

Middle School Language Arts

In Middle School, students grow in their literary sophistication. Exposure to a wide range of texts help them develop analytical skills, a broader knowledge of the world, and a deeper engagement with literature. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project's Units of Study in narrative, argument, and information writing continue to strengthen writing skills, and we weave grammar and vocabulary study throughout the curriculum.

In addition to composition, grammar, and vocabulary, our program emphasizes critical thinking about world history and culture. Our students develop into sophisticated and articulate communicators, and our graduates and their teachers consistently testify that their writing skills give them a competitive advantage in high school.

Reader's Workshop

Sixth Grade

Texts include a variety of short stories, novels, poems (including Shakespeare's Sonnets), and drama. Students will:

- ❖ Read, comprehend, and analyze literature
- ❖ Provide an objective summary of a text
- ❖ Cite evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly to make inferences drawn from a text
- ❖ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings, and analyze the impact of word choice on meaning and tone
- ❖ Understand how plot unfolds by identifying how characters evolve as a plot moves toward a resolution
- ❖ Identify the sequence of important events, the literary elements, and the story arc
- ❖ Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot
- ❖ Explain and examine how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text
- ❖ Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, play, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch
- ❖ Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics

Seventh Grade

Texts include a variety of short stories, novels, poems, and plays. Students will:

- ❖ Read, comprehend, and analyze literature
- ❖ Provide an objective summary of a text
- ❖ Cite several pieces of evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly and to draw references.

- ❖ Practice determining theme and analyze its development, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot
- ❖ Analyze how particular literary elements interact
- ❖ Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings, analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sound on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama, and examine the impact of specific word choices on meaning, including allusions to other texts
- ❖ Analyze how form or structure contributes to meaning
- ❖ Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators
- ❖ Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its recorded, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium
- ❖ Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history

Eighth Grade

Texts include a variety of short stories, novels, poems, and plays. Students will:

- ❖ Read, comprehend, and analyze literature
- ❖ Provide an objective summary of a text
- ❖ Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings, analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts
- ❖ Cite several pieces of evidence that most strongly support an analysis of what the text says explicitly and make inferences drawn from the text
- ❖ Master the ability to determine theme and analyze its development, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot
- ❖ Analyze how particular lines of dialogue propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision
- ❖ Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts, and analyze how the differing structure of each contributes to its meaning and style
- ❖ Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor
- ❖ Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors
- ❖ Analyze how a text draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible

Grammar and Language Functions

6th grade: introduction

7th grade: practice

8th grade: master

- ❖ Annotate while reading passages to deepen understanding of written language
- ❖ Use coordinating conjunctions and commas to separate independent clauses
- ❖ Use clear and specific nouns when writing, thoughtfully chosen to draw a picture in the reader's mind
- ❖ Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and appropriately place commas
- ❖ Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking
- ❖ Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
- ❖ Vary sentence patterns for meaning, interest, and style
- ❖ Interpret figures of speech in context and recognize and understand idioms, adages, proverbs, similes, and metaphors
- ❖ Recognize the role of the audience within varying contexts and draw logical conclusions about the intended audience for a given passage
- ❖ Understand how the purpose for and focus of a piece of writing help determine the kind of information included and the appropriate style and tone of the piece
- ❖ Recognize thesis statements, topic sentences, and conclusions, effective transitions between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs, and effectively and logically sequence information within a paragraph or passage
- ❖ Articulate the differences between simple, compound, complex, and complex-compound sentences
- ❖ Recognize correct and incorrect shifts in verb tense and know how to fix them
- ❖ Properly write and punctuate dialogue

Punctuation

- ❖ Recognize correct and incorrect punctuation, including the correct use of the comma, the apostrophe in contractions and possessives, and dashes, parentheses, colons, and semicolons to help include extra detail and explanation in sentences
- ❖ Cite sources including photos, videos, articles, blogs, websites and quotations using MLA style formatting
- ❖ Proofread to check for errors in punctuation and meaning.
- ❖ Prepare works cited and bibliography pages.

Spelling

- ❖ Identify misspellings of commonly used words
- ❖ Use resources to be sure words are spelled correctly

Vocabulary

- ❖ Distinguish among the subtle shades of meaning in choosing the appropriate word (or words)
- ❖ Identify the meaning of a word by the prefix, suffix, or root
- ❖ Use knowledge of Greek and Latin root words as clues to help determine meaning
- ❖ Find synonyms for common verbs in a sentence for variation; choose verbs that are exact in their description; and use resources to check for precision
- ❖ Consult reference materials, print or digital, to find the pronunciation of a word, or to determine or clarify its precise meaning or part of speech
- ❖ Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words
- ❖ Be able to distinguish among homonyms, homophones, and homographs

Writer's Workshop

Sixth Grade

- ❖ Personal Narrative--Students write true stories, learning strategies to generate meaningful story ideas, manage pace, elaborate on important scenes, and deepen insights.
- ❖ The Literary Essay--Students craft essays that make arguments about character, learning strategies essayists use to gather, analyze, and explain evidence from the text to support their claims.
- ❖ Research-Based Information Writing--Students learn ways to research and write informational essays to teach their readers about a topic using increasingly sophisticated ways to draw on and structure information to explain a position or make a call to action.

Seventh Grade

- ❖ Writing Realistic Fiction--Students write engaging short fiction, creating action-filled plots, believable characters, and crafting nuanced, memorable scenes.
- ❖ Writing About Reading-- Students intensify their engagement with reading by crafting essays about character and theme, learning strategies essayists use to gather, analyze, and explain evidence from the text to support their claims.
- ❖ The Art of Argument--Students craft essays that make arguments about character and theme and learn strategies essayists use to gather, analyze, and explain evidence from the text to support their claims.

Eighth Grade

- ❖ Investigative Journalism--Students learn to use sharp observations of life to write news and investigative articles about meaningful topics, crafting vivid narratives and elaborating on multiple perspectives.
- ❖ The Literary Essay--Students write arguments and counterarguments about themes in texts, supporting their positions with details of plot, character, and author's craft.
- ❖ Position Papers--Students learn ways writers explain complex issues and compose arguments by drawing on evidence, contextualizing their positions, and addressing multiple perspectives.

Middle School Mathematics

We have adopted math curricula with an excellent track record of promoting deeper understanding of numbers and math concepts: Montessori Math in Kindergarten, Singapore Math for grades 1-6, Pre-Algebra (Big Ideas) and Algebra (Prentice Hall).

Unlike many math curricula, which spiral concepts from year to year, Singapore Math teaches for mastery. Since we adopted Singapore Math, our students' test scores have markedly increased. Results of the ERB standardized tests confirm that Singapore Math has given our students an academic boost.

In seventh and eighth grades, students transition to year-long study of pre-algebra, algebra and geometry. The programs balance conceptual understanding with procedural fluency, as research shows that students benefit from equal exposure to discovery learning and scaffolded instruction. These courses follow a traditional approach which mimics the curriculum of the local schools into which they will integrate in 9th grade.

Sixth Grade:

- * Algebraic reasoning- writing algebraic expressions and equations with all four operations
- * graphing functions and finding solutions in two variables from a graph
- * Solving one step equations using bar models
- * Problem Solving
- * Fraction and decimal relationships
- * Compare and order fractions and decimals, including negative rational numbers
- * Add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions
- * Percents - Percent of a quantity using bar models
- * Percent of change- increase and decrease
- * Interest, sales tax, discount
- * Spend \$350 project
- * Ratio and proportion
- * Compare three quantities using ratios
- * Rates and speed using formula
- * Circumference and area of whole and partial circles
- * Perimeter and area of composite figures
- * Volume of prisms, cylinders, composite solids and partial solids
- * Angles - Identify vertical, supplementary, complementary, reflex angles
- * Solve problems by determining angle measurements
- * Solving triangles and quadrilaterals for angle measurements
- * Construction of angles, lines, triangles and quadrilaterals using straight edges, compass, and protractors
- * Measures of central tendency- mean , median, & mode

- * Population and sampling
- * Range
- * Probability, Experimental and Theoretical, Simple events and compound events
- * Integer operations
- * Order of operations

Seventh Grade

- * Writing and translating variable expressions from verbal descriptions and linear models
- * Using order of operations to simplify and evaluate numerical and algebraic expressions and involving multiple grouping symbols
- * Determining the absolute value of an integer
- * Operations with radical numbers
- * Using inductive reasoning to make conjectures and solve problems involving patterns
- * Graphing on a cartesian plane
- * Solve one- and two-step equations and inequalities with rational numbers using all four operations
- * Simplify integer and algebraic expressions with the distributive property
- * Graph and solve inequalities including one-step and two-step inequalities.
- * Review measures of central tendency and determine which measure best describes the data
- * Solve problems within the metric system
- * Simplify numerical and algebraic expressions with exponents, including grouping symbols and negative and positive bases
- * Represent area as a product of exponential terms
- * Write numbers and solve problems in scientific notation
- * Convert units within the customary measurement system
- * Simplify exponential expressions including raising powers to powers and quotients raised to powers
- * Solve problems using unit rates
- * Solve and use proportions to determine if figures are similar
- * Solve similar figure problems
- * Solve problems using scale
- * Solve problems using percent applications including compound interest and the percent equation
- * Determine the percent of change
- * Solve for a specified variable for a given formula
- * Determine the differences between relations and functions
- * Graph equations with two variables
- * Graph functions and determining slope and y intercept of a line
- * Graph scatter plots and determine if there is a correlation

- * Review points, lines and planes
- * Solve problems involving parallel line and angle relationships
- * Classify polygons
- * Determine if polygons are congruent
- * Understand and write rules for transformations including glide reflections, and rotations
- * Review area of quadrilaterals and triangles
- * Create nets for space figures
- * Determine the surface area of prisms, cylinders, pyramids, cones, and spheres
- * Review volume of prisms and determine volume of cones, spheres, and pyramids
- * Use routine and non routine problems to strengthen problem solving skills
- * Simplify square roots
- * Solve problems involving the pythagorean theorem
- * Determine the distance and midpoint between two points on a cartesian plane

Eighth Grade

- * Order of Operations with exponents and multiple grouping symbols
- * Writing open sentences for problem situations
- * Evaluating and writing algebraic expressions
- * Understanding and defining a functional relationship from both the mathematical and real world applications
- * Review graphing on Cartesian Plane
- * Create scatter plots and making correlations
- * Review of rational number operations
- * Use the properties of real numbers to simplify and write equivalent expressions
- * Review probability and compound events
- * Represent and solve multi step equations with and without variables
- * Determine possible solutions for an equation
- * Estimate square roots and review Pythagorean Theorem
- * Solve problems involving percent of change and the percent equation
- * Graph and solve multi step variable inequalities
- * Solve compound inequalities
- * Solve absolute value equalities and inequalities and graph the results
- * Interpret Qualitative graphs and make qualitative graphs
- * Evaluate functions and understand the difference between functions and graphs
- * Relate the three views of a function- table, graph, and written description
- * Write and use functions that model direct and inverse variation
- * Graph linear functions
- * Determine the slope of a line
- * Write equations of a line in slope intercept, point slope, and standard form

- * Understand which form of a line to use in problem situations
- * Model real world examples of slope and interpret slope from a graph
- * Graph parallel and perpendicular lines
- * Create lines of best fit for data sets
- * Graph other functions - absolute value, exponential and quadratic
- * Solve Systems of linear equations by graphing, combination/elimination method, or by substitution
- * Determine the best way to solve a system of linear equations presented in a word problem format
- * Solve and graph linear inequalities and systems of linear inequalities
- * Simplify algebraic expressions involving exponents
- * Use scientific notation to represent large and small numbers
- * Multiply and divide numbers in scientific notation
- * Evaluate and simplify exponential expressions involving multiplication and division when bases are the same, and raising powers to powers
- * Use exponents to represent geometric sequences
- * Model Exponential growth and decay
- * Add, subtract, multiply polynomials
- * Model and multiply binomials and their products, including binomial squares & difference of squares
- * Factor polynomials and special cases
- * Factor by grouping
- * Graph quadratic functions
- * Solve quadratic equations by graphing, completing the square, factoring, using the square root, and the quadratic formula
- * Solve real world application problems involving quadratic functions
- * Use the discriminant to determine number of solutions for a quadratic equation
- * Simplify radical expressions

Major Units of Scientific Study

The middle school science program engages students in work that mimics that of real scientists. The classes take place in our state of the art science lab, where they can interact with authentic tools and experimentation. The curriculum nourishes students' curiosity about the world, while preparing them for high school.

Learning begins with curiosity. Our middle school science program provides an in-depth, collaborative and project-based learning experience designed to students' interest, empowering them to ask more questions and think more critically. Through inquiry-based, hands-on investigations of real-world phenomena, the students learn to construct explanations for scientific phenomena or design solutions for real-world problems. As their knowledge builds from simpler concepts to more sophisticated phenomena, they design solutions to real-world problems.

6th Grade: Earth and Space

- Exploring Space
- Water and Climate
- Impacts on the Environment
- The Changing Earth

7th Grade: Life Science

- Interactions within Ecosystems
- Life Structure and Function
- Reproduction of Organisms
- Change Over Time

8th Grade

- Energy and Motion
- Understanding Waves
- Understanding Matter
- Interactions of Matter

Middle School Social Studies

At Mirowitz, we understand that the study of past events provides a context for understanding present and future challenges. Social studies allows students to understand how societies have changed over time and the contributions each has made. It also allows students to investigate and respond thoughtfully to questions about their world today.

The Middle School social studies involves a three-year rotation of content that is taught across grade levels. This plan creates an overarching theme carried year-round with more focused topic areas for each trimester. Students are challenged to explore the past and present through compelling, interactive experiences that cultivate the critical thinking and analytical skills children need to succeed in college, career, and civic life. The structure of the program incorporates place-based learning to immerse students in the history, culture, landscapes, and experiences of their own communities. Using inquiry, field trips and projects as a vehicle for learning provides opportunities for students to explore, engage, and connect by incorporating community partners, authentic products, and student choice.

Sample skills:

- Evaluating secondary and primary sources
- Writing a strong thesis statement
- Defending a thesis with relevant reasons, details, and facts including properly formatted citations
- Sharing the importance of a topic through expository essay writing
- Developing a lesson plan
- Public speaking/presenting

Approaches to Learning :

- Inquiry Based Learning
 - Student-driven
 - Asking questions
 - Finding supporting evidence
 - Making sense of the evidence
 - Developing an opinion
- Project Based Learning
 - A “need to know”
 - A driving question
 - Student voice and choice
 - 21st-century skills
 - Inquiry and innovation
 - Feedback and revision
 - A publicly presented product

- Learning Through Authentic Experiences
 - Exploring local monuments and places of remembrance
 - Exploring communities
 - Intercultural exchange
 - Meeting community members with stories to tell

Rotation Year One Overarching Theme :: Social Justice in Action

Trimester One :: Civil Rights

Trimester Two :: WWI Through Art, Music, and Literature

Trimester Three :: Environmental Justice

Rotation Year Two Overarching Theme :: World History and Conflicts

Trimester One :: WWI and the Fall of Empires

Trimester Two :: WWII and the Holocaust

Trimester Three :: The Cold War

Rotation Year Three Overarching Theme :: Community Engagement

Trimester One :: Journalism and Media Literacy

Trimester Two :: Civics and Community Leadership

Trimester Three :: Community Service

Middle School Hebrew

In Middle School, students enhance their conversational and writing skills. They follow current events in Hebrew, become familiar with the work of Israeli poets, songwriters and storytellers, and prepare for their 8th grade Israel Study Trip — a beautiful culmination of nine years of Hebrew study.

What does Hebrew learning look like?

Hebrew classes are combined across grades 6/7 and 7/8. Students participate in activities that engage that enhance reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Teachers speak almost exclusively in Hebrew, and students are expected to answer in Hebrew as well. Students write and speak more original language, which increases in length from individual sentences to strings of sentences to full paragraphs. Students develop an ability to understand longer and more complex text and conversation, on a wider set of topics which expand beyond their immediate surroundings to include the local community and communities in Israel.

Morah Limor's class: Main study topics include: Hobbies; Feelings; School Life; Time to Eat; Friends and Free Time; Daily routine; Shopping; When were you born

Skills attained:

- Take part in a simple conversation and social situations, ask and answer questions and express opinions
- Understand the main points and some of the detail from short spoken passages which include some unfamiliar language, applying previous knowledge and context to help determine meaning. They may still need to listen two or three times to extract this information
- Understand the main points and some detail from short written texts, which include some unfamiliar language, applying previous knowledge and context to help determine meaning
- Write a short text on a familiar topic, integrating new language into previously learned language, and applying known rules to create new language
- Use and understand an increased range of language within familiar topic areas or those of personal interest
- Write a few simple and compound sentences with support using familiar language and expressions, and increasingly use and understand an a greater range of grammatical structures and sentence patterns, including a number of everyday verbs in the past tense
- Give information, express feelings and emotions, give reasons, express preferences, give simple descriptions (of places in Israel)
- Express time (frequency, days of the week)
- Talk about the past and the future, and express future intentions in present tense
- Use adjectives to add interest and detail

Morah Becky's Class: Main study topics include: Ivrit around the world; Music; Tel-Aviv; Sports and daily routines; Holidays

Skills Attained:

- Listen and read to obtain information and respond appropriately, using a variety of structures and vocabulary learned
- Speak and write at short paragraph length with increasing accuracy using grammatical structures learned
- Engage in conversation and with written text on the learned topics including requesting and giving information, expressing likes and dislikes, making comparisons, giving and justifying opinions, providing descriptions using a variety of verbs and adjectives
- Engage in social interactions within the learned topics (such as inviting someone to a concert or show, giving directions, making plans to go out in Tel Aviv)
- Identify and use present tense and present tense structures
- Express things you would like to do
- Express time (when you do certain things, tell time in Hebrew)
- Use transactional language related to shopping
- Understand and explain information presented as a graph in Hebrew
- Talk about sports and other activities that you did and someone else did in the past
- Cope with some unfamiliar language

Morah Roxana's Class: Main study topics include: Before the visit to Israel; Going for a hike on the Israel National Trail; Future plans. By the end of this year, within specific vocabulary areas, most students should be able to:

- Listen and read to obtain information and respond appropriately, using a variety of structures and vocabulary learned
- Speak and write at short paragraph length with increasing accuracy using grammatical structures learned
- Engage in conversation and with written text on the learned topics including requesting and giving information, expressing likes and dislikes, making comparisons, giving and justifying opinions, providing descriptions using a variety of verbs and adjectives
- Engage in social interactions within the learned topics (giving directions, explaining medical symptoms and understanding advice, negotiating situations on a trip to Israel, planning equipment to bring on a hike)
- Express and develop ideas with increasing confidence, accuracy and fluency, using an increasing range of more complex language
- Use familiar language for new purposes and in new contexts
- Identify and use past, present and future tenses
- Describe a past visit to Israel and talk about a future trip to Israel
- Discuss and write about plans for next year and compare with students in other countries
- Discuss and write about jobs, careers, and future career choices
- Discuss and write about what you have, and will have in the future
- Discuss and write about Israel: Inventions and technology, Government, Aliyah, high school mandatory volunteer service, IDF

Middle School Judaics

We will practice and gain skills in chevruta learning (1-to-1 partnership learning) – a traditional method of Torah study. In doing so, students will develop skills in active listening, asking questions, and respectful, supportive, and challenging dialogue and discussions. Other modalities for learning and assessment will include creative arts projects, newspaper writing, bibliodrama, and more.

The following standards guide our students' learning:

- Students will develop and practice skills necessary to be independent and literarily astute readers of the traditional Jewish text in their languages of origin.
- Students will develop a love of Torah study for its own sake and embrace it as an inspiring resource that informs their values, moral commitments, and ways of experiencing the world.

6th Grade

TaNakh

- Parashat Yitro–Preparation at Sinai; Revelation; 10 דברות - Ten Commandments, with a focus on Shabbat and the concept of idolatry; What experiences / laws require changes in a community's leadership structure?
- Parashat Ki Tissa–Golden Calf. What leads to the worship of idols? How might we respond when we feel disconnected from our leader(s)? Project: Mock Trial of Aharon.
- Selected texts from Devarim/Deuteronomy and the Book of Shoftim/Judges–What are the benefits / dangers of establishing a king as the leader of the Jewish people?
- Begin I Samuel, exploring the desire for kingship.

Holidays/Ritual Practice/Lifecycle Events

Sixth graders will study stories and texts, rituals, and traditions associated with the holidays through the lens of our school middot (core values). Mirowitz students pursue holiday and ritual learning for the purposes of making meaning by a) connecting with diverse Jewish observances and b) developing new perspectives and personal approaches that may connect them in meaningful ways with the holidays.

- Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur-2022 focus: Shofar.
- Sukkot–Hakhnasat Orchim–Welcoming people of diverse views into our Sukkah to build community. Rotating units on Environment/Poverty/Racial Justice, depending on the Middle School trip.
- Purim: Public Service Announcements for our school-wide Purim celebration based on the four mitzvot of Purim.
- Hanukkah and Pesach learning and projects.
- Birkat Hamazon
- Jewish Rituals of Mourning
- Tzitzit–Students tie tzitzit based on study of the symbolism and meaning(s) of the mitzvah.

7th Grade

TaNakH

- Samuel—Examining models of and challenges to leadership.

Holidays / Ritual Practices / Lifecycle Events

Seventh graders will study stories and texts, rituals, and traditions associated with the holidays through the lens of our school middot (core values). Mirowitz students pursue holiday and ritual learning for the purposes of making meaning by a) connecting with diverse Jewish observances and b) developing new perspectives and personal approaches that may connect them in meaningful ways with the holidays.

- Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur-2022 focus: Shofar.
- Sukkot—Rotating units on Environment/Poverty/Racial Justice, depending on Middle School trip. Hakhnasat Orchim—Welcoming people of diverse views into our Sukkah to build community.
- Units and projects for Hanukkah, Purim, and Pesach.
- Hebrew months: each month has a different theme and focus, researched and presented by students.
- Birkat Hamazon
- Jewish Weddings

TaNakH

- I Samuel (final chapters) and II Samuel—What are the challenges and potential pitfalls of leadership?

Holidays / Ritual Practices / Lifecycle Events

Eighth graders will study stories and texts, rituals, and traditions associated with the holidays through the lens of our school middot (core values). Mirowitz students pursue holiday and ritual learning for the purposes of making meaning by a) connecting with diverse Jewish observances and b) developing new perspectives and personal approaches that may connect them in meaningful ways with the holidays.

- Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur- 2022 focus: Shofar.
- Sukkot—Rotating units on Environment/Poverty/Racial Justice, depending on Middle School trip. Hakhnasat Orchim—Welcoming people of diverse views into our Sukkah to build community.
- Purim - 8th graders will write and perform the school-wide Purim play!
- Units and projects on Hanukkah and Pesach.
- Hebrew months: each month has a different theme and focus, researched and presented by students.
- Jewish Rituals of Mourning
- Writing graduation speeches in partnership with ELA