

4th Grade Curriculum

Language Arts

Fourth grade students study reading, writing, spelling, and grammar. Students read short stories, a minimum of four novels, and non-fiction materials. Students increase their knowledge of elements of literature and figurative language. Class discussions encourage students to make connections, predictions, and inferences as they read. Fourth grade students continue to hone their writing skills with emphasis placed on writing sound paragraphs and multi-paragraph compositions. Students use Microsoft Word for many writing assignments. Spelling and grammar instruction continues, and the Open Court series is used. Students are expected to use a dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, glossary, or internet resources as appropriate for their needs.

Mathematics

Math instruction in the fourth grade reinforces skills and introduces algorithms; scientific notation; compound measurements such as volume; density; equivalence classes and relations ($<$, $>$, $=$); fraction operations and procedures; basic metric properties of plane figures; and congruence, similarity, and transformations of geometric figures. Students study number and visual sequences, formula models, and the use of variables. The properties of number systems, operations with positive and negative numbers, parentheses, order of operations, writing and solving equations and relations on a number line are all presented in grade four. The primary text used is Everyday Mathematics published by the University of Chicago. Additionally, students access Everyday Mathematics computer math games on "EM Games Online" which directly support instruction.

Science

Fourth grade students study the cells, tissues, organs, and systems of the human body. Students learn to identify the parts and functions of the digestive, respiratory, circulatory and skeletal systems. Students learn to use microscopes in the study of plant and animal cell structure. The study of the ocean and its ecosystem is emphasized in the study of earth science. In the physical sciences, students learn to relate the three states of matter to the arrangement and movement of particles, identify common elements on the periodic table, and compare and contrast the nature of mixtures and compounds. Fourth graders study the laws of motion and the effects of friction, gravity, and magnetism on an object. Correct lab procedures and safety are emphasized. Students create and present Power Point presentations during their study of both elements and cells. The basis for the curriculum is Science by Harcourt School Publishers.

Social Studies

The social studies curriculum in fourth grade focuses on American history with emphases on ancestry and immigration, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War. Students hone research skills as they delve into genealogy for a family tree project. Students use specific internet sites and Microsoft Word to research and create explorer timelines. The Living History program brings living conditions during the Civil War to life. "The Oregon Trail", produced by Interact Publishers, is presented as a live simulation as students virtually make their way to Oregon in groups or as individuals, learning not only history but also group dynamics, decision-making skills, cause and effect, and natural consequences. The primary text is United States History, Volumes I and II by Harcourt School Publishers.

Spanish

Speaking and listening skills continue to be emphasized in fourth grade Spanish class with an increasing emphasis on grammatical structures in addition to vocabulary expansion. Students learn common irregular verbs in the present indicative tense and the correct use of ser and estar. Number and gender agreement as well as correct syntax for negative sentences and interrogatives are emphasized. Students prepare and present original dialogues and scripts for conversations which incorporate newly acquired vocabulary and grammatical structures. Class is conducted almost exclusively in Spanish with the use of teacher-created and authentic materials.

Art

Fourth grade art emphasizes drawing, design, painting, crafts, and art history. Students are expected to demonstrate a maturing appreciation for the elements of design, color schemes, the works of major artists, and new art forms. Students learn to be more sensitive observers of line, color, texture, form, and pattern in natural and constructed forms. Students use a variety of methods and media as they produce original and creative works of art using crayons, paint, clay, pastels, textiles, paper, and computer graphics in increasingly complex ways.

Music

Students in fourth grade music class continue to build skills in rhythm, rhythmic notation, tempo and dynamic markings, melodic notation and ear-training, singing on pitch both in unison and in harmony, solfege, music symbols in several meters, octavo, and instrumental score reading. Additionally, students learn to recognize by sight and sound the various instruments of an orchestra. Students learn basic fingerings and play simple songs and duets on soprano recorders. Students write original musical compositions in the key of C pentatonic in 4/4 time for piano, soprano recorder, or a pitched Orff instrument. Finally, students have the opportunity to perform in two major stage productions each year.

Physical Education

Fourth grade physical education emphasizes motor skill development, perceptual awareness, and overall health and fitness. Students participate in developmentally appropriate activities balancing the development of individual skills with the concept of team play. Fourth grade students participate in fitness testing and learn how to improve their personal fitness levels. Students participate in a variety of modified games to practice skills needed for sports offered in the middle and upper schools. For example, students learn to play volleyball, basketball, soccer, flag football, and baseball among others. Activities are designed to promote strength, flexibility, and cardio respiratory health as well as coordination and balance in the context of safety and good sportsmanship.