



## GRADE SEVEN, 2009 - 2010

As new members of the Upper School, seventh graders will take on increased responsibility and independence in their daily activities. They will serve as role models for the younger students and contribute positively to the everyday operation of the school. The seventh grade curriculum encourages students to think analytically as they practice and improve their basic skills in different subject areas. Students learn to study independently, work in small groups, and share their knowledge with their peers.

**ENGLISH:** Seventh grade English emphasizes the reading of good literature, creative and expository writing, and critical thinking. Literature is selected from different genres including nonfiction, drama, poetry, the short story, and the novel. Each selection serves as a model of expression and as a springboard for writing assignments, animated classroom discussions, and analysis. English class meets five periods per week.

The website program <http://englishgrammar101.com/> serves as a grammar program for the seventh grade, and students complete Vocabulary Energizers I, by D. Popkin. Spelling will be directly connected to the vocabulary work and writing assignments. Reading selections will draw from *The Miracle Worker* (Gibson), *The Old Man and the Sea* (Hemingway), *The Shakespeare Stealer* (Gary Blackwood), *The Cay* (Theodore Taylor), *I Am the Cheese* (Cormier), *Our Town* (Thornton Wilder), *A Book of Poetry: Perspectives in Literature*, *Short Stories I: Perspectives in Literature*, and *Seedfolks* (Fleischman).

**MATH:** The seventh grade uses the text *Transition Mathematics*. This is a University of Chicago School Mathematics Program (UCSMP) middle school component that coordinates smoothly with our K-6 grade *Everyday Mathematics* program. Problem solving, everyday applications, technology, and reading, as well as developing and maintaining basic skills, are emphasized in this curriculum. There are three themes to the year: applied arithmetic, pre-algebra, and pre-geometry. Variables are explored through patterns, formulas, and the coordinate plane. Students will connect arithmetic to algebra and geometry, and apply them to measurement, probability, and statistics.

As mathematicians, students are asked to participate in class actively through discussion, shared work on the board, group work, and projects. They are required to read the math text as well as to write when explaining their mathematical thinking. The graphing calculator will be introduced in seventh grade.

**SCIENCE:** Through research and experimentation, seventh graders practice the scientific method of observation, analysis, and presentation. They learn how to write structured lab reports on data they have collected, as well as written reports on topics they have researched in books and on the Internet. Concise, clear oral reports are presented with the use of posters, graphs, and computer programs such as PowerPoint. Students have a chance to explore topics of their choice while following a scientific process.

In the fall the science and math curricula are tied together as students collect data from tree plots in the woods. They learn about the growth of the local forest and how to identify species of trees. A trip to the White Mountains to observe forest types in a different landscape is the culmination of this unit. Students also learn various cycles found in nature through the study of soil. Later in the fall, students are introduced to healthy nutrition. They examine their own diets and use the computer to create spreadsheets and graphs to display data. They also inspect the environmental impacts of various nutrition-related topics. During the winter, the students develop a science project of their own to research and test. Spring brings exploration of forces and motion.

Texts for the year include *A Guide to New England's Landscape* and Prentice Hall's *Earth's Natural Resources*. Individual projects will utilize a variety of sources, including journals, library books, and the Internet, for current information on scientific topics.

**DRUG AND ALCOHOL CURRICULUM:** In conjunction with science, the seventh grade substance abuse program will focus on the way drugs, especially alcohol, affect the body. Decision-making skills and role-playing will give students the knowledge and tools to enable them to deal with situations they might encounter involving drugs and alcohol.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** In seventh grade, students begin the first section of a two-year class called *An Introduction to American Studies*. The text on civics teaches them why and how governments are formed. It focuses on the ideals that culminated in the founding of the United States and the philosophical thinking that went into the writing of the Constitution. As they learn about the United States, seventh graders will discuss current events and read relevant magazine and newspaper articles. There is a geography component to the class that incorporates the five themes of geography: location, place, human/environment interaction, movement, and region, as well as frequent mapping exercises. While U.S. government is the overarching theme for the year, we will also read books about people from different places and discuss political situations around the globe. A goal for the course is for students to develop an awareness of the United States and its relationship to the rest of the world. In the spring, there is a unit on the Civil Rights Movement.

*We The People* is the primary text. The magazine *Junior Scholastic* will arrive twice a month, and we will read *Three Cups of Tea* in November and Martin Luther King's essay "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

**ART:** In the seventh grade the students begin a more focused look at the work of a variety of artists from throughout history with an eye towards self-expression and how our unique identities inform our work. The curriculum builds on skills acquired in the past and the focus is to create concise expression of ideas in the work. Students complete weekly homework, which allows them the chance to read about contemporary artists and issues in the art world. Often research done as homework informs projects worked on in class. Students have looked at masks from around the world and made plaster

masks of themselves. They have done projects related to the work of Joseph Cornell, Jim Dine, and Roy Lichtenstein. A popular project has been creating CD covers for their own fictitious bands using Photoshop Elements. In seventh grade students need to be able to discuss artwork within a greater historical and social context.

**FRENCH:** In seventh grade we will be using the textbook *Amis et Compagnie*. This series is designed with middle school students in mind, featuring teenage characters and engaging adventures with the Three Musketeers. An accompanying CD provides a sound track of native French speakers with authentic accents for auditory and oral exercises, and a workbook provides written exercises. Young learners of French will enjoy the songs, games, and reading and writing built around a body of vocabulary. Topics in this series include school belongings, family, tastes, favorite activities, towns and schedules, descriptions of people, clothing and parties, the house and meals. Additionally, the new language series *Qtalk*, which employs pictures as a mechanism to promote oral proficiency, will be used to get students speaking more in class. There will be regular homework. The seventh and eighth grades will combine to meet in two multi-age groups, each group meeting three times a week, twice for 40 minutes and once for 50 minutes, in the French room.

**MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY:** The music program is an integral part of the TGS curriculum with all students in K-8 having three music classes per week. The primary goals are: developing an appreciation for music; singing on-pitch; reading music and playing an instrument; dancing cooperatively; taking direction and performing on stage. Basic computer skills and an introduction to music technology are also important components of the program. Students work in groups, individually, and with several faculty members throughout the year in different learning situations.

**SOCIAL CURRICULUM:** The social curriculum at TGS is designed to complement the academic curriculum and help maintain a healthy social and learning environment. This includes a series of "Community Life" classes at all grade levels that complements and reinforces the classroom-based social curricular activities and goals. We define a healthy school community as a place where people have a sense of belonging, where adults and students extend and receive respect in their relationships with each other, and where people feel both a sense of support and personal challenge to help them learn and grow as human beings.

The "Community Life" classes help highlight and develop important community skills such as cooperation, team building, personal and social responsibility, deep listening, mindful speech, emotional literacy, respect for diversity, conflict resolution, stress reduction and relaxation, self-awareness, and problem solving.

**LIBRARY:** Seventh graders will make use of the upper school and main libraries to support class work and reading for pleasure.

**PHYSICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:** This program is designed to give a child a chance to develop physically through play, games, and skill tasks. Activities are planned to stress various underlying themes of the program: strength and endurance (muscular and cardiovascular), coordination, game skills, sportsmanship, and social interaction. Seventh and eighth graders have PSD in two mixed class groups of about 15 students each during the fall. The fall curriculum includes one class each week focusing on Presidential Fitness guidelines, one working with Chris Harlow and Paul Hopkins on challenge course activities, and one for general aerobic fitness, building up to the timed mile run. After-school cross-country running practice and meets are scheduled through the fall. In winter seventh graders cross-country ski on the TGS trails, skate with fifth-eighth graders at the Vermont Academy rink, and have a choice between cross-country skiing at Grafton Ponds or downhill skiing or snowboarding instruction at Okemo. Spring activities include team and cooperative games as well as some track and field sports.