

CROSSROADS ACADEMY EIGHTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Class of 2015 Academic Profile



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| Students in grade 8: | 10 |
| Average section size: | 7-18 |
| Length of periods: | 50 minutes |
| Grading system: | A+ to F; class members are not ranked |
| Effort grades: | 1 (excellent); 2 (meets expectation); 3 (below expectation) |
| Grading interval: | Trimester; mid-trimester |
| Examinations: | Math exams are taken at the end of the year. Timed composition assessments are given twice a year. |
| Academic honors: | Neither academic honors nor awards are given to individuals. |
| Tracking: | Tracking takes place in mathematics. |
| Percentage of graduates attending independent secondary schools: | 50–65% |

Course Descriptions

ART HISTORY

Meets one period per week. The eighth grade curriculum focuses on how art developed during the twentieth century. Over the course of the year students begin to understand how contemporary art evolved. Eighth graders study a wide variety of media such as sculpture, architecture, painting, and photography. A strong effort is made to help students understand and appreciate modern art.

STUDIO ART

Meets one double period per week for half the year. Review of the elements and principles of art as they are expressed in 20th century artwork. Projects include both two- and three-dimensional work, sharpening students' skills in drawing, painting, color theory, collage, printmaking, clay work, and sculpture. Students are encouraged to develop a personal style and vision. Some projects are related to artists' work covered in the Art History class.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Meets one period per week. Students begin the year by discussing *real* heroes found in their summer reading biographies. Through discussion, students demonstrate their understanding of the cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice, and they apply these terms to people in everyday life. In addition, films and poems exemplifying the cardinal virtues are viewed and discussed. Students also are asked to choose and complete two goals per trimester from their *Stepping Stones* project booklet. Activities in this booklet are focused on the completion of community service projects at home, at school, and in the wider community.

ENGLISH

Meets six periods per week. Crossroads offers a rigorous English program that includes a demanding reading curriculum. While students are not grouped by ability in English classes, the student population in general is academically ambitious and very capable. Texts used in the seventh and eighth grade English classes may include: Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night*, Dickens's *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, Lee's *To Kill a*

Mockingbird, Wiesel's *Night*, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and *Realms of Gold*, an anthology of poetry, essays and short stories. The English program, in addition, offers a separate class in composition; students are

organized in small groups. This approach has proven to be very useful in developing student writing.

The eighth grade course places strong emphasis on written expression. Highest priority is given to expository writing, especially literary analysis. One trimester is devoted to writing a research paper. In addition, students write essays that narrate, persuade, and compare and contrast. Students write and revise several drafts of each essay to improve organization, content, focus, diction, spelling, and grammar. In-class essay writing is also required to develop students' ability to write within a time limit.

The vocabulary component of this course uses *Vocabulary from Classical Roots, Level C*, Norma Fifer, Nancy Flowers: Educational Publishing Service, 1993. This text introduces Latin and Greek root words and presents vocabulary derived from these roots. Students continue a systematic study of grammar with *English Composition and Grammar, Second Course*, John Warriner: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1998. Topics covered include phrases, clauses, sentence structure, punctuation, and usage. Independent reading is also a course requirement.

FRENCH

Meets three periods per week. This course emphasizes listening skills through a method called Total Physical Response Storytelling. Students are also encouraged to practice speaking through dialogs. The grammar covered includes five tenses (the present, simple past, future, future proche, and imperfect) of *er*, *-ir*, *-re*, and more than 30 irregular verbs in the active indicative and imperative; noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, and related structures; topical vocabulary; and geography. Appropriate reading material and CDs of music are incorporated into the program, with some writing required. Students should be well prepared for second-year honors-level French. **Text:** *French Second Year*, Eli Blume, Gail Stein: Amsco School Publications, 1996.

HEALTH

Meets once or twice a week during the second trimester. In health education, the focus is on the promotion of healthy lifestyles and awareness of public health issues. Eighth grade topics include decision making strategies, human development, sexual health, HIV/AIDS prevention, tobacco/alcohol/drug use prevention, and hazing/harassment. Teaching methods include classroom

presentations, PowerPoint presentations, guest speakers, group discussion, and group activities.

HISTORY

Meets three times per week. This class encourages students to make connections and think critically about history from the end of World War II to the present. Topics of study after World War II include a significant focus on the Cold War and the response of the United States to its political and strategic implications. Students will develop their knowledge through reading both textbook assignments and primary source readings. They will practice critical analysis skills through short and longer form writing assignments, as well as structured debates. Relevant map work and portions of documentary films will also be included. Additional topics of study will include post-war decolonization with a close look at the independence of India and Pakistan and the success of Mao and the communists in the Chinese civil war, with an examination of the effects of the Cultural Revolution. Students will also become familiar with the U.S. experience of the Korean and Vietnam wars, the rise of social activism and the civil rights movement, and the international oil crises of the seventies. The contemporary history of the U.S. and the world will be touched on through a look at Middle East politics and 9/11 and its subsequent events and conflicts still unfolding today. Topics to reinforce the constitution, civics, and geography will be addressed within each unit, as applicable. Students are graded on frequent quizzes to further their reading-for-content skills, a variety of essay topics, debates, and unit tests. **Texts:** *A History of US – Vol. 10: All the People*, Joy Hakim: Oxford University Press, 2010; *Gandhi: Great Soul*, John B. Severance: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997; *The Human Odyssey: From Modern Times to Our Contemporary Era*, Mary Beth Klee, John Cribb, and John Holdren: K-12 Inc., 2007; *10,000 Days of Thunder: A History of the Vietnam War*, Philip Caputo: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2005.

LATIN

Meets three periods per week. Reading in Latin is the springboard of the learning process. Students read aloud in class and are able to comprehend the Latin text as they proceed. Along with more formal translation assignments and answering comprehension questions in both English and Latin, vocabulary continues to expand to approximately five hundred words. The sequence of syntax and grammar covers all indicative tenses of all conjugations, active and passive, the present participle active, and the perfect passive participle. The sequence also covers the fourth and fifth declensions, the comparison of adjectives and adverbs, numerals and additional pronouns. Additionally, the sequence deals with common uses of the ablative and completes the study of relative clauses. By the end of eighth grade Latin, most Latin inflection of words has been covered except for the subjunctive, which is introduced at the beginning of second year Latin in secondary school, paving the way for rapid progress in learning various types of subordinate clauses. Meanwhile, the study of Roman history and culture in the period just prior to the end of the Republic and the ushering in of the Augustan revolution continues. **Text:** *Latin for the New Millennium*, Level 1, Milena Minkoa, Terence Tunberg: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., 2008.

MATHEMATICS

PRE-ALGEBRA

Meets five periods per week. This is a full-year pre-algebra course that prepares students to take Algebra I. This course is

designed for students who have solid skills working with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. The topics include variables, operations with positive and negative numbers, solving equations and inequalities, ratio, proportion, percent, the coordinate plane, introductory geometry, and probability and statistics, all with an emphasis on problem solving. Students are encouraged to become independent problem solvers and willing to try a variety of strategies when faced with a challenging problem. **Text:** *Big Ideas Math Accelerated*, Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell: Big Ideas Learning, LLC, 2014.

ALGEBRA I

Meets five periods per week. This course is designed for students who have mastered pre-algebra. This course begins by briefly reviewing and expanding on topics introduced in pre-algebra, including equation solving, operations with negative numbers, and axioms. Students then begin to work with polynomials, radicals, quadratic equations, two variable equations, exponents, and factoring. The course emphasizes problem solving and reading and interpreting word problems. In addition, students study operations with radical and rational algebraic expressions and inequalities in one and two variables. Students complete graphing calculator work throughout the course. They learn to use editing features, graphing techniques, and they write programs on the calculator. Students completing this course will proceed to geometry. **Text:** *Big Ideas Math: Algebra 1*, Ron Larson and Laurie Boswell: Big Ideas Learning, LLC, 2014.

GEOMETRY

Meets four periods per week. In this course, students explore geometry topics while continually reinforcing their algebra skills. Students use two-column, paragraph, and indirect proofs while studying congruent triangles, parallel lines, polygons, introduction to trigonometry, circles, area and volume, and coordinate geometry. Geometry emphasizes logical thinking and organization of mathematical ideas. Students completing this course will be prepared to take Algebra II. **Text:** *Geometry for Enjoyment and Challenge, New Edition*, Richard Rhoad, George Milauskas, Robert Whipple: McDougal Littell, 1991.

MUSIC/PERFORMING ARTS

Meets three times a week from September through January and twice a week from February through June. The eighth grade program strives to educate the students in content while giving them performance and creative opportunities.

Music history focuses on the music of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Students discuss the development of jazz and are exposed to works by Debussy, Ravel, Bartok, Copland, and Stravinsky. In the theory component, students cover major and minor scales, primary chords, and complex rhythmic patterns. Students are introduced to composition through the use of note writing software and play in ensembles with mallet instruments, “boomwhackers,” drums, and keyboards. Choral performance opportunities include Grandparents Day, the Holiday Performance, the spring musical, and the graduation ceremony performance. The musical, produced in cooperation with a drama specialist, gives students a chance to experience the staging of a major theatrical performance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Meets twice a week, except during the second trimester when the same class time is used for health education. In

physical education, students participate in more advanced games and activities while skill work is emphasized and reinforced. Teamwork, sportsmanship, strategy development, and cooperation are the focus for units such as archery, climbing wall, basketball, volleyball, and floor hockey. Middle School students focus on the benefits of physical activity and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Fitness testing is a part of the curriculum for eighth graders.

SCIENCE

Meets four periods a week. All branches of the natural sciences are presented in an integrated fashion. Students are given opportunities to experience authentic scientific research. This requires students to combine their knowledge of basic scientific concepts with their understanding of sound scientific experimental design and proper use of instruments. Emphasis is placed on students becoming comfortable writing scientific papers in the standard style of: Introduction, Methods and Material, Results and Discussion. Students are expected to become adept at applying sound inductive and deductive reasoning during their investigations. As students progress through this final year, concepts such as negative feedback regulation and inverse square relationships are revisited in more depth to employ the spiraling nature of our Core Curriculum. **Texts:** *Conceptual Physics*, Paul Hewitt: Addison Wesley, 1999; *Conceptual Physical Science*, Paul Hewitt: Addison Wesley, 2000.

SPANISH

Meets three periods a week. The eighth grade class uses the book *Avancemos 1 B* published by Holt McDougal. Students will learn the foundational grammatical structures beginning with simple sentences and moving to more complex sentences. In addition, students will be introduced to new vocabulary words during each class, and they will be asked to use new vocabulary in written and in oral communication.

Culture plays an important role in the acquisition of a new language, therefore students will learn about the customs, food, holidays and beliefs of the people living in various Hispanic countries. On occasion, for homework, students will be asked to do research on various Hispanic countries. Students will connect and compare the history and geography of these countries.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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