

Planting the Seeds

Curriculum Guide

First Grade

the **LernerSchool**
Learning for Life

First Grade students are encouraged to ask questions, express ideas, and explore connections as they learn and grow. Their natural curiosity leads to wonderful ideas, projects and discussions. Each idea, each question is a seed that is nurtured through learning and experience. After learning about the Self and their relationships to family and community in Kindergarten, students in First Grade broaden their understanding of the needs of living things. Through all of the curricular strands, First Graders learn that all living things are connected and dependent upon other living organisms in many direct and indirect ways. Ethics and Jewish values are taught and reinforced in every subject area as First Graders explore their role in protecting our Earth and its inhabitants.

LITERACY

First Graders learn about story elements through interdisciplinary author studies, participating in reader's theater, exploring word families, becoming familiar with sight words, and creating story maps. Reading skills such as decoding, segmenting and blending, and phonemic awareness are taught directly as well as through integrated activities. Our highly differentiated reading program meets learners where they are and allows them to successfully build their "reader's toolbox."

In First Grade, students begin to master word patterns and the different vowel sounds, and emphasis is placed on understanding that writing has meaning and that their words communicate their ideas to others. The Writer's Workshop model allows students to express themselves while teaching the ways and habits of writers such as narrative, extending ideas, and choosing the best words. Attention is also paid to writing mechanics such as capitalization and punctuation, and spelling that focuses on "spelling for writing."

Students are assessed on an ongoing basis to provide for their individual instructional needs. Through a variety of activities and settings, your child will learn:

- Use strategies for effective reading
- Phonics including short and long vowels, consonant blends, and consonant digraphs
- Word families
- High Frequency Word Wall words
- Alphabetize words to the first or second letter
- Read grade level /individual learning level text with comprehension
- Organize and express ideas orally and in writing
- Identify story elements and structures
- Read for a variety of purposes including information gathering and enjoyment
- Use temporary (phonetic) and conventional spelling in daily work
- Print upper case and lower case letters
- Write more than one sentence related to a single topic
- Write for a variety of purposes

Resources we use include, but are not limited to:

- Right into Reading phonics and comprehension, Fountas and Pinnell Phonics materials
- Wright Group Guided Reading materials and other Guided Reading texts
- Units of Study for Primary Writing and Reading (Reading and Writing Workshop)
- Handwriting Without Tears
- Sitton Spelling

MATH

First Graders use the Everyday Mathematics Program as the basis for math learning, which stresses flexible thinking, number sense, and creative problem solving. Games play a strong role in the Everyday Math Program, and are designed to support and extend conceptual understanding. 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.

First Grade math concepts include:

- Identifying and writing numbers up to 100
- Comparing numbers
- Addition and Subtraction through 20
- Fact Families
- Fractions
- Non-standard and Standard linear measurement (foot, inch, centimeter)
- Place value (ones, tens, hundreds)
- Telling time
- Money skills: Coin identification, counting amounts, coin combinations, making given amounts
- 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional shapes
- Number Stories

SOCIAL STUDIES

Lerner First Graders expand their horizons and awareness over the course of the year in Social Studies by beginning with community building within the classroom, then moving to a unit on using resources that incorporates an investigation into the homes that people build throughout the world. The hands-on unit helps the students recognize how families in varied climates and cultures all want to keep their loved ones safe and healthy. The unit integrates with science as the students build their own shelters. Then, the students move into one of the highlights of the Lerner First Grade experience: the Art and Artists Unit (see Spotlight at end of Guide). After “becoming” their artists, the First Graders return to a focus on community that includes studies of economics, geography and mapping, types of communities, and managing resources. For their final project of the school year, the First Graders build their model community, including the actual model, a map, and a written explanation of their choices.

SCIENCE

The study of Science at Lerner is a hands-on, inquiry-driven learning experience. Through the innovative STEMscopes Curriculum – supplemented by teacher created materials, the use of our outdoor spaces, and field trips – students are given ample opportunities to explore, ask questions, form hypotheses, experiment, and come to their own conclusions. First Grade science 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. The First Grade units of study, which are connected explicitly to the Social Studies themes, include plants and trees, rocks and minerals, natural resources and human impact, balance and motion, and matter. In addition, First Grade scientists complete extensive investigations of bird species that culminate in formal projects on their individual bird.

At Lerner a strong emphasis is placed on values and ethics. While learning about natural resources and our Earth, students discuss the Jewish values of tza'ar ba'alei chayim (caring for animals and plants), ba'al tashkit (respecting and caring for the environment), and tikkun olam (taking care of the world). As they explore the world in Science, Social Studies and Judaic Studies, First Graders discover the web connecting all living things and learn about their roles and responsibilities within it.

JUDAIC STUDIES

The Jewish Studies program at Lerner utilizes the Ivrit b'Ivrit (Hebrew immersion) Tal Am curriculum to foster a love of tradition and community, build a sense of values and responsibility to one another, engender a strong Jewish identity, and create confident Jewish learners and participants. First Grade children study stories from the Torah, discover the cities of Israel, explore the synagogue, and embrace the Jewish values of kavod (respect), derech erez (good manners), tikkun olam (repairing the world), and tzedakah (charity). This learning is reinforced in their secular studies, as when the Jewish teaching that kol Yisrael arevim zeh l'zeh (all Jews are responsible for one another) is highlighted in the 4 Rs unit. First Grade students will focus on learning about the Siddur, culminating in a Siddur Ceremony at which each child will be presented with an inscribed Siddur by his or her family.

HEBREW

The focus of Hebrew language instruction in First Grade is learning to read and write the letters of the aleph-bet. As they master the characters, sounds, and vowels, students begin to recognize and read simple words in Hebrew; each week children bring home a Hebrew reader from the lending library to practice their reading skills. Hebrew instruction is a full body experience as the children listen to stories, sing songs, dance, follow Hebrew directions in games and activities, and much more. The First Grade uses the Ivrit b'Ivrit (Hebrew immersion) Tal-Am Ariot Program to teach letter recognition and reading skills.

SPOTLIGHT ON ART AND ARTISTS

The Art and Artists Unit incorporates reading, writing, geography, history, science, oral presentation, critical thinking, and the hands-on creation of artwork. The students complete whole class artist studies that explicitly connect the art to the artist to show how context, personality, style, and region intertwine. For example, an artist study of Georgia O’Keeffe begins by using Google Earth to locate the artist’s home and the areas where she completed her artwork. Then, the class analyzes a variety of examples of O’Keeffe’s artwork one at a time, and then writes down and shares their observations. The students recognize the features of the artwork that paid homage to the landscapes, flora, and fauna of the regions where O’Keeffe lived and worked. After the discussions, the students return to a slide of a painting of a flower, and the children note the distinctive stylistic features of the art. Finally, the students have the opportunity to examine real flowers with magnifying glasses, to make additional observations, and to create their own watercolor paintings in the style of O’Keeffe. The students complete similarly robust investigations into various accomplished artists from different countries and time periods.

The culminating activity for the unit is a special event for parents that includes individual presentations by the students, who “become” their selected artists by describing their lives and work in first person speeches (in costume), followed by a “gallery opening” showcasing the students’ renditions of artwork in the styles of O’Keeffe, Warhol, Klee, Picasso, Matisse, and Chagall.



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