



SIXTH GRADE CURRICULUM

Note for 2022-2023: As Grade 6 teachers Chris and Monica continue to develop the sixth-grade curriculum, more information will be added and we will share a more detailed version of this curriculum later in the year.

Our goal is for every student to develop an individual as well as a collective “Sixth Sense.” Our big idea for the year is intended to tie together not only four subject domains—math to English, history to science, etc.—but also to validate each student’s unique story, social and emotional development, and academic areas of strength. The sixth grade year offers an opportunity to truly take learning across disciplines, breaking the lines sometimes drawn around subject areas.

A defining element of 6th grade is an increase in academic rigor. Students should expect to be challenged by the content with which we engage and the learning tasks we execute. The skills we will practice and apply throughout the year will become the essential tools of 7th and 8th grade and beyond. To sharpen these skills and harness the intellectual sophistication burgeoning within the mind of each student, kids will be presented with tasks that are “desirably difficult.” Leaning into challenging work will allow each student to make the most of the experience. Our job, collectively, is to foster a growth mindset within them.

HUMANITIES

Themes:

- Power, “us and them,” the relativity of justice, “the ladder of equality,” dualities of human nature

Topics:

- Who writes our history?
 - Case Study: Columbus and the myth of the “savage”
- Whose rights does a society choose to protect and respect? Why?
 - Case Study: Civil rights around the globe, yesterday and today
- Where does “revolution” start? How? Why?
 - Era Study: The Age of Enlightenment and the Seeds of Revolution
- *Where* are we?! Essential geography
- Short stories, novel study, and poetry analysis

Skills:

- Writing: (1) Developing the writing process and applying grammatical conventions and structures; (2) Argumentation: claim-based writing with evidence and analysis; (3) Creative and descriptive writing.
- Reading: Close reading and text annotation; summarizing main ideas; evidence collection and selection; inference; lensing (reading from different perspectives)
- Speaking and Listening: (1) Small group discussions; (2) public speaking with a practiced purpose
- Higher-order, problem-based thinking; understanding ambiguity
- Historical sourcing

Books

- Born a Crime (Young Readers Edition) by Trevor Noah
- Other texts to be announced

STEM

The world around us will direct our STEM studies this year, but our focus will not be limited to what we can easily observe with our five senses. We will look at the very small, the very large, the too slow and the strikingly complex, using data as our guide. We will speak the language of mathematics, as we make sense of the world and discover ways to share our understanding with others. Developing a “Sixth Sense” in STEM will ask students to look beyond the simple facts and algorithms to engage with the beauty of their world and to find power in their ability to understand it.

Essential Questions

- How can we better understand our world through inquiry?
- What are the stories in numbers?
- What are the tools that allow us to “see” our world in all of its complexity?

Science Topics

- Sensory perception (neurobiology)
- Covid-19 Pandemic (pathogens, immunity, etc.)
- Science Underlying Global Climate Change (combustion, density, melting/freezing, heat, etc.)
- Environmental Justice

Math topics

- Data analysis/graphs and statistical tools
- Manipulating Decimals
- Manipulating Fractions
- Percentages

Skills

- Measuring
- Problem-solving
- Reading text and visual information
- Designing experiments

- Collecting data
- Analyzing data; using numbers and words to explain our understanding of the world

COMMUNITY, HEALTH & WELLNESS

Essential Questions

- What does a community need to feel safe? How can we each contribute to that?
- What are the elements of a healthy relationship
- What are the elements of a healthy identity?
- How do bodies and brains change as they mature?
- What are the tools for healthy self-regulation and positive energy

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 Proficiency 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 play the ukulele, learning to read chord charts and tab. They also use technology to create musical compositions.

Singing

- Sing independently with accurate pitch
- Sing in unison and two part harmony
- Develop full, relaxed vocal quality
- Develop blended class sound

Instrumental

- Play ukulele
- 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, and flag football); winter (basketball and fitness club); spring (lacrosse, tennis for grades 7 & 8, track and field, and ultimate Frisbee). 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.