

Middle School

Academic Program Guide

2016/2017

Academic Program : Grade 6-8

English

The English Language Arts (ELA) program at George Washington Academy lays a foundation of lifelong communication skills in reading, writing and speaking, so that students to empower students for success across academic disciplines. The English department develops comprehension of language in a wide variety of contexts, and provides outlets for experimentation and creative organization of ideas. The English department sharpens students' critical thinking skills by training them to make connections between ideas, to ask good questions, and to infer shades of meaning. The school recognizes the importance of providing students with a strong background in the English language so that they are well-equipped to enter an English-speaking academic environment. Additionally, the school recognizes the merits of capturing students' imaginations, awakening them to the delights of written and spoken English. GWA uses the Common Core English Language Arts Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>) as the foundation of its curriculum.

Sixth through 8th grade teachers use whole texts, short stories, and poems for English instruction. A short story anthology text and class novel sets supplement Literature instruction. 6 +1 Traits of Writing supplements Writing and Grammar instruction to develop English Language Arts competencies systematically.

A significant library collection, including Accelerated Reader (AR) books, supplements the 6th-8th grade (out-of-school) reading program. AR encourages students to read AT AGE LEVEL or higher. Students accumulate points when they read books from the collection at age level and pass the corresponding multiple-choice tests to verify out-of-class reading and improvement on reading level. AR assigns points based upon the length of the book, the level of difficulty, and a student's comprehension. Students who fall behind in their AR reading may need to stay after school to make up for the lost reading time. Accelerated Reader is 10% of a MS student's English grade. Note: See the "Parental Involvement" Section for more detailed information.

English Language Support

GWA offers English language support during regular school hours to some students who need extra support in their English language development, including academic language. Students may receive in-class support and/or small group support for one period every other day. In the case of small group support, students take the course in place of an elective (ex: art, drama). The ESL Department re-evaluates the need for this intervention at the end of each semester.

Math

Mathematics studies quantity, structure, space and change. It is a discipline that teaches about the order and precision of the world around us. The development of logical and critical thinking skills is essential as we seek patterns, form conjectures and establish truths.

Sixth through 8th grade students will master the skills necessary for real-world math applications and will be prepared to continue the study of mathematics at the university level.

Courses in Middle School Mathematics:

6th Grade Math students will:

- Understand and work with Whole numbers and Decimals
- Analyze Graphs and Patterns
- Apply Number Theory
- Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide Fractions
- Understand both Geometric and Algebraic concepts

7th Grade Math students will:

- Understand and work with Decimals, Fractions and Integers
- Operate and compute Exponents and Factors
- Analyze Proportions, Percents, and Ratios
- Apply and Identify Patterns
- Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide Fractions
- Understand both Geometric and Algebraic concepts

Pre-Algebra:

This course places a strong emphasis on the continued study of integers, order of operations, variables, expressions, and equations. Students solve and graph equations and inequalities, write and solve proportions, and explore Geometry, statistics, and graph concepts. The course emphasizes problem-solving throughout.

MS Algebra 1:

This beginning level Algebra course builds on the foundation of knowledge and understanding of algebraic ideas and concepts from pre-Algebra. Topics include: number properties, integers, rational and real numbers, linear equations and inequalities, beginning quadratic equations, factoring, polynomial operations, systems of equations, and radicals.

Science

The science department at George Washington Academy exists to inspire students' an interest and joy in the sciences, to develop in students a desire to learn more, and to give them the skills necessary to do so. These skills include the basics of scientific thought, such as the scientific method, observational skills, and how to speak and write scientifically. Students learn about the natural world, in theory and practice. The science department equips students with the tools necessary to understand the basics of the world around them with cogent logical thought, and to pursue the sciences in university. GWA has adopted the Next Generation Science Standards (<http://www.nextgenscience.org/>), which align grade by grade with Common Core (CCSS) Standards, as the foundation of our instructional program.

The 6th through 8th grade middle school curriculum builds a solid inquiry approach to Life, Earth, and Physical Science by utilizing The Science Explorer program through Science Fusion by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Differentiated instruction components to meet the needs of every student at every learning level is one of the strong suits of this curriculum that has strong reading support and multiple opportunities for hands-on inquiry.

The Middle School Science program emphasizes:

- 6th Life Science: Cells and Heredity; The Diversity of Living Things; The Human Body; and Ecology and the Environment
- 7th Grade Earth Science: The Dynamic Earth; Earth's Water and Atmosphere; and Space Science
- 8th Grade Physical Science: Matter and Energy; Motion, Forces, and Energy; and Sound and Light

Social Studies

The practices of good citizenship and successful living require studying the social characteristics of our world. Without careful analysis of our past and our present, we cannot navigate our future effectively. With this in mind, the Social Studies department at George Washington Academy desires that all graduates, regardless of future career endeavors, will have the necessary skills and educational background to be strong citizens, economic planners, community leaders, and analytical thinkers, as they seek to improve and participate fully in the society in which they live. Students who have completed GWA's Social Studies Program will develop an awareness of the world's political, economic, and social systems, and will have a basic chronology of major world historical events and their implications to the current world situations.

6th through 8th grade

- 6th Grade - Ancient Civilizations: This course focuses on the study of the history of man from prehistory through the Pre-Modern period. Students focus on the geographic, economic, political, social and cultural developments of different religions and key civilizations in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.
- 7th Grade - World Geography: This course focuses on both the physical and human geography of our world. Students will work by continents and regions studying physical features as well as the cultural, political and economic geography of the world.
- 8th Grade - US History: This course focuses on the development of America from early explorers to the 20th Century. The major topics of this course include exploration, Native Americans, the American colonial experience, the US Constitution, westward expansion, slavery, the Civil War and the Gilded Age, American Imperialism, the Great Depression, WWII, and the Cold War.

French

The GWA French fosters mastery of the French language to induce better oral communication and proper written expression for our students in their daily interactions, higher academic studies, and potentially in their professional endeavors. Through language study our students learn to deepen their knowledge and appreciation the diversity and depth of French culture, both from a literary angle through a study of the classical works, and from a historical one that grasps a wider vision of their surrounding world.

For 6th through 8th grade students, publications approved by the French Ministry of Education, including French as a Foreign Language materials, form the core instructional material for French classes.

Arabic

George Washington Academy has committed both to the instruction *of* the Arabic language, and to instruction *in* the Arabic language. The Arabic Department teaches Classical Arabic to instill in students a love of the language, to help them understand and appreciate the historical and cultural heritage of Morocco and the Arab world, to increase students' appreciation and understanding of ancient Arabic literature, and to develop in students a proper level of pride in and respect for their heritage.

Physical Education

The Health and Physical Education Department of George Washington Academy exists to expose students to the benefits of physical fitness as a part of lifelong health and wellness. The curriculum exposes students to athletics, physical fitness, and the role of all areas of wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and environmental) in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.