

Middle School Curriculum

English

Middle-School English is a sequential program of grammar, composition, vocabulary, reading, literary criticism, oral expression, and research skills. Therefore, each course reviews all concepts and skills from the previous year(s). Students are required to read independently in addition to the assigned literature. The social studies and English curricula are frequently integrated to form interdisciplinary units.

Sixth-Grade English

Sixth-grade composition instruction focuses on the stages of the writing process from prewriting activities through proofing and editing. Students concentrate on sentence structure and the organization of one- to three-paragraph essays in each of the discourse methods. They also express their creativity in poetic and narrative compositions. In their literature studies students read a variety of genres and apply reader response, historical, cultural, and formalistic criticism. Sixth graders will learn and practice several methods of oral communication, such as class discussion, oral presentation, and small-group conversations. Students research using prescribed methods of note taking and bibliography creation and practice paraphrasing and summarizing. They distinguish fact from opinion and relevant from irrelevant information. They learn outlining in the production of a two- to four-page research paper.

Seventh-Grade English

Composition instruction in the seventh grade continues to

explore the writing process with focus on organizing techniques and leading to the creation of the three-paragraph essay. Students write in a variety of styles, including such creative forms as journaling, poetry, and letter writing. Seventh graders read many different genres of literature and use a variety of critical methods of evaluating texts. Full-class and small-group discussions and individual and dramatic presentations are among the ways students will practice oral expression. As they create a three- to five-page documented paper, students research in a variety of print and electronic sources, differentiate between logical and emotional appeals, and present outlines using more sophisticated subdivision.

Eighth-Grade English

Students in the eighth grade practice all elements of the writing process to compose in many varying styles, including poetry and reader's response. They learn to create an effective thesis and concentrate on the structure of the five-paragraph essay. As they read in a variety of genres, they analyze texts using such methods as biographical/historical and moral/philosophical criticism. Students learn to recognize faulty generalizations and stereotypes. They compose a three- to five-page documented paper with a refined focus, using a formal outline.

Social Studies

Sixth-Grade Social Studies

The sixth-grade social studies curriculum focuses on the cultural geography of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Each regional unit will help students develop geography skills such as map interpretation and applying the five themes of geography to the elements of

culture. Students will gain a broad-based understanding of key historical figures, events, and cultural characteristics in these regions. Critical thinking, research, writing, and oral presentation skills will also be emphasized in class activities and projects. Social studies themes and cultural studies are often integrated into interdisciplinary units with the English department.

Seventh-Grade Social Studies

The seventh-grade social studies curriculum builds upon students' cultural literacy and geography skills learned in the previous year. Critical reasoning, research, writing, and oral presentation skills will be emphasized through class activities and projects. This course features a broad-based study of the history and cultural geography of Latin America, Europe, and Russia. All units accentuate the role of geography and its influence on history and culture. Current events are an integral part of weekly class activities.

Eighth-Grade Social Studies

The eighth-grade social studies curriculum is designed to help students develop a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the history of the United States from the pre-colonial era to the Civil War era. This multi-disciplinary course highlights the nation's historical, political, cultural, economic, and institutional development. An in-depth study of the Constitution along with the causes of the Civil War and its effects on United States history will be emphasized through projects, debates, and historical analysis. The course culminates with a five-page United States Civil War research paper in coordination with the eighth-grade English course.

Mathematics

Placement in math courses is determined by test scores, previous placement and performance, and teacher recommendations.

Math 1

Math 1 assists students in the sixth grade to develop the necessary skills for success in subsequent math classes. Students work on basic arithmetic skills, as well as mathematical concepts including algebraic equations, basic geometry, graphing, estimating, and problem solving strategies.

Math 2

Math 2 helps students to develop the skills necessary to prepare for a successful intensive course in pre-algebra or the first year of algebra. Topics covered include basic arithmetic functions, problem solving, estimating, rounding, graphs, statistics, algebraic equations, and geometry.

Pre-Algebra

This course is designed to prepare students for their first year of high school algebra. The units of study review, but in greater depth, many of the same topics students have practiced in previous classes. Both review and new topics with an emphasis on their relation to algebra are part of this course. Integers, rational numbers, variables, number theory, and equation solving are among the topics covered.

Accelerated Algebra

Algebra I is the first building block in the study of higher-level mathematics. This course is designed for students who have a firm grasp of mathematical concepts and a high degree of competency in arithmetic and is

a rigorous approach to first year algebraic concepts.

Accelerated Geometry

This geometry course involves the study of measurements, properties, and relationships of points, lines, angles, surfaces, and solids using deductive and inductive reasoning. Students develop an understanding of the nuances of mathematical proof and the relationship of mathematics and the physical world.

Science

The middle-school science curriculum employs the Science Plus program, an integrated approach to science education. It is activity, and inquiry-based, hands-on and minds-on. Activities are designed to challenge the students' higher-order thinking skills while introducing them to realistic methods of science. With its holistic approach, the specific disciplines of physics, chemistry, biology, and earth science are incorporated into science as a way to view and make sense of the world. Students are trained in safe laboratory procedures and proper use of laboratory equipment.

Sixth-Grade Science

Major topics included in the sixth-grade year include science and technology, patterns of living things, microorganisms, matter, and chemical changes.

Seventh-Grade Science

The seventh-grade course covers such units of study as interactions and diversity of living things, solutions and solvents, force and motion, structure and design, earth science, and astronomy.

Eighth-Grade Science

In the eighth-grade students study life processes, machines, work

and energy, oceans and climate, light, particles, and the continuity of life.

Foreign Language

Keith School offers three foreign languages: French, Latin, and Spanish.

Sixth-Grade French

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the vocabulary and grammar needed to express themselves in everyday situations, to understand and make themselves understood, and to ask and answer questions. It also introduces students to the francophonic world, its culture, history, geography, and customs.

French I-A

French I-A is designed for those seventh-grade students who have high achievement in English and who have shown good potential for learning a foreign language. The course work is equivalent of one semester of high school French I and carries the same credit value. French I-A is an introduction to the fundamentals of the French language in terms of vocabulary, grammar and structures, and also is an introduction to the French and francophonic culture, history, geography and customs.

French I-B

French I-B is a course for eighth-grade students who have successfully completed French I-A. It covers the second-semester material of the high school French I course.

Introduction to Latin

This introductory course enables sixth-grade students to learn about ancient Roman family life and culture, mythology, Latin-based etymologies in English, and some basic Latin vocabulary and grammar. Students translate from Latin into English many stories about a typical Roman family's

meals, entertainment, education, city and travel.

Latin I-A

Latin I-A is designed for those seventh graders who have high achievement in English and who have shown good potential for learning a foreign language. The course work is the equivalent of one semester of high-school Latin I and carries the same credit value. The course is an introduction to the fundamentals of Latin grammar and the workings of the language. Study of Greek and Roman mythology is an integral part of the course, as are selected topics of Roman history and civilization.

Latin I-B

Latin I-B continues the study of basic grammar and vocabulary begun in Latin I-A. After a thorough review of material covered in seventh grade, this course concentrates on additional vocabulary, grammar, and translation. Students also study history, mythology and the legacy of Latin in English.

Sixth-grade Spanish

The goal of sixth-grade Spanish is to familiarize students with the vocabulary and phrases necessary to express themselves in everyday situations, to understand basic conversational statements, and to ask and answer simple questions. It also introduces students to the Spanish-speaking world, its culture, customs, history, and geography.

Spanish I-A

Spanish I-A is for those seventh-grade students who have high achievement in English and a good potential for learning a foreign language. This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of the Spanish language: its vocabulary, grammar, and basic verbs.

Students will also learn about the culture, customs, and geography of Spanish-speaking countries. The coursework is equivalent to one semester of high-school Spanish and carries the same credit value.

Spanish I-B

Spanish I-B is a course for eighth-grade students who have successfully completed Spanish I-A. It covers the second-semester of the high-school Spanish I. It begins with a review of concepts covered in I-A and continues with the acquisition of basic vocabulary, conversational skills, grammar, and verbs. Students continue to increase their knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries and their culture, customs, geography, and history. Students can enter Spanish II upon completion of the course with a grade of C or better.

Music

Middle School Chorus

Middle School Chorus is a choral group of mixed voices singing one-, two-, three-, and four-part choral music in a variety of styles and from various historical time periods. Students develop skills of good vocal production, sight-reading, and collaborative work through the study of a varied repertoire.

Beginning Band

The class is designed to give sixth graders an opportunity to learn to play a band instrument through formal class instruction.

Intermediate Band

The intermediate-level band course is for seventh and eighth graders who have completed Beginning Band or the equivalent. In addition to further study of music reading, musical concepts, and instrumental techniques, the course offers expanded performance opportunities.

Middle School Ensemble

Middle School Ensemble is a technique and performance class for those desiring to play stringed instruments. The instructor places students in levels after an assessment. Students will learn the techniques of the specific instrument, as well as music reading and various music concepts.

Piano Class

Piano Class is open to students from 6th -12th grades. It is designed for beginning pianists who have had no previous piano instruction. The focus in the class is to introduce students to the skills and techniques necessary to play basic piano repertoire. Note reading, rhythm, dynamics, expressive terms and playing techniques are covered topics.

Art

All middle school art classes employ the conceptual approach of art while exploring the elements and principles of design. The courses also include history of art and art appreciation.

Sixth-Grade Art

Sixth-grade art includes drawing, painting, printmaking, fibers, three-dimensional design, ceramics, and mixed media approaches to creative expression.

Seventh-Grade Art

Drawing, painting, design, graphics, printmaking, fibers, three-dimensional design, and mixed media approaches to creative expression comprise the content of this course.

Eighth-Grade Art

Drawing with various media including pastels and scratchboard, ceramics, additive sculpture, batik, and mixed media approaches to creative expression

are the features of the eighth-grade course.

Theater

Drama 6

The course is a survey that introduces basic theater terminology, concentration, cooperation, trust, sensory exploration, communication, emotions, storytelling, creating a character, writing and play production. The students will rehearse their class play during class and for one to two weeks after school. The play will be performed second semester.

Drama 7

The seventh-grade drama course builds on knowledge attained in Drama 6. Students will explore acting through improvisation, writing, theater exercises, and more in-depth monologues and scenes. The students will rehearse their class play during class and for one to two weeks after school. The play will be performed second semester.

Drama 8

The eighth-grade drama course builds on knowledge attained in Drama 7. Students will continue to work together to create theater pieces using improvisation, literature, characterization and student writing. The students will rehearse their class play during class and for one to two weeks after school. The play will be performed second semester.

Physical Education and Health

The middle-school physical education courses expose students to a variety of activities including individual, dual, and team sports. The courses stress active participation, skill

development, and cognitive understanding. Through the versatility of the physical education program students learn the importance of developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

These courses also seek to identify health-related issues that the middle-level student may encounter. Topics covered include cardiovascular and muscular endurance, nutrition, and health issues in the United States.

Computer Education

Laptop Computers: Anytime, Anywhere Learning Program

As part of the Anytime, Anywhere Learning Program, each student in grades 6-12 must have a laptop for daily school use. Computers may be purchased or leased through the Technology Division of the school. Sixth-grade students are given direct instruction in computer applications. Older students new to Keith will be evaluated for their computer skills, and an individualized plan will be developed if needed.

Computer Applications

Students in the sixth grade will become familiar with their laptops and the bundled programs which are installed or are available on the network. Students learn a variety of terms and concepts involving technology and the school setting. They also improve their keyboarding, research, and presentation skills.

Additional Programs

Learning Resources

Learning Resources is provided for students with identified learning differences. The primary goal is to provide remediation and coaching for students who need

skill building. Testing may be required to determine achievement levels.

Advisory Groups

Each student in grades 6-12 is assigned an advisor who will meet with the advisory group each morning during the homeroom time slot. Advisors will also meet with students and their families as the need arises. The advisor acts as a home-school liaison to review grades and to plan the academic program. In the Middle School, the advisor also accompanies the advising group to service learning projects.

Leadership Forum

Leadership Forums are held quarterly and address issues important to adolescents. The usual forum is a speaker, followed by discussion in advisory groups. Values, ethics, health, and character development are among the major concepts covered in these forums.

Service Learning

The goals of both the Service Learning Program and the 90-hour service requirement are to appreciate the diversity of the global community, to accept responsibility for the development of that community, to share the resources and talents of the Keith student body, to acquire new skills as volunteers, and to develop character by providing much-needed services to those in need. Advisory groups rotate to different venues each time, providing students with a variety of experiences. The goal of this variety is to help students appreciate the diversity of need in the community and to help them make informed choices as they plan their involvement in meeting the 90-hour service requirement for graduation.

This curriculum guide is subject to change as Keith School seeks continually to improve its academic program.

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