

Journeys: Tracing Our Families' Footsteps

Curriculum Guide

Third Grade

the **LernerSchool**
Learning for Life

As Third Graders become increasingly more independent, they take on greater responsibilities for their own learning and step up to a new level of community participation. Third Graders explore not only their place in the present, but the history of their own families and their community.

LITERACY

Third Graders engage with literacy concepts and skills throughout their day as they find and share information, solve problems, and explore new places and ideas. “Active reading” and the concept that “reading is thinking” are a focus of the Third Grade curriculum, and students learn to engage with a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts on diverse levels. Through student-led literature circles, Third Graders develop strong reading habits such as summarizing, visualizing and asking meaningful questions about what they read, as well as connecting texts to other texts, their own lives, and events in the world. They learn to use many different tools to keep information organized as they read, such as classroom charts, idea webs, and other graphic organizers, and to consider the author’s main ideas and motivation for writing.

Third Graders utilize writing as communication in all of their subject areas. Through Writers’ Workshop, students focus on honing their writing skills and creating polished final products. During the course of the year, they explore personal narratives, biographies, poetry, informative essays, fiction, and interviews. Great care is taken in the editing process, and Third Graders learn to correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors, add details, and “paint a picture” with their words. Spelling patterns and self-editing skills are explicitly studied through the Sitton Spelling program, which focuses on “spelling for writing” rather than word-list memorization. Third Grade students learn to write in cursive. They also learn touch-typing and keyboarding skills using the Keyboarding without Tears program, and encounter the world of digital citizenship through Google Apps. Our one-to-one Chromebook program ensures that each child has ample opportunity to explore the technology that will help shape their academic lives for years to come. Third Graders learn about online collaboration and practice peer editing through their writing and project work on Google Drive.

Resources we use include, but are not limited to:

- Units of Study for Reading and Writing (Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop)
- Sitton Spelling
- Daily Grammar Workshop and IXL Grammar
- Handwriting Without Tears Cursive Workbook
- Keyboarding without Tears
- Literature Circle novels and theme-related novels
- Topical non-fiction, various biographies, and web resources

MATH

We use the Everyday Mathematics Program as the basis for our math learning, which stresses flexible thinking, number sense, and creative problem solving. The program is designed to support and extend conceptual understanding, enhance and deepen learning, and provide “real-life” application of math skills. Students are encouraged to explain their thinking process through writing and discussion, and learn that the many ways of arriving at an answer are just as important as the answer itself. Students apply their math skills throughout the day and in all of their subject areas. Mastery of basic facts is fostered through Rocketship Math, a fun and engaging “fast facts” daily practice. Our students utilize the IXL math practice website to enhance their math skills and follow individualized programs that track and reward their progress.

In Third Grade, a few of the math concepts your child will work with include:

- Addition and subtraction fact families and automaticity
- Linear measurement and area
- Beginning multiplication and division algorithms
- Multiplication facts to 12
- Order of operations
- Analyzing, using, and showing data
- Probability
- Money math
- Word problems

SOCIAL STUDIES

Community and Family are the main themes for Social Studies in Third Grade. Students examine what it means to be a productive, positive community member both at school and in the wider world; this unit of study is then extended by looking at citizenship and civic heroes such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Third Graders explore immigration to the United States and, in connection with Judaic Studies, they learn about the Jewish immigration experience and the history of their own families. Students map where different branches of their families originated, interview family members, and choose an ancestor to research and present to the class. Third Graders work with their art teacher to create beautiful and detailed family trees, which are framed and hung at school for all to admire.

SCIENCE

The study of Science at Lerner is a hands-on, inquiry-driven learning experience. Through the innovative STEMscopes Curriculum, students are given plenty of opportunities to explore, ask questions, form hypotheses, experiment, and come to their own conclusions. STEMscopes is a project-based curriculum utilizing the scientifically proven 5E Model: Engage, Explore, Explain, Evaluate, and Elaborate, and has its pedagogical roots in Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Each STEMscopes unit of study provides hands-on opportunities for these five learning goals. Students experience science concepts in the real world as they study plants and soil in our gardens and use the compost bins. Science in Third Grade draws heavily on the students’ natural curiosity about the world and how it works, and is linked to content in all other subject areas. Third Grade topics of study in Science include the Physics of Objects and Motion, Astronomy (Stars, Observations in the Sky, and Solar System), Soil and Plant Adaptations, Animal Adaptations (including Humans), and Weather.

JUDAIC STUDIES

The Jewish Studies program fosters a love of tradition and community, builds a sense of values and responsibilities, engenders a strong Jewish identity, and creates confident Jewish learners and participants. Third Graders begin working with the MaToK Bible Curriculum, which teaches Torah text in Hebrew and through many diverse learning modalities; students in Third Grade study the stories of Lech Lecha, VaYera, and Toldot. Through their work with MaToK, students engage with the Torah text on a variety of levels. They study the literal meaning of the text as well as the many interpretations, and have ample opportunities to “unpack” and experience the text through discussion, role-play, art, asking and answering questions, and storytelling. Third Graders study the meanings and history of t’fillot (prayers) from the Shacharit (weekday morning) service, examine Jewish holiday customs around the world, and explore the people and places of Israel. They take an in-depth look at Jewish values and how they can guide our actions through discussion, role-play, literature, and the Kids’ Mensch Handbook curriculum. In connection with their work on Immigration and Family History, Third Graders study the history of Jewish immigration to the United States and participate in an “Ellis Island Experience” family program.

HEBREW

Hebrew language instruction at Lerner takes place through the “Ivrit b’Ivrit” (Hebrew immersion) Tal Am curriculum. In the Third Grade, students are introduced to the grammatical system of shoreshim (word roots) and work throughout the year to identify the shoreshim in words and use them to predict meaning as well as to conjugate verbs in the present tense. Students continue to build vocabulary and read with greater fluency, and they write complex sentences and short paragraphs. They practice reading for meaning with a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts. Games, plays, art, and songs are used to support the learning experience.

SPOTLIGHT ON...SOCIAL STUDIES

The theme of extended families weaves throughout the Third Grade year. Students reflect on their school “family” through discussion of community-building, citizenship, and what it means to be a good friend. They notice friendship traits in the literature they read, and write short biographies highlighting interesting and positive aspects of their classmates. As they learn about immigration, students delve into their own family’s past. They interview family members and compile family stories and photographs. They write about, bring in, and discuss family heirlooms, and create detailed, lush, vibrant family trees. Each child researches the life of a family member and presents that person to the community while dressed in costume and bearing a written report and poster or PowerPoint presentation. The “Ellis Island Experience” program transports Third Graders and their entire families as they take on a new identity and move through the different stations of the school, now transformed into the bustling, confusing, hope-filled Ellis Island of the past.