

Successful Strategies for Learning at Home

The following suggestions, written by experienced teachers of grades 6 to 8, allow your children to make a smooth transition into middle/junior high school and let them continue to be successful for the duration of their secondary school careers. The activities and advice are designed to help your children learn how they are progressing academically and socially and to assist you in having your children take charge of their own schoolwork.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Read

- Set a daily time up for your child to have uninterrupted reading time (20 to 30 minutes daily).
- Allow your child to select appropriate books from the public library or bookstore.
- Share the books that you love with your child.
- Choose appropriate books for your child's ability.
- Establish a set family reading time.
- Read aloud to your child.
- Have your child read to you and discuss main ideas from the reading.
- Read the novels your child is required to read for class so that you can both discuss them.
- Let your child see you read.
- Have your child read regularly to get information from newspapers, magazines, reference books, and online sources.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Write

- Encourage your child to keep a journal of personal thoughts.
- Encourage your child to write thank you notes for gifts and to people who have been helpful.
- Write letters to your child so that your child will respond in writing to you.
- Have your child write about what he or she has read.
- Have your child write grocery lists or to-do lists.
- Give your child a special gift to encourage writing, such as a nice pen, colorful or decorated writing paper, a notebook, or a journal.
- For some writing tasks, have your child revise his or her writing to improve the work. Ask your child what he or she can do to make the writing more effective.
- Encourage your child to write letters for different purposes, such as to request information or to share an opinion.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Think

- Assign a task and ask your child to create the process for the solution.
- Ask your child open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Ask your child to express his or her opinion on a relevant issue.
- Discuss current events, movies, and music and have your child apply these issues to daily life.
- Don't answer all of your child's questions. Answer their question with a question to encourage their thinking at a higher level.
- Encourage problem solving through games and riddles.
- Question your children regularly regarding how they feel and think about everyday happenings. Afterwards, have them elaborate about these issues.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Be Organized

- Establish a simple schedule for your child to follow at home.
- Encourage conversation about your child's day.
- Have your child write assignments for each class in an agenda notebook and check this notebook regularly.
- Establish a place at home for child to do homework and keep supplies.
- Clean out and organize the backpack with your child once a week.
- Label all folders, binders, and other supplies with the subject area and your child's name.
- Get materials and assignments ready the night before school.
- Model organization for your child at home.
- Provide a structural system for increasing responsibility and accountability.
- Recognize and reward good habits.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Do Homework

- Establish a "homework first" policy.
- Establish a specific time and place in your home for your child to do homework.
- Use incentives to motivate your child to complete homework before other activities.
- Ask your child to actually show you the completed work before moving on to other activities and discuss the work with him or her.
- Avoid distractions, such as television and computer games, while doing homework.
- Reward positive independent study.
- Encourage your child to ask you for help.
- Use the Austin ISD Homework Helpline.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Assume Self-Responsibility

- Set short-term goals with rewards for achievement and consequences for non-achievement of these goals.
- Set realistic attainable goals. Start small and grow.
- Establish a “no excuses” policy; accept only results. Don’t give in too easily.
- Model self-responsibility.
- Make a to-do checklist.
- Praise your child for responsible behavior.
- Establish household chores and family responsibilities for each child.
- Don’t do the chores or homework for your child.
- Allow your child to experience both positive and negative consequences.
- Discuss with your child what he or she learned in school each day.
- Ask your child to share his or her written agenda and homework assignments with you each day.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES GRADES 6-8

Overview

The English language learner (ELL) develops English literacy skills while simultaneously gaining content area (mathematics, science, and social studies) knowledge in English. Content area teachers modify the instruction and use a variety of learning strategies to make learning more meaningful and understandable for the ELL.

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered at all campuses in Austin ISD. Content area ESL classes are offered at some campuses where large populations of ELLs are enrolled. Instruction in these classes is provided by teachers who are familiar with ESL strategies and who have an ESL endorsement.

Upon the ELL's enrollment, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee evaluates the ELLs to determine the level of English oral language proficiency—Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. The expectations for ELLs are the same as those for all students. (Please refer to the content-area pages in this guide.) Emphasis is placed on acquiring English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and expanding content-area vocabulary.

All ELLs will:

- Listen and speak actively in a variety of situations.
- Decode and read written English text.
- Use writing as a tool for language acquisition.

The **Beginning** ELL will:

- Distinguish and produce sounds and intonation patterns and begin to eliminate barriers to effective communication.
- Use decoding skills to recognize words in English and recognize common phonemic and structural patterns in English (sound groups/ prefix, root, suffix).
- Write and recognize letters and words in English.

The **Intermediate** ELL will:

- Listen critically to analyze and evaluate a speaker's message.
- Begin to read with fluency and understanding while increasing vocabulary and comprehension.
- Compose original text and respond in authentic language.

The **Advanced** ELL will:

- Share knowledge clearly.
- Read in English with increased fluency and understanding.
- Write and edit in English for a variety of purposes.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Grades 6 to 8

Tips for Parents

Listening and Speaking: The ELL will enrich his/her listening skills by listening to a variety of speakers, including teachers and peers, to gain an increasing level of comprehension and appreciation for newly acquired language. The ELL will enrich his/her speaking ability by speaking for a variety of purposes using developmental vocabulary.

- Ask your child's teachers how his/her instruction is modified.
- Watch an English-language TV program with your child and ask for a translation.
- Listen to an English-language radio program with your child.
- Watch an English-language movie with your child and ask him/her to summarize it.
- Ask your child to compare and contrast both alphabets in sound and print.
- Encourage your child to repeat particular sounds difficult for an ELL (such as b and v, th, ch, sh).
- Encourage your child to play rhyming games with English words.
- Attend story-telling time at the public library near your home.
- Have your child translate for you.
- Monitor your child's English language homework by asking him/her to explain the homework in the family language.
- Ask your child to explain in English the objectives and homework for each class.
- Let your child take care of your correspondence in English.
- Ask your child to share in English his/her favorite recipe.
- Have your child describe an imaginary trip.
- Have your child record a message in English on the telephone answering machine.
- Use a video camera to record family gatherings and have your child narrate the events.
- As the family participates in games, such as Monopoly, Scrabble, Bingo, have your child give the directions in English.
- Use audiotapes to reinforce the development of speaking and listening skills.

Reading: The ELL will read a variety of texts for a variety of purposes with an increasing level of comprehension.

- Help your child identify basic English safety vocabulary and signs, such as *Don't walk, Danger, Do Not Enter, Exit*.
- As you drive or ride with your child, have him/her read signs to you.
- Ask your child to identify content-area vocabulary. For example, select an article and have him identify social studies, science, or math words.
- Listen while your child reads to you from science or social studies textbooks.
- Establish a family silent reading time when all family members read.
- Have your child explain captions of pictures in newspapers.
- Ask your child to summarize key points of newspaper or magazine articles.
- Challenge your child to read books in English to younger family members.

- Obtain a free “Star Card” from the Austin Public Library facility near your home.
- Help your child select appropriate native-language reading materials and literature at the public library so that native-language reading skills continue and transfer to English.
- Have your child read a bus schedule.
- Have your child follow a recipe.
- Have your child follow the instructions for assembling something you bought.

English for Speakers of Other Languages Grades 6 to 8

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Writing: The ELL will write in a variety of forms with increasing accuracy to effectively address a specific purpose and audience.

- Have your child practice writing every day.
- Ask your child to write the alphabet in English and in his/her first language to make comparisons between the two.
- Check your child's ability to write his/her name, address, phone number, and emergency information.
- Have your child copy his/her class schedule, with teachers' names, room numbers, times, and dates and then explain it to you.
- Create with your child a personal survival guide to carry in his/her backpack, including a bus or school schedule, neighborhood information, directions home, and vital phone numbers.
- Have your child translate simple sentences from the first language to English.
- Have your child write a learning journal to share daily.
- Help your child develop a vocabulary book or glossary for each content area class. The native language word could be written in parentheses next to the English word.
- Ask your child to create a story with a math, science, or history theme or topic using drawings or pictures and text.
- Encourage your child to write a letter to a relative describing your neighborhood, a family gathering, or something personal.
- Encourage your child to read and check assignments and papers again before turning them in.
- Assist your child in creating a personal spelling list.
- Show different uses of written language in English or in the family language by collecting samples, such as instructions, letter writing, poetry, menus, posters, and persuasive letters.
- Assist your child with library research.
- Incorporate the use of the telephone, answering machine, video camcorder, or digital camera as learning tools.
- Have your child write about an imaginary or real trip; include a list of the items you must pack, and estimate the costs.
- Encourage your child to write a summary about a family gathering, party, or trip.
- Encourage your child to use a bilingual dictionary as he/she writes in English.
- Encourage your child to use a thesaurus to enhance his/her writing in English.

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Child:

- What are you learning in science (or social studies, mathematics, and English)?
- What homework do you have today in mathematics (or English, social studies, science)?
- Please explain your homework to me.

- What new words did you learn today in social studies (science, mathematics, or English)?
- What don't you understand about mathematics (science, social studies, or English)?
- Who were the characters in the television program we just watched together?
- What was the plot in the movie we just saw?
- Restate the news.
- Where and when did the story you read take place?
- What do you think the author was trying to tell the readers in this story?
- Tell me how you solved that mathematics problem.
- What was the result of the science experiment?

Language Arts Grade 6 page 1

Grade 6 Language Arts TEKS

Overview

In Grade 6, language arts students read a variety of texts that includes fiction, nonfiction, and other informational sources. They understand rich vocabulary and the role of literary devices such as simile, metaphor, theme, and foreshadowing in the books they read. They use multiple sources to prepare research reports. Sixth grade students use strategies to learn and recall important information. Using the writing process, students write regularly and apply grammar, mechanics, and usage skills to produce error-free compositions for a variety of purposes and audiences. They listen to gain information, take notes, and summarize. Sixth grade students learn how language is used to create meaning in media presentations, and evaluate their purposes and effects on audiences.

Listening and Speaking: Students will

- Analyze a speaker's message for content, persuasive technique, and tone.
- Distinguish between a speaker's opinion and provable fact.
- Listen to models of oral reading.
- Identify how language reflects regions and culture.
- Listen in order to learn, take notes, and organize and summarize ideas.
- Listen in order to connect personal experiences.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings such as interviewing, reporting, and requesting and providing information.

Reading: Students will

- Read fluently, regularly and independently a variety of texts and purposes with clear understanding.
- Build an extensive vocabulary through reading and word study.
- Offer observations, make connections, react, speculate, interpret, and raise questions in response to text.

- Use study strategies, including outlines, timelines, graphics, summaries, and paraphrases, to recall important ideas from text.
- Read to increase knowledge of their own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of all cultures.
- Recognize how authors use form and literary techniques to complement the ideas of the text.

Writing: Students will

- Follow the writing process both independently and with others to revise and refine selected drafts.
- Publish for general and specific audiences for a variety of purposes, including persuasion, information, and entertainment.
- Apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and correct spelling to create error-free compositions.
- Evaluate his or her own writing and the writing of others using criteria that is appropriate for each purpose.

Viewing and Representing: Students will

- Describe, interpret, and use visual media to compare ideas and points of view.
- Analyze, critique, evaluate, and contrast the messages found in visual media.
- Produce class newspapers, multimedia reports, and/or short films.

Language Arts Grade 6 page 2

Tips for Parents:

- Read novels, newspapers, and magazines with your child and discuss connections to your child's and your family's everyday life.
- Have family discussions about what your child is learning in school on a daily basis.
- Ask your child questions about his or her writing assignments and research. Have them read some of their written work aloud to you. Offer praise and helpful comments rather than criticism.
- Check daily to see that your child has written down his/her assignments in student agendas, notebooks, calendars, or other assignment books.
- Encourage your child to read books they are interested in and help them locate reading materials on their reading level. (Check with your child's teacher or a librarian for suggestions.)
- Visit the library or bookstores regularly so that your child becomes comfortable searching for materials that interest them.
- Make use of library and retail video resources, and encourage your child to view videos about new topics (science/history/documentaries).
- Ask your child to explain to you how they use the Internet to complete class projects.

- Seek out good sources for recommended reading. For example, The Young Adult Roundtable of the Texas Library Association for Grades 6-9 generates a reading list every year.
- Some titles from lists, that your child may be interested in, include:
 Avi. **Midnight Magic**. Scholastic Press. 1999.
 Creech, Sharon. **Walk Two Moons**. Harpercollins Juvenile Books. 1994.
 Flake, Sharon G. **The Skin I'm In**. Hyperion. 1998.
 Lowry, Lois. **Gathering Blue**. Houghton Mifflin. 2000.
 Miller, Marvin. **You be the Jury** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
 Miller, Marvin. **You Be the Detective** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
 Peck, Richard. **Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats**. NY DELL/Laurel. 1995.
 Rowling, J. K. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**. Arthur A. Levine Books. 1998.
 Sacher, Louis. **Holes**. Frances Foster Books, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1998.
 Soto, Gary. **Taking Sides**. Harcourt Brace. 1991.
 Spinelli, Jerry. **Stargirl**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Grade 6 Exploratory Language/Language Discovery

Language Other Than English (LOTE) Grade 6 1

Overview

In middle school, this is a single semester, non-high school credit, elective course in which students are introduced to the world of languages. The course emphasizes the culture or cultures associated with the language and acquiring basic communication skills through age-appropriate activities. Languages offered vary from campus to campus.

Students will . . .

- Use the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing.
- Explore aspects of culture.
- Compare and contrast features of other languages to English.
- Compare and contrast aspects of other cultures to the student's own culture.
- Practice different language learning strategies.

Tips for Parents

- Discuss with your child the value of exploring languages.
- Point out the use of other languages in everyday life such as in sports, the arts, and the media.
- Talk to your child about your family heritage and languages spoken by your ancestors.
- If you, or a family member, speak a language other than English, encourage your child to speak that language with you or them.

Questions to ask your child

- "What similarities did you learn today between the "target language" and English?"
- When watching a cultural program, viewing a cultural exhibit or visiting a

cultural site, ask your child:

“What do you notice about the culture?”

“What do you notice about the language?”

“What things are the same as what we experience in our culture?”

“What things are different from what we experience in our culture?”

Resources

- Media: newspaper, magazines, television, online sites
- Community: museums, libraries, special events, ethnic organizations

On-line Resources

- www.quia.com [vocabulary and grammar practice]
- www.vebersetzung.at/twister/index.htm [tongue twisters]
- www.atlapedia.com [on-line encyclopedia/good maps]
- www.fodors.com/language [common phrases]
- erwin.sparcky.com/hangman.html [spelling practice]

Grade 6 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 6 page 1

Overview

In Grade 6 mathematics, students focus on using ratios to describe proportional relationships with number, geometry, measurement, and probability. Students also focus on adding and subtracting decimals and fractions.

Students use a variety of mathematical processes and tools to develop conceptual understanding and solve problems as they do mathematics.

Number, operation, and quantitative reasoning: Students will

- Compare and order positive fractions, decimals, and whole numbers.
- Generate equivalent forms of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals.
- Use integers to describe real-life situations.
- Write the prime factorization of numbers using exponents.
- Identify factors and multiples, including common factors and multiples.
- Model addition and subtraction situations involving fractions with objects, pictures, words, and numbers.
- Add and subtract to solve problems using decimals and fractions.
- Multiply and divide whole numbers to solve problems, including situations involving equivalent ratios and rates.
- Estimate and round to produce reasonable results where exact answers are not required in problem situations.

Patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking: Students will

- Use ratios to describe proportional situations and make predictions in proportional situations.
- Represent ratios and percents with physical models, fractions, and decimals.

- Use tables and symbols to describe and represent proportional and other relationships (measurement conversions, sequences, perimeter, area, etc.).
- Use patterns found in a table of data to develop formulas to represent relationships involving perimeter, area, and volume.
- Use letters to represent unknowns in forming equations from a problem situation.

Geometry and spatial reasoning: Students will

- Use angle measurements to classify angles as acute, obtuse, or right.
- Identify relationships using angles in triangles and quadrilaterals (patterns of angle-sum measurements).
- Describe the relationship between radius, diameter, and circumference of a circle.
- Locate and identify points on a coordinate graph using ordered pairs of positive fractions, decimals, and whole numbers.

Measurement: Students will

- Estimate measurements and evaluate reasonableness of results.
- Select and use appropriate units, tools, or formulas to measure and to solve problems involving length, perimeter, circumference, area, time, temperature, capacity, weight, and angles.
- Convert measures within the same measurement system (customary or metric).

Grade 6 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 6 page 2

Probability and statistics: Students will

- Find all possible outcomes using lists, tree diagrams, and combinations.
- Find probabilities of a simple event occurring and not occurring (complement).
- Draw and compare different graphical representations of the same data (circle graphs, bar graphs, line graphs, etc.).
- Use median, mode, and range to describe a set of data.
- Solve problems by collecting, organizing, displaying, and interpreting data.

Underlying processes and mathematical tools: Students will

- Identify and apply mathematics to everyday experiences in and outside of school.
- Use a problem-solving model that includes understanding the problem, making a plan, carrying out the plan, and checking the solution for reasonableness.
- Select or develop problem-solving strategies such as drawing a picture, looking for a pattern, systematic guessing and checking, acting it out, making a table, working a simpler problem, or working backwards to solve problems.
- Select tools such as real objects, manipulatives, paper/pencil, and technology to solve problems.
- Use techniques such as mental math, estimation, and number sense to solve problems.
- Communicate mathematical ideas using language, efficient tools, appropriate units of measure, and

models (graphical, numerical, physical, algebraic).

- Evaluate the effectiveness of different representations to communicate ideas.
- Make conjectures from patterns or sets of examples and non-examples.
- Validate conclusions using mathematical properties and relationships.

Tips for Parents

- When dealing with price reductions, have your child estimate the value of sale items after discounts ($\frac{1}{3}$ off, 20% off, etc).
- When dining out, ask your child to calculate and/or estimate the total bill, the cost per person, the tip, and the change.
- Ask your child to describe any fractional amounts found in their everyday setting: “What part of the pizza did you eat?” or “What part of distance have we covered?” ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the total amount). “Can you describe that part in another way?” (about 33% or $\frac{2}{6}$, etc.)
- When grocery shopping, have your child estimate the total cost of the bill.
- Review and practice multiplication and division facts with your child when driving, during commercials, or other down times.
- Be a strong role model by valuing mathematics. The world of mathematics has expanded to encompass not only computation but also a need for deeper, more powerful thinking and reasoning abilities for all students to navigate through future problem-solving situations. Instill in your child the confidence to trust their problem-solving abilities.

Grade 6 Science TEKS

Science Grade 6 page 1

Overview

In Grade 6, science provides an integrated approach to life, earth-space, and physical sciences. All students participate in inquiry-based field and laboratory investigations. Science concepts and processes include: energy and matter; physical and chemical properties of matter; cells and their genetic material; systems and cycles (solar, living ecosystems, atmospheric and earth); and, a unit on Making Healthy Choices.

Process Skills: Students will

- Demonstrate safe practices and environmentally appropriate field and laboratory investigations.
- Learn to use, conserve, dispose, and recycle resources and materials.
- Plan and implement investigations, including: asking well-defined questions; collecting information;

making observations; formulating testable hypotheses; and, using equipment and technology.

- Collect (observe and measure), analyze and interpret information to construct explanations from direct and indirect evidence to communicate valid conclusions.
- Construct graphs, tables, maps, and charts to organize, examine and evaluate information.
- Analyze, review, and critique scientific explanations, hypotheses and theories as to strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluate research on scientific thought, society and environment.
- Connect science concepts with history of science and contributions of scientists.
- Collect, analyze, and record information using scientific tools.
- Identify patterns in collected information using percent, average, range, and frequency.

Content Learning: Students will

Investigate three strands which include systems; properties, patterns, and models; and constancy and change.

The content is viewed from different perspectives in each strand.

- Systems; Combination of Systems (*Strands: Systems; Patterns, Properties, and Models*)
 - Identify and describe systems resulting from combinations of two or more systems.
 - Describe properties of systems that differ from properties of its parts.
- Force and Motion (*Strands: Systems; Patterns, Properties, and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify and describe changes in position, direction, and speed of objects.
 - Measure and graph changes in motion.
 - Identify forces that shape Earth.
- Physical and Chemical Properties of Matter (*Strands: Patterns, Properties, and Models*)
 - Demonstrate new substances can be made combining two or more substances, and compare properties of new substance to originals.
 - Classify substances by physical and chemical properties.
- Living Systems: Structures and Functions (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Differentiate between structure and function.
 - Identify how structures complement functions.
 - Determine that organisms are comprised of cells that carry on functions to sustain life.

Grade 6 Science TEKS

Science Grade 6 page 2

- Matter & Energy: Interactions (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Define matter and energy.
 - Explain and illustrate interactions between matter and energy in the water cycle and decay of biomass.
- Energy and the Environment (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify energy transformations during production of energy.
 - Compare methods for transforming energy in devices.

- Research and describe energy types from sources and determine if it is renewable, nonrenewable, or inexhaustible.
- Species Change Through Generations (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify changes in traits over several generations.
 - Identify cells as structures containing genetic material.
 - Interpret the role of genes in inheritance.
- Internal and External Stimuli: Organism Response (*Strands: Systems, Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify responses to internal stimuli and external stimuli.
 - Identify components of ecosystems to which organisms may respond.
- Components of Our Solar System (*Strands: Systems; Patterns, Properties, and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify characteristics of sun, planets, meteorites, comets, asteroids, and moons.
 - Describe equipment and transportation needs for space travel.
- Earth Systems: Structures and Functions (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Summarize the rock cycle.
 - Identify relationships between groundwater and surface water in a watershed.
 - Describe components of the atmosphere and identify the role of atmospheric movement.

Tips for Parents

- Let your child know that you enjoy and value science, and that it can be fun.
- Let your child know that you believe that he or she can succeed in science.
- Encourage your child to read and investigate fields of science and explore scientific careers.
- Encourage your child to locate scientific information using a variety of sources, including the Internet, television, newspapers, magazines, and reference materials.
- Look for science in the news and keep informed about upcoming science events.
- Connect “real life” situations as they occur to science.
- Relate what your child is currently learning in science to everyday life.
- Encourage your child to gather examples of science information to share with their class.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain to you what he/she has learned in science.
- Encourage your child to visit science-related websites on the Internet.
- Explore careers related to science and technology with your child.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain what he/she learned in science.

Grade 6 Social Studies TEKS

Social Studies Grade 6 page 1

Overview

In Grade 6, students learn about people and places in various modern regions of the world. They also learn how

individuals and groups have influenced historical and modern events. Students compare similarities between economies, geographic regions, governments, educational opportunities and belief systems. In addition, students explain how the level of technology affects the development of societies.

History: Students will

- Describe how history has shaped modern nations.
- Explain how individuals and groups have contributed to historical and modern societies.

Geography: Students will

- Create and use geographic tools, and look for patterns found in selected world regions.
- Locate and describe geographic factors responsible for immigration and products people consume.

- Explain the influence of geographic factors on decisions political leaders make.
- Explain the effect of physical processes such as earthquakes and erosion on the Earth's surface and

describe the processes that affect natural resources.

- Describe the influence of human interaction and technology on the development and use of land.

Economics: Students will

- Identify and compare distribution of goods and services throughout the world.
- Describe factors of production and explain the concept of supply and demand.
- Describe the components of economic development.

Government: Students will

- Describe, identify and compare democratic and non-democratic forms of governments.
- Identify various forms of government throughout the world.

Citizenship: Students will

- Identify the role of a citizen in the U.S. and in various countries in the modern world.
- Explain the importance of civic participation and individual rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

Culture: Students will

- Describe similarities and differences in cultural traits among world societies.
- Identify and compare characteristics of contemporary societies.
- Explain how cultures influence one another.
- Identify the influence of culture on art, literature, music and architecture.
- Identify how people's beliefs influence relationships among modern countries.

Science, Technology and Society: Students will

- Explain the influence of science and technology on modern society, and make predictions for the future.

Grade 6 Social Studies TEKS

Social Studies Grade 6 page 2

Social Studies Skills: Students will

- Use a variety of primary (eye-witness accounts) and secondary (magazines, encyclopedias) sources to find information.
- Use a variety of communication skills.

- Use a variety of decision-making skills to solve problems.

Tips for Parents

- Study world events and discuss how they affect us locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Communicate with grandparents or other living ancestors and ask them how world events such as the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War affected them or other members of their families. Make connections to the present by asking your child how events in history affect the availability of food, clothing, automobiles, gasoline and other materials.
- With your child, interview someone from another country and discuss rights, responsibilities, customs, and beliefs in order to help your child understand other cultures.
- Examine currencies from other countries either through concrete examples or through pictures on the Internet. Discuss the symbols on the currency. Track the currency exchange rate listed in the local newspaper and graph the results.
- Attend local performances of international music and dance groups.
- Attend and participate in special events and cultural celebrations in the community, such as the AISD Powwow and the American Indian Heritage Festival held the first Saturday in November each year.
- Involve your child in the election process. Compare the election process in the United States to the process used in other countries.
- Watch television programs focusing on international travel or cultural celebrations.
- Follow news stories dealing with foreign elections or changes in governments outside the United States. Discuss similarities and differences to the U.S. government.
- Register with www.epals.com and correspond with an international pen pal.
- Many local museums feature exhibits with international themes. Visit them with your child and discuss what you have seen and heard.
- Examine labels of clothing and food products to determine their country of origin. Locate these places on a map. Discuss how these products came to the United States.
- Examine photographs from *National Geographic*. Discuss how photographs from another country tell about that country's culture and locate the countries that these photographs are from on a world map.

Language Arts: Grade 7 page 1

Grade 7 Language Arts TEKS

Overview

In Grade 7, language arts students evaluate spoken messages and the speaker. They consider the content, credibility, and delivery of a message. They read a variety of texts which includes fiction, nonfiction, classic, and contemporary selections. Seventh grade students apply reading skills and recognize how literary devices such as simile, metaphor, theme, mood, and tone contribute to meaning. Using the writing process, students write regularly for a variety of purposes using varied and advanced sentence structure as they apply knowledge of usage, spelling, and punctuation, to produce final, error-free drafts. They use data from nonfiction books and computer sources to create research projects and reports. Students use skills in reading selections and writing assignments with increased complexity.

Listening and Speaking: Students will

- Analyze a speaker's message for content, persuasive technique, and tone.
- Distinguish between a speaker's opinion and provable fact.
- Listen to models of oral reading.
- Identify how language reflects regions and culture.
- Listen in order to learn, take notes, and organize and summarize ideas.
- Listen in order to connect personal experiences.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings such as interviewing, reporting, and requesting and providing information.

Reading: Students will

- Read fluently, regularly and independently with clear understanding for a variety of purposes and text.
- Build an extensive vocabulary through reading and word study.
- Offer observations, make connections, react, speculate, interpret, and raise questions in response to text.
- Use study strategies, including outlines, timelines, graphics, summaries, and paraphrases, to recall important ideas from text.
- Read to increase knowledge of their own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of all cultures.
- Recognize how authors use form and literary techniques to complement the ideas of the text.

Writing: Students will

- Follow the writing process both independently and with others to revise and refine selected drafts.
- Publish for general and specific audiences for a variety of purposes, including persuasion, information, and entertainment.

- Apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and correct spelling to create error-free compositions.
- Evaluate his or her own writing and the writing of others using criteria that is appropriate for each purpose.

Viewing and Representing: Students will

- Describe, interpret, and use visual media to compare ideas and points of view.
- Analyze, critique, evaluate, and contrast the messages found in visual media.
- Produce class newspapers, multimedia reports, and/or short film.

Language Arts: Grade 7 page 2

Tips for Parents

- Read novels, newspapers, magazines, with your child and discuss connections to your child's and family's everyday life.
- Have family discussions about what your child is learning in school on a daily basis.
- Ask your child questions about his or her writing assignments. Have them read some of their written work aloud to you. Offer praise and helpful comments rather than criticism.
- Check daily to see that your child has written down his/her assignments in student agendas, notebooks, calendars, or other assignment books.
- Encourage your child to read books they are interested in and help them locate reading materials on their reading level. (Check with your child's teacher or a librarian for suggestions.)
- Visit the library or bookstores regularly so that your child becomes comfortable searching for materials that interest them.
- Make use of library and retail video resources, and encourage your child to view videos about new topics (science/history/documentaries).
- Seek out good sources for recommended reading. For example, The Young Adult Roundtable of the Texas Library Association for Grades 6-9 generates a reading list every year.
- Some titles from lists, that your child may be interested in, include:
 Avi. **Midnight Magic**. Scholastic Press. 1999.
 Creech, Sharon. **Walk Two Moons**. Harpercollins Juvenile Books. 1994.
 Flake, Sharon G. **The Skin I'm In**. Hyperion. 1998.
 Lowry, Lois. **Gathering Blue**. Houghton Mifflin. 2000.
 Miller, Marvin. **You Be the Jury** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
 Miller, Marvin. **You Be the Detective** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
 Peck, Richard. **Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats**. NY DELL/Laurel. 1995.
 Rowling, J. K. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**. Arthur A. Levine Books. 1998.

Sacher, Louis. **Holes**. Frances Foster Books, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1998.

Soto, Gary. **Taking Sides**. Harcourt Brace. 1991.

Spinelli, Jerry. **Stargirl**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Grades 7 & 8 page 1

Overview

Level One of the high school credit course is equal to the seventh and eighth grade LOTE courses. In the 7th grade, students cover the first semester of the Level One high school course. In the 8th grade, students cover the second semester of that course. The languages offered vary from campus to campus. This is a novice level academic course requiring rigorous commitment on the student's part to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures as a framework for effective communication. Interaction in the language is vital, and active participation is essential for success.

Communication: Students will...

- Communicate in the language using familiar words, phrases, and sentences.
- Understand simple spoken or written passages.

Cultures: Students will...

- Learn about other cultures.
- Learn what people do (practices), what people create (products), how people view Things (perspectives).

Connections: Students will...

- Use the target language to make connections with other subject areas and to acquire information.
- Use authentic resources, including technology, to obtain information and reinforce or expand knowledge.

Comparisons: Students will...

- Make comparisons of the target language and culture with their own language and culture.
- Develop insights into the nature of language and culture through these comparisons.

Communities: Students will...

- Recognize and use the target language outside the classroom, as well as within it.
- Recognize the value of participating in community cultural events and the importance of a second language in career and personal opportunities.

- If you or another family member speak the target language, encourage

your child to speak the language with you or them.

- Encourage your child to bring souvenirs, media articles, and other artifacts to share with the class.
- If you know the target language or have traveled to a country where that language is spoken, volunteer to share your experiences with your child's class.
- Expand your child's knowledge of the culture of the language through books, videos, music, and museum visits.
- Alert the teacher to any upcoming cultural events (i.e., heritage events, special exhibits)
- Consider visiting a country/region where the language is spoken and/or where you get a sense of the culture associated with it.
- Quiz your child on vocabulary and spelling (call out vocabulary words in English and have your child respond orally in the target language).
- Ask your child to discuss the class activities and share with you the criteria involved.
- Help your child develop successful study techniques (i.e., practicing vocabulary, using flash cards, studying in small segments).
- Have your child help you cook food from the culture.
- Volunteer to organize and chaperone a trip to a restaurant or cultural site.
- Watch TV programs/videos in the target language(s) with your child.
- Watch TV programs/videos pertaining to the culture with your child.
- Help your child to study the second language on a daily basis.
- Listen to tapes/CD's in the second language in the car.
- Provide newspapers and age-appropriate magazines in the target language.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Grades 7 & 8 page 3

Questions to ask your child

- When watching a cultural program, viewing a cultural exhibit, or visiting a cultural site, ask your child:
 - "What do you notice about the culture?"
 - "What do you notice about the language?"
 - "What things are the same as what we experience in our culture?"
 - "What things are different from what we experience in our culture?"
- "What similarities did you did you learn today between the ' target language' and English?"
- "Can you read that passage aloud to me?"
- "Will you teach me some vocabulary words?"
- "Do you know how to spell your vocabulary?"
- "Can I help you review this vocabulary?"
- "How can you be a better listener?" (e.g., close your eyes, tune in to

the target language, etc.)

- “What are you doing to learn this vocabulary?”
- “May I see your homework, please?”
- “Where are the criteria for this project?” (ask this before the due date)

Resources

- Media: newspaper, magazines, television, online sites
- Community: museums, libraries, special events, ethnic organizations
- How to Learn a Foreign Language by Graham E. Fuller
- Yes! You Can Learn a Foreign Language by Marjory Brown-Azarowicz/Charlotte Stannard/Mark Goldin

On-line Resources

- www.quia.com [vocabulary and grammar practice]
- www.vebersetzung.at/twister/index.htm [tongue twisters]
- www.atlapedia.com [on-line encyclopedia/good maps]
- www.fodors.com/language [common phrases]
- erwin.sparcky.com/hangman.html [spelling practice]
- www.promotelatin.org [Latin information]
- www.bolchazy.com [Latin information]
- www.caecilius.com [Latin information]
- www.fodors.com [travel information]
- www.xe.net/ucc [universal currency converter]
- www.isbister.com [time zones]

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Grades 7 & 8 page 1

Overview

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Communication: Students will...

- Communicate in the language using familiar words, phrases, and sentences.
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Cultures: Students will...

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Communities: Students will...

- Recognize and use the target language outside the classroom, as well as within it.
- Recognize the value of participating in community cultural events and the importance of a second language in career and personal opportunities.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Grades 7 & 8 page 2

Tips for Parents

- Show a positive attitude toward learning a new language and culture.
- Point out the use of other languages in everyday life such as in sports, the arts, and the media.
- Talk to your child about your family heritage and language(s) spoken by your ancestors.
- If you or another family member speak the target language, encourage your child to speak the language with you or them.
- Encourage your child to bring souvenirs, media articles, and other artifacts to share with the class.
- If you know the target language or have traveled to a country where that language is spoken, volunteer to share your experiences with your child's class.
- Expand your child's knowledge of the culture of the language through books, videos, music, and museum visits.
- Alert the teacher to any upcoming cultural events (i.e., heritage events, special exhibits)
- Consider visiting a country/region where the language is spoken and/or where you get a sense of the culture associated with it.
- Quiz your child on vocabulary and spelling (call out vocabulary words in English and have your child respond orally in the target language).
- Ask your child to discuss the class activities and share with you the criteria involved.
- Help your child develop successful study techniques (i.e., practicing vocabulary, using flash cards, studying in small segments).
- Have your child help you cook food from the culture.
- Volunteer to organize and chaperone a trip to a restaurant or cultural site.
- Watch TV programs/videos in the target language(s) with your child.
- Watch TV programs/videos pertaining to the culture with your child.

- Help your child to study the second language on a daily basis.
- Listen to tapes/CD's in the second language in the car.
- Provide newspapers and age-appropriate magazines in the target language.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

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Grade 7 & 8

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- Provide newspapers and age-appropriate magazines in the target language.

Grade 7 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 7 page 1

Overview

In Grade 7 mathematics, students focus on using proportional relationships with number, geometry, measurement, probability and statistics. Along with addition and subtraction, students also focus on multiplication and division of decimals, fractions, and integers to solve problems. Furthermore, students use statistical measures to describe data. Students use a variety of mathematical processes and tools to develop conceptual understanding and solve problems as they do mathematics.

Number, operation, and quantitative reasoning: Students will

- Compare and order integers, positive fractions and decimals.

- Convert between fractions, decimals, percents, and whole numbers.
- Represent squares and square roots using geometric models.
- Represent multiplication and division situations involving fractions and decimals with physical models, pictures, words, and numbers.
- Add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions and decimals to solve problems and justify the choice of operation.
- Manipulate physical models to add, subtract, multiply, and divide integers, and connect actions to rules.
- Use division to find unit rates and ratios in proportional relationships (speed, density, price, recipes, and student-teacher ratios).
- Simplify numerical expressions involving order of operations and exponents.
- Evaluate answers for reasonableness.

Patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking: Students will

- Estimate and solve application problems involving percent.
- Estimate and solve application problems involving proportional relationships (similarity, scaling, unit costs, and measurement conversions).
- Create formulas involving conversions, perimeter, circumference, area, volume, and scaling.
- Create coordinate graphs for familiar relationships (conversions, perimeter, circumference, area, volume, and scaling).
- Describe the relationship between the terms in a sequence and their positions in the sequence.
- Use physical models to solve equations and record symbols that match the actions.
- Create a problem situation from a simple equation.

Geometry and spatial reasoning: Students will

- Identify shapes (triangles, quadrilaterals, pentagons, and circles), solids (cones, pyramids, prisms, and cylinders) and pairs of angles (complementary or supplementary), and list characteristics of each.
- Define and list characteristics of similar figures.
- Locate and name points on a coordinate graph using ordered pairs of integers.
- Graph translations on a coordinate graph.
- Recognize and sketch three-dimensional shapes from a flat pattern and different perspectives (top, front, and side views).
- Make a flat pattern of the surface area of three-dimensional shapes.
- Use geometric concepts and properties to solve problems in fields such as art and architecture.

Measurement: Students will

- Estimate measurements and solve application problems involving length, perimeter, circumference, area,

and volume.

Grade 7 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 7 page 2

Probability and statistics: Students will

- Find mean, median, mode, and range to describe data and justify which is best for a given situation.
- Select and use an appropriate representation for presenting collected data and justify the selection.
- Make statements and convincing arguments based on an analysis of given or collected data.
- List all possible outcomes for compound events (dependent and independent).
- Approximate the probability of compound events through experimentation.

Underlying processes and mathematical tools: Students will

- Identify and apply mathematics to everyday experiences in and outside of school.
- Use a problem-solving model that includes understanding the problem, making a plan, carrying out the plan, and checking the solution for reasonableness.
- Select or develop problem-solving strategies such as drawing a picture, looking for a pattern, systematic guessing and checking, acting it out, making a table, working a simpler problem, or working backwards to solve problems.
- Select tools such as real objects, manipulatives, paper/pencil, and technology to solve problems.
- Use techniques such as mental math, estimation, and number sense to solve problems.
- Communicate mathematical ideas using language, efficient tools, appropriate units of measure, and models (graphical, numerical, physical, algebraic).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different representations to communicate ideas.
- Make conjectures from patterns or sets of examples and non-examples.
- Validate conclusions using mathematical properties and relationships.

Tips for Parents

- Cook with your child and ask questions involving proportional reasoning: “How much of each ingredient would be needed if the recipe were doubled or halved?” “How much of each ingredient would be needed to feed 120 people?”
- At the gas station, ask your child to calculate miles per gallon. Consider questions such as “How far could you travel on about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a tank?”
- When driving, ask your child to estimate arrival time based on your average speed.
- At the grocery store, discuss with your child how to estimate/calculate the unit price to determine the best buy (24 ounces for \$1.99 versus 32 ounces for \$2.24).
- Encourage your child to solve problems in more than one way to emphasize the many connections in

mathematics.

- Be a strong role model by valuing mathematics. The world of mathematics has expanded to encompass not only computation but also a need for deeper, more powerful thinking and reasoning abilities for all students to navigate through future problem-solving situations. Instill in your child the confidence to trust their problem-solving abilities.

Grade 7 Science TEKS

Science Grade 7 page 1

Overview

In Grade 7, science provides an integrated approach to life, physical, and earth-space sciences. All students participate in inquiry-based field and laboratory investigations. Science concepts and processes include:

scientific processes, organization and processes of systems (living, human body, and ecosystems); diversity of species; force and motion; potential and kinetic energy; natural events; and, a unit on Making Healthy Choices.

Process Skills: Students will

- Demonstrate safe practices and environmentally appropriate field and lab investigations.
- Use, conserve, dispose, and recycle resources and materials.
- Plan and implement investigations, including: asking well-defined questions; collecting information; making observations; formulating testable hypotheses; and, using equipment and technology.
- Collect, analyze and interpret information to construct explanations from direct and indirect evidence to communicate valid conclusions.
- Construct graphs, tables, maps, and charts to organize, examine and evaluate information.
- Analyze, review, and critique scientific explanations, hypotheses and theories as to strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluate research on scientific thought, society and environment.
- Connect science concepts with history of science and contributions of scientists.
- Collect, analyze, and record information to explain natural occurrences and patterns.

Content Learning: Students will

Investigate three strands which include systems; properties, patterns, and models; and constancy and change.

The content is viewed from different perspectives in each strand.

- Systems: Equilibrium may change. (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Describe how a system reaches equilibrium.

- Observe and describe the role of ecological succession in maintaining equilibrium in an ecosystem.
- Force and Motion (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Demonstrate basic relationships between force and motion using simple machines.
 - Demonstrate an object will remain at rest or constant speed and in a straight line, if it is not being subjected to an unbalanced force.
 - Relate forces to basic processes in living organisms.
- Physical and Chemical Properties of Substances (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns and Models*)
 - Identify and demonstrate everyday examples of chemical phenomena.
 - Describe physical properties of elements and identify how they are used to position an element on the periodic table.
 - Recognize that compounds are made up of elements.
- Organisms and Environment (*Strand: Systems*)
 - Identify parts of an ecosystem.
 - Observe and describe how organisms, including producers, consumers, and decomposers, live together in an environment and use existing resources.
 - Describe how different environments support different varieties of organisms.
 - Observe and describe the role of ecological succession.

Grade 7 Science TEKS

Science Grade 7 page 2

- Living Systems: Structures and Functions (*Strands: Systems*)
 - Identify the systems of the human organism and describe their functions.
 - Describe how organisms maintain stable internal conditions in changing external environments.
- Internal and External Stimuli: Organism Response (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Analyze changes in organisms that may result from internal stimuli.
 - Identify responses in organisms to external stimuli found in the environment.
- Components of Our Solar System (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify and illustrate how the tilt of the Earth on its axis, as it rotates and revolves around the sun causes changes in seasons and the length of a day.
 - Relate the Earth's movement and the moon's orbit to the observed cycles of the moon.
- Natural Event and Human Activity Alter Earth Systems (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Describe and predict the impact of different catastrophic events on the Earth.
 - Analyze effects of regional erosion weathering and deposition.
 - Make inferences and draw conclusions about effects of humans on resources.

- Matter and Energy: Interactions (*Strand: Constancy and Change*)
 - Illustrate examples of potential and kinetic energy.
 - Radiant energy from the sun is transferred into chemical energy through the process of photosynthesis.
- Species Change Through Generations (*Strand: Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify that sexual reproduction results in more diversity, asexual reproduction in uniform offspring.
 - Compare traits of organisms of different species that enhance their survival and reproduction.
 - Distinguish between dominant and recessive traits, and recognize that inherited traits of an individual are contained in genetic material.

Tips for Parents

- Let your child know that you enjoy and value science, and that it can be fun.
- Let your child know that you believe that he or she can succeed in science.
- Encourage your child to read and investigate fields of science and explore scientific careers.
- Encourage your child to locate scientific information using a variety of sources, including the Internet, television, newspapers, magazines, and reference materials.
- Look for science in the news and keep informed about upcoming science events.
- Connect “real life” situations as they occur to science.
- Relate what your child is currently learning in science to everyday life.
- Encourage your child to gather examples of science information to share with their class.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain to you what he/she has learned in science.
- Encourage your child to visit science-related websites on the Internet.
- Explore careers related to science and technology with your child.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain what he/she learned in science.

Grade 7 Social Studies TEKS

DRAFT Social Studies Grade 7 page 1

Overview

In Grade 7, students study the history and geography of Texas from early times to the present, ranging from the time period of Native Americans living in Texas prior to European exploration to the 20th century. Students learn about the cultures of Native Americans, European exploration, the Spanish mission system, colonization, revolution, republic and statehood. They also learn about city, county, and state governments, the Texas Constitution, and rights and responsibilities of Texas citizens.

History: Students will

- Identify and describe, in order, the major periods of Texas history, and sequence important individuals, events, and time periods.
- Compare the Native American cultures found in Texas prior to European exploration.
- Explain how European exploration and colonization shaped Texas history.
- Explain how the Texas Revolution shaped Texas history.
- Explain how individuals, events, and issues of the Republic of Texas and early Texas statehood shaped Texas history.
- Explain how events and issues during the Civil War and Reconstruction shaped Texas history.
- Explain how individuals, events, and issues from the period of Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century shaped Texas history.
- Explain how individuals, events, and issues during the 20th century shaped Texas history.

Geography: Students will

- Collect, analyze and interpret geographic information.
- Describe the political, economic and physical regions in Texas.
- Describe how climate, weather and landforms influence where people live in Texas.
- Describe how people in Texas have adapted to and changed their environments.

Economics: Students will

- Describe how land was used to make profits in Texas during each historical period.
- Explain the economic connection between Texas, the United States, and the world.

Government: Students will

- Identify the basic principles of the Texas Constitution.
- Identify the ideas borrowed from the U.S. Constitution for the Texas Constitution.
- Identify and describe the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution.

Citizenship: Students will

- Describe important political customs, symbols and celebrations in Texas.
- Explain the role of the individual in state and local elections.
- Identify leaders in state and local government, and list ways to contact them.

Culture: Students will

- Identify the contributions of people of different racial, ethnic and religious groups in Texas.

Science, Technology and Society: Students will

- Describe the impact of science and technology on life in Texas.

Grade 7 Social Studies TEKS

DRAFT Social Studies Grade 7 page 2

Social Studies Skills: Students will

- Apply critical-thinking skills, communicate effectively, and use problem-solving and decisionmaking processes.

Tips for Parents

- Study important events in Texas and U.S. history and discuss how they have affected your family.
- Visit interesting places in the Austin area that will help your child understand how landforms and climate affect the way people live in Central Texas. Interesting places to visit include:
Mansfield Dam and the Highland Lakes, Mt. Bonnell, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Research Center, Barton Springs, Zilker Botanical Gardens, McKinney Falls State Park, and the Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve.
- Chart daily stock prices of local businesses that are listed on the stock exchange.
- Identify advances in science and technology, such as the: windmill, revolver, discovery of oil, or barbed wire. Discuss effects these inventions have had on the development of Texas today.
- Draw a family tree; complete and discuss information for at least three generations.
- Help your child use a Texas road map to plan a trip to an interesting Texas site.
- Ask your child to plan a family trip to a local Texas history museum such as the Bullock State History Museum, Neill-Cochran House, or Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm.
- Read the newspaper, watch TV news, and surf the Internet with your child. Discuss interesting Texas events and people in the news.
- Watch educational television programs on Texas history and discuss them with your child.
- Visit local art galleries and historic sites.
- Attend and participate in special events and cultural celebrations in the community, such as the AISD Powwow and the American Indian Heritage Festival held the first Saturday in November each year.
- Discuss the characteristics of a responsible Texas citizen. Take your child to a political party headquarters and volunteer to help in local elections. Show and discuss your voter registration card with your child.
- Volunteer in your community with your child. Encourage your child to participate in the community – assist with Meals on Wheels, nursing homes, and Caritas.
- On road trips, stop and read historical markers.
- Visit a local courtroom with your child.
- Attend the Texas Legislature when it is in session.

Grade 8 Language Arts TEKS

Overview

In Grade 8, language arts students demonstrate mastery of skills introduced in earlier grades. They read a wide variety of texts for different purposes. Using the writing process, students write for a variety of purposes in order to persuade, inform, or entertain. They produce error-free compositions by applying knowledge of usage, spelling, and punctuation. The goal is to produce well-written, publishable pieces. Students use proper citations from multiple resources in research reports, and create both oral and written presentations that are enhanced by visuals and media.

Listening and Speaking: Students will

- Analyze a speaker's message for content, persuasive technique, and tone.
- Distinguish between a speaker's opinion and provable fact.
- Listen to models of oral reading.
- Identify how language reflects regions and culture.
- Listen in order to learn, take notes, and organize and summarize ideas.
- Listen in order to connect personal experiences.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings such as interviewing, reporting, and requesting and providing information.

Reading: Students will

- Read fluently, regularly and independently with clear understanding for a variety of purposes and text.
- Build an extensive vocabulary through reading and word study.
- Offer observations, make connections, react, speculate, interpret, and raise questions in response to text.
- Use study strategies, including outlines, timelines, graphics, summaries, and paraphrases, to recall important ideas from text.
- Read to increase knowledge of their own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of all cultures.
- Recognize how authors use form and literary techniques to complement the ideas of the text.
- Compare a print version with a live video performance of a literary work.
- Use the knowledge of the author's use of literary devices to understand a variety of forms of literature such as drama, novels, short stories, poetry, myth, and fable.

Writing: Students will

- Follow the writing process both independently and with others to revise and refine selected drafts.
- Publish for general and specific audiences for a variety of purposes, including persuasion, information,

and entertainment.

- Apply the rules of capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and correct spelling to create error-free compositions.
- Evaluate their own writing and the writing of others using criteria that is appropriate for each purpose.
- Identify challenges that authors face and strategies they use to write different types of texts.

Viewing and Representing: Students will

- Describe, interpret, and use visual media to compare ideas and points of view.
- Analyze, critique, evaluate, and contrast the messages found in visual media.
- Produce class newspapers, multimedia reports, and/or short films.

Language Arts Grade 8 page 2

Tips for Parents

- Read novels, newspapers, magazines, with your child and discuss connections to your child's and family's everyday life.
- Have family discussions about what your child is learning in school on a daily basis.
- Ask your child questions about his or her writing assignments. Have them read some of their written work aloud to you. Offer praise and helpful comments rather than criticism.
- Check daily to see that your child has written down his/her assignments in student agendas, notebooks, calendars, or other assignment books.
- Encourage your child to read books they are interested in and help them locate reading materials on their reading level. (Check with your child's teacher or a librarian for suggestions.)
- Visit the library or bookstores regularly so that your child becomes comfortable searching for materials that interest them.
- Make use of library and retail video resources, and encourage your child to view videos about new topics (science/history/documentaries)
- Seek out good sources for recommended reading. For example, The Young Adult Roundtable of the Texas Library Association for Grades 6-9 generates a reading list every year.
- Some titles from lists, that your child may be interested in, include:
Avi. **Midnight Magic**. Scholastic Press. 1999.
Creech, Sharon. **Walk Two Moons**. Harpercollins Juvenile Books. 1994.
Flake, Sharon G. **The Skin I'm In**. Hyperion. 1998.
Lowry, Lois. **Gathering Blue**. Houghton Mifflin. 2000.
Miller, Marvin. **You Be the Jury** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
Miller, Marvin. **You Be the Detective** (Jigsaw Puzzle Mysteries). Scholastic Press. 1991-1992.
Peck, Richard. **Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats**. NY DELL/Laurel. 1995.

Rowling, J. K. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone**. Arthur A. Levine Books. 1998.
Sacher, Louis. **Holes**. Frances Foster Books, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
1998.
Soto, Gary. **Taking Sides**. Harcourt Brace. 1991.
Spinelli, Jerry. **Stargirl**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Grades 7 & 8 page 1

Overview

Level One of the high school credit course is equal to the seventh and eighth grade LOTE courses. In the 7th grade, students cover the first semester of the Level One high school course. In the 8th grade, students cover the second semester of that course. The languages offered vary from campus to campus. This is a novice level academic course requiring rigorous commitment on the student's part to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures as a framework for effective communication. Interaction in the language is vital, and active participation is essential for success.

Communication: Students will...

- Communicate in the language using familiar words, phrases, and sentences.
- Understand simple spoken or written passages.

Cultures: Students will...

- Learn about other cultures.
- Learn what people do (practices), what people create (products), how people view Things (perspectives).

Connections: Students will...

- Use the target language to make connections with other subject areas and to acquire information.
- Use authentic resources, including technology, to obtain information and reinforce or expand knowledge.

Comparisons: Students will...

- Make comparisons of the target language and culture with their own language and culture.
- Develop insights into the nature of language and culture through these comparisons.

Communities: Students will...

- Recognize and use the target language outside the classroom, as well as within it.
- Recognize the value of participating in community cultural events and the importance of a second language in career and personal opportunities.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Tips for Parents

- Show a positive attitude toward learning a new language and culture.
- Point out the use of other languages in everyday life such as in sports, the arts, and the media.
- Talk to your child about your family heritage and language(s) spoken by your ancestors.
- If you or another family member speak the target language, encourage your child to speak the language with you or them.
- Encourage your child to bring souvenirs, media articles, and other artifacts to share with the class.
- If you know the target language or have traveled to a country where that language is spoken, volunteer to share your experiences with your child's class.
- Expand your child's knowledge of the culture of the language through books, videos, music, and museum visits.
- Alert the teacher to any upcoming cultural events (i.e., heritage events, special exhibits)
- Consider visiting a country/region where the language is spoken and/or where you get a sense of the culture associated with it.
- Quiz your child on vocabulary and spelling (call out vocabulary words in English and have your child respond orally in the target language).
- Ask your child to discuss the class activities and share with you the criteria involved.
- Help your child develop successful study techniques (i.e., practicing vocabulary, using flash cards, studying in small segments).
- Have your child help you cook food from the culture.
- Volunteer to organize and chaperone a trip to a restaurant or cultural site.
- Watch TV programs/videos in the target language(s) with your child.
- Watch TV programs/videos pertaining to the culture with your child.
- Help your child to study the second language on a daily basis.
- Listen to tapes/CD's in the second language in the car.
- Provide newspapers and age-appropriate magazines in the target language.

Grade 7 & 8

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Questions to ask your child

- When watching a cultural program, viewing a cultural exhibit, or visiting a cultural site, ask your child:
 - "What do you notice about the culture?"
 - "What do you notice about the language?"
 - "What things are the same as what we experience in our culture?"
 - "What things are different from what we experience in our

culture?”

- “What similarities did you did you learn today between the ‘ target language’ and English?”
- “Can you read that passage aloud to me?”
- “Will you teach me some vocabulary words?”
- “Do you know how to spell your vocabulary?”
- “Can I help you review this vocabulary?”
- “How can you be a better listener?” (e.g., close your eyes, tune in to the target language, etc.)
- “What are you doing to learn this vocabulary?”
- “May I see your homework, please?”
- “Where are the criteria for this project?” (ask this before the due date)

Resources

- Media: newspaper, magazines, television, online sites
- Community: museums, libraries, special events, ethnic organizations
- How to Learn a Foreign Language by Graham E. Fuller
- Yes! You Can Learn a Foreign Language by Marjory Brown-Azarowicz/Charlotte Stannard/Mark Goldin

On-line Resources

- www.quia.com [vocabulary and grammar practice]
- www.vebersetzung.at/twister/index.htm [tongue twisters]
- www.atlapedia.com [on-line encyclopedia/good maps]
- www.fodors.com/language [common phrases]
- erwin.sparcky.com/hangman.html [spelling practice]
- www.promotelatin.org [Latin information]
- www.bolchazy.com [Latin information]
- www.caecilius.com [Latin information]
- www.fodors.com [travel information]
- www.xe.net/ucc [universal currency converter]
- www.isbister.com [time zones]

Grade 8 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 8 page 1

Overview

In Grade 8 mathematics, students focus on using basic principles of algebra to analyze and represent proportional and non-proportional relationships. Students also focus on using probability to describe data and make predictions. Students use a variety of mathematical processes and tools to develop conceptual understanding and solve problems as they do mathematics.

Number, operation, and quantitative reasoning: Students will

- Compare and order rational numbers (fractions, decimals, whole numbers, percents, and their opposites).
- Select and use forms of rational numbers to solve real-life problems.

- Approximate the value of irrational numbers (π , $\sqrt{2}$, etc.) in problem situations.
- Express numbers in scientific notation using a calculator in problem situations.
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational numbers in problem situations and justify the choice of operation.
- Evaluate solutions for reasonableness.
- Represent proportional relationships using multiplication by a constant factor (perimeter of a square is four times the length of a side, or $P=4s$).

Patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking: Students will

- Compare and contrast proportional and non-proportional relationships.
- Estimate and find solutions to application problems involving percents and proportional relationships.
- Create a different representation given one representation of data such as a table, graph, equation, or verbal description.
- Estimate, find, and justify solutions to application problems using appropriate tables, graphs, and algebraic equations.
- Use an algebraic expression to find any term in a sequence.

Geometry and spatial reasoning: Students will

- Generate similar shapes using both enlargements and reductions (dilations).
- Graph dilations, reflections, and translations on a coordinate plane.
- Draw solids from different perspectives.
- Use geometric concepts and properties to solve problems in fields such as art and architecture.
- Use pictures or models to demonstrate the Pythagorean Theorem.
- Locate and name points on a coordinate plane using ordered pairs of rational numbers.

Measurement: Students will

- Find surface area of prisms and cylinders using physical models and nets (unfolded flat patterns).
- Connect physical models to formulas for volume of prisms, cylinders, pyramids, and cones.
- Estimate answers and use formulas to solve surface area and volume application problems.
- Use the Pythagorean Theorem to solve real-life problems.
- Use proportional relationships in similar shapes to find missing measurements.
- Describe effects on perimeter, area, and volume when dimensions of shapes are changed proportionally.

Grade 8 Mathematics TEKS

Mathematics Grade 8 page 2

Probability and statistics: Students will

- Find the probabilities of compound events (dependent and independent).
- Use probability to make predictions and decisions.
- Select and use different models to simulate an event.

- Select the appropriate measure of central tendency (median, mode, and mean) to describe a set of data for a particular purpose.
- Draw conclusions and make predictions by analyzing trends in coordinate graphs.
- Construct circle graphs, bar graphs, and histograms with and without technology.
- Evaluate methods of collecting data to determine the truth of a prediction made from data.
- Recognize misuses of graphical or numerical information.
- Evaluate predictions and conclusions made based on data analysis.

Underlying processes and mathematical tools: Students will

- Identify and apply mathematics to everyday experiences in and outside of school.
- Use a problem-solving model that includes understanding the problem, making a plan, carrying out the plan, and checking the solution for reasonableness.
- Select or develop problem-solving strategies such as drawing a picture, looking for a pattern, systematic guessing and checking, acting it out, making a table, working a simpler problem, or working backwards to solve problems.
- Select tools such as real objects, manipulatives, paper/pencil, and technology to solve problems.
- Use techniques such as mental math, estimation, and number sense to solve problems.
- Communicate mathematical ideas using language, efficient tools, appropriate units of measure, and models (graphical, numerical, physical, algebraic).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different representations to communicate ideas.
- Make conjectures from patterns or sets of examples and non-examples.
- Validate conclusions using mathematical properties and relationships.

Tips for Parents

- Ask your child to estimate the volume of any familiar three-dimensional object using cubic inches, cubic feet, cubic meters, etc. (cereal boxes, soft drink cans, trash cans, etc.).
- When driving, pose questions about distance, speed, and time relationships. Ask variations of the question, “If I travel 400 miles in 8 hours, what is my average speed? Show me all the ways you can think about this problem.” (table of data, graphs, equation, numerical computation, etc).
- Encourage your child to write an equation that models real-life patterns with a constant rate of change.
(The Cost of renting a video is \$3.50 plus late fees of \$1.50 a day; or algebraically, $C = 3.50 + 1.50d$).
- Read papers and magazines with your child and generate questions that can be answered by interpreting the given data (line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, etc).
- Be a strong role model by valuing mathematics. The world of mathematics has expanded to encompass

not only computation but also a need for deeper, more powerful thinking and reasoning abilities for all students to navigate through future problem-solving situations. Instill in your child the confidence to trust their problem-solving abilities.

Grade 8 Science TEKS

Science Grade 8 page 1

Overview

In Grade 8, science provides an integrated approach to earth-space, physical, and life sciences. All students participate in inquiry-based, field and laboratory investigations. Science concepts and processes include:

scientific inquiry/ method; physical and chemical properties of matter; cycles (atmospheric, geo-chemical, living ecosystems and earth); changes over time on Earth and in the universe; sun and global climate changes; natural disasters; and, a unit on Making Healthy Choices is included.

Process Skills: Students will

- Demonstrate safe practices and environmentally appropriate investigations.
- Learn to use, conserve, dispose, and recycle resources and materials.
- Plan and implement investigations, including: asking well-defined questions; collecting information; making observations; formulating testable hypotheses; and, using equipment and technology.
- Collect, analyze and interpret information to communicate valid conclusions.
- Construct graphs, tables, maps, and charts to organize, examine and evaluate information.
- Analyze, review, and critique scientific explanations, hypotheses and theories.
- Evaluate environmental issues and their effects on society using scientific thought.
- Connect science concepts with the history of science and contributions of scientists.
- Collect, analyze, and record information using scientific tools and technology.
- Make predictions using collected information.
- Design a problem and propose a solution using a model.

Content Learning: Students will

Investigate three strands which include systems; properties, patterns, and models; and constancy and change.

The content is viewed from different perspectives in each strand.

- Interdependence among living systems (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns, and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Describe interactions among human systems.
 - Identify feedback mechanisms that maintain equilibrium of systems.
 - Describe interactions among ecosystems.

- Force and Motion (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns, and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Demonstrate how unbalanced forces cause change in speed or direction of objects.
 - Recognize that waves are generated and can travel through media.
- Matter: Composed of Atoms (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns and Models*)
 - Describe structure and parts of atom.
 - Identify properties of atom-mass and electrical charge.
- Matter and Energy: Interactions (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Illustrate interactions between matter and energy.
 - Describe interactions among solar, weather, and ocean systems.
 - Identify and demonstrate that loss or gain of heat energy occurs during exothermic and endothermic chemical reactions.

Grade 8 Science TEKS

Science Grade 8 page 2

- Cycles in Earth Systems (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns, and Models*)
 - Analyze and predict sequence of events in lunar and rock cycles.
 - Relate role of oceans to climatic changes.
 - Predict results of modifying Earth's nitrogen, water, and carbon cycles.
- The Universe: Characteristics (*Strands: Systems; Properties, Patterns, and Models; Constancy and Change*)
 - Describe characteristics of the universe.
 - Research and describe historical scientific theories of the origin of the universe.
 - Explain the use of light years to describe distances in the universe.
- Natural Events & Human Activity Alter Earth Systems (*Strands: Systems; Constancy and Change*)
 - Predict land features resulting from gradual changes.
 - Analyze how natural or human events may contribute to extinction of some species.
 - Describe how human activities have modified soil, water, and air quality.
- Matter: Physical & Chemical Properties (*Strand: Properties, Patterns, and Models*)
 - Demonstrate that substances may react chemically to form new substances.
 - Interpret physical and chemical properties used to group elements on periodic table.
 - Recognize importance of formulas and equations to express chemical reactions.
 - Identify that physical and chemical properties influence development of everyday materials.
- Species Change Through Generations (*Strands: Constancy and Change*)
 - Identify that change in environment can affect survival of species.
 - Distinguish between inherited traits and other characteristics resulting from interactions with environment.
 - Make predictions about outcome of genetic combinations.

Tips for Parents

- Let your child know that you enjoy and value science, and that it can be fun.
- Let your child know that you believe that he or she can succeed in science.
- Encourage your child to read and investigate fields of science and explore scientific careers.

- Encourage your child to locate scientific information using a variety of sources, including the Internet, television, newspapers, magazines, and reference materials.
- Look for science in the news and keep informed about upcoming science events.
- Connect “real life” situations as they occur to science.
- Relate what your child is currently learning in science to everyday life.
- Encourage your child to gather examples of science information to share with their class.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain to you what he/she has learned in science.
- Encourage your child to visit science-related websites on the Internet.
- Explore careers related to science and technology with your child.
- Encourage your child to teach and explain what he/she learned in science.

Grade 8 Social Studies TEKS

Social Studies Grade 8 page 1

Overview

In Grade 8, students study the history and geography of the United States from the early colonial period through Reconstruction. Students learn about political, economic, and social events and issues related to the colonial and revolutionary eras, the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, challenges of the early Republic, westward expansion, sectionalism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. There is a focus on the impact of geography on these events. Students use critical-thinking skills, including identification of bias in written, oral, and visual material.

History: Students will

- Identify major time periods in U.S history through 1877.
- Identify causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of the Americas.
- Explain beginnings of representative government and evaluate documents that were written.
- Analyze events, causes, effects and individuals of the American Revolution.
- Describe challenges faced by the government and leaders of the early Republic.
- Explain political, economic and social development of westward growth.
- Analyze influences of the Civil War on American society.
- Describe effects of Reconstruction on the nation.

Geography: Students will

- Use tools of geography to collect, analyze, and explain distance, location, natural resources, and patterns of settlement.
- Identify the location and characteristics of places and regions of the U.S.A., past and present.
- Describe geographic factors that influenced the settlement of the United States.
- Describe how individuals have adapted to and modified their environments.

Economics: Students will

- Explain why certain areas of the United States develop different economic patterns from others.
- Analyze events and economic forces that caused the Industrial Revolution.
- Describe origins and developments of the U.S. free enterprise system during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Government: Students will

- Identify important ideas in the Founding Documents such as the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights.
- Identify and describe major features of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.
- Identify and describe important landmark Supreme Court cases during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Citizenship: Students will

- Describe important customs, symbols, and celebrations that represent American beliefs.
- Explain the importance of individual participation in the democratic process.
- Identify important national leaders in American history.
- Summarize basic rights of American citizens.

Grade 8 Social Studies TEKS

Social Studies Grade 8 page 2

Culture: Students will

- Explain the relationship between art, music, and drama within the different cultural groups in the United States.
- Identify contributions of people of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the growth and development of the United States.

Science, Technology and Society: Students will

- Describe the impact of science and technology on life in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Social Studies Skills: Students will

- Apply critical thinking skills to organize and use information.
- Communicate in written, oral and visual forms.
- Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to work independently and with others.

Tips for Parents

- Stop to read historical markers on roadways while traveling by car on a family vacation.
- Ask your child to plan a family trip to a local history museum or collection (LBJ Library, Texas History Museum, Center for American History).
- Read the newspaper and watch TV news with your child. Discuss interesting U.S. events and people in the news. Use a U.S. map to mark locations of events in the news.
- Watch educational television programs on U.S. history and discuss interesting points with your child (documentaries, biographies, etc.).

- Visit local art galleries and historic sites. Discuss the most important new idea gained from each visit.
- Attend and participate in special events and cultural celebrations in the community, such as the AISD Powwow and the American Indian Heritage Festival held the first Saturday in November each year.
- Help your child use a U.S. road map or atlas to plan a trip to an interesting place in the United States.
- Discuss how the U.S. is divided into regions and how each region is different. Use road maps, atlases, books, and online resources to locate landmarks and historical sites throughout the regions.
- Look for pictures and newspaper articles of elected officials with your child. Discuss the responsibilities and duties of these elected officials. Identify representatives and senators from your district.
- Use opportunities in current events to discuss the three branches of the U. S. government.
- Discuss characteristics of a responsible U.S. citizen. Take your child to the polls when you vote.
- Encourage your child to participate in National History Day activities at your school.
- Go to the public library to look for primary sources (documents, letters, diaries, etc.); read and discuss them with your child.

Career Investigation Grades 6-8

Overview

Students learn how to make decisions about their career(s) and lifelong learning using

career information, other materials and skills. Career investigation introduces the student to the many careers in the world of work and what a student must do to prepare for a career.

Students will:

- Identify personal strengths and areas of needs.
- Evaluate personal interests, career interests, and aptitudes.
- Explain how basic skills are essential in every area of work.
- Locate, analyze and process career information.
- Learn and demonstrate how many skills apply to a variety of careers.
- Learn and apply the process cycle used by employers in selecting employees.
- Recognize the importance of career choice on one's personal lifestyle.
- Prepare realistic goals to effectively plan and achieve personal career(s) goals.
- Recognize the importance of good work habits, teamwork and work ethics.

Tips for Parents:

- Observe what your child's interests are.
- Expose your child to varied career opportunities.

- Point out career options in local newspapers. (*The Austin American Stateman's* Sunday edition has careers showcased.)
- Take advantage of parent/child career days.
- Discuss math applications when you cook.
- Use the Internet.
- Encourage reading to gather and process information.
- Encourage elective courses such as Keyboarding and Computer Applications.
- Observe and discuss various job clusters.
- Role-play job interviews to help your child develop interview skills.
- Stress the importance of an education.
- Share examples of good resumes with your child.
- Practice completion of job applications with your child.
- Compare and contrast working conditions of various careers.
- Explain and discuss the labor (physical exertion) versus non-labor jobs/careers.
- Encourage use of journals for job research and goal-setting.
- Gather relevant material to your child's career choice from friends and family members.
- Be an example.
- Stress the importance of task completion.
- Praise observed positive, professional behavior of others in the workforce when out with your child.
- Use story-telling to relate examples of changes in our society.
- Discuss the effect of Hi-Tech progress on careers.

Industrial Technology Education Grades 6 and 7

DRAFT Industrial Technology Education Grades 6 and 7 page 1

Overview

The study of technology education allows students to apply their academic knowledge and skills to a wide variety of interesting and challenging activities, the course is designed to increase student understanding of the development and use of technology.

The course presents the 6 areas of study in the areas of technology: bio-related technology, communications (computer applications), construction, energy, power, transportation, and manufacturing. Students are introduced to the major concepts of each area yet only visit a few in detail.

Process Skills

Students will:

- Demonstrate the Universal System Model for problem solving, using resources, inputs, process, outputs, and feedback. This will enable the student to recognize, understand, and manipulate materials.
- Demonstrate proper care and operation of tools and equipment.
- Demonstrate proper safety when operating tools and equipment.
- Demonstrate proper use of computers, cameras, scanners, printers.
- Demonstrate the use of teamwork in activities as well as in problem

solving activities.

Practice and Improvement Skills

Students use correct techniques and procedures for operating tools, machines, and equipment. Students will:

- Demonstrate accuracy set-ups for making various cuts.
- Demonstrate accuracy in layouts for parts of a project.
- Demonstrate accuracy for mass production
- Demonstrate accuracy in following directions.

Production Skills

Students operate tools, machines, and equipment. Student will:

- Demonstrate safety and care when operating tools, machines, and equipment.
- Demonstrate the use of a plan of procedure for construction.
- Demonstrate the use of estimation of materials.
- Demonstrate the use of teamwork in production.
- Demonstrate the use of various types of materials, such as woods, plastics, and metals in production.
- Demonstrate the use of codes, laws, standards, and regulations as they relate to construction.

Industrial Technology Education Grades 6 and 7

DRAFT Industrial Technology Education Grades 6 and 7 page 2

Tips for Parents:

- Allow your child to do small jobs around the house requiring the use of tools.
- Encourage your child to download interesting technology articles on the computer.
- Encourage your child to be active in the schools TSA (Technology Student Association) organization if possible.
- Ask your child what he/she is learning in class regularly.
- Show interest in your child's technology curriculum.
- Don't treat tech ed as "just an elective".
- Be supportive of any out of class assignment.
- Visit TSA website at www.tsawww.org.

Questions and Activities:

In order to comprehend the scope of technology, help your child learn that new products and systems can be developed to solve problems or to help do things that could not be done without the help of technology.

Ask, "Can an engineer build a bridge without the use of tools and machines?"

Have your child build a paper tower using only their hands.

Technology is using knowledge and resources to meet perceived needs and wants and to extend human capabilities. Have your child build a model kaleidoscope using poster board, mylar, glue and some type of reflective material.

Ask, "What are some ways in which technology has affected humans ability to see?"

Introduction to Keyboarding Grades 7 and 8

DRAFT Introduction to Keyboarding Grades 7 and 8 page 1

Overview

Keyboarding is a high school credit elective course appropriate for 7th and 8th grade students. Those enrolled apply business applications skills through the use of up-to-date technology. Students learn and develop their skills in touchtyping, and work on improving their speed and accuracy when typing. Students must apply their own reading, writing, computing, communications, and reasoning skills through the production of various business forms.

Process Skills

Students use correct keyboarding technique. Students will:

- Demonstrate correct posture and body position at the keyboard.
- Demonstrate proper care and operation of equipment.
- Demonstrate correct touch-system techniques (typing by memory, not sight) for using alphabetic keys.
- Demonstrate correct touch-system techniques for using the number and symbol keys.
- Demonstrate correct touch-system techniques for using the ten-key number pad.
- Demonstrate correct use of command and function keys.
- Demonstrate increase in speed and accuracy (reaching 25 words or more per minute with no more than one error).
- Demonstrate ability to use the backspace key appropriately to correct errors.
- Apply speed and accuracy in production of documents; and demonstrate mastery of basic grammar, including use of punctuation marks and capitalization.

Production Skills

Students create, format, and print various documents such as—personal and business letters, short reports, outlines, and compositions. Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to work from printed, rough-draft, statistical, handwritten, and unarranged material.
- Demonstrate the ability to compose at the keyboard.
- Demonstrate the ability to proofread own work as well as work of others.
- Identify the parts of personal and business letters.
- Compose and correctly format personal and business letters and envelopes.
- Format all pages of a report including title page, reference page, and bibliography correctly.
- Format an outline correctly.
- Demonstrate mastery of basic grammar, and use of punctuation marks, and capitalization when composing.
- Demonstrate use of technical tools such as spell and grammar check.

Introduction to Keyboarding Grades 7 and 8

DRAFT Introduction to Keyboarding Grades 7 and 8 page 2

Tips for Parents:

- Stress importance of the skill of keyboarding..
- Discuss the concept of learning a skill as a process of repetition.
- Discuss the concept of learning a skill and the necessity of “correct” vs. “incorrect” practice.
- Observe your child typing without looking at the keyboard or his/her hands.
- Provide family projects (lists, letters, mottos, etc.) for your child to type and print for family use.
- Encourage your child to practice “correct” keyboarding skills while typing homework assignments.
- Discuss difficulties your child may be having with certain key reaches and observe as he/she practices for improvement.
- Call out letters and/or words from a list for your child to type to demonstrate touch-typing (emphasize not looking at hands or keyboard).
- Investigate any available typing tutorial software programs to purchase for home use.
- Model using the keyboard using touch-typing techniques for your child.
- Observe your child demonstrating to correct touch-typing techniques.
- Make a game out of competing for speed and accuracy with written text using time limits.

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Child

- Who invented our American keyboard?
- Why is the keyboard arranged in the way that it is?
- Which fingers are the most difficult to use? Why do you think that is?
- Which reaches are the hardest?
- How many repetitions do you think it takes for the average person to learn a skill?
- Why are there two shift keys on the keyboard?
- What careers might use typing skills?
- (Ask any questions that you might wonder about; see if they can answer.)

Skills for Living Grades 7 and 8

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Overview

Skills for Living is a semester elective for 7th and 8th graders. In Skills for Living, students begin to explore and understand some of the life issues they will have to face as they move toward adulthood. They learn information and skills that make them feel more capable of making positive decisions. Emphasis is placed on the importance of being a member of the family, and on positive interpersonal skills through effective communication skills, positive decision-making, and taking responsibility for one's

behavior. Information and skills needed for personal development are discussed. Topics include: nutrition and wellness, self-image and personal appearance, childcare

practices, managing money, and career options.

The student will:

- Begins to understand how the family meets the needs of family members and can propose ideas for promoting satisfying relationships among family member of all ages.

- Describe the responsibilities of parenting and identify changes in the parent-child

relationship due to different stages of the family life cycle or pressures from society or culture.

- Determine ways to have positive relationships among friends.

- Identify personal characteristics that promote satisfying relationships.

- Describe how to be an effective team member or leader.

- Use effective communication skills in various relationships and on different occasions.

- Demonstrate techniques for resolving conflicts and becoming more assertive.

- Explain how children grow and develop.

- Demonstrate knowledge of first aid and safety practices.

- List and describe resources in our community that are available for the welfare of

children.

- Demonstrate the steps of the decision-making process.

- Explain how personal priorities affect decisions and can describe the role of acceptance of responsibility in decision-making.

- Demonstrate understanding of money management and its impact.

- Explain how management skills are needed to meet the challenges of living and working in our society.

- Demonstrate techniques that will help enhance career and personal effectiveness while promoting family strength and well being.

- Exhibit healthy nutrition and wellness practices that help with stress management

and promote well-being and achievement.

- Select clothing based on clothing budget, care procedure, and needs versus wants.

- Explain how good grooming habits and positive personal habits, in combination with complementary fashions, increase personal effectiveness.

- Plan for the future by comparing a variety of career options (skill and educational

requirements) including full-time homemakers and how technology affects careers and family life.

Skills for Living Grades 7 and 8

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Tips for Parents:

- View family album(s) together and discuss your family heritage.

- Describe the responsibilities you have as a parent.
- Describe how your life changed after he/she was born.
- Explain how your parenting style is similar or different from that of your parents.
- Discuss the role and characteristics of a friend.
- Describe how being a team member helps individuals on the job.
- Discuss different forms of communication.
- Discuss how body language and tone effect positive or negative communication.
- Describe how communication affects any relationship.
- Explain how to help resolve conflicts effectively.
- Check out a baby care video from the library or video rental store.
- Discuss the developmental stages your child went through with him/her and discuss how you dealt with them appropriately.
- Discuss the steps to follow if a child needs intervention from abuse.
- Search the phone book and locate services that cater to the well-being of a child.
- Describe the steps you take when you have to make a decision.
- Talk about the consequences of the decisions.
- Explain how to take ownership for the decisions.
- Visit your bank or credit union and talk to a bank representative about the different types of services available.
- Describe the importance of learning to save money for emergencies.
- Discuss how goals affect how to save and spend money.
- Discuss the challenges of working and maintaining a household.
- Take your child to work.
- Discuss how to positively deal with co-workers and supervisors.
- Discuss possible career interests.
- Start a daily exercise regimen with your child.
- Discuss different ways to deal with stress.
- Look for healthy recipes and cook the meals together.
- Have your child help you with the laundry.
- Discuss the difference between needing and wanting different clothes.
- Talk about the importance of good grooming on a daily basis.
- Explain appropriate attire for different occasions.
- Discuss possible career options after high school.
- Talk about your child's interests and areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Explain how technology affects you on the job.

Instructional Technology Grades 6 to 8

DRAFT Instructional Technology Grades 6 to 8 page 1

Overview

Students experience technology in specific technology classes and other subject areas.

Students are required to properly use both hardware and software. Students use technology to access information, solve problems, analyze data and communicate in

different formats.

Basic Computer Operations and Acceptable Use: Students will

- Demonstrate appropriate use of operating systems, software applications, communication, and networking components using a variety of hardware.
- Employ software and vocabulary appropriate to the task.
- Demonstrate keyboarding skill proficiency including techniques, posture, and speed.
- Use Internet terminology correctly.
- Observe proper internet etiquette.
- Explain the difference between LAN and WAN.
- Explain the difference between Intranet and Internet.
- Compare and contrast tape recordings of music and movies with digital devices like music CDs and DVDs.
- Use special characters such as smart quotes, dashes, and spacing.
- Efficiently capture digital files.
- Apply copyright laws to digital information.
- Describe consequences of copyright violations and unlawful use of technology.
- Use more than one operating system.
- Evaluate the impact of technology on daily life and make predictions for the future.

Information Acquisition: Students will

- Acquire information from electronic sources.
- Use search engines.
- Use files of different formats from various sources.
- Judge the reliability and usefulness of web sites and other media.

Communications: Students will

- Use a computer to create slide shows, posters, newsletters, brochures, reports, or other multimedia presentations.
- Create and use databases and spreadsheets.
- Generate charts.
- Select and use different fonts, sizes, styles, and graphics in word processing documents.
- Share information on the computer in a variety of ways including printing, monitor display, Internet document, video, browsers, video conferencing and distance learning.
- Design multimedia projects, which include audio, video, text, and graphics and employ specifications to evaluate them.
- Save selected documents in an electronic portfolio.
- Track trends, set timelines, and use calendars to manage projects.

Solving Problems: Students will

- Use a word processor to create published documents.
- Use spreadsheets to collect data and share information in the forms of charts and graphs.
- Use databases to create mailing lists and reports.
- Choose appropriate multimedia presentation software to present projects using

text, audio, video, and graphics.

- Create articles in a newspaper or magazine format.
- Use graphics software to create flyers, posters, and illustrations. Students include graphics such as tables, charts, graphs, and illustrations in projects and presentations.
- Use simulation software and access virtual reality websites (i.e. Sim City, flight simulator programs, and [www.NASA.com](http://www.nasa.com)).
- Use e-mail and student made web sites to share information and collaborate on projects.
- Use what is learned in class to create a product that includes meaningful content.
- Participate in on-line activities that require students to share information and ideas with other students from other cultures (i.e. collaborative projects with students in classrooms in other countries).
- Share information by using software that allows many students to access the same programs simultaneously.
- Choose appropriate technology for sharing products with specific audiences (i.e. with peers in the classroom or with the world wide web).
- Incorporate skills learned using technology with information learned from the classroom in engaging activities.
- Continually evaluate new information to improve basic understanding of current trends and self-evaluate progress in completing projects.
- Compare data and use research to justify the accuracy of information.

Tips for Parents:

- Encourage proper keyboarding skills.
- Monitor use of the Internet and computer for educational purposes.
- Encourage students to take breaks to avoid eyestrain.
- Assist with searches on the Internet.

Monitor student use of information to avoid copyright violations and plagiarism.

FYI

Students have access to the following district applications:

Appleworks (includes word processing, spreadsheets, database, and presentation tools)

Microsoft Office Standard (Word, Excel, Powerpoint)

Hyperstudio

Inspiration

Various content-area and / or campus specific titles

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General Internet Resources

Austin Independent School District

<http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/>

Texas Education Agency

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us>

Software Reviews

Children's Software Revue – www.childrensoftware.com

The foremost authority on children's software, electronic toys and Internet sites.

Links to Software Reviews

A link to other pages of software reviews.

How to Search the Net

Internet Search Tutorial -

Learn the S.E.A.R.C.H. acronym for effective internet searches.

Ask the Surf Guru - Yahoo – www.surf-guru.com

Yahoo's Surf Guru will answer your questions about on-line issues.

Your Complete Guide to Searching the Net

PC Magazine and ZDNet bring you this guide with everything you need to know about searching the net.

Choose the Best Search Engine for Your Needs

Tips and strategies for effective Internet searches.

Reference Research

The Handbook of Texas Online – www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/

A multidisciplinary encyclopedia of Texas history, geography, and culture.

Smithsonian Institution – www.si.edu

Their educational page contains a list by topic.

Library of Congress Home Page – www.loc.gov/

All things related to the U.S. and its history.

NASA Homepage – www.nasa.gov

NASA and all its resources.

TIME 100_ 1900 vs. Now – www.time.com/time/time100/

Time magazine's most important people of the 20th century and other historical topics.

Armadillo's Texas Studies Information – www.rice.edu/armadillo/texas

Part of Houston ISD's site. The page has Texas Studies and Instructional Resources.

Student Search

Searchopolis - www.searchopolis.com/

A nice search engine with well organized categories.

Yahooligans! – www.yahooligans.com

Yahoo for kids, education, entertainment and more.

Ask Jeeves for Kids – www.ajkids.com

At Ask Jeeves users enter questions in plain English to which Jeeves responds with an array of related queries that narrow the search. Each question leads to links that can hold the answer.

KidsClick! Web Search – <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/kidsclick/>

Created by a group of librarians to help guide young users to appropriate web sites. Dewey decimal categories are also available.

EdView Smart Zone – <http://edview.apple.com/>

This site allows you to pick grade level. Sponsored by the EDView company who sell Internet filtering software.

LycosZone -<http://lycoszone.lycos.com/>

Kids' version of the popular Lycos Search engine. The Homework Zone has a Kids' Almanac, Encyclopedia and Dictionary.

AOL NetFind Kids Only –<http://www.aol.com/netfind/kids>

America On Line's safe search engine for kids.

Safe Search Engines - <http://www.onekey.com/>

The Amazing Picture Machine – www.ncrtec.org/picture.htm

Great source for student searches for images.

Student Sites

Yahooligans!

Search engine and more.

WWW.4kids.org

"Quickest Shot to the Coolest Spots on the Internet"

Humongous Entertainment – www.humengous.com
Lots of goodies for young children with goodies for the Blues Clues and Freddy Fish crowd.
Cyberteens - Where Creative Teens Rule – www.cyberteens.com
Edutainment for teens. Cartoons, columns, movie reviews and more, all written and created by teenagers.
Yuckiest Site on the Internet – www.yucky.com
Bodily fluids and other disgusting subjects.
Cyberkids - Where Creative Kids Click – www.cyberkids.com
As you might expect, a quality site. Check out the map machine.
Time For Kids – www.timeforkids.com/TFK
Time magazine's online periodical for kids.
Puzzlemaker – www.puzzlemaker.com
Make all kinds of puzzles. Part of the Discovery network.
ALFY - The Web Portal for Kids – www.alfy.com
A web portal playground with lots of edutainment opportunities.

Language Arts page 1

Grades 6 – 8 Language Arts Information and Resources For Your Information

• **Core experiences, based on TEKS, provide common hands-on experiences for all middle school children across the district.**

- Young Authors Conference is held in the spring of each year.
- Numerous opportunities are available for students to publish work and participate in writing contests.

Your child's teacher will be the best resource for this information.

- If you feel your child is not achieving as expected, discuss your concerns with your child's school counselor. Additional information can be found on the AISD website or by calling the appropriate department—Special Education, ADHD, Dyslexia Services, or Gifted and Talented.
- Performance on the TAKS test will influence student elective choices. For example, a reading elective may be required in place of music or art if your child is struggling on the test.
- **Starting in 2008, state law will require a passing score on the TAKS ELA test in order to promote any eighth grader to ninth grade.**

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Child

- Where do you sit in class? Does it help you learn? What distracts you? Have you talked to your teacher about this?
- What are you reading?
- What are you writing about?
- What interests do you have?
- What questions do you ask when you do not understand?
- What can you do when you do not understand something?
- What research did you do to complete your assignment?
- What help does your teacher provide when you get behind in your work?

- What are your teacher's classroom phone number, e-mail, and/or Homework Helpline mailbox number?

Questions Students Can Ask Their Teachers

- Which TEKS are in today's lesson?
- How do I know if my work is good?
- What can I do to improve my work?
- What can I do to increase my reading comprehension?

Resources

Possible magazine subscriptions that you can get for your child to read at home:

- *Sports Illustrated for Kids*
- *National Geographic for Kids*
- *Teen People*
- *Time Magazine for Kids*
- *Read Magazine*
- *Scholastic Scope*

Reference materials

- A dictionary
- A thesaurus
- An Austin Public Library Card (free to all AISD students)

Language Arts page 2

Websites

- www.m-w.com (dictionary)
- www.dictionary.com (dictionary)
- www.austin.isd.tenet.edu (Austin ISD)
- www.tea.state.tx.us (Texas Education Agency)
- www.ci.austin.tx.us/library (Austin Public Library online catalog) (for research)
- www.ala.org (American Library Association)
- www.txla.org/index.html (Texas Library Association)
- www.txla.org/groups/yart/001/lone.html (Lone Star Reading List)
- www.mcdougallittell.com (state adopted literature book)
- www.barrettkendall.com (state adopted composition book)
- www.nationalgeographic.com (National Geographic)
- www.discovery.com (Discovery)
- www.aande.com (Arts and Entertainment)
- www.si.edu (Smithsonian Institute)
- www.scholastic.com (Scholastic, Inc.)
- www.britannica.com (Britannica)
- www.andromeda.Rutgers.edu/~jlynch/writing/ (grammar/usage)
- <http://cc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp/~shiki/> (haikus)
- www.geocities.com/solto/atrium/1437 (essay writing)
- www.bham.wednet.edu/bio/biomaker.htm (biography writing guide)
- www.favoritepoem.org (poetry favorites)
- www.latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/latino_bibliography.html (Latino resource)
- www.owl.English.purdue.edu (resources for writers)
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK (Time magazine for students)
- www.cyberkids.com (student projects)

- www.edufax.com (college information)
- www.ncrtec.org/picture.htm (images)
- www.about.com (search engine)
- www.yahooligans.com (search engine)

Middle School Mathematics Information and Resources

Mathematics page 1

For Your Information

- **Core experiences, based on TEKS, provide common hands-on experiences for all middle school children across the district.**
- For more information on grade 6-8 TEKS and sample lessons, visit: www.tenet.edu/teks/math/clarifying/index.html.
- School libraries have *Connected Mathematics Parent Handbooks* available for assistance at home.
- Students must conceptually understand and have mastered the Kindergarten through Grade 8 TEKS for success in Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II (AISD recommended graduation plan) and other advanced math courses.
- All students must have access to and experience technology in middle school and high school mathematics classes. Technology incorporated into today's classroom includes: calculators being used in rigorous, problem-solving applications; dynamic computer software to explore higher-level mathematics while offering conceptual understanding; and, interactive websites.
- Portions of the Grade 8 TEKS are tested on the 9th, 10th, and Exit-level TAKS test beginning in 2003. Other TEKS to be tested include Algebra and Geometry TEKS. Texas law states that a passing rate on the Exit-level test is a graduation requirement.
- **Starting in 2008, state law will require a passing score on the mathematics TAKS test in order to**

promote any eighth grader to the ninth grade.

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Children

- How can you draw and label a picture to represent the problem?
- How do you know your solution is reasonable?
- Have all parts of the question been answered with a quality reply?
- How can you explain your solution so it is clearer?
- What is another strategy that would work?
- How else can you explain your thinking?

Questions Students Can Ask Their Teachers

- How do I know if my work is good?
- How does today's lesson connect to yesterday's work?
- Which TEKS are in today's lesson?

Where do I stand in my understanding of the TEKS?

Where can I go for additional help when I need it?

Mathematician Information

- Mathematicians and jobs: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos043.htm>

- Chronological List of Mathematicians:

<http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~djoyce/mathhist/chronology.html>

Math Competitions

- MATHCOUNTS coaching and competition program for middle school students:

<http://mathcounts.org>

- University InterScholastic League Elementary and Junior High Academic

Competitions:

<http://www.uil.utexas.edu/aca/ejh/ejhindex.html>

Middle School Mathematics Information and Resources

Mathematics page 2

Magazines

- ***Dynamath***. Scholastic. Available from the school division. \$5.00 for the subscription.

- ***Games Magazine***, P.O. Box 10147, Des Moines, Iowa 50347.

- ***Games Junior***, P.O. Box 10147, Des Moines, Iowa 50347. Appropriate for ages 7 and up.

- ***Math Power***. Scholastic. Available from the school division. \$5.00

- ***Puzzlemania***. Highlights, P.O. Box 18201, Columbus, Ohio 43218-0201. Cost is approximately \$7.50

per month.

- ***Zillions***. Consumer Reports. P.O. Box 54861, Boulder, Colorado 80322. The cost is approximately

\$2.75 per issue.

Books for Parents

- Kulm, Gerald. *Math Power at Home*. American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- Kulm, Gerald. *Math Power in the Community*. American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- Kulm, Gerald. *Math Power in the School*. American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- Matyas, Marsha and Triana, Estrella M. *In Touch with Mathematics* (available in English and Spanish).

American Association for the Advancement of Science.

- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Family Math Awareness Activities*.

- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*

- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Using Calculators to Improve Your Child's Math Skills*.

- National PTA and Exxon Foundation. *Math Matters*.

- Room, Adrian. *The Guinness Book of Numbers*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc.

- Stenmark, Jean, Thompson, Virginia, and Cossey, Ruth. *Family Math-The Middle School Years* and

Matemática para la familia University of California at Berkeley.

- Walthall, Barbara, ed. *IDEAAAS: Sourcebook for Science, Mathematics, and Technology education*.

American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Technology Resources in District Mathematics Program (that can be purchased by parents for use at home)

- Texas Instruments Graphing Calculators: <http://education.ti.com/>
- Dynamic Geometers' Sketchpad Software Student Versions: http://www.keypress.com/catalog/products/software/Prod_GSP.html
- Dynamic Fathom Statistics Software Student Versions: http://www.keypress.com/catalog/products/software/Prod_Fathom.html

Websites (These contain great links for parents and children.)

- Have your child practice sample mathematics TAAS tests and together discuss strategies for solving the problems. Go to www.tea.st.gov to obtain a copies of released tests.
- For more information on the district-wide mathematics curriculum alignment plan for grades kindergarten through 12th grade visit www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/k12/curriculum/core/math/scopesequence.phtml.

Middle School Mathematics Information and Resources

Mathematics page 3

- Visit the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Family Corner at www.nctm.org. Go to the Family Corner and select The Math Forum, Do Math, Figure This!, and Illuminations for games emphasizing mathematics.
- Visit the Charles A. Dana Center Mathematics TEKS Toolkit Quickstart for the Family website at www.tenet.edu/teks/math/qstarts/families.html.
- Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education: <http://www.enc.org/weblinks/math/>
- U.S. Department of Education, America Counts: <http://www.ed.gov/americancounts/>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement: <http://www.ed.gov./pubs/parents>
- The Math Forum: <http://www.mathforum.com>
- National Institute of Standards and Technology: <http://www.nist.gov/metric>
- For information concerning the AISD middle school mathematics core resource, visit the CMP website at www.math.msu.edu/cmp.
- For calculator and computer information, visit the Charles A. Dana Center Mathematics TEKS Toolkit Technology website at www.tenet.edu/teks/math/tech/index.html.
- Interactive programs that your student can manipulate are available through the Manipula Math Java site at www.ies.co.jp/math/java/index.html.

- Dave’s Math Tables at www.sisweb.com/math/tables offers a site you can download into your computer.
- It also has many links to quality math sites, including a Spanish/English math dictionary site.
- The website designer of Cool Math at www.coolmath.com calls this site an “amusement park of mathematics.”

Middle School Science Information and Resources

For Your Information

- **Core experiences, based on TEKS, provide common hands-on experiences for all middle school children across the district.**
- ***Making Healthy Choices***, the district’s wellness and sexuality curriculum, is included in middle school science.
- Science Fair participation is required for all AISD 7th and 8th graders. It is optional, however, for AISD 6th graders.
- Participation in “Invent Austin” (a science invention fair), is required for AISD 6th graders. It is optional, however, for AISD 7th and 8th graders.
- **Starting in 2003, state law will require a passing score on the science TAKS test, which includes chemistry, physics, and biology, to graduate from high school.**

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Children

- What are the criteria by which your work is graded?
- How is your science work evaluated? How do you improve your work?
- What did you discuss in class today?
- Which of the TEKS did you cover today in class?
- What are your expectations for your science class?
- What safety precautions do you take when doing a lab?
- What hands-on activities are you doing in science class?
- How do you use computers and other technology in science class?
- What are you doing in science class that relates to real-life applications?

Questions Students Can Ask Their Teachers

- What do I need to do to successfully complete this project or activity?
- How can I use the Internet to do scientific research?
- What is an effective way to organize my daily work, portfolio, labs, or interactive notebooks?
- How does this topic affect everyday living?
- How will learning this topic impact my life? Why is important to learn this?

Middle School Science Information and Resources

Science page 1

Encourage your child to read scientific literature, including biographies of scientists, scientific achievements, and

scientific magazines.

Periodicals

Any newspaper
National Geographic
World
Texas Parks and Wildlife
Popular Science
Discover
Science News
Science World
Science Scope
National Wildlife
Federation
Scientific American

Bilingual Periodicals

Ahora
El Sol
Milenio

Encourage your child to locate scientific information using a variety of sources, including the Internet, television, newspapers, magazines, and reference materials.

Television Programs

Nature
A&E
Biography
Discovery Channel
Discovery Health Channel
National Geographic
Wild America
NOVA
Scientific American
Frontiers
Newton's Apple
Bill Nye, The Science Guy
Mr. Wild
The History Channel
Zoom

Websites

Encourage your child to visit science-related websites on the Internet.

www.scholastic.com (Scholastic, Inc.)
www.discovery.school.com (Discovery)

www.si.com (Smithsonian encyclopedia)
www.ci.austin.tx.us/library (Austin Public Library online catalog-use for research)
www.whyfiles.com (Well-researched, educational descriptions of the actual science behind current news stories. Supported by University of Wisconsin & National Institute for Science Education of NSF.)
www.kidscience.about.com (Ask experts tough questions; experiments, projects, & games.)
www.syvum.com/squizzes/science (Wonderful study aid for children.)
www.atomsandants.com (Science and nature learning site)
www.billnye.com (Nye Labs)
www.findoutwhy.com (Find Out Why)
www.explorescience.com/activities (real-time correlations between scientific theories and applications)
www.historyoftheuniverse.com (History of the Universe)
www.nsf.gov/home/menus/k12.htm (National Science Foundation)
www.olog.amnh.org
www.sciencemadesimple.com (Science Made Simple)
www.exploratorium.com (The Exploratorium Museum, S.F., CA)
www.tryscience.org (Try Science)
www.nationalgeographic.org (National Geographic)
www.pbs.org (PBS)
www.wildbasin.org (Wild Basin)
www.maps.com (maps)
www.stardate.utexas.edu (UT Star Date)
www.nimidi.amnh.org/burroughs/jba.html (122 John Burroughs Nature Books for Young Readers; 1988- 1999).
www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/fosrec/index/html (Learning from Fossil Records)
www.usgs.gov/education/learnweb/MA/index.html (U.S. Geological Survey: Map Adventures)

Middle School Science Information and Resources

Science page 1

www.comet.ucar.edu/dstremer
(American Meteorological Society (AMS) Weather

Maps)
www.spaceflight.nasa.gov
(NASA Human
Spaceflight)
www.fortworthmuseum.org
(Fort Worth Museum)
www.nwf.org
(National Wildlife
Foundation)
[www.abc.net.au/oceans/
alive.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/oceans/alive.htm) (Oceans
Alive)
www.envirosapes.com
(Enviroscape)
[www.colorado.edu/physic
s/2000](http://www.colorado.edu/physics/2000) (Physics 2000)

Middle School Social Studies Information and Resources

For Your Information:

- **Core experiences, based on TEKS, allow students to build a foundation on all eight of the social studies strands.**
- At all three grade levels in middle school, students will use a variety of rich primary (eye-witness accounts) and secondary (magazines, encyclopedias, textbook) sources, including biographies and autobiographies, novels, speeches and letters, as well as poetry, songs, and artwork.
- House Bill 1776 designates the last full week of September as "Celebrate Freedom" week. Its purpose is to impart to students the intent, meaning, and importance of significant documents and events from our nation's past.
- Middle school students are urged to participate in History Fair as part of National History Day activities.
- Students should also participate in Junior Historians. More information on this organization and Texas History Day can be found at the Texas State Historical Association website at www.tsha.utexas.edu.
- Participation in the National Geography Bee is recommended for all middle schools. More information about this competition can be found at the National Geographic Society's website at www.nationalgeographic.com.
- The intent of *Project Citizen* is to motivate and enable young people to enjoy the rights and accept the

responsibilities of citizenship. *Project Citizen* helps middle school students learn how to express their opinions, decide which level of government and which agency is most appropriate for dealing with problems they identify, and influence policy decisions at that level. Students in a classroom work cooperatively with each other and with teachers and adult volunteers as they identify a problem to study, gather information, examine solutions, develop public policy positions, and create action plans.

- The Austin Powwow and American Indian Heritage Festival is held the first Saturday in November. All students are urged to attend.

- **Starting in 2003, 8th grade students will be taking the TAKS examination in Social Studies.**

Students will need to demonstrate an understanding of issues and events in U.S. history, in

addition to understanding geographic, economic, social, and political influences on historical

issues and events. Students will also need to use critical thinking skills to analyze social studies

information. Texas law states that a passing rate on the Exit-level test is a graduation

requirement.

Questions Parents Can Ask Their Children

- How is your social studies work evaluated? How can you improve your work?
- What did you discuss in class today?
- How does your teacher help when you are behind in your work?
- What are you doing in social studies class that relates to real-life applications?
- How do you use computers and other technology in social studies class?
- What hands-on activities are you doing in social studies class?
- What community resources does your teacher utilize in social studies?
- What type of field trips have you taken in social studies class? What new idea or concept did you learn

from your visit on these field trips?

Questions Students Can Ask Their Teachers

- What content and skills will I be responsible for knowing on the 8th grade TAKS exam?
- What do I need to do to successfully complete a project or activity in social studies?
- How can I effectively organize my work in social studies class?
- How can I use the Internet to do research for social studies?
- How will learning this topic impact my life? Why is it important to learn this?

Middle School Social Studies Information and Resources

Resources

Periodicals

American Heritage Journal
Austin American-Statesman
American History
Civil War
Discover
National Geographic World
Newsweek
Our Kids
Smithsonian for Kids
Texas Highways
Texas Monthly
Texas Parks and Wildlife
Time
U.S. News and World Report
Other local newspapers

Books

Adopted textbooks
Atlas
Don't Know Much about Geography
Don't Know Much about History
Texas Almanac
World Almanac

Websites

www.abanet.org (American Bar Assn.)
www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/community (AISD)
www.civiced.org (Center for Civic Education)
www.discovery.com (Discovery)
www.educationplanet.com
(Education Planet)
www.nara.org
(National Archives)
www.nationalgeographic.com
(National Geographic)
www.ncss.org
(National Council of Social Studies)
www.pbs.org (PBS)
www.si.edu
(Smithsonian Institution)
www.texasbar.com/pubinf/lre/info.htm
(Texas Bar Assn.)
www.thehistorynet.com
(history site)
www.tea.state.tx.us
(Texas Education Agency)
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

(Texas Parks and Wildlife)

www.tsha.utexas.edu

(Texas State Historical Assn. and UT Center for Studies in Texas History site)

www.americaslibrary.com/cgi-bin/page.cgi/es

(The Library of Congress - America's Library)

[www.rice.edu.armadillo/Texas/maps](http://www.rice.edu/armadillo/Texas/maps)

(Texas maps and travel)

www.kidscom.com (geography site)

www.npg.si.edu/coi/pres

(portraits: presidents and first ladies)

Television Programs

A & E

Biography

Discovery

History Channel

PBS Series – “The American Experience”

Successful Strategies for Learning at Home

The following suggestions, written by experienced teachers of grades 6 to 8, allow your children to make a smooth transition into middle/junior high school and let them continue to be

successful for the duration of their secondary school careers. The activities and advice are designed to

help your children learn how they are progressing academically and socially and to assist you in having

your children take charge of their own schoolwork.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Read

- Set a daily time up for your child to have uninterrupted reading time (20 to 30 minutes daily).
- Allow your child to select appropriate books from the public library or bookstore.
- Share the books that you love with your child.
- Choose appropriate books for your child's ability.
- Establish a set family reading time.
- Read aloud to your child.
- Have your child read to you and discuss main ideas from the reading.
- Read the novels your child is required to read for class so that you can both discuss them.
- Let your child see you read.
- Have your child read regularly to get information from newspapers, magazines, reference books, and online sources.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Write

- Encourage your child to keep a journal of personal thoughts.

- Encourage your child to write thank you notes for gifts and to people who have been helpful.
- Write letters to your child so that your child will respond in writing to you.
- Have your child write about what he or she has read.
- Have your child write grocery lists or to-do lists.
- Give your child a special gift to encourage writing, such as a nice pen, colorful or decorated writing paper, a notebook, or a journal.
- For some writing tasks, have your child revise his or her writing to improve the work. Ask your child what he or she can do to make the writing more effective.
- Encourage your child to write letters for different purposes, such as to request information or to share an opinion.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Think

- Assign a task and ask your child to create the process for the solution.
- Ask your child open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Ask your child to express his or her opinion on a relevant issue.
- Discuss current events, movies, and music and have your child apply these issues to daily life.
- Don't answer all of your child's questions. Answer their question with a question to encourage their thinking at a higher level.
- Encourage problem solving through games and riddles.
- Question your children regularly regarding how they feel and think about everyday happenings.

Afterwards, have them elaborate about these issues.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Be Organized

- Establish a simple schedule for your child to follow at home.
- Encourage conversation about your child's day.
- Have your child write assignments for each class in an agenda notebook and check this notebook regularly.
- Establish a place at home for child to do homework and keep supplies.
- Clean out and organize the backpack with your child once a week.
- Label all folders, binders, and other supplies with the subject area and your child's name.
- Get materials and assignments ready the night before school.
- Model organization for your child at home.
- Provide a structural system for increasing responsibility and accountability.
- Recognize and reward good habits.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Do Homework

- Establish a "homework first" policy.
- Establish a specific time and place in your home for your child to do homework.
- Use incentives to motivate your child to complete homework before other activities.

- Ask your child to actually show you the completed work before moving on to other activities and discuss the work with him or her.
- Avoid distractions, such as television and computer games, while doing homework.
- Reward positive independent study.
- Encourage your child to ask you for help.
- Use the Austin ISD Homework Helpline.

Suggestions for Getting Your Child to Assume Self-Responsibility

- Set short-term goals with rewards for achievement and consequences for non-achievement of these goals.
- Set realistic attainable goals. Start small and grow.
- Establish a “no excuses” policy; accept only results. Don’t give in too easily.
- Model self-responsibility.
- Make a to-do checklist.
- Praise your child for responsible behavior.
- Establish household chores and family responsibilities for each child.
- Don’t do the chores or homework for your child.
- Allow your child to experience both positive and negative consequences.
- Discuss with your child what he or she learned in school each day.
- Ask your child to share his or her written agenda and homework assignments with you each day.

Important Questions to Ask your Child About Learning

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) provide the standards we use in AISD to ensure **academic rigor in a thinking curriculum**. We recommend that you use the questions below each day to discover what your children are learning. By asking these questions regularly, you are letting your child know that you value learning and are interested in their progress.

These questions help focus children on learning goals. When children know what is expected of them, we call it **clear expectations**. When children are able to talk with others about quality work, we call it **accountable talk**. These ideas are part of the Principles of Learning that AISD is using to increase learning for all children.

Try using these questions at home each day and see!

Tell me one new thing you learned today.

Why is it important to learn that?

How do you know your work is good?

What can you do to make your work better?