



WALDORF SCHOOL *of GARDEN CITY*



Lower School Curriculum Guide





Our Mission Statement

The Waldorf School of Garden City educates children to meet the world with purpose, gratitude and respect. Our curriculum, inspired by Rudolf Steiner, progresses in accordance with child development, awakening students to the experience of knowledge, strengthening their sense of moral responsibility, and empowering them to act with courage and conviction. The School's aim is to graduate a diverse group of young people distinguished by the scope and acuity of their minds as well as the depth and integrity of their character.



First Grade

The first grade is a transitional year that both supports the needs of young, playful children and commences their journey into the realm of academic learning and social responsibility. As new skills are being developed, the children are introduced to all the wonders of mathematics, writing, and reading. The children, brought together from different kindergarten experiences, are encouraged to work together and depend on each other as a unified class unit. Good habits are developed when caring for personal and class belongings, individual schoolwork, and their classroom. Respect and kindness in word and deed are expected.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Language Arts curriculum for the first grade lays the foundation for developing important listening, speaking, writing, reading and viewing (processing what one sees) skills crucial for academic success. In the curriculum, writing precedes reading. Lessons often begin with the telling of fairy tales by the teacher, the retelling of the story by the children, and then the translation of the story into a drawn picture. Within the picture might be a representation of a letter of the alphabet. Poems and alliterations, which include the letter, are also recited by the children so they can build a relationship with the sound the letter makes. Lastly, the teacher leads the children in transforming the drawing into the letter. Throughout this process, the letter and its sound are experienced through multi-sensory games and experiences that meet the needs of various learning styles.

The foundation for reading is further developed through exercises in story comprehension, long and short-term memory development, sound-symbol recognition, phonemic awareness, and proper diction. As the year progresses, the letters and sounds that are introduced are joined to make words and sentences. These new words are copied into main lesson books along with colorful coordinating pictures. It is from these sentences that the children first began to read. Additional exercises in phonics and decoding support reading skills.

MATH

Mathematics begins with counting and mental arithmetic. Through rhythmic exercises such as clapping, stepping, marching, and jumping, children make their way from 0 to 100 and back again on a regular basis. The multiplication tables are also introduced through similar exercises and as a class they will learn to count by 2s, 3s, 5s, and 10s with ease. Calculating both mentally and on paper are emphasized enabling students to fully internalize the calculations.

The four processes are introduced through imaginative story-telling. Through these stories students learn problem solving, reasoning, and how to communicate mathematically. They learn to write number sentences, follow mathematical sequences, and connect mathematics to the world around them.

FORM DRAWING

Form Drawing enhances many aspects of learning: writing, geometry, spatial awareness, observation skills, relationships, balance, and symmetry. It is often referred to as “motion come to rest on the page.” The study of a particular form to be drawn, slowly unfolds throughout the course of a week. It might first be observed visually, then in motion in a variety of ways. Multi-sensory methods are easily employed in this activity. Children might “draw” the form in the air, on sandpaper, in sand, on a partner’s back, with feet, with noses, etc. Exactness is the goal in terms of balance, placement, and symmetry.

First Grade forms start with straight and curved lines drawn with thought and care. Later repetitive forms, where a particular form is repeated in a rhythmical, consistent pattern, are practiced.

MOVEMENT

First Grade is a time of building good movement habits and learning how to move together in a group. Group goals include focus and participation, taking turns, moving with control and rhythm, building strength, and joyful expression. The children work with enthusiasm to master challenging locomotion patterns and use a variety of props to develop dexterity.

HANDWORK

First graders are introduced to the art of European Continental Knitting. The children hear stories about the wool process and learn a rhyme that guides them into the knit stitch. The children play finger games to support them in being more adept in their work. Their first project is an animal that travels home with them. Most of the year is spent crafting a recorder case that will serve them as they move up through the grades. The skills that they learn include: rolling a ball, making a slipknot, casting on and off, knitting the knit stitch, changing colors, tucking tails, braiding, and sewing an edge.

Knitting is introduced to first grade for several reasons. It helps the child to bring the will forces into thinking. By developing fine motor skills in the hand brain development is strengthened. The action of knitting establishes the eye’s control over the hand and arouses the power of concentration. It helps the child to strengthen numerical skills by counting the number of stitches and rows. Lastly, the child feels a sense of self-esteem and joy by having made something both beautiful and practical.

WORLD LANGUAGES

First graders experience two languages with foundational differences, French and German, twice weekly. Recitation and listening activities are balanced with movement, games and songs. Some basic conversational vocabulary is introduced to the class including body parts, numbers, colors, days of the week, months and animals.

EURYTHMY

Eurythmy routines are choreographed to stories and music. Fast, rhythmical exercises are also incorporated to develop agility and coordination. The children practice synchronization, as movements done in unison enhance and heighten the concentration and awareness of each individual in space.

MUSIC

The children are taught to enjoy and treasure musical sounds. Circle games and seasonal songs prepare the children, in a playful way, for rules and routines that will be necessary for musical ensemble work in the years to come. Much time is spent on cultivating patience and good listening habits, qualities that are essential for studying an instrument. All movement activities aim to exercise the children's dexterity and rhythmical ability. Children work with brass tone bars, and master playing the entire range of the pentatonic recorder in a soft, beautiful tone.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING

Children are introduced to the different qualities of color through a variety of color building activities. Playful color “stories” are told to help students understand the relationships between colors and simple compositions help them develop brush control and paint handling skill. The basic principles of color mixing and color theory are also explored.

CLASS PLAY

The class play is a yearly event that the class looks forward to with great anticipation. Costumes are simple and archetypal, allowing for the children's personal expressions to shine through. This intense social exercise allows the children to develop additional skills and capacities not stressed in academic learning such as teamwork, physical self-expression, speech formation, and timing.





Second Grade

Skills and methods of learning that were cultivated in the first year of school are nurtured and developed to a greater degree in the second year. These abilities slowly transform into good habits that are depended upon when the curriculum becomes more demanding. For example, responsibility for one's belongings builds a foundation for being responsible for one's learning, and respect for one's classmates when taking turns to speak or to participate, develops respect for knowledge and varying points of view.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Second grade students put their newly acquired skills to work. They follow a similar rhythm to first grade including storytelling, picture drawing, and writing, but expectations for writing and reading increase significantly. Stories of saintly people and animal fables serve as the vehicle for skill development in reading, writing, spelling, speaking, and penmanship. The class studies sentence structure, simple punctuation, capitalization, summarizing, and finding main themes in the stories. Speech work using tongue twisters, poems, and dramatic presentations develops articulation, projection, fluidity, and memory.

Class readers are introduced and students work individually and in groups to strengthen reading skills and develop expression in their reading. Group discussions about the stories encourage comprehension and logical sequencing. Students also compose their own stories.

MATH

Mathematics classes primarily review the four processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and continue these processes with greater complexities. Memorizing multiplication tables is an important task this year. Knowing them forward and backward (1-12) helps the student gain fluidity with all processes.

Place value in addition and subtraction and the rules for multiplication and division are introduced. Children solve word problems, both as “number sentences” and in written English. Care in writing problems is emphasized in all written work, and careful computation is stressed over speed of calculation.

FORM DRAWING

Form Drawing touches many aspects of learning: writing, geometry, spatial awareness, observation skills, relationships, balance, and symmetry. It is often referred to as “motion come to rest on the page.” Second Grade forms often try to achieve a certain symmetry through mirroring vertical forms.

MOVEMENT

Rhythmic leaping and coordination exercises are the main focus of movement class in the second grade. These elements increase stamina, grace, and body awareness. Students work on group cooperation, focus, and fairness during games and activities aimed to balance speed with control. Coordination combinations, balancing, and body geography games are used to supplement running and jumping activities.

HANDWORK

Second graders continue to hone their European Continental knitting skills. In addition to working with the knit stitch, the children add the purl stitch to their repertoire. The purl stitch is the complete opposite of the knit stitch and it requires the children to be very attentive to their work. Besides enhancing knitting skills, the children discover that they can visualize simple shapes. After knitting a rectangle, the children are asked to turn the shape into a three dimensional hat. In addition, they learn to adjust the shape of their knitting by increasing and decreasing stitches. Not only does this change the shape of their knitting, it also reinforces their mathematical skills. They then sew and stuff a flat shaped piece of knitting. The ability to take a basic shape or two-dimensional object and change it into something three-dimensional requires flexibility of thought; which expands their ability to think logically. This is very valuable skill to develop for higher learning.

Children complete different projects according to their own abilities. The number of projects is not as important as the attentiveness the child gives to their project. Some projects that the children may complete include: recorder case, hat, lamb, gnome, lion, and doll.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The second grade language experience builds upon the foundation set in first grade. Students act out short stories and produce sentences of their own using previously introduced vocabulary. They also recognize patterns in the use of gender (feminine and masculine) and number (singular and plural). Lessons are a balance of listening, speaking activities, and games.

EURYTHMY

The second grade curriculum builds on and strengthens the children's expressive capacities through movement with the introduction of more complex exercises, bigger challenges, and greater expectations for accuracy. All forms experienced are based on the straight line and curve. More complicated forms, such as the curve of Cassini, are introduced. The children learn the movements for the consonants and vowels more consciously enhancing their ability to imagine and conceptualize.

MUSIC

In the second year of music instruction, a positive, joyful music experience is cultivated through seasonal songs, games, and movement activities. While the students learn to listen, observe, and participate in the group, they also practice many skills necessary for harmonious and cooperative music making. Tone and dexterity exercises help the students achieve fluency on the recorder. Students start to build and modify their own melodies, recording them on the board as a basic introduction to music notation. Rhythmical games, partner dances, and various movement exercises are a regular part of class, helping to develop a solid feeling for rhythm.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING

Painting subjects in the second grade continues to live in the imaginary realm. Stories about the colors and how they behave with each other help the children better understand the world of color. Students expand their color palettes in each composition, while still bringing attention to technique and care for materials. Paintings may now contain simple objects rather than being purely a color experience.

CLASS PLAY

Second grade stages a dramatic play for which they practice memorization, fluency, inflection, articulation, and projection. The recitation of the play is done with choral work.



Third Grade

Third graders begin to live more consciously on the earth and the curriculum meets them through the topic of geography and how it impacts farming, food, clothing, and shelter. Students study measurement and other practical topics that contribute to a healthy life and community. In the spring, the third graders embark on their first journey together to our Camp Glen Brook where they can live the life of a farmer on our extended campus. This year marks significant growth in the student in terms of self-reliance and self-confidence.

OLD TESTAMENT

Much of the story content and language arts practice comes from legends of the Old Testament. They follow the journey from creation study to, life in the Garden of Eden, the fall from grace, the Ten Commandments, the sibling rivalry of Cain and Abel, and Noah's Flood. Children continue with tales of Moses in Egypt and the flight of the Israelites from the Pharaoh through the Red Sea. These stories uniquely meet the unfolding inner life of the third grader.

PRACTICAL LIFE ARTS

At a time in development when the students are moving further away from being a young child, studies turn to the practicalities of life and how to live on earth through an examination and experience of farming, cooking, shelters, and clothing.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Third graders draw on the story content of the Old Testament and Practical Life Arts to deepen writing skills, both independently and collaboratively, by breaking up the steps of the writing process into gathering and organizing ideas, developing a rough draft with proper grammar and paragraph use, making edits, and creating a final piece for entry into Main Lesson Books, accompanied by a drawing. Pieces range from descriptive narratives to objective reporting. Grammar (articles, nouns, verbs & adjectives) is formally introduced and studied. Reading practice moves from small groups to individual reading. Group and recitations continue to strengthen articulation, listening, dramatization, and public speaking skills. Cursive writing will be regularly used this year. Emphasis is placed on legibility, beauty, proper pencil grip, and posture.

MATH

Third graders learn to take measures into their own hands and bring their math skills into the practical world. Topics include linear distances, through the use of rulers and measuring tapes, mass, by way of scale balances, volume, through simple kitchen accessories such as teaspoons and cups, and time, from the seconds, minutes, and hours of clockwork to the days, weeks, months, years, and millennia of calendar work. Third graders also practice the art of bartering by calculating change to make-believe purchases. Regrouping (borrowing), multi-digit multipliers, and long-division are practiced throughout these exercises.

FORM DRAWING

Form Drawing continues to inform many aspects of learning: writing, geometry, spatial awareness, observation skills, relationships, balance and symmetry. Often referred to as “motion come to rest on the page,” third grade forms focus on achieving symmetry on the horizontal plane.

MOVEMENT

Third grade movement’s diverse curriculum reflects the lively and creative spirit of the 9 year old child. Classes include introductory ball activities, rhythmic exercises, cooperative games, tumbling, beginning circus arts (partner acrobatics, stilts, scarf juggling) and folk dancing. All activities are designed to increase balance, spatial awareness, group collaboration, core strength, and posture. Students are encouraged to work individually and with partners to create their own tumbling, jump-rope, and balancing tricks as part of the circus arts block. Fostering strategies to help problem solve and support one another are also an important aspect of the class.

HANDWORK

Embroidery and crocheting are activities that support the child’s awakening consciousness. The precision needed to embroider and crochet, hones fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. It is also another tool for supporting strong communication between the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

Crochet is an ancient craft, which creates fabric by forming loops from a continuous thread of yarn. Crocheting utilizes one hand instead of two, allowing one limb to work almost independently of the other. Emphasizing only one hand requires a new, more intense kind of concentration. This rhythmical hand activity strengthens the will forces and brings clarity into thinking. The children have created squares, rectangles, and spirals. Some shapes are made flat, others three-dimensional. Projects have included a rectangle made into a satchel, a spiral eurythmy slipper bag, a granny square, and a star. Before some of the projects are produced, such as the star, we mentally visualize the product and then together develop a procedure without the use of a pattern. This expands the children’s ability to think abstractly and to envision what will be created in the future.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Third graders continue their study of World Languages through creatively adapted games such as bingo, finger twister, dialogues, and flip-through picture books. Each exercise contains a fun yet effective way of reviewing basic vocabulary including numbers, colors, family members, common adjectives, and activities. Oral skills are strongly emphasized and precise pronunciation is cultivated through conversational exercises. Third graders also expand on their vocabulary with the introduction of new adjectives, objects, fruits, vegetables, clothing, family members, verbs and their proper conjugations.

EURYTHMY

The third grade eurythmy curriculum focuses on imbuing students with a capacity for group work and social grace. Musical pieces are selected from the Baroque and Classical periods, with careful attention to mood as it shifts between the major and minor keys, and the loud and soft tones. Children also begin to practice more complicated spatial forms within the circle including spirals, triangles, and squares.

MUSIC

Third graders expand on their knowledge of music theory with a practical edge. The C and G scales are introduced through story and image, which also begin to expose the children to whole and half steps and the concepts of tonality, and sharps and flats. At this point, students have graduated from the pentatonic recorder and move on to the diatonic recorder. New finger positions such as B flat and F sharp are also introduced. Singing and playing in rounds is introduced.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING

Students bring form out of moods represented through color. Themes are drawn from other portions of the curriculum including the Old Testament, nature study, and house building seminars.

CLASS PLAY

The class play of the third grade continues largely in choral recitation. Themes are more complex than in previous years. Music plays a more integral role and students are more involved in set design and creation.



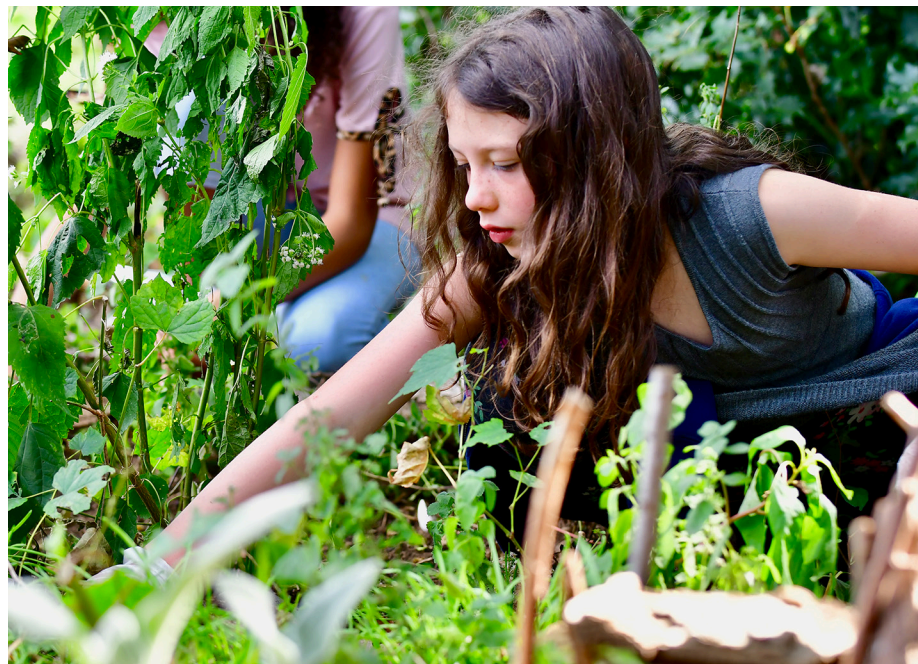
GARDENING

Third graders experience a farm and gardening curriculum that combines class work as well as hands-on gardening to immerse children, mind and body, into this fundamental topic. In the classroom, students learn of the progression from nomadic hunting and gathering to the first crops, from early hand tools to the machines used on small farms. Different types of soils, grasses, and grains are identified and characterized.

Children work in our garden one period per week, contributing to tasks such as growing seedlings in greenhouses and transplanting them into soil, mulching and composting, weeding, and harvesting. Third graders make bread from scratch, threshing and grinding the grains they harvest to prepare dough.

CAMP GLEN BROOK

The third graders make their first trip to Camp Glen Brook, an exciting week that promises to deepen their connection and sense of responsibility to the earth. The children learn about composting: the act of transforming food waste into healthy soil for future use. Students also harvest fruits and vegetables, prepare apple cider and maple syrup, and grind wheat. They enjoy the fruits of their labor by transforming the foodstuffs into breads, pies, vegetable soups, and salads. Additionally, these children may participate in wool shearing, lambing, and planting seedlings for the greenhouse. Through immersion in the farm life, students learn the importance of sustainable farming in our everyday lives.



Fourth Grade

Fourth graders are no longer in their early childhood but have not yet entered adolescence. This is the perfect year to begin exploring the world of possibilities. Brain development allows them the ability to see more perspectives than they were previously able to grasp. Enter fractions, local geography, grammar, research, a stringed instrument, and woodworking. Depth accompanied by variety is key to this age.

NORSE MYTHOLOGY/NATIVE AMERICAN LORE

Students read and write summaries for seminal works in Norse Mythology. They learn of the legendary gods and goddesses, their various personalities, triumphs and foibles. Native American stories also play a role this year as the students begin to compare and contrast creation stories and how mythology was woven into the lives of ancient peoples.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Students in the fourth grade make great progress in their independent writing skills. They learn to make a first draft, edit and revise their work, then edit and finalize their writing. Additionally, the process of outlining and paragraph structure is introduced more formally.

Grammar includes all main parts of speech (articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions & interjections). Punctuation and spelling become more complex. Contracted words are introduced and practiced. Sentence types and structure are studied. Verb tenses (past, present, future) are introduced. The many varied characters that are represented in the Norse myths create opportunities to explore the importance of perspective and point of view in writing.

A simple research project is assigned and the students learn to write a basic report from their research. Lessons to support these projects may include an introduction to information research and note taking. Students learn how to use the library for research, how to write rough drafts, and to prepare the final project they envisioned. At the conclusion of the project students make an oral presentation to the class.

The reading curriculum includes word attack skills (decoding), vocabulary development, and comprehension. Class books are selected from classic literature and students are expected to read at home regularly.

MATH

Fourth grade core math lessons focus on reviewing and expanding long multiplication and division, as well as an introduction to fractions and factoring. Students learn to change mixed numbers into improper fractions, and vice versa, as well as add, subtract, multiply, and divide with fractions of like and unlike denominators. The students learn to find greatest common factors, least common multiples, the use of reciprocals, and estimation.

FORM DRAWING

Form Drawing enhances many aspects of learning: writing, geometry, spatial awareness, observation skills, relationships, balance, and symmetry. It is often referred to as “motion come to rest on the page.” Fourth Grade forms often focus on braiding or weaving. Here complex Celtic knots might be drawn.

SCIENCE

Science study focuses on animal physiology and relates this to the traits of the animals and their relationship to the environment. Of special interest is the study of correspondences between the human being and those animals that best represent the respiratory system, the circulatory system, the nervous system, and the metabolic system. This is typically highlighted by first introducing the unique qualities of the human being, specifically pointing to the uprightness and the ability to serve human kind and the world. The students come to recognize the connectedness between the animal and the human being as the animal often emphasizes a single aspect of the human.

GEOGRAPHY

The study of Geography formally begins this year and begins with the exploration of the immediate locale of the students then branches outward to include all of Long Island and parts of New York State. Map-making begins by creating floor plans of their homes and the school building. Students construct maps of the route they take to school and eventually a map of the entirety of Long Island, including its geographic land formations. Students study the history of Long Island, beginning with its indigenous peoples. Stories about local people and their work on land and sea bring new understanding about the effect human beings had on the land and those inhabiting it. Lessons are supported by field trips to local historical landmarks.

MOVEMENT

The fourth grade movement curriculum explores lead-up skills for team activities and individual exercises. Basketball and volleyball skills are introduced as well as further development in circus arts with props (scarves, hoops, stilts), folk dancing, and cooperative games. Native American games are introduced in tandem with the Local Geography Main Lesson. Teamwork skills and good sportsmanship are emphasized throughout all class activities.

HANDWORK

Students learn embroidery and the cross-stitch and are introduced to color theory. The cross-stitch, an X shaped stitch, is made by dividing the square weave on the diagonal and then dividing again, enforcing their knowledge of fractions. The students work with focus to maintain symmetry in their designs. They also further their color work by attempting to blend colors in the piece. Once their cross stitch is complete it is transformed into a pencil case. Handwork often is the precursor to higher mathematical concepts. This project represents an artistic representation of a simple algebraic equation; each side must be equal, both in the color and number of the stitches.

WORLD LANGUAGES

World languages learning shifts from a purely oral practice to include writing and reading. Students begin compiling vocabulary, recitations, and songs from the previous years. They also continue their oral skills through tongue twisters, practiced conversation, games, movement activities, and poem recitations and writing skills through various compositions.

EURYTHMY

Students practice new spatial orientations through the frontal position, and other forms such as spirals, triangles, and squares. Students also explore alliteration within a four beat line through the original Beowulf. Dexterity and rhythm exercises are set to pieces such as “The Danse Russe” by Tansman and the 6 *Ecossaises* by Beethoven. Through these tasks, students gradually cultivate presence of mind, focus, listening, and consciousness in their actions.

MUSIC

In their fourth year of music instruction, the students are presented with many opportunities to discover new musical territory, including complex rounds and part-songs. Students begin to use printed music material, mainly scores to folksongs and animal songs that utilize the C major scale, known in class as the rainbow scale. Our fledging musicians begin to sight-read on the recorder, as well as continue to practice beat, tempo, and rhythm. Rhythmic movement exercises, clapping games, and body percussion intended to relax the mind and body begins and ends each lesson.

ORCHESTRA

Fourth graders have the option of studying the violin or cello in once weekly group classes, and the ensemble comes together to play at the annual Spring Concert. Aspiring violinists and cellists learn the foundations of their instruments, exploring posture and grip. The goal of the fourth grade curriculum is for the students to develop a sense of familiarity and fluency with their instruments.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING AND DRAWING

Greater attention to color use, detail, shading, and gesture is emphasized in painting and drawing. Main Lesson bookwork is meant to not only record the lessons, but to record them beautifully.

CLASS PLAY

Students partake in all aspects of production including creating sets, costumes, and props, composing and playing original score, and acting out their respective double or triple roles. Reenacted works in the past have included The Death of Baldur and The Theft of Iduna’s Apples.

CAMP GLEN BROOK

A week-long trip to Camp Glen Brook takes the science class into the great outdoors. Farm animals and wildlife are observed and studied. The students partake in all aspects of camp life fostering a sense of confidence, independence and teamwork with this classmates.



Fifth Grade

The fifth grade curriculum is one of great majesty. Students complete Main Lesson Blocks focusing on ancient civilizations in which they meditate in India, cultivate land in Persia, and build the first cities in Mesopotamia. Students gradually travel westward to discover the roots of civilization. In Egypt they study pharaohs and pyramids. In Greece, the cradle of democracy, they see the birth of an extraordinary culture and listen to the much anticipated Greek myths with rapt attention. Fifth graders learn about the ancient Greek Olympics and organize their own festivities. Most of the events in the fifth grade Greek Olympics—the javelin, discus, long jump, wrestling, and running events are individual sports. It is about cultivating one's personal best and taking risks—supporting each athlete to try new things and find their strengths.

ANCIENT GREECE

Students follow the development of the civilization from nomadic tribes to clans to kingdom. The structure and inner-workings of city-states are deconstructed, and dichotomies between city-states such as Sparta and Athens, Corinth and Thebes are established. Students learn about aspects of Greek culture including poems, drawings, watercolor paintings, songs, and impromptu dramatic presentations, as well as the Greek alphabet. They also hear the stories of Philip of Macedonia and his son Alexander, philosophers Plato and Socrates, and the heroes Hercules and Odysseus. Students further explore the idea of Greece as the cradle of democracy.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Becoming a solidly independent writer is a goal of the fifth grade. Writing is now mostly original student work and is rarely copied from the teacher. Composition skills are developed through organization, prewriting exercises, practice, and self-editing. Grammar and mechanics are reinforced through games and practice. More complex writing skills including the descriptive, letter and expository writing are studied. The study of ancient civilizations provide ample opportunity for expression through writing, reading, and speech.

Regular reading assignments expand the student's active and passive vocabulary, refine reading comprehension skills, and improve oral summaries. Class discussions around class readings ask students to develop an understanding of the setting, events, characters, and storyline of each book. Students are asked to read at home daily.

Poetry is explored as a way to express feeling and gratitude, especially in the Olympic Odes in preparation for the Fifth Grade Pentathlon. Group and individual recitation continues.

MATH

The fifth grade year solidifies all aspects of working with fractions and introduces decimals. Decimal place value, more complex story problems, prime and composite number identification, working averages are all practiced. Mental math becomes much more complex and difficult. Strategies for problem solving are emphasized.

FORM DRAWING

Form Drawing enhances many aspects of learning: writing, geometry, spatial awareness, observation skills, relationships, balance, and symmetry. It is often referred to as “motion come to rest on the page.” Fifth Grade form drawing includes metamorphic forms, (forms that through a series of drawings transform from one form to another). The fifth grade work culminates in free-hand drawings of what will later be drawn with a straight-edge and compass in sixth grade.

SCIENCE

Lessons in botany explore the kingdom of plants from fungi to the conifer. Students learn to characterize plants and understand growth cycles. They identify the root, stem, leaves, flowers, and fruit along with the different manifestations depending on climate and soil. Weekly tree observation sessions help students become attuned to plants’ different physical characteristics through the seasons.

Students study photosynthesis, pollination, and plant families including; Fungi, Lichens, Bryophytes, (Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts), Ferns, Lycophytes, Gymnosperms, and flowering plants, beginning with the lily (Monocotyledon) and the rose (Dicotyledon). In addition, students study the relationship between the plant kingdom and pollinators and other insects.

The school grounds and Camp Glen Brook provide students with direct experiences in nature to relate to their classroom work in Botany. Students will keep a workbook to record plant descriptions/observations and scientific plant diagrams.

GEOGRAPHY

North American Geography is the focus of Fifth Grade. Its physical characteristics (land forms and waterways), plant and animal life, and the experiences of the human beings that live in its various regions and climates are studied. The students develop a picture of the regions on our continent that differ from their own. Physical geography is experienced through accounts of the explorations of Lewis and Clark and Henry Hudson and of the building of the Erie Canal and the transcontinental railroad.

Cultural history is taught through the sharing of folk tales, tall tales, and regional music and arts. Student main lesson books includes map drawing, retelling

stories and expository writing about events and biographies from American history. Work continues on how to research and present material to the class in both oral and written forms. Individual reports on the different States or the five geographical regions of the United States are common culminating activities.

MOVEMENT

Fifth grade movement classes are designed to foster group cooperation, individual movement and listening skills. Activities include lead-up ball sports skills, fast-paced field games, advanced circus arts (plate spinning, group juggling, stilts, acrobatics) and team-building games/activities. With the arrival of spring comes time to train for the annual fifth grade Greek Olympics. The five field events of the Greek Olympics comprise of running, Greek wrestling, long jump, javelin, and discus; each demanding poise and control. All students look forward to proudly exhibiting their skills at the Olympics, a day of intense games, and cheerful camaraderie.

HANDWORK

The students begin the year by reviewing the knit and purl stitches they learned in 1st and 2nd grade, and students who are new to knitting are introduced to the European Continental technique. Each student dyes their own yarn utilizing a hand-painted technique where colors can blend together on the skein. This is an opportunity for the students to further their understanding of color theory and it is exciting to experience how each skein knits up.



The students are introduced to knitting in the round on double pointed needles so that they can create mittens or socks. This project is an opportunity for them to learn how to read a pattern and work with three dimensional designs. These new skills will allow them to make more complex projects. Socks and mittens are a small, yet complicated project that includes: ribbing, picking up stitches, shaping, sequential decreases, and creating curves. It takes a great deal of skill to work in a circular fashion with double-pointed needles. This process promotes concentration and the ability to focus on details. The socks and mittens are engineering projects that call on the students to apply their math skills.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Lessons focus on enriching student vocabulary and comprehension skills through reading. Students study relevant vocabulary from works read, focusing on words associated with the house, time, daily activities, and animals. Grammar review contains short units on pronouns and verbs, with an emphasis on irregular conjugations.

EURYTHMY

Fifth graders expand their knowledge of eurythmy through work with spatial and rhythmical elements in speech and music. Awareness of orientation in space, social connection, presence of mind, and self-control, are stimulated through work with geometrical forms, musical phrasing, dexterity, and rhythm exercises. Accompanying verses and music are selected in conjunction with themes from main lessons.

MUSIC

Students continue their vocal exercises during music lessons to develop their choral sound. Movement activities and body percussion help students practice rhythm, physical coordination, and team work, and are incorporated seamlessly into each class. Fifth graders also take music theory to the next step, writing and playing scales in G, F, and D, and building harmonies with soprano, alto, and tenor recorders inspired by the triad.

ORCHESTRA

The fifth grade orchestra rehearses compositions such as *Noble Dance* and *Canyon Sunset*, challenging pieces that require precise transitions between arco (bowed) and pizzicato (plucked) sections. In this way, students develop a basic foundation based on impeccable technique.

WOODWORKING

This introductory woodworking class emphasizes shop protocol: proper care for the tools and their safe and effective use. Students practice with carving knives and rasps to shape animals out of wood blocks, a task that requires focus, attention, strength, and skill to achieve the ideal symmetry and detail.

WATERCOLOR PAINTING AND DRAWING

Greater attention to color use, detail, shading, and gesture is emphasized in painting and drawing. Main Lesson bookwork is meant to not only record the lessons, but to record them beautifully.

CLASS PLAY

The class play in fifth grade marks a turning point. Most roles now have individual speaking lines, and listening and acting becomes more important. Student musicians will weave music throughout the play. Sets take on a more detailed look and roles such as props and lights are the responsibility of the students.

CAMP GLEN BROOK

Botany studies move from the Garden City campus to the Camp Glen Brook campus in New Hampshire. Students spend a week expanding their exploration of Botany while participating in camp life that also includes hiking, games, singing and chores.





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