities they enjoy and build the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead active, healthy lives.

PE SKILLS

- Students demonstrate competency in movement patterns (for example, hand and foot dribbling, and disc throwing).
- Students develop knowledge of basic rules and strategies of games and sports (soccer, basketball, football, lacrosse, and track and field).
- Students develop teamwork skills and find roles in various games and activities that push them to grow, without feeling overwhelmed.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & HEALTH

- Students develop an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Students demonstrate proper safety procedures with equipment.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Students develop positive self-management and social skills necessary to work independently and with others.
- Students engage in Agreements and Compromise meetings to address the boundaries and rules, and tailor activities to the interests and needs of the entire group.
- Team building skills to include everyone.
- Using multiple ways of forming teams to address the risks of unfair teams and minimize feeling “left out.”
- Students have a voice to share their hopes and goals every day, prioritizing having fun while taking care of each other.

SCIENCE

5TH/6TH Grade: LIFE AND EARTH SCIENCE

COURSE OVERVIEW

Science at Hyla is a hands-on, lab-based exploration of living systems and their connections to the natural world. This year's curriculum (Systems and Interactions) asks, How does the natural world work? Students investigate systems from the microscopic scale of cells to the larger systems of Earth and ecosystems. Through laboratory investigations, field studies, modeling, data analysis, and engineering challenges, students develop increasingly sophisticated ways to understand, model, and explain how systems function and interact.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Observation and questioning
- Scientific communication
- Materials management and organization
- Reflection and self-assessment

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Laboratory and field investigation
- Data collection, analysis, and representation
- Scientific modeling
- Systems and cause-and-effect thinking
- Evidence-based explanations
- Mathematical reasoning
- Engineering design process
- Scientific language and communication
- Structure and function

UNITS OF STUDY

Unit 1- Cells, Organisms & Living Systems

- How living things are organized, how specialized cells function, and how organs and body systems work together

Unit 2- Plants, Matter & Energy

- How plants grow, where plant matter comes from, and how matter and energy move through living systems

Unit 3- Earth Systems & Water

- How Earth's major systems interact and how water moves through the atmosphere, land, oceans, and living things

Unit 4- Ecosystems & Energy Flow

- How organisms interact, how energy flows through ecosystems, and how matter cycles through living systems.

STUDENTS INVESTIGATE

- Structures and functions
- Systems and subsystems
- Matter and energy
- Interactions and relationships
- Cycles and patterns
- How systems function and change

ASSESSMENT

Students demonstrate learning through laboratory and field investigations, scientific models, data analysis, written explanations, presentations, and hands-on projects. Assessment emphasizes students' ability to identify patterns, use evidence, explain relationships within systems, communicate scientific thinking, and revise their ideas based on feedback. While the content changes from year to year, students' scientific thinking continues to develop, with increasing depth, complexity, independence, and sophistication.

DEIB INTEGRATION

Students explore science through environmental, cultural, historical, and ethical perspectives. Investigations of ecosystems, water, biodiversity, and human impacts provide opportunities to consider how people interact with and make decisions about natural systems. Students also examine how scientific ideas have been interpreted and used in different contexts.

TEXT & MATERIALS

OpenSciEd 6.6 Cells and Systems
FOSS Human Systems Interactions, Population and Ecosystems
IQWST 6.1 What is Going on Inside Me?
Act NOW Science Ecological Restoration
HyLab laboratory and engineering materials
Microscopes, models, specimens, and field-study equipment
Plant-growth and experimental systems

7TH/ 8TH GRADE: PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY

COURSE OVERVIEW

Science in the 7/8 classroom asks, *How can we explain what is happening in the physical world?* Building on students' earlier understanding of natural systems, students investigate matter, motion, forces, energy, and chemical change through hands-on experiments, mathematical relationships, scientific modeling, and engineering challenges.

Students move beyond describing what happens to developing explanations for why it happens. They collect and analyze evidence, connect observable phenomena to particle-level models, recognize limitations in their models, and revise their thinking when new evidence challenges an initial explanation. Differentiation comes through increasing depth, complexity, independence, and scientific skill development.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Scientific communication
- Questioning and curiosity
- Persistence through productive struggle
- Materials management and organization
- Reflection and self-assessment

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Laboratory and experimental design
- Quantitative data collection and analysis
- Mathematical reasoning and prediction
- Scientific modeling
- Evidence-based explanations
- Graphing and data representation
- Cause-and-effect reasoning
- Identifying uncertainty and sources of error
- Engineering design and problem solving
- Scientific communication and critique

UNITS OF STUDY

Unit 1-Matter & Atomic Structure

- Physical properties, density, states of matter, particle models, atoms, elements, molecules, temperature, and changes of state

Unit 2- Motion & Forces

- Describing motion, measuring and representing changes in motion, forces, interactions, and using models to explain why motion changes

Unit 3- Energy & Physical Systems

- Forms of energy, energy transfer and transformation, systems, and how energy moves through and changes physical systems

Unit 4- Chemical Change & Reactions

- Evidence of chemical change, conservation of matter, particle interactions, chemical reactions, and using models to explain changes in matter

Unit 5- Engineering & Applications

- Applying physical science concepts to design, test, evaluate, and improve solutions to real-world problems

Scientific Thinking Progression

Across the course, students move from observing physical phenomena to developing increasingly powerful models that explain what is happening. They investigate patterns and relationships, use mathematics and evidence to test their ideas, connect observable events to particle-level explanations, and revise their models as they encounter new evidence.

ASSESSMENT

Students demonstrate learning through laboratory investigations, experimental design, data analysis, scientific models, calculations, written explanations, engineering challenges, discussions, quizzes, projects, and presentations. Assessment emphasizes the quality of students' reasoning, evidence, communication, problem-solving, and ability to revise their thinking. Students take increasing ownership of their learning and use feedback as a tool for reflection, revision, and growth.

DEIB INTEGRATION

Physical Science provides opportunities to explore science within its broader human, historical, and technological contexts. Students consider how scientific knowledge and technologies affect communities, examine the benefits and limitations of technological solutions, and engage with ethical questions that arise when scientific understanding is applied to real-world problems.

TEXT & MATERIALS

- OpenSciEd 7.1 Chemical Reactions
- QWST 8.2 How Do Forces Impact Me?
- FOSS- Chemical Interactions
- Physical Science-McGraw Hill
- Hylab Laboratory and engineering material

SPANISH

5TH/ 6TH GRADE

OVERVIEW

Built on ACTFL national standards, this 5th and 6th grade course develops Spanish proficiency through communicative, linguistic, and cultural learning. Students build essential listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while mastering applied grammar—including verb conjugations, adjective-noun agreement, noun gender, and word order. Through interactive real-life scenarios, students recognize key vocabulary, translate expressions, and read simple dialogues. By the end of the year, students will confidently apply fundamental grammar and cultural context to hold basic conversations and write structured sentences, laying a solid foundation for future language learning.

GRAMMAR TOPICS

- definite and indefinite articles
- word gender
- Comparisons
- Gustar and preference verbs

LINGUISTIC SKILLS

Academic Skills

Phonology & Mechanics: Pronunciation, gender/number agreement, articles (*el/la/los/las*), word order.

Literacy & Synthesis: Visual literacy, bilingual organization, structured oral presentation

UNITS OF STUDY

Unit	Dates	Focus	Project / Activity
Unit 1: Alphabet & Greetings	Sept 2 – Oct 9	Alphabet, phonics, formal/informal greetings, introductions, basic word order. Classroom expressions, animals, TPR, articles (<i>el/la/los/las</i>), pronunciation rules.	Cómic de Saludos: Multi-panel comic showing cultural greetings + paired oral dialogue Mi Diccionario Visual: Mini picture dictionary with articles + 5-word oral presentation.
Unit 2: Common Expressions & Animals	Oct 12 – Nov 20	Classroom expressions, animals, TPR, articles (<i>el/la/los/las</i>), pronunciation rules.	Mi Diccionario Visual: Mini picture dictionary with articles + 5-word oral presentation.
Unit 3: Spanish Speaking Countries & Culture	Nov 23 – Jan 31	Spanish-speaking countries, capitals, celebrations, foods, music, U.S. Hispanic communities.	Country Poster & Pasaporte: Research poster + cultural passport booklet highlighting geography & art.
Unit 4: Classroom,	Feb 1 – May 7	Classroom objects, commands,	Mi Aula Ideal + Mi Horario: Visual poster of

Unit	Dates	Focus	Project / Activity
Numbers & Time		numbers 1–50, telling time, noun-adjective agreement.	classroom + daily schedule with times & presentation.

DEIB INTEGRATION

Students in this class benefit from many of the DEI-related objectives that are intrinsic to language learning, such as practicing communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries on terms other than one's own, developing cultural humility, etc. Additionally, in our classroom, each unit features a cultural topic that revolves around a country or region from the Spanish speaking world. Students learn not only big-picture "encyclopedia" facts, but also about the region's minority and indigenous populations and the subcultures that exist amongst these groups.

ASSESSMENTS

- Teacher observations
- "Pairs" practice
- Presentations
- Exit tickets
- Role Play activities
- End of Unit Quiz

7TH/ 8TH GRADE

OVERVIEW

This capstone Spanish course guides 7th/8th-grade students toward Novice-Mid/High ACTFL proficiency through an integrated linguistic, communicative, and cultural framework. Building on foundational skills, students strengthen reading comprehension and master applied grammar—including regular, stem-changing, and reflexive verbs, indirect object pronouns, and prepositions—to craft accurate sentences. Through dialogues, projects, and authentic texts, learners develop practical communication while examining cultural similarities and differences across the Spanish-speaking world.

PERSONAL & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Cultural Empathy: Recognize diverse communication styles and cultural perspectives.
- Collaboration: Engage in paired/group dialogues with active listening and feedback.
- Risk-Taking: Communicate confidently in L2 using self-correction strategies.
- Global Awareness: Connect historical events (civilizations, colonialism) to modern culture.

ACADEMIC & LINGUISTIC SKILLS

- Interpretive: Extract main ideas from authentic texts, infographics, and audio clips.
- Presentational: Write and speak using accurate grammar, syntax, and verb conjugations.
- Interpersonal: Participate in scripted and spontaneous Q&A exchanges.
- Applied Mechanics: Apply correct agreement, word order, and contextual translation.

UNITS OF STUDY

Unit & Duration	Grammar & Mechanics Focus	Communicative & Cultural Objectives
Preliminary Unit: Repaso y Fundamentos (9 Weeks)	Greetings, numbers 0–100, classroom vocab, personal pronouns, definite & indefinite articles, mechanics of <i>ser</i> vs. <i>gustar</i> .	Conduct introduction interviews and state preferences; analyze the influence of ancient civilizations (Maya, Aztec, Inca) & European colonialism.
Unit 1: Identidades (9 Weeks)	Adjective agreement (gender/number), high-frequency regular <i>-ar/-er/-ir</i> verbs, possessive adjectives (<i>mi, tu, su</i>).	Describe physical appearance, traits, and family dynamics; compare adolescent identity and diverse cultures across Latin America & Spain.
Unit 2: La Comida Es Cultura (9 Weeks)	Food/beverage vocab, stem-changing verbs (<i>e→ie, o→ue, e→i</i>), polite requests (<i>me gustaría, por favor</i>).	Order meals, navigate menus, and express dietary preferences; explore culinary traditions and staple foods across regions.
Unit 3: La Rutina Diaria (9 Weeks)	Reflexive verbs & pronouns (<i>me, te, se, nos</i>), telling time, sequencing words, prepositional phrases.	Describe daily habits and schedules; compare daily life rhythms (e.g., <i>la siesta</i> , school days) with Spanish-speaking peers.

RESOURCES

- EntreCulturas 1 (Spanish Edition) 1st Edition, by Ann Mar, Robert Davis, Maritza Sloan, George Watson-Lopez (2017)
- EntreCulturas 1, Español – Activity Workbook (2017)

SAMPLE PROJECTS

- Collage of an Ancient Civilization from a Spanish speaking country (Aztec, Mayan, Inca)
- Research and presentation of a famous Spanish-American
- Food truck project
- Mi rutina diaria video
- Learn to dance Bachata/Merengue

DEIB INTEGRATION

Students in this class benefit from many of the DEI-related objectives that are intrinsic to language learning, such as practicing communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries on terms other than one's own, developing cultural humility, etc. Additionally, in our classroom, each unit features a cultural topic that revolves around a country or region from the Spanish speaking world. Students learn not only big-picture "encyclopedia" facts, but also about the region's minority and indigenous populations and the subcultures that exist amongst these groups.

ASSESSMENTS

- Teacher observations
- "Pairs" practice
- Presentations
- Exit tickets
- Role Play activities
- End of Unit Quiz

VISUAL ARTS

5TH/6TH GRADE YEAR

OVERVIEW

Students will gain a familiarity with and develop a sense of ownership over the art room. They will continue building their practical language with new tools learning about proper use, storage and safety. Their creative language will continue to grow with ongoing introduction to various media, and they will start to develop a sense of comfort through continued play and experimentation as they work toward visual literacy.

The primary focus will be to collaborate with social studies to create history-informed artifacts. Any Projects surrounding the dig will focus on similarly themed historical creative endeavors to warm up and continue on with the cross-temporal creative experience. Projects will be globally themed to continue embracing culturally diverse art education and students will use various media to begin combining and exploring according to the project

Successful completion of the course will see the student participating in the full creative experience as they build the artifacts for their imagined culture. They will have a greater understanding of the unique tools needed to create the objects they dream up and fully understand from start to finish what it takes to complete such an undertaking. They will also have the experience of a project that embraces multiple areas of study and understand that intellectual and creative endeavors are not isolated.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Research Skills
- Public Speaking
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Collaboration Skills
- Respectful and supportive communication
- Creative Problem Solving
- Developing comfort in ambiguity
- Risk taking

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Art Vocabulary
- Play and Experimentation
- Visual Storytelling
- Visual literacy

DEIB INTEGRATION

- Representation is present in the art room.
- Students will learn about culturally diverse artists.
- Lessons are adapted to serve all students.

UNITS OF STUDY

Art Communicates about Culture

- In-depth Archaeology collaboration with Social Studies.
- Additional projects will continue with the history-informed theme

SAMPLE OF MATERIALS

Collage, pen and ink, oil pastel, watercolor, acrylic paint, paper mâché, clay, charcoal

7TH GRADE YEAR

OVERVIEW

In 7th grade, students will learn about the responsibilities that come with the freedom to create. They will explore how to preserve and document tool use as well as dive deeper into the elements of design thinking.

Two-dimensional projects may include large and small scale drawing and painting projects, graphic design exploration for posters, collage and mixed media.

Three-dimensional projects may include ceramics, mold making, wire sculpture, carved forms, papier-mâché, and assemblage.

Successful completion of the course will see the student experimenting with the elements of art (line, shape, form, texture, color, value, space). Students will participate in developing a shared understanding of what conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creativity and innovative thinking, and will participate in cultivating a positive and supportive art room culture. Students will have learned to use art making tools and materials safely and effectively. Students will better understand their comfort zones in art and be able to notice and/or communicate when they are pushing their own boundaries.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Research Skills
- Public Speaking
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Collaboration Skills
- Respectful and supportive communication
- Creative Problem Solving
- Developing comfort in ambiguity
- Risk taking

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Art Vocabulary
- Play and Experimentation
- Visual Storytelling
- Visual literacy
- Write and illustrate an effective proposal

DEIB INTEGRATION

- Representation is present in the art room.
- Students will learn about culturally diverse artists.
- Lessons are adapted to serve all students.

ASSESSMENT

Students will maintain a student portfolio for visual assessment of their learning and progress.

UNITS OF STUDY

1. Cultivating Art Room Culture
 - Behavior, conditions, and attitudes for innovative thinking inquiry
 - Risk-taking
 - Mistake Making
 - Play in the art room.
2. Tool Ownership
 - Tool Instructions & Signs
 - Communication through Art
 - Criteria-Development for Art Evaluation
3. Introduction to Design Thinking
 - Tool Design
 - Prototype Creation
 - Clay Building

SAMPLE OF MATERIALS

Collage, pen and ink, charcoal, oil pastel, watercolor, acrylic paint, paper mâché, clay

8TH GRADE

OVERVIEW

The third year in art is an in-depth study of installation art, driven by a question collectively generated by the 8th grade class. Questions from past years have run the gamut from “Am I dreaming?” to “How are we connected?” and “What do you see in the belly of the beast?” After thorough exploration of installation art as a vast genre of artistic expression, the 8th graders create a collaborative art installation in the art room. Their collective work along with their presentation of it to their community acts as the culminating piece to their time in art at Hyla. It is the point that all three years have led up to.

The year begins by breaking down how to influence the viewer through art and creating art for the BIMA Día de los Muertos event. In an effort to get our 8th graders to start understanding the scale of an empty room (or a blank canvas), we dip our toes into the world of installation art by completing a “mini-installation.” They decide how the inside is lit, how viewers will see inside, and what materials they will use to communicate something about themselves. This prepares students for the main installation project, where they will determine a question to use as the guiding and unifying theme for their collaborative piece.

Successful completion of the course will see students developing an understanding of art installation as a genre of artistic expression different from other forms. They will participate in class discussions and inquiry into thematic approaches to their artistic endeavors. Students will have gained a solid understanding of how to successfully write and illustrate an effective proposal for their own work. Students will have engaged in collaborative problem solving, and risk taking as a group. They will have participated in the planning and execution of a large-scale presentation of their work to their community.

STUDENT SKILLS

- Public Speaking
- Research
- Engaging in inquiry-based discussions
- Respectful and supportive
- Communication
- Risk taking in art making
- Group Creative Problem Solving
- Collaboration
- Time Management
- Large Scale Project Management
- Presentation of Individual and group Materials to a wider Community
- Extensive Management of individual and group materials

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Art Vocabulary
- Play and Experimentation
- Visual Communication
- Visual literacy
- Write and illustrate an effective proposal
- Writing about artistic works
- Exploration of self
- Collective defining of terms
- Studio Practice Skills

DEIB INTEGRATION

- Representation is present in the art room.
- Students will learn of culturally diverse artists.
- Lessons are adapted to serve all students.

ASSESSMENT

Students will maintain a student portfolio for visual assessment of their learning and progress.

UNITS OF STUDY

1. Collaboration Growth
 - Design Thinking Challenge
 - Micro-Collaboration
 - Window Display Collaboration
2. Skills Exploration
 - Día de los Muertos Art Show
 - Exploring different art skills to be used later in Install work
3. Introduction to Installation Project
 - Introduction to Immersive Installation Artists
 - Exploration of themes and questions for show
 - Plan and Prototype Show
4. Execute Plan
 - Time management and project management tools
 - Care for and Organization of personal materials in a studio setting
 - 3D Sculpture
5. Presentation of Work to Community
 - Planning an art exhibition
 - Writing an artist's statement
 - Presentation of their work to their community

SAMPLE OF MATERIALS

Wood, clay, wire, paper mâché, acrylic paint, lighting, paint, hardware, cardboard, and any other material that the 8th graders dream up!