

UMS-Wright Preparatory School



Middle School Course Guide

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6th Grade English This course combines grammar instruction and composition skills. Students learn the six traits of writing (overall development, organization, support, sentence structure, word choice, and mechanics) and use the traits to compose well-written narrative, descriptive, persuasive, and expository essays.

6TH Grade Reading This course is designed for the sixth grade students to hone their reading skills. Students are involved in small group and large group discussions about class novels that they are reading. In addition to class novels, each student must complete individual novels throughout the entire year. The teacher uses modeling and different reading strategies to help the students become better readers. Through computer-based projects, students are able to share their novels with the class and inspire others to discover new authors and books.

6th Grade Language Arts Foundations- This class is intended to assist students in a variety of areas including but not limited to the following strategies: organization, learning styles, note-taking, memorization, test-taking, and information literacy. Latin and Greek root words are studied also to encourage vocabulary growth, logical thinking, and to enhance creative writing assignments.

7th Grade English This course focuses on developing literary analysis skills in response to literature. This includes characterization, setting, plot analysis, and literary terms relevant to the selections. Works studied typically include short stories, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. Novel studies include *A Christmas Carol*, *Johnny Tremain*, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The course also includes intensive instruction on composing the multi-paragraph essay in response to the selected literature.

7th Grade Language Arts Research This class is designed to give the seventh grade student an introduction to producing a full, well-written research paper including proper research organization and accurate source citing. Students will write several small papers in preparation for the large research paper assignment in the spring. Along with the acquisition of research skills, there is a strong emphasis on the improvement of writing and public speaking skills. These skills will be improved through daily writing activities and

various class presentations. The class will also focus on vocabulary with Greek and Latin roots as well as grammar and mechanics.

8th Grade English This course focuses on literature, literary elements, discussion skills, vocabulary, and the writing process. The students use the skills they learn to write literary analysis essays. Students also work on increasing their reading comprehension and expanding their vocabulary. Works studied typically include *The Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a contemporary work, and a novel of the student's choice (from a teacher approved list). In addition short stories and poetry are studied using the Pearson e-text.

8th Grade Communication Arts is a course that aids students in fundamental communication skills. Students will engage in writing essays with a focus on the six traits and will also create presentations utilizing various communication methods. By the end of this course, students will have gained strength in the various modes of writing. Enhanced vocabulary through writing and speaking is also a main objective. In addition, students will understand basic communication theory, practice theory and apply those skills through numerous speaking opportunities, and utilize self and peer evaluation techniques to improve performance.

6th Grade Math reinforces basic mathematical concepts and introduces skills that are essential for all students. Concepts,

procedures, and vocabulary that students will need in order to be successful in upper-level algebra and geometry courses are introduced and continually practiced. Students begin with a problem-solving unit and a general review of the four basic operations. They are introduced to exponents, algebraic concepts, ratios, percentages, probability, and data analysis. 6th Grade Math students work extensively with fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, and estimating. Problem solving strategies are an integral part of the curriculum.

7th Grade Introduction to Pre-Algebra This course covers topics that are essential for mastering Pre-Algebra. It includes, but is not limited, to integers, fractions, decimals, and negative numbers. Conceptual understanding and procedural fluency are core standards for this course.

7th Grade Honors Pre-Algebra Pre-Algebra prepares students for the study of algebra. This course covers topics such as integers, one and two-step equations, inequalities, graphs and functions. It is designed to provide students with an engaging yet balanced approach to mathematics.

8th Grade Pre-Algebra Pre-Algebra is a transition course from arithmetic to algebra. Students study integers and rational numbers which lead to an understanding of the real number system. Other topics include writing and solving two-step and multi-step equations and inequalities, using order of operations to evaluate mathematical and algebraic expressions, recognizing and using properties, graphing linear equations, solving proportions, and understanding the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percents. Problem-solving techniques are applied throughout the course, and there is an emphasis on algebraic vocabulary and the use of patterns in understanding more complex concepts.

8th Grade Algebra I (Honors) This course is for selected eighth grade students who have demonstrated exceptional ability in mathematics. This course introduces students to the basic structure of algebra and the real number system. Students focus on vocabulary, properties, and algebraic structures that are applied to more complex problems. Topics include writing and solving more

advanced equations and inequalities. Students work extensively with graphing linear equations using a variety of methods, and systems of equations are solved using substitution and elimination. Emphasis is placed on factoring quadratic trinomials, differences of squares, and special perfect squares as a foundation for extended study in Algebra II. Square roots, absolute value, compound inequalities, functions, and transformations on the coordinate plane are additional topics of investigation.

for **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math**. This year, the STEM modules will cover topics in earth science. Each module contains graphics, videos, hands-on activities, labs, math, problem solving, and research assignments. The STEM curriculum allows students to take an active role in learning. The module topics covered this year include the following: *Rocks and Resources, Soils, Climate and Biomes, Dynamic Earth, Natural Disasters, Mission to Mars, Carbon Footprint, and Environmental Issues*.

7th Grade Science studies life science and uses a STEM approach that is student-centered and relies on a combination of text, graphics, video, and real-world, hands-on activities. Most activities require a partner(s) to complete; so the experiences they share not only encourage and reinforce positive communication, but also require analytic thinking, teamwork, self-discipline, self-motivation and a positive attitude. The curriculum is divided into STEM Modules and Blended Science. The STEM Modules are made up of 12 modules which are web-based and accessed through the Synergy ITC website. The modules completed are Animals, Aquaculture, Biotechnology, Body Systems, Cell Structure, Ecology, Genetics, Horticulture, Microbiology, Organism Reproduction, Plants & Pollination, and Weights & Measures. The Blended Science portion focuses on the process and investigation skills students need for scientific inquiry and is designed to supplement the life science modules. Blended Science includes 5 stages that are designed around student exploration. Each stage is based on the Scientific Method and students will be required to maintain a Journal.

8th Grade Science is a fully incorporated STEM lab focusing on Physical Science and Earth Science. Students work through web based modules that use multiple experiments, audio – visual teaching sessions, and hands on activities. Module titles include Oceanography, Lights and Lasers, Weather, Dynamic Earth, Astronomy, Climate and Biomes, Applied Physics, Material Science, Rocket Science, Reactions, Rocks and Resources, and Forces. Students also complete 5 Blended Science units. These units develop critical thinking skills, teamwork, and scientific reasoning as students design their own experiments and prepare presentations of their data using several technological platforms.

6th Grade Geography The course uses an online textbook to provide a comprehensive look at both Physical and Human Geography. Students learn about the cultures, climates, resources, landscape, and industries of countries around the world. Emphasis is placed on mapping and basic Geography skills.

7th Grade Civics/Economics This course features Civics through the first semester and transitions to Economics during the second semester. The Civics portion teaches the students civic responsibility and promotes active participation in government and their community. In addition, students will be asked to think critically about issues that affect their role as an American. The course examines key events in the development of the United States government, the roles of the different branches of the government and the functions of the various levels of government. The Economics portion of the course teaches the students the basic principles of economics, changes in the U.S. Economy, personal finance skills and sound economic decisions.

8th Grade American History This American History course explores the development of early America from the Beginnings through the period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. Particular attention will be devoted to examining the changing relationships between European, Native American, and African peoples as well as to the internal evolution of these diverse societies. We will also explore such topics as colonization and cultural interactions between Europeans and Indians, the rise of slavery, the American Revolution, the beginning of Industrialization, westward expansion, and the Civil War. Our major focus will be to determine how race, geography, gender, class, and culture created competing worlds in America prior to 1877.

Spanish 7 This course serves as a beginning level study of the Spanish language. Students have numerous opportunities to practice and hone their skills both inside and outside the classroom. They work on four modalities - speaking, listening, reading, and writing while learning about Spanish culture and traditions.

French 7 This course serves as a beginning level study of the French language. Students have numerous opportunities to practice and hone their skills both inside and outside the classroom. They work on four modalities - speaking, listening, reading, and writing while learning about French culture and traditions.

8th Grade Spanish This course introduces elementary syntactical components of the target language and the grammatical rules that govern the present tense. Learners thereby apply the vocabulary that is acquired during the year to interact in all four modalities (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and create meaningful communication appropriate for beginning language students. Linguistically, students will attain a Novice Medium-High level of proficiency, as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Culturally, students will acquire a basic understanding of the country of Mexico and the Geography of Latin America.

8th Grade French Students will develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the target language. Emphasis will be on learning to communicate in the target language on topics of daily life, with frequent use of paired practice, small group work, and role-plays. Students will read basic descriptions of life in countries where the target language is spoken and be introduced to various examples of authentic text found in the culture such as signs, advertisements and letters. By the end of Level 1, students will have a basic understanding of how to express feelings and opinions, describe people, things and places, and make requests at the most basic level in the target language. Students will be able to ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics.

6th Grade Art The 6th Grade Art Elective is designed to awaken students to the wondrous images in the world around them and to teach them how to interpret what they see through a variety of materials using the artist's tools—line, shape, value, color, texture, form, and space—better known as the elements of art. The principles of design—rhythm, movement, balance, proportion, variety, emphasis, and unity—are the means of composing the elements and are taught using a variety of assignments that are often inspired by art history. This class will be a rapid immersion in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional projects. There will be an exhibit in the Academic Gallery for each 6th grade art class.

7th Grade Art This class is a semester-long class that focuses on 2-dimensional art and photography. There is a variety of projects using traditional film and digital photography. Drawings, paintings, and collages are also used. The students explore different photographic techniques and learn new art methods. Student work is exhibited in Moorer Gallery during the semester.

8th Grade Art This semester course is all about teaching students how to see and create as an artist does by paying close attention to the way lines and shapes relate in placement and scale. Each project works to reinforce the students' understanding of the elements of art—line, shape, form, value, texture, space, and color—and challenges them to apply the elements successfully by exploring the principles of design—rhythm, movement, pattern, balance, emphasis, contrast, harmony, and unity. Students find inspiration especially within nature and works of great artists as they experiment with a wide variety of media. Student work is exhibited in Moorer Gallery during the semester.

6th Grade Chorus The Chorus Elective is designed to give the students the opportunity to sing a variety of types of music, work on vocal technique, and explore musical literacy, building basic musicianship skills in an engaging atmosphere. Students will learn music notation, the solfege system of sight singing, and beginning harmonization. The course is designed to give the student a taste of the choral experience in the 7th-12th grades.

7th Grade Chorus This class is a semester long course offered in the spring semester. It is designed to give the students the opportunity to sing a variety of types of music, work on vocal technique and develop sight singing skills. It is also designed to help build basic musicianship skills in an engaging atmosphere. Students will continue learning music notation, the solfege system of sight singing, and 2-3 part harmonization. Students will have an opportunity to perform with the high school students in the Spring Concert.

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6th Grade Drama Class The sixth grade student enrolled in the Drama Exploratory Class will learn the dramatic process by producing, designing, and acting in a class play. Beyond developing performance skills and an understanding of the production process, the experience provides an opportunity to hone leadership and team-building skills through collaboration.

7th Grade Drama The seventh grade student enrolled in the Drama Class will learn the dramatic process by producing, designing, and acting in a class play. Seventh grade productions are based on works of classic literature, which engages the student in an exploration of the historical setting as well as the customs of the period. Beyond developing performance skills and an understanding of the production process, the experience provides an opportunity to hone leadership and team-building skills through collaboration.

8th Grade Drama The eighth grade student enrolled in the Drama Class will learn the dramatic process by producing, designing, and acting in a class play. Eighth grade productions are based on works of classic literature, which engages the student in an exploration of the historical setting as well as the customs of the period. Beyond

developing performance skills and an understanding of the production process, the experience provides an opportunity to hone leadership and team-building skills through collaboration.

8th Grade Debate The eighth grade debate student will survey debate process by exploring National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) events. Through research, topic analysis, and event practice the student will improve academic, communication, and critical thinking skills. To satisfy the competitive nature and increase rigor, the student is invited to participate in intramural tournaments specifically designed for middle school debaters.

6TH Grade Exploratory Band This class is designed to expose the students to the world of instrumental music. Activities include reading and understanding of different styles of music and developing the ability to instrumentally communicate the intent of the composers. In this hands-on class, the students are given the opportunity to touch, hold, and play a variety of instruments. They make music as a group with individually chosen instruments to sample. The students will perform a few musical pieces on their chosen instruments at the end of the quarter for their parents.

After School Beginner Band (Grades 6-8) This course is for students with little or no playing experience. Students will learn basic note reading, phrasing, dynamics, and ensemble playing. Students will be allowed to practice using various instruments in an effort to find the “right fit”. These students will perform at two concerts a year, and they will have the opportunity to perform at various other school functions. This class meets after school once a week.

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Intermediate Band (Grades 7 & 8) This class is a continuation of the Beginner Band where the students are afforded opportunities to improve and hone their playing and performance skills. Instruction

includes the reading and understanding of music, the different styles of music, and the ability to instrumentally communicate the intent of the composers. These students will perform at two concerts a year, and they will have the opportunity to perform at various other school functions.

8th Grade Advanced Band The members of the 8th Grade Band are members in the Advanced Band, but they can be at any ability level and will receive the same instruction and opportunities as all the other members according to their playing ability and potential. Instruction will include reading and understanding the different styles of music and developing the ability to instrumentally communicate the intent of the composers. This ensemble performs at many school and community functions, District events, and State events. Students in the Advanced Band are required to be in the Marching Band. The Marching Band performs at all of the school's football games including State Playoffs and the State Championship Game. They also perform at some pep rallies and basketball games. In the fall, the Advanced Band also performs as a Concert Band which performs at community and school functions. Spring opportunities include group performance at the State MPA Contest, and individual performances at All-State Band and District Festival. Students participating in the Advance Band are required to attend all of these events as well as Tuesday afternoon rehearsals and Summer Band Camp.

Jazz Band Open to band members in grades 7-12, this group rehearses after school. They perform at two concerts a year, and they will have the opportunity to perform at various other school functions.