

HUMANITIES *Students use analytical and critical thinking skills to explore history, geography, social condition, and literature conjunctly to translate their knowledge into writing, presentations, or dramatizations. Social Studies topics reflect the class trip goals and objectives.*



6 Theme: "Home" as a Point of Entry Into Social Studies Topics

Literature about homes will serve as an entry point into examining larger social studies topics such as Slavery, Reparations, Affirmative Action, Native American Reservations and Relocation, Migrant Workers, Jim Crow Era, Japanese Internment Camps, Civil Rights, Immigration, and the impact of Public Housing Projects and Gentrification on communities. Legislation having to do with homes such as the Fair Housing and Voting Rights Acts, Gerrymandering, and Neighborhood Covenants will also be explored. We will critically examine some of the cultural, social, and political impact of migrations to and within America. Students will examine the many fragile, permeable, and shifting notions that inform the communities and identities in diasporic populations.

Essential Questions

What defines home and community? At what point do our homes or communities become shackles and not anchors? Do we define our homes and communities or do they define us? What cultural, social, and political forces affect people's relationships to their homes?

Skills, Activities, and Objectives

Students will analyze the purposes, crafts, and styles of many writers; they will learn literary terms that will enable them to be successful when writing such analyses. Most units are taught with an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating aspects of history, geography, economics, civics, psychology, cultural studies, and contemporary issues. Other course components include: debates, simulations, and skits. Students will learn to think critically about media messages, enabling them to better recognize, analyze, and evaluate the hidden agendas in what they watch and read. An overriding objective is that the students further develop empathy for the opinions of others, value citizenship in a democracy, respect diversity, and understand ways to promote social justice.

A Media Literacy unit focuses on our democratic election process where students learn to identify political spin and propaganda, and to think critically about media messages, enabling them to better recognize, analyze and evaluate the hidden agendas in what they watch and read.

7 The year opens with an exploration of story and structure which leads us into Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey. Next we explore how figurative language plays into story creation through poetry analysis. Some poets include: Marge Piercy, Billy Collins, Yehuda Amichai, Maya Angelou, Sarah Kay, and many many more. From there we continue to analyze story through the perspective of what author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie describes as 'the dangers of a single story.'

Throughout the year, students interweave three distinct strands; vocabulary, writing through the 6-trait system and linguistics ranging from deep sentence diagraming to language puzzles.

Geography and Geology of the Pacific Northwest, History of US National Parks, Natural Regions of the West, the History of September 11, 2001 and Modern Terrorism, Media Literary, the history of race relations in the US, modern issues of social justice, a dedicated unit related to the class extended field trip, and current events. Field destinations are national and change from year to year. Lessons are based on the trip's itinerary.

8 Students read *The Alchemist*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Weep, Not Child*; and *A Ticket to Childhood*. Students explore issues such as: how language persuades, Aristotelian rhetoric, satire, allegory, metaphor, Elizabethan tragedy, and issues of adolescence. Students write a number of essays and creative pieces throughout the year.

North American Archaeology and Geography, Viking Exploration of North America, Norse Mythology, Legacy of Columbus, Spanish Conquest of the Americas, Clash of Cultures: Maya, Aztec, and Inca, Historical Geography for all units, a dedicated unit related to the class extended field trip, and current events. Field destinations are international and change from year to year. Lessons are based on the trip's itinerary.



MATHEMATICS *Highlighting quantitative, spatial, and reasoning skills, students discover and represent concepts in a variety of ways including: modeling, interpreting data, and problem-solving. Students complete pre-algebra, algebra I and geometry. In 9th grade, students most commonly are placed into Algebra II.*

6 Bases and Exponents
Finance Park®
Number Systems
Ratios & Proportionality
Area & Angles
Volume & Surface Area

7 Linear Relationships
Functions
Exponential Expressions
Probability
Quadratic Equations

8 Quadratic Equations
Lines and Angles
Triangles and Trig
Quadrilaterals and Polygons
Circles and Spheres

SCIENCE *"How do you know what you know?" Scientific inquiry encourages students to explore, question, design, analyze, and synthesize as they work to construct meaning from various lab activities.*

6 Astronomy by Sight
Scale Solar System
Properties of Matter
Cell Structure and Function
Cell Division
Light and Color
Botany

7 Atomic Structure and Electricity
LED Flashlights
Mendelian Genetics
Weather
Sights and Sounds
DNA Forensics

8 Motion, Force and Earthquakes
Landslides
Geology, Ecosystem, and Biodiversity of Vietnam in support of the 8th grade trip

ENGINEERING EVENT The annual Engineering Event focuses on a theme from current events through tasks involving potential kinetic energy, wheel alignment, friction in systems, angular movement, and gear ratio. For example, during the Beijing-based Olympics, the theme was "Inventions of China" to inspire student-designed suspension bridges, umbrellas, and wheel-barrows. Another theme centered on the expansion of wind power for energy in which students produced and tested if their classroom-built dynamo-pinwheel powered an LED.

ADVISORY & SEL SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING Our daily morning advisory time is dedicated to help students become more adept at organizational strategies, developing both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and to monitor personal growth both academic and social. The advisory groups are mixed grade level, which gives the children an opportunity to share a wide range of experiences. They will gain the sense of being part of a broader academic and social community. Such an emphasis adds to a sense of mutual respect and understanding within the middle school years.

TRIPS & OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES In middle school, the class trips are designed to be deeply embedded into the curriculum and have lasting significance for the children beyond the doors of SCDS. In sixth grade, the trip is usually at the beginning of the school year to welcome students to middle school and lay the groundwork for their Social and Emotional Learning work. Example of trips: Alaska in connection with the 7th grade study of native people and Spain in connection with the 8th grade study of Spanish, art, and history.

TECHNOLOGY

While technology is a fully-integrated component in many subject area courses, at SCDS, technology is also a destination class. Students are encouraged to explore, experiment, and create with different technology tools to solve problems, express creativity, and to communicate their message to a target audience.

- 6** Planetary Tour: students create an imaginary resort among the stars using data gathered from science class
- World Tour:** students create a band and run their "world tour" by designing marketing posters and promotional pieces, editing film, managing audio, internet researching to determine concert cities and travel costs, budgeting with spreadsheets
- Digital Citizenship:** copyright, intellectual property, and internet safety
- Timelines:** immigration and "life" of a cell
- Film Trailer:** a 60 second film project in which students learn the basics of using film editing

- 7** Film: Create a 3 minute movie based on a original Spanish script.
- Digital Art:** design a logo, "mangled masterpieces"
- National Parks Brochure:** create an informational brochure (in collaboration with social studies research)
- Digital Citizenship:** cyber-manners

- 8** Photography Primer: Students develop a 'primer' that encompasses the people, technologies, and terminology of photography; trace the history of the camera; and explore the various advancements that make modern photography possible.
- Critical Suite Comparison:** Students compare and contrast the various Office Suites available (Microsoft, Google, Apple) and note the functionality and design differences amongst the products. They develop a critique of each offering based on objective evidence.



SPANISH

- 6** The Middle School Spanish Curriculum is focused on developing fluency. We use the Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling method. In TPRS lessons, we use a mixture of reading and storytelling to help students learn grammatical structures and vocabulary. Students speak and comprehend progressively more complex questions, answers and commands; and also learn about Spanish-speaking societies to develop an appreciation for diverse cultures.

LIBRARY

Students practice expanded catalog search skills, effective internet searches and advanced bibliography competencies and storytelling techniques. Units are correlated with other subject areas like the study of immigration in Humanities.

Students use the library for research in conjunction with projects in several subject areas. Students are introduced to online notecard and outline tools to use for various projects. Other programs available to 7th and 8th graders are Middle School Student Library Advisory Team, Young Reader's Choice Awards, and Summer Reading.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 6** Cooperative activities; goal-setting and fitness tasks; soccer; ultimate frisbee; team handball; basketball; volleyball; badminton; pickleball.
- 7** Cooperative Activities; goal-setting and fitness tasks; soccer; ultimate frisbee; acrobatics/circus arts; indoor rock-climbing; martial arts; badminton; basketball.
- 8** Cooperative activities; goal-setting and fitness tasks; ultimate frisbee; flag football; acrobatics/circus arts; indoor rock-climbing; parkour; rowing.

ATHLETICS

Seattle Country Day School participates in interscholastic sports through the Cascade Middle School League for volleyball, soccer, cross-country, basketball, and track and field. Interscholastic ultimate Frisbee is available through Disc Northwest. Tennis and disc club are also athletic opportunities offered to our students.

LIFE SKILLS

Community-building; pro-social skills; conflict resolution; social responsibility; support systems; self-care; human sexuality; study skills; and health and wellness.

Social/emotional health; bully prevention; study skills; health: body systems, adolescent brain development, nutrition, and sexual health.

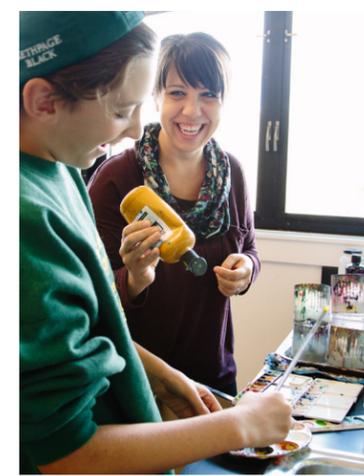
Social/emotional health; bully prevention; preparation for the high school application and transition process both academically and socially; substance abuse prevention; diseases and disorders; nutrition; and sexual health.

HOMEWORK

Seattle Country Day School takes more of a philosophical approach rather than a time driven approach when assigning homework in the middle school. Teachers thoughtfully decide what will be meaningful, intentional, and appropriate given their subject matter and classroom structure.

ART

- 6** The Middle School art program is centered on the development of 21st Century Skills and places emphasis on the process (vs.product) of art making. When students move through their Middle School years, projects evolve from building discipline-based skills to creating conceptualized art. Students are challenged to take risks and apply critical thinking skills when experimenting within a range of mediums and art approaches including; ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture building, collaborative installation, collage, printmaking and more. The arts curriculum also offers opportunities for students to make connections to other content areas, class trips, and personal experiences, with a goal to deepen their understanding of self and others.



MUSIC

- 6** Roots of American popular music; American musical theater; intervals: aural recognition; Grammy Awards project; circle of fifths; voice charts; vocal performance; keyboarding skills; elements of music.
- 7** Inter-related influences of music and society; vocal range; vocal performance; trends in music; musical timeline; conducting; guitar instruction: chords and tablature; folk songs, blues and chord progressions; music genres related to class trip.
- 8** Music of Northwest rock & roll artists; vocal performance; world music; personal music preferences and interviews; music in advertising; songwriting; music activities with kindergarten buddies; cultural music relative to class trip; creation of music playlist with connections to people, emotions, and events; guitar instruction: tablature, chords, folk songs, blues, and chord progressions.



DRAMA, SPEECH, & DEBATE

- 6** The aim of Drama, Speech, and Debate is to engage students in thinking by doing and teach them to persuade with both verbal language and body language. We will learn about the stage and develop presentation skills through acting, reacting, improvising, pantomiming and other theatrical exercises. Memorization techniques and mnemonics are also covered. Performance pieces may be sourced from one-act plays, scenes selected from the Language Arts class curriculum, interpretive pieces, poems, artworks, or a myriad of other sources. Students produce works in each grade: 6th graders perform short scenes for their peers. 7th graders perform a Shakespearean comedy. 8th graders perform a Shakespearean tragedy.

