



St. Croix Preparatory Academy Middle School Curriculum Overview

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 5 - Language Arts

In 5th grade, Language Arts focuses on composition, grammar, and vocabulary skills. Basic parts of speech are reviewed and complex grammatical concepts are introduced. The Kansas Grammar curriculum is used for grammar instruction. Students will be introduced to various writing genres including, narrative and informative. Students will expand their understanding of complex vocabulary through the use of *Growing Your Vocabulary: Learning from Greek and Latin Roots* spelling and vocabulary work. Informal speaking opportunities are included throughout the course to develop effective communication skills.

Textbooks:

- *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Grammar Practice*
- *Growing Your Vocabulary: Learning from Greek and Latin Roots* Level 5

Grade 5 - Reading/Literature

Reading class provides the opportunity for middle school students to build foundations in the elements of literature, as well as experience various genres of literature. To deepen comprehension, students learn and practice literacy routines for pre, during, and post reading. Students utilize nonfiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *Tuck Everlasting*, *Sherlock Holmes Short Stories*, and *The Birchbark House*. Vocabulary strategies such as context clues and root recognition will be taught alongside the reading of the novels and other short pieces from the textbook. Students build their writing and thinking skills while learning a text-based constructed response format. Finally, students analyze and synthesize major themes and ideas through discussion.

Textbook: *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Into Literature grade 6*

Grade 6 - Language Arts

Language Arts class focuses on grammar, composition, and speaking skills. Basic parts of speech are reviewed and advanced grammatical concepts are introduced. Students work through pre-writing, revising, and editing techniques while applying the parts of speech to assist in the enhancement of their writing. In addition, students will continue to develop their understanding of various writing genres including expository, narrative, and creative. Students will also focus on developing the skills needed to write a well constructed paragraph using evidence and a thorough explanation.

Textbooks:

- *Growing Your Vocabulary: Learning from Greek and Latin Roots* Level 6



Grade 6 - Reading/Literature

Reading class provides the opportunity for 6th grade students to master the foundational elements of literature through analysis of various genres of literature. To deepen comprehension, students learn and practice literacy routines for pre, during, and post reading. Students utilize nonfiction and fiction texts in the exploration of reading concepts. Students are introduced to the following classical canon texts throughout the year: *The Giver*; *The Westing Game*; and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Students further develop their writing and thinking skills through practicing text-based constructed responses. The constructed response writing is a foundation for critical thinking because it requires students to strategically choose and cite evidence to justify their ideas. Finally, students analyze and synthesize major themes and ideas through seminar discussion.

Textbook: *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Into Literature grade 7*

Grade 7 & 8 - English Language Arts

Seventh and eighth grade students examine quality prose, both fiction and nonfiction, drama, art, and poetry with an expectation that students will analyze and construct deeper meaning from what they read, hear, or see. Students utilize multiple reading strategies to become more active readers and increase their comprehension. Additionally, students examine the purpose for reading and the author's purpose for writing to foster their analysis skills development. Students work to think critically about what they read, moving beyond surface level connections toward deeper, more meaningful text to world connections.

Students work toward a deeper understanding of literary elements and their impact on the meaning of the text. Along with the common literary elements of simile, metaphor, and personification, students study foreshadowing, flashback, irony, puns, allegory, and more.

Writing:

Seventh grade students continue to refine their writing skills, with a focus on text-based constructed responses. The expectation is that students will present a cohesive, logical argument with two or more pieces of text evidence followed by a coherent explanation that demonstrates analysis and deeper understanding of the literary text.

Eighth grade students work toward more sophisticated writing, endeavoring to offer analysis that shows deeper understanding of the topic. Students continue to hone their paragraph writing skills by refining their sentence structure and diction to better convey their ideas. Additionally, eighth grade students begin writing thesis statements and corresponding body paragraphs that effectively utilize text based evidence and provide thoughtful analysis in preparation for writing essays in high school.

7th Grade textbook:

- *Into Literature, Grade 8*, Houghton Mifflin harcourt Publishing Company, 2022

Canon Novels are chosen from the list below.

The Hobbit

Touching Spirit Bear

The Book Thief



8th Grade textbook:

- *Into Literature, Grade 9*, Houghton Mifflin harcourt Publishing Company, 2022

Canon Novels:

Lord of the Flies

The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet

Fahrenheit 451

To Kill a Mockingbird

SCIENCE Grades 5 - 8

Textbook: *McGraw-Hill Education Science: A Closer Look Grade 5 LS-Edited 2021*

In 5th grade science we use the textbook, *McGraw-Hill Education Science: A Closer Look Grade 5*.

Students will work together on eight scientific practices: asking questions & defining problems, developing & using models, planning & carrying out investigations, analyzing & interpreting data, using mathematics & computational thinking, constructing explanations & designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information. Each of these practices will be embedded in units anchored by big questions revolving around natural phenomena tying into Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science. Some topics covered include: energy, force and motion, collisions, matter & mixtures, Earth's rotation, revolution and seasons, moon phases, ecosystems, plants, food webs and population factors.

Textbook: *Glencoe iScience: Earth & Space*

In 6th grade we use the *Glencoe iScience: Earth & Space*. Students will work together on eight scientific practices: asking questions & defining problems, developing & using models, planning & carrying out investigations, analyzing & interpreting data, using mathematics & computational thinking, constructing explanations & designing solutions, engaging in argument from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information. Each of these practices will be embedded in units anchored by big questions revolving around natural phenomena tying into Earth Science. Some topics covered include: weather, the Solar System, life of a star, Earth's structure & processes, plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes, geologic time, and the rock cycle.

Textbook: *Glencoe Life iScience* textbook

Life science is an inquiry-based class in which students investigate scientific phenomena related to living things on Earth. Students are encouraged to ask questions about the phenomena and are guided to research the answers to those questions through readings and experiments. Throughout the year, a variety of topics are covered, including Ecology which focuses on interactions, energy and dynamics of ecosystems, Cell Structure and Function, and Cell Processes, Homeostasis, Genetics and Heredity, Evolution/Natural Selection and Taxonomy, which culminates in dissections of several organisms. Throughout these units students develop skills in asking questions and defining problems, analyzing and interpreting data, developing and using models, constructing explanations, and engaging in argument



from evidence. Seventh grade life science uses the McGraw-Hill Education *Life iScience* textbook to support the topics covered in class.

Textbook: *Glencoe Physical iScience*

Eighth grade Physical Science is an inquiry-based class in which students investigate scientific phenomena related to the physical structure and interactions of materials on Earth. Students are encouraged to ask questions about the phenomena and are guided to research the answers to those questions through readings and experiments. Throughout the year, a variety of topics are covered, including thermal energy, an introduction to chemistry and chemical reactions, forces and object motion, and waves. While immersed in these units, students participate in labs and develop skills in asking questions and defining problems, analyzing and interpreting data, developing and using models, constructing explanations, and engaging in argument from evidence. Eighth grade life science uses the McGraw-Hill Education *Physical iScience* textbook to support the topics covered in class.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies - Grade 5

Fifth grade students start off the year developing and building analytical skills and knowledge including how to create and read maps and how to think using a historical perspective.

From here they analyze the who, what, when, where and how of the following topics and events: early Americans and the discovery of the New World; early civilizations including the Maya, Inca and Aztec peoples; European exploration of the New World; colonization and life during the colonial era; the spirit of independence and unrest leading to the Revolution; the formation of the Constitution and its impact on early American society; pioneers and Westward expansion; tensions between Northern and Southern states; and, the Civil War, including Minnesota in the Civil War.

As the year progresses, students will begin to explore how to analyze primary documents while learning how to “think historically.” Students will also begin learning note-taking strategies to help them disseminate information from their text into smaller chunks of meaningful information.

Textbooks:

- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States – Early Years*, McGraw Hill

Social Studies - Grade 6

Sixth grade social studies focuses on two content areas of history:

- Minnesota History from the Early Dakota and Ojibwe to the Fur Trade in the early 1700s; treaties and early settlement; influx of immigrants; the Dakota Conflict; Industrialization, Immigrants/Labor/Cities, the Progressive Movement, and Social Change Movements
- World History includes the rise of civilizations in the Fertile Crescent; Sumerian City–States; Mesopotamia; Egypt; Ancient Greece; Early Chinese; and Early India

Class skills focus on developing historical thinking skills, studying history through other people’s points of view, using comprehension strategies for reading and analyzing non-fiction texts, note-taking and



summarizing, analyzing primary documents (prints and pictures, maps and written texts), applying map skills, and analyzing chronologies/timelines.

Texts:

- *Discovering Our Past: A History of the World – Chapters 1 – 10 – Ancient History*, McGraw Hill
- *Northern Lights: The Story of Minnesota's Past*, 2nd Edition, Minnesota Historical Society Press (2013)
- *Little Crow: Leader of the Dakota*, Borealis Books (2004).

World History - Grade 7

Students in 7th grade cover events in world history from the beginning of the Roman Empire through the modern age. The course covers historical events dating between approximately 500 B.C.E. to the mid C.E. 1900s. Students learn about the significance of major events in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas, and how these events connect to a large scope of history. They also study the influence of cultural diffusion over time and the way that empires interacted with each other.

Units covered during this course include Ancient Rome, the rise of Christianity, the rise of Islam in the Middle East, cultures and kingdoms of West Africa, Imperial China, feudalism in Japan, the Middle Ages in Europe, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Revolution, Industrialization, and World Wars.

Skills emphasized in World History continue to form what was established in previous grades. Students continue to study perspective and understanding different cultures and a variety of cultural components and where they fit in history. Historical thinking skills are practiced throughout the year, specifically making connections to a chronological order of events, the relationship of cause and effect, and writing that analyzes primary sources. Furthermore, students establish comprehension and summarization strategies used while reading non-fiction texts.

Textbook: *Discovering Our Past: History of the World*, McGraw-Hill, 2014

U.S. History - Grade 8

Students in 8th grade cover events in U.S. History from the Reconstruction to the later part of the 20th century. Students learn about the significance of major events over time, the influence of historical figures on our culture, and the connected impact of these events in the larger scope of history. Students have an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. at the end of their 8th grade year, and learn about the historical monuments and memorials in our nation's capital as they study each major event in U.S. History.

Units covered during this course include the development of the U.S. government, the age of innovation and reform, expansionism, Progressivism and immigration, major world wars, and societal reform in the 20th century.

ConnectEd is the online resource that allows each student to access the text via the internet along with other resources such as video tutorials, links to student worksheets and other online study tools. Each student will have the option to purchase their own online textbook.



Skills emphasized in U.S. History continue to form what was established in previous grades. Historical thinking skills are practiced throughout the year, specifically making connections to a chronological order of events, the relationship of cause and effect, and writing that analyzes primary sources. Furthermore, students establish comprehension and summarization strategies.

Textbook: *United States History and Geography* (McGraw-Hill, 2014)

MATH Grades 5 - 8

St. Croix Preparatory Academy uses the following McGraw-Hill texts as the primary guide for our curriculum:

Grade 5

Fifth-grade math uses Envision Math 6. The textbook covers the following concepts: multiplying and dividing decimals, adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions, ratios & rates, conversions between fractions, decimals, & percents, algebraic expressions, and equations. In addition, we cover many geometry concepts such as properties of triangles & quadrilaterals, perimeter, area, surface area, and volume. We also work closely with the science department to ensure that we are having students practice analyzing data and different graph types.

Pre-Algebra

The Pre-Algebra curriculum covers the following concepts: converting fractions, decimals and percents, operations with integers and rational numbers, expressions and multi-step equations, inequalities, ratios, proportions, similar figures, graphing, powers, linear and nonlinear functions, real numbers, right triangles, distance, angles, surface area, volume, statistics, and probability.

Algebra 1

The Algebra curriculum covers the following concepts: the relationship between expressions, equations, and functions; linear equations, inequalities, and functions; systems of linear equations and inequalities; exponents and exponential functions; quadratic expressions, equations and functions; radical functions; rational equations and functions.

Geometry

The Geometry curriculum includes all the preceding concepts from Pre-Algebra and Algebra. In addition, it covers Geometry concepts including proofs, reasoning, parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, proportions and similarities, right triangles, and an introduction to trig, transformations, circles, areas, surface area, and volume.

The typical pathway for our math students at St. Croix Prep is Pre-Algebra in 6th grade, Algebra 1 in 7th grade, and Geometry in 8th grade.



Language & Logic

Language & Logic - Grade 5/6

This course focuses on a variety of subjects that complement language and classical studies. Students begin the year by studying and practicing executive functioning skills, growth mindset, and foundations of logic, which can be transferred to other subject areas in order to increase student success. Students also study the history of the Latin language. Students gain familiarity with classical roots that broaden student vocabulary. The study of Latin allows them to understand the classical influence in the evolution and dissemination of language. The parallel study of history and English language arts gives them the critical foundations for appreciating and recognizing the influence of the classical world. Students also have the opportunity to study Spanish, a language derived from Latin. Students learn vocabulary and grammatical structures in order to begin reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish. Through the study of both Spanish and Latin, students learn to use roots and cognates to determine the meaning of unknown words in English, which broadens their reading and comprehension abilities. Students also practice the fundamentals of effective public speaking in order to write and deliver speeches, monologues and presentations.

Language & Logic - Grade 5

In this first year of a two-year course, students learn fundamental concepts to help them progress in middle school at SCPA. The course begins with a focus on the academic skills, executive functioning, and growth mindset that students need to be successful in middle school. The course addresses organization, time management, self-reflection, and memory in order to fill student toolboxes with strategies and resources. The course also introduces students to language learning by beginning the studies of both Latin and Spanish. In studying Latin and classical roots, students are provided a strong foundation for deepening their understanding of English, continuing study in Latin, and transferring skills to learning languages derived from Latin, such as Spanish. The course will focus on many modes of communication, including spoken language. Students will also apply beginning logical principles in the practice of public speaking and presenting.

Language & Logic - Grade 6

The second year of Language and Logic continues and deepens student understanding of language, communication, and logical problem solving. Students go from learning very basic Latin and Spanish sentence structures and root words to more complicated principles of grammar. As students deepen translation skills, they also begin writing in Latin and Spanish. Throughout the year, students work to demonstrate logical problem solving and use different problem solving methods. Students will learn critical thinking and communication strategies that they will be able to transfer to all academic subjects. Students will also continue to build upon and practice the principles of effective public speaking learned in the first year of this course.



Logic - Grade 7

In Logic class, students learn about the essentials of argumentation: how to use strong vocabulary for clarity and precision, how to identify credible evidence, and how to spot, correct, and counter Logical Fallacies. Through these studies, students develop two foundational abilities: the ability to effectively examine, analyze, and understand the ideas of others and the ability to clearly formulate, support, and articulate ideas of their own. This course builds a linguistic base for Latin in eighth grade through the study of Latin and Greek Root Vocabulary. Additionally, this course emphasizes note-taking and studying skills, providing students with practice on how to keep and maintain quality notes, make and follow a study plan, and practice effective studying strategies.

Textbooks:

- *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots*, Level VII, Prestwick House, 3rd Edition, 2017
- *The Art of Argument: An Introduction to the Informal Fallacies*

Latin I - Grade 8

The curriculum for Latin I focuses on the 5 C's of language learning: communication, cultures, comparisons, connections, and community. Students learn to use the Latin language to communicate, with greatest emphasis on reading skills. Through the study of Roman history and culture with occasional forays into the cultural practices and products of other groups of Latinists, students explore American cultural practices and values from another perspective. Connections and comparisons are drawn between Latin and English and between Latin and other subject areas. Finally, students are encouraged to find ways to use their study of Latin to become more effective, engaged participants in the communities to which they belong.

Textbooks:

- *Cambridge Latin Course. Unit 1.* 4th ed. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots*, Level VIII, Prestwick House, 3rd Edition, 2017

MUSIC **Grades 5 - 8**

Students in middle school participate in band, choir, orchestra, or general music. Students in 5th and 6th grade meet every other day and 7th and 8th graders meet every day.

Making music cultivates creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and cooperation. These skills are important for success in school, at home, in the community, and in the world. Each ensemble performs several times a year and covers a wide variety of repertoire from different time periods and styles. All students learn the fundamentals of music theory.

Some recent pieces performed by SCPA middle school groups include:

Art Thou Troubled? – George Frideric Handel – 6th Grade Choir



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Ad Astra – Jacob Narverud – 7th/8th Grade Combined Choirs

A Prehistoric Suite – Paul Jennings – 6th Grade

Portrait of a Clown – Frank Ticheli – 7th and 8th Grade Band

Dragonhunter – Richard Meyer – 6th Grade

Gauntlet – Doug Spada – 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Grades 5 - 8

Students in 5th-8th grades are introduced to small-sided games and lifelong activities that build physical skills and provide the opportunity to build an appreciation for lifelong activity. Students will be provided the opportunity to improve their physical fitness during each lesson. Various units will allow students the opportunity to build and develop teamwork and leadership skills. Students will also be introduced to health lessons on topics ranging from stress, nutrition, mental health, and changes in adolescents.

Example units: soccer, football, fitness, floor hockey, dance, volleyball, team handball, badminton, lacrosse, pickleball, wiffle ball, kickball.

ART

Grades 5 - 8

Students in middle school explore art through a variety of art experiences, mediums and time periods. The creative process is inherent in all artistic endeavors and has a positive influence in the student's development and stimulation of their imagination. The artwork that students produce is the result of the individual's ability to think creatively, solve problems, and to evaluate. As students gain confidence in their abilities to organize their thoughts and ideas into effective works of art they delve into a deeper understanding of the elements and principles of art and artistic theory.