Cascades Academy of Central Oregon

Experience Exceptional Learning

Middle School Curriculum Guide

Language Arts

To engender an appreciation for literature while developing language skills as the principal instrument of communicating ideas, information, experiences and values from one to another and across time; to develop proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening; to experience regional, national and world literature, past and present; to develop appreciation of, and response to literature; to develop students' language abilities as a function of their thinking abilities.

Sixth Grade

Discoveries in Literature

Sixth grade students discover that literature can help them realize who they are, as well as help them decide who they will be. Expository and creative writing opportunities allow students to refine basic skills as they express and evaluate their feelings and thoughts. Students will read several award-winning novels covering a variety of themes, from the very serious to the light hearted. Weekly lessons incorporate vocabulary and spelling into an integrated writing program fueled by a wealth of literary stimulus.

Seventh Grade

Composition and Communication

Seventh grade students continue to focus on the writing process of prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading and publishing. Paragraph writing expands into multi-paragraph essays as grammar, usage and mechanics improve through expository, creative and technical writing. The examination and study of reading passages from a strong literature base and supplemental content area materials pervade each writing unit. Vocabulary and spelling skills continue to expand and improve through focused study and use. Oral presentations further develop and refine students' communication skills, and collaborative and integrated units of study allow students to work cooperatively.

Eighth Grade

Survey of Literature

Eighth grade students commence with an in-depth study of selected novels and the continued application of their expanding writing skills via paragraph, essay and letter writing. Subsequently students work to acquire advanced research skills through the preparation of a library research project in the MLA style. The course further promotes higher level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation), independent inquiry and creative thinking to augment the basic skills of vocabulary, spelling, usage and mechanics. Reading, writing poetry, creating speeches and lessons in logic continue to develop students' communication skills.

Social Studies

To engender a love of and fascination with history; to cultivate citizenship; foster cultural, historical and geographical literacy; to develop students as informed, active and responsible participants in a democratic society; to identify historical patterns of economy, culture, religion, conflict, science and technology, and interaction with the environment; to build a solid base of social science skills that will serve students well in the demanding Cascades Academy Upper School program and beyond.

Sixth Grade

U.S. History and Geography II

Students explore the ideas, issues and events beginning with the Civil War and progressing chronologically up to study of contemporary American society. They learn of the unique challenges that faced our fledgling nation with a particular emphasis on the causes, course and consequences of the Civil War. They will investigate the connections between the rise of industrialized society and contemporary social and economic conditions. Students trace the rise of democratic ideas and develop a deeper understanding of the historical roots of world issues extrapolated from the American experience.

Seventh Grade

Investigations in Ancient World History

Students investigate the evolution of the earliest human civilizations through the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods and how this evolution manifested itself across different geographical regions. Students explore the cultural, political and economic contributions of the early civilizations in China, Meso-America, the Middle East, Greece, Rome and Africa leading up to an exploration of medieval European and Middle-Eastern conflict.

Eighth Grade

Investigations in Modern World History

Students begin with an investigation of the Renaissance and Reformation by defining their effects on the literature, art, science and political structures of Europe and beyond. Further study includes Eastern and Western exploration and colonialism, focused on the motivating forces of mercantilism and the technological and scientific advances that made this exploration possible. European religious wars, and the rising power of both France and England conclude this year of intense study.

National History Day: History students participate in this annual regional contest, which aligns closely with the CACO history objectives, each spring. Their research and subsequent project must focus on a prescribed theme and be developed as either dramatic performance, documentary media presentation, museum style display or historical essay.

Mathematics

To experience mathematics as an exciting, useful and creative discipline; to solve interesting, challenging problems that will develop abilities to create abstractions and generalizations; to acquire a firm foundations in rational numbers that will allow for significant conceptual work in algebra and geometry.

Sixth Grade

Explorations in Mathematics

This course reinforces basic arithmetic skills, introduces elementary algebraic concepts such as evaluating variable expressions, and strengthens students' problem solving skills. The course covers topics of operations with fractions, decimals, statistics, probability, geometry, dealing with negative numbers, ratios and proportions and solving an equation with a variable. Students are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions during which they find themselves discovering the principles being discussed rather than simply being given a set of rules to follow.

Seventh Grade

Pre - Algebra

This course is designed to assist students as they make the transition between the concrete subject of arithmetic and the more abstract subjects of algebra and geometry. Students work with variables, variable expressions, equations, inequalities and formulas representing real life situations. Subjects covered earlier in math courses such as fractions, ratios, exponents, and probability are revisited and reinforced for greater mastery. The students explore geometry through examination of polygons, geometric solids, congruence and similarity.

Eighth Grade

Algebra I

The eighth grade algebra course provides students with opportunities to gain greater mastery and awareness of mathematical properties crucial in the transition from arithmetic to algebra. Students work with data, study patterns and spatial relations, investigate the properties of two and three dimensional geometric shapes and experiment with probability to relate mathematics to its real world applications as much as possible. The course reinforces basic math concepts such as signed numbers, order of operations, and ratio and proportion. Students work on building algebraic equations from real world situations to tie abstract notation to concrete problems.

Science

To introduce students to the concept of asking and answering their own questions using the scientific method; to develop the skills necessary to design and conduct a research experiment; to understand the benefits of computer interface technology to acquire and analyze data; to foster an appreciation for and understanding of the natural world.

Sixth Grade

Human Biology and Health -Through the Bend Science Station-

Students are introduced to the science of life by focusing on the biology of human systems. Through microscopy and cell models, students develop an understanding of the complexity of the basic building blocks of life. Dynamic laboratory experiments will focus on human tissues, organs, and organ systems to demonstrate the basic biology of organisms. Primary focus will be placed on the circulatory, respiratory, nervous, digestive and reproductive systems. In sixth grade, student directed research projects on human anatomy will be conducted in small groups.

Seventh Grade

Exploring Earth -Through the Bend Science Station-

Students focus their attention on the science of geology. Hands on investigative studies provide an understanding of minerals, rocks, and plate tectonics. Real fossils, internet research, and the fossil record will enable students to engage in thoughtful discussion about the theory of evolution. Since more than 70% of the earth is covered with water, this course will also focus on the basic concepts of oceanography and weather systems. In seventh grade, student directed research projects will be performed in the field of geology and conducted in pairs.

Eighth Grade

Amazing Astronomy -Through the Bend Science Station-

This class uses basic concepts as a spring-board to introduce physics concepts. Dynamic optics experiments help students to understand the laws that govern how telescopes operate. Investigations of electromagnetism provide the knowledge necessary to interpret the information that arrives at our planet from outer space. Students also focus their attention on Newton's laws of motion, basic rocketry, gravitation, stellar evolution and the Big Bang theory. In eighth grade, student directed research projects will be conducted in the field of physics and performed as individuals.

Spanish

To familiarize students with basic Spanish vocabulary and grammar conventions; to develop common functional vocabulary and conversational expression; to use a variety of teaching modalities to develop oral, written, listening and reading skills.

Sixth Grade

Spanish A

Students will be exposed to the Spanish language in this highly interactive class. Students build a solid foundation of basic listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as gaining exposure the cultures of Spanish-speaking people. Besides providing instruction in the basic conventions of the Spanish language students are also familiarized with common functional vocabulary and expressions. Games, short dialogues, plays, and writing activities complement the formal and conversational instruction.

Seventh Grade

Spanish B

In this course students begin a more structured study of the Spanish language. They continue to study the present tense and are introduced to the past tense. Building on basic skills learned in sixth grade Spanish students learn how to function in market, restaurant and social situations. They also converse about traveling, chores, feelings, and health. Major projects include designing a travel guide for a Spanish-speaking nation and organizing a school-wide Spanish activity. In addition to the textbook, many other resources enhance the instruction in this class.

Eighth Grade

Spanish I

Students continue to develop grammar skills and build a strong vocabulary base with an emphasis on written and oral expression. Students develop elementary and intermediate conversational expressions of language and practice topical vocabulary. A wide variety of teach methods are employed and Spanish is spoken most of the time. Students learn to introduce themselves and others, describe themselves and others; express likes and dislikes; converse about things such as vacations, travel, chores, feelings, health and the environment.

Technology

To introduce, master and extend a wide range of technological skills in order to maximize the benefits of technology to the end of better understanding core content and more efficiently communicating ideas, knowledge and achievement.

Integrated Technology

Technology instruction will be integrated throughout the middle school the curriculum at Cascades Academy. The applications will include the introduction, mastery and extension of word processing skills, communication skills, database manipulation, spreadsheet functionality, multimedia skills and information acquisition and manipulation skills in all core academic areas. Instruction will employ popular Microsoft® software programs including Microsoft Word®, Microsoft Excel®, Microsoft Publisher®, Microsoft FrontPage® and Microsoft PowerPoint®, as well as other software such as ArcView 8.3™ Geographic Information Systems in social studies and LoggerPro 2.2™ in sciene. Special attention will be paid to the ethical use of the computer and the basic citation protocols inherent to this technology.

The Arts

-A work in progress

Art and Drama

-A work in progress...

Physical Education

-A work in progress

Physical Education

-A work in progress...

Portfolio of Achievement "Greatest Hits!"

To authenticate assessment across the middle school; to demonstrate the depth and breadth of educational experience; to demonstrate students' growth over time.

This portfolio is designed to showcase student growth academically and artistically. The portfolio contains a prescriptive variety of student work samples from language arts, social studies, science, math and art that will measure student achievement against clear goal s and standards, thus authenticating assessment throughout the Cascades Academy middle school program. Pieces drawn for this portfolio are selected by both the teacher and the student over the course of each year. This portfolio enables all students at Cascades Academy to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their educational experience as well highlight areas of growth and improvement. The Portfolio of Achievement is a critical element of assessment and as well as teacher-parent-child communication. Eighth grade students will be required to publish their *Greatest Hits* as a summative project by May of that year. This capstone project will be an overall collection of student achievement that reflects the creativity, diligence and hard work done by the students at Cascades Academy.