

SIXTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Sixth graders are the adults of childhood, just beginning to come into a sense of themselves in the larger world. Therefore, our curriculum focuses on cultivating the attitudes and aptitudes needed to become active, compassionate, and clear-thinking community members. We strive to maintain a safe and supportive environment that encourages and enables students to take risks and become independent learners while also developing their competence in necessary skills – organization, notetaking, outlining, studying, computing, writing, and speaking. We also empower students to engage in mindfulness practices as they take on academic and social challenges. We offer students opportunities for solitary thought and for interactive activities in all subject areas, and we attempt to spark their natural curiosity and enthusiasm for the world of ideas.

HUMANITIES

Themes:

- Oppression & Resistance
- Power & Identity

Topics:

- Environmental Justice
- The Evolution of Sports & Protest
- Apartheid, Enslavement & Incarceration
- Relationship of Current Events & History
- Parentage & Privilege
- Embracing our “Otherness”

Skills:

- Close Reading
- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Independent Reading: Book Challenge
- Utilizing the Writing Process
- Presentation Skills

Books typically read:

- [A Long Walk to Water](#) by Linda Sue Park
- [Born a Crime](#) (Young Readers Edition) by Trevor Noah
- [Jefferson's Sons](#) by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
- [Journey to Topaz](#) by Yoshiko Uchida
- [A Girl on Schindler's List](#) by Rena Finder

- Akata Witch by Nnedi Okorafor
- Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Culminating Project: Game Changers Research Project

STEM

Topics:

Math

- Problem Solving Strategies
- Number System
- Expressions & Equations
- Ratios & Proportions
- Geometry
- Statistics & Probability

Science

- Environmental Justice
- Earth Science & Ecosystems
- Celestial Navigation

Skills:

- 5E Method: Engagement, Exploration, Explanation, Elaboration, Evaluation
- Thinking Like a Scientist (i.e. Deep Seeing, Causal Relationships v Complex Causality)
- Discovery & Efficiency
- Communication
- Practice
- Procedural Skills/Fluency
- Conceptual Understanding
- Application

Key Projects:

- Modified Engineering Challenges (i.e. Lava Viscosity and Earthquake Structures)
- Design Projects (i.e. Bad Cookie Ratios and Game of Life Financial Fridays)
- Explorations and Labs (EcoXPT, Predator and Prey Wet Lab)

COMMUNITY, HEALTH, AND WELLNESS

Driving Questions:

- What does a community need to feel safe?
- How do we know if a relationship is good for us?
- How does understanding others help us build relationships?
- How does our “best self” influence our relationships?
- How can conflict strengthen our relationships?
- What is going on in my body?
- How do I express myself and interact with others?

WORLD LANGUAGE

We recognize that the grammar of Romance Languages uses a binary gender system. While we strive to maintain the integrity of the history and culture of these languages, we also seek to create inclusive learning environments for all students.

FRENCH

This is the first year of a three-year program. The goal is to build confidence and comfort in a new language by introducing the students to fundamental French grammar, vocabulary and various aspects of Francophone culture. The emphasis in 6th grade is on how to best learn a language. Students practice a variety of study methods, including online note cards, four-column notes, written exercises, and internet-based games and activities, to hone their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. The class is conducted primarily in French. Using a wide range of teaching techniques and materials, such as TPR (Total Physical Response), skits, poems, short readings, games, videos and popular music, 6th graders complete the first three chapters of the text, *Bien Dit!*. In class, new topics and vocabulary are taught with a thematic approach – providing the students with a context in which to learn French language and culture. Assessments vary and are in the form of written and oral chapter tests, quizzes, homework, class participation or projects relating to thematic vocabulary. The year ends with a cultural unit about the province of Québec.

Themes: Introductions, activities and hobbies, family

Vocabulary: Greetings, introductions, numbers 0-200, classroom objects and expressions, activities and hobbies, physical descriptions and personality traits, family

Structures: Subject pronouns, present tense of regular ‘-er’ and ‘-re’ verbs, **avoir** and **être**, the negative, indefinite, definite and possessive articles, yes/no questions, adjective agreement, conjunctions

SPANISH

This is the first year of a three-year program. The goal is to have students feel comfortable and successful while learning a new language. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of Spanish grammar, vocabulary and many aspects of Hispanic culture. The emphasis in 6th grade is on how to best learn a language. Students practice a variety of study methods, including online note cards, four-column notes, written exercises, and web-based games and activities. These methods help students improve their writing, speaking, and listening skills. The class is conducted primarily in Spanish. Using a wide range of teaching techniques and materials, such as TPR (Total Physical Response), TPRS (Teaching Proficient through Reading and Storytelling), CI (Comprehensible Input), skits, poems, chapter stories, games, videos and songs. 6th graders complete the first three chapters of the text, ¡Avancemos!. In class, new

topics and vocabulary are taught with a thematic approach. Assessments are in the form of written and oral chapter tests, quizzes, homework, class participation and projects relating to thematic vocabulary. In the spring, focus is on Spain and its capital Madrid.

Themes: Introductions, “who am I”, school, family

Vocabulary: Greetings, introductions, weather, numbers 0-1000, classroom objects and expressions, activities and hobbies, physical descriptions and personality traits, family, school subjects and supplies, days of the week, months of the year, colors.

Structures: Subject pronouns, present tense of regular ‘-ar’, ‘-er’ and ‘-ir’ verbs, **ser, estar, tener, hacer, gustar,** and **ir**, the negative, indefinite, definite and possessive articles, yes/no questions, questions with question words, adjective agreement, subject/ verb agreement.

ART

The sixth grade art program is a sequential curriculum integrating studio work with major classroom themes.

Shapes Marks and Lines

- Exploring mark making in mono-prints
- Drawing animals in a setting
- Capturing observed features in natural objects through drawing, painting and collage activities

Color

- Matching observed colors in a large-scale sculpture
- Sequencing colors in a block printing project
- Exploring color and mood in a landscape painting
- Capturing color values in observed subject matter

Texture and Pattern

- Exploring texture and pattern in a mono-print process
- Carving into a block in a print-making process

3-D Form

- Building large-scale representations of objects (proportion and scale)

MUSIC

In sixth grade, students expand skills of creative musical participation through singing, playing instruments, and composition. Students explore sound and composition through the use of both original and “junk” instruments. They learn about musical theater, developing their presence and confidence onstage. They continue to practice basic notation and reading skills, and learn about the elements of music. They also use technology to create musical compositions.

Singing

- Sing independently with accurate pitch
- Sing in unison, duet and three part harmony

- Develop full, relaxed vocal quality
- Develop blended class sound

Instrumental

- Play xylophones in two and three parts from notation and by ear
- Play and compose melodies on various instruments
- Play unique, original instruments and “junk” instruments

Listening

- Listen to, and discuss components of selected compositions, pitch, duration, volume, timbre, texture, form, style

Composition--Individual and Small Group Projects

- Create original compositions with percussion and other instruments
- Create original compositions using Soundtrap, an online music program

Music Theory

- Rhythmic theory to include quarter, eighth, sixteenth and half note values, and rests
- Improvising patterns up to 16 beats using discussed rhythmic and melodic and harmonic elements

TECHNOLOGY

The technology program at CRS starts with the why – why should we teach technology at all? The answer is we don't teach “technology;” we teach self-reflection, empathy, and problem solving (know themselves, understand others, and shape the future). The medium we work within to accomplish this is digital tools, and we teach students both existing skills and how to learn new technology on their own. While the process of learning new tools is inherently valuable (growth mindset, exploration, logic, sequential thinking, curiosity), ultimately we teach technology because of the opportunities it can provide for students to improve themselves and make a positive impact on the world.

We approach this through focusing on four main curricular categories that spiral throughout all grades (PreK - 8):

- Engineering & Design Thinking
- Multimedia Production
- Programming & Robotics
- Digital Citizenship

In the sixth grade, we focus on taking greater personal responsibility for learning and applying new skills, preparing for the transition to middle school. There is a greater focus on digital citizenship and focus on long term projects that require integrating multiple skills and group collaboration. Examples include coding and electrical wiring for the interactive media project “Evoking Autumn”, using digital tools for classwork and homework workflows, video and audio editing clips for world language weather reports, digital photography editing and manipulation techniques, graphic design, and animated superhero trope take-downs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education program is developmental and skill-based. The program includes cooperative games, standard games, such as capture the flag and ultimate Frisbee, and team sports including field hockey, soccer and basketball. Students practice motor and sports skills throughout these activities. Students develop sports skills through movement exploration, specific skill work and playing games.

Skills

- Locomotor Movements: Walk, Run, Hop, Slide, Jump, Crawl, Roll
- Non-Locomotor Movements: Swing, Bend, Stretch, Twist, Turn, Dodge, Push, Pull
- Sports Skills: Throw, Dribble, Kick, Bat, Catch, Shoot (basketball), Volley

Activities

Soccer, Softball / Baseball, Field Hockey, Frisbee, Kickball, Basketball, Volleyball, Lacrosse, Team Handball, Track and Field, Tennis, Flag Football, Fitness Exercises, Relays, Cooperative Games, Group Challenges, Obstacle Courses, Lifetime Fitness Activities

LIBRARY

Sixth grade students are familiar with the library, its facilities, and how to make use of them. They continue to use the library as a resource for reading for pleasure and information, and to a greater extent, for developing skills in inquiry and research. In the fall, students are introduced to the Young Adult genre through a current, age-appropriate read-aloud book that challenges them to explore different cultures and identities, analyze various perspectives, and reflect on their own personal reading choices. As the year progresses, sixth graders develop higher level inquiry skills by reading deeply for information, point of view, and bias; and practice their digital research skills using our library research database. Students are exposed to primary sources such as newspaper articles, videos, and audio related to multiple historical events, honing the skills they will need to become sophisticated consumers of news and information.

Activities

- Review library skills
- Refresh familiarity with the computer catalog as a reader's tool
- Identify and read various genres of literature
- Identify, evaluate, and select appropriate sources of information, both digital and print
- Organize and synthesize research information for presentation
- Develop media literacy for informed decision making

ELECTIVES PROGRAM

Sixth grade students, joined by 7th and 8th graders, choose an elective class. Electives are held each Friday afternoon and give students the opportunity to learn more about a particular area of interest. Teachers offer a variety of classes including cooking, dark room photography, ceramics, volleyball, sewing, and jewelry making. Each term a list of courses is presented to the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students, who then choose a topic to explore.

SPORTS (Interscholastic Competition)

The school offers a program of interscholastic competition for students in grades 6-8. Students are encouraged to participate in at least one of the three seasons per year. Offerings include: fall (soccer, field hockey, cross-country); winter (basketball); spring (lacrosse, tennis for grades 7 & 8, track and field).

Children work with others in their age group under the supervision of a coach. They learn strategies, positions on the field, skills specific to the sport, and skills to develop effective teamwork. The Charles River School Sports Program encourages group cooperation in a competitive setting, as each team plays games with neighboring teams of similar age and ability.