

Understanding Multiple Points of View

Curriculum Guide

Fourth Grade

the **LernerSchool**
Learning for Life

Fourth Grade is a year of growth and change as the students begin to take greater responsibility for their learning and for setting their own goals. Their year-long focus on perspective taking and experimentation, coupled with an emphasis on protecting natural resources along with human and ecological diversity sets the backdrop for an integrated course of study across the curriculum; critical thinking skills, point of view, and values are woven throughout as the Fourth Graders examine community from a variety of angles.

LITERACY

Thinking, writing, and speaking about literature are at the center of our reading program. Through student-led literature circles, Fourth 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 going on in the world. Students also engage with a wide variety of non-fiction material, from books to websites to news articles, and develop critical reading and comprehension skills as they seek out facts and information.

Fourth Graders utilize writing as communication in all of their subject areas. Through their Writers' Workshop, students focus on honing their writing skills and creating polished final products. During the course of the year, they explore personal narratives, current events reports, poetry, blogging, persuasive essays, fiction, and literature responses. Great care is taken in the editing process, and Fourth Graders work independently and with their peers to correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors as well as to improve on content and flow. 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. Fourth Graders hone their 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. Fourth Graders learn about online collaboration and practice peer editing through their writing and project work on Google Drive.

Fourth Graders use literature as a gateway to discussion of the wider world and our place in it. As they read *El Deafo*, for example, students use the novel as a starting point for discussions about differences among individuals, and how analyzing diverse ways of learning and of navigating the world can facilitate self-exploration as well. The novel also serves as an inspiration for artistic and creative expression, as the students discover and experiment with the graphic novel format. Throughout their literature study, students are guided to expand their horizons regarding differing points of view and learn to articulate their beliefs and ideas in a respectful and effective manner through debate and essay writing.

Resources we use include, but are not limited to:

- Sitton Spelling
- Daily Grammar Workshop and IXL Grammar
- Units of Study for Reading and Writing (Teachers College Reading and Writing Workshop)
- Literary Cafe novels and theme-related novels
- Topical non-fiction and web resources

MATH

Math concepts are utilized throughout the day and are integrated with units of study across the curriculum. The flexible thinking skills and oral and written explanation of how one arrived at one's answer correspond with and build on similar skills the students use as they work with literature, social studies, science, and Judaics topics. Students are provided with ample opportunities to apply their math skills throughout the day, whether analyzing North Carolina population data, calculating the force of different magnets, or using coordinate graphs to play logic games and participate in a "geo-caching" scavenger hunt around the school.

We use the Everyday Mathematics Program as the basis for our math learning, which stresses flexible thinking, number sense, and creative problem solving. Students work with a variety of math-related websites for practice, research, skills application, and fun. Our students utilize the IXL math practice website to enhance their math skills and follow individualized programs that track and reward their progress. Mastery of basic facts is fostered through Rocketship Math, a fun and engaging "fast facts" daily practice. In Fourth Grade, a few of the math concepts your child will work with include:

- Properties of geometric solids, angles, rays, and line segments
- Coordinate planes and graphing
- Data landmarks (median, mode, range)
- Symmetry, reflections, and translations
- Multi-digit multiplication and division
- Decimal places to the ten-thousandths
- Comparing and using fractions, adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators
- Order of operations and parentheses
- Area, perimeter, and volume
- Beginning algebra concepts

SOCIAL STUDIES

In an effort to expose our students to the benefits of multi-age, interdisciplinary learning, our Fourth and Fifth Grade Social Studies and Science classes will be combined and integrated. The major Social Studies themes will thus be intertwined with the Science curricula. The Fourth/Fifth Grade themes for the 2017–2018 school year include U.S. and World Geography, Leadership, American Revolution, U.S. Government and Constitution, Civil Rights, and a major interdisciplinary project on Jewish American history. One of the culminating projects for the year will include a research paper and presentation on the modern U.S. that will require students to utilize their research, technology, reading comprehension, writing, and oral communication skills. In the process of completing the project, the students will "become" a significant figure from Jewish American history in an area of interest for them. The 4th and 5th graders will go on field trips to the state capitol, Book Harvest, and Bennett Place, and will seek out opportunities to meet with local Jewish scientists, artists, writers, scholars, leaders, and educators of renown.

Throughout the year, the 4th and 5th grade students will also engage in service learning projects tied to their Social Studies and Judaic Studies units. One major service project involves collecting books to donate to Book Harvest while studying the impact of literacy on communities throughout the world.

SCIENCE

The study of Science at Lerner is a hands-on, inquiry-driven learning experience. Through the innovative STEMscopes Curriculum, coupled with teacher generated resources and utilizing the outdoor environment, students are given ample 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 unit of study provides hands-on opportunities for these five learning goals. The combined Fourth Grade/ Fifth Grade units of study, which are connected explicitly to the Social Studies themes, include Matter, Gravity, Energy Transfer, Earth Systems, Human Footprint, and Reducing the Human Footprint. At the beginning of the year, students will incorporate a thorough evaluation of scientific procedures and principles, as well as investigate the human brain and cognition in connection to their efforts to build greater self-awareness.

At Lerner, a strong emphasis is placed on values and ethics. While learning about the human footprint on the 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 research Jewish Americans in Science, Social Studies and Judaic Studies, Fourth and Fifth Graders discover how their predecessors established a foundation of excellence in fields that encourage speculation, exploration, experimentation, and application of knowledge to aid scientific, technological, and artistic innovation.

JUDAIC STUDIES

The Jewish Studies program at Lerner fosters a love of tradition and community, builds a sense of values and responsibility to one another, engenders a strong Jewish identity, and creates confident Jewish learners and participants. Fourth Graders continue their Torah study with the Va'Yeitzei and Va'Yishlach books of the MaToK Bible Curriculum, focusing on the story of Jacob and his family. 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. Fourth Graders study the meanings and history of t'fillot (prayers) from the Shacharit (weekday morning) service, act as shelichei tzibur (prayer leaders), and discover the historical roots of holidays through looking at what the Tanach proscribes for each one. They take an in-depth look at Jewish values and how they can guide our actions through discussion, role-play, literature, and the You Be the Judge ethics curriculum. In connection with their work on North Carolina history in Social Studies, Fourth Graders also explore the history of Jews in our state.

HEBREW

Hebrew language instruction at Lerner takes place through the "Ivrit b'Ivrit" (Hebrew immersion) Tal Am curriculum. In the Fourth Grade, students draw on their knowledge of shoshvim (word roots) to enrich and increase their vocabulary, learn to conjugate verbs in the past tense, and expand their writing abilities to craft longer one or two paragraph pieces. They read a variety of Hebrew texts for information as well as enjoyment, and build on their reading fluency to understand the more nuanced meaning of a text rather than translating literally word for word. Songs, games, art, and creating and performing short skits all enrich the Hebrew experience.

SPOTLIGHT ON...TECHNOLOGY

In an ever more technological world, we strive to provide our students with the skills and resources to use technology in intelligent, savvy, ethical, and creative ways. Fourth Graders engage with technology throughout the year and for diverse purposes. They learn about online communities and communication as they conduct literacy discussions and complete other projects on Google Drive, engage in online collaboration and discussion using Google Classroom, work with Google Earth to explore geography, and use Chromebooks to write and edit, conduct internet research, and design presentations in a variety of formats (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Prezi, Adobe Voice). Fourth Graders use the SmartBoard to manipulate objects during their study of geometry, challenge themselves to beat previous records on IXL (a math and grammar skills practice website), and investigate sources of renewable energy. Through guided use of the Internet, Fourth Graders learn how to search safely and distinguish the useful information from the vast returns of a web search. Designing research questions on topics of interest allows students to practice locating, compiling, and understanding information online.