

The American School in London

Grade 4: Semester 1 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the first reporting period, these are the ideas, concepts, and skills your child will have learned. We acknowledge that all children learn at different paces, and that it takes the students different lengths of time to master skills and concepts. Your child's teacher will update you on their initial social, emotional, and academic progress at October conferences and provide a more formal report card in February.

Approaches to Learning

We expect students in Grade 4 to accept responsibility for their own actions. We value cooperation and attentive listening to directions from the teacher and the ideas of other classmates. The development of a consistently organized approach to work is fostered throughout the year. We expect work of a consistent quality that reflects thoughtful practice with a focus on the attainment of self-reflective skills.

Reading

In reading, Grade 4 students learn to become metacognitive readers and record and discuss their thoughts about texts. They practice a variety of reading strategies to help deepen their comprehension. Some of these skills include: summarizing, making connections, inferring, predicting, formulating questions and analyzing characters. In the middle of the year, we expect most Grade 4 students to be reading between Fountas and Pinnell level R-S.

Writing

Using the Writer's Workshop model, the students are led through a process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing their work. Whole class mini-lessons teach students specific writing strategies in two specific genres: narrative and opinion writing. Students consider their audience by thinking of the purpose of their writing. During our narrative writing unit, students focus on the meaning of their story and how to elaborate with action, dialogue, and inner thought. Our opinion-writing unit focuses on making claims and supporting them with evidence. Student/teacher conferences provide an opportunity for more individualized instruction based on the students' needs.

Speaking and Listening

Grade 4 students practice speaking and listening across disciplines in order to reinforce, build upon, and share their learning. Students use eye contact and respond appropriately throughout a discussion. They are expected to be able to follow multi-step instructions independently. Opportunities to speak in small and large groups help students gain confidence as speakers. They share their ideas and experiences in an organized fashion while using appropriate body language and gestures.

Math

In math, Grade 4 students develop efficient strategies to tackle increasingly complex problems. They work to explain their mathematical thinking fully and clearly. Based on the Common Core State Standards, we emphasize problem-solving, requiring students to use multiple approaches, have an open mind and think flexibly. This semester, students deepen their understanding of numbers in the base-ten system up to the millions, are introduced to angle measurements and continue their examination of properties of two-dimensional figures. They also extend their knowledge of multiplication and division with a project-based investigation with a focus on multi-digit operations.

Social Studies

In social studies, students learn about culture, history, and change. Students investigate topics that require them to think, research, question, and infer meaning as they evaluate history. This semester, students will think about the concept of power and how it relates to them and our classroom community. Students will investigate how their choices or behavior impact themselves and others in the classroom. They will focus on how to resolve conflict in a way that empowers them. In the second unit students will investigate the structures of human made systems and community. They will focus on how power, perspective and conflict shape the past and present. Seeing the past through the lens of power will help students understand inequalities today. Students will use primary and secondary sources to examine inequalities in power, specifically slavery in ancient times, the Atlantic Slave Trade and Underground Railroad.

Science

This semester Grade 4 students will investigate systems, in particular human body systems such as the senses and how light, the eyes and the brain interact. Through investigations, discussion and writing the students will make detailed observations and explain their thinking. They will create diagrams, build models and reflect on learning to demonstrate an understanding of systems and their application. The importance of effective communication and teamwork in science will be emphasized during the Junior FIRST Lego League challenge. Students will research across multiple resources to synthesize information, make new meaning and present learning to a wider audience. Engineering practices will be highlighted as the students identify mechanical issues to revise and refine their Lego models. Students attend three 60-minute lessons every eight days.

Art

Grade 4 students use a wide range of subject matter, symbols, images and visual expressions in their work while continuing to develop their technique and skills. They reflect on and evaluate their own work and learn to explain the thinking behind the artistic choices they make. To understand how artists use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, students look at the work of specific artists, using the work they see as inspiration for their own artwork. Students collaborate on group artwork as well as on their own individual work. Students attend two, 50-minute classes every eight days.

Music

Grade 4 students develop their playing skills, using tuned percussion instruments such as xylophones and recorders. Students learn a number of two, three and four-part instrumental pieces that also incorporate movement or body percussion. Ensemble skills are an important part of the grade four curriculum and the students discuss form, dynamics and harmony. Basic notation is used for instrumental parts and students become more familiar with melodic direction using a staff. Students perform in several informal settings as a way of demonstrating their understanding of musical concepts. They also continue to develop their singing skills through learning a variety of songs in different genres and languages. Grade 4 students work in small groups on creative projects throughout the semester. Students attend three, half hour lessons every eight days.

PE

Grade 4 students work together in more complex cooperative games continuing to deepen their understanding of the "Big C's" of sport; cooperation, care, compromise, challenge, celebration and commitment. Students participate in activities that build on more mature locomotor and manipulative skills in activities such as net games, short tennis and invasion games, all integrated within modified game situations. This helps develop the students' understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies and tactics. Students self-assess and peer assess to improve their skills and play games demonstrating good sportsmanship, fair play and self-discipline. Students also continue to develop their gymnastic skills, learning to adapt, link and create sequential movement skills. They attend aquatic lessons for a six-week block as part of their PE classes during the Fall and revisit the pool in April for the Aquathon - a fitness unit building up to a 150 or 300m swim and an 800m run. Students attend hour-long classes twice a week.

Spanish

Grade 4 students build on their prior knowledge and skills, reviewing fundamentals from previous years, while expanding their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The students access the language with increasing independence, using it to string together more complex thoughts and statements. Students have an opportunity to use their knowledge through movement, music, games, and both student and teacher led activities. Students attend three, half hour classes every eight days.