

Seventh Grade

General Curriculum:

The Age of Discovery, Reformation, the Renaissance, Cultural Geography, Physics (Mechanics), Inorganic Chemistry, Anatomy, Health and Nutrition, Creative Writing, Pre-Algebra, Composition, Grammar, Spelling, Arithmetic, Literature

As the seventh grade children enter their teenage years, they are advancing across a threshold experience on their way to selfhood. Can they enter this dark unknown territory carrying a flaming torch to allow discovery as they wander and probe? Can they spend their time productively, bearing in mind that others behind them also need their light?

To help seventh grade students cross this threshold confidently, the curriculum presents a rich panorama designed to take them to civilizations and people who share their mood of soul, as well as lead them to a closer look at each one's own environment and inner-being.

The history block of the Renaissance and Reformation really begins with a dauntless quest into the unknown, which is also akin to the seventh grader's soul mood. Allegiance to traditional authority no longer holds sway. Human capacities are limitless, as epitomized by Leonardo Da Vinci. As with the true spirit of the Renaissance, the only boundaries acknowledged are boundaries to be crossed. Here the student realizes the individual cannot only make a difference, but can create a new world if one's conviction is strong enough.

As this historical period was an age of doubt that followed the unquestioning faith of the Middle Ages, so too adolescents need to find things out for themselves. Their doubt and resistance to authority mark a giant step toward self-recreation and individual thinking. Birth in the Renaissance parallels this birth in students' thinking, feeling and willing.

The writing blocks involve creative writing and literature, and are designed to bring consciousness, balance and refinement to the adolescent's emotional life. The first writing block is typically called Wish, Wonder, and Surprise. It is seen how personal a wish is, how it comes from deep within and goes toward the outer world. Wonder comes from a meeting between one's inner and outer worlds, and surprise really originates outside and impresses itself upon the individual. It becomes evident that a variety of styles can be employed to convey specific feelings accurately. Bringing consciousness to this expression of oneself, and thoughtful communication with others, can bring confidence and a sense of liberation.

Mechanics begins in physics with the lever principle as found in the human arm. From their experimentation, the children learn the basic mechanical concepts and their application in the machinery of ancient and modern times.

Organic chemistry is introduced as a study of the combustion process. The study of combustion begins in the human organism (the digestive process). Fire is observed externally in the breaking down of

substances by oxidation. Physiology is introduced as the study of the life processes in humans: blood circulation, respiration, reproduction, and nutrition in connection with digestion, health and hygiene.

World geography, with a focus on oceans and climate, runs parallel to the history units, covering the entire globe. It helps students better understand the theme of exploration from different perspectives: from the explorers venturing into the unknown with courage and strength, to the indigenous people whose land was being explored. Students look at colonization similarly, from the perspective of the group colonizing and the group being colonized.

To further enrich the curriculum, many seventh grade classes bring the Renaissance alive by taking an Ashland Shakespeare Trip, seeing a play, participating in a theater workshop and a back stage tour. In the spring, seventh grade students from Waldorf schools all over Oregon gather to compete in the 7th & 8th Grade Track Meet, which includes running events, shot put, high jump, javelin and discus.