

PLAZA VISTA MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

6TH GRADE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS OF REQUIRED CLASSES

MATH: The instructional program is based on the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline. The math program prepares students for 7th grade Pre-Algebra and 8th grade Algebra. Our program offers strategies to learn mathematical ideas, to develop thinking and problem solving skills, and to maintain and apply basic computational skills. Students learn to use technology as a tool in problem solving, computational enhancement, and presentation. Math curriculum in grades 6 and 7 includes: fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, percents, statistics and data collection, integers, geometry, probability, exponents, measurement, introduction to equations and algebraic functions. Opportunities exist for 6th grade students to take courses in Pre-Algebra or Algebra.

SOCIAL STUDIES: Using the California Social Studies Framework and the Irvine School District History/Social Science Content Standards, our program offers students opportunities to expand their understanding of geography and history by studying the people and events that ushered in the dawn of the ancient civilizations. They include: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Kush, Middle East, Greece, India, China, and Rome. Continued emphasis is placed on the circumstances that influenced events, the achievements of people, the development of social, economic, and political structures, and the spreading of ideas that transformed the world. Students develop higher level of thinking skills by understanding why civilizations developed and declined, by analyzing the interactions between peoples and cultures, and by recognizing the enduring contributions of the past to the present.

LANGUAGE ARTS: Classes are based on the Language Arts Framework, literature-based and thematically organized. The program incorporates significant literary works and emphasizes not only the integration of thinking, listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, but also a multidisciplinary integration of the total sixth grade curriculum. Students read literature from many genres and culturally diverse works which correlate with Social Studies topics. Reading instruction includes novel studies, anthologies, and expository texts. Writing instruction will follow the writing process that will take students from pre-writing through revision and ultimate publications. Spelling and language mechanics are taught through direct instruction. Student assessment will include written assignments, research-based projects, comprehension questions, and open-ended projects. Students will be provided opportunities to integrate technology through word-processing, the use of CD-ROMs, presentation programs, and the Internet.

SCIENCE: The sixth grade science program is a year of science process skills and science fair. The curriculum includes: electricity, dynamic earth, earth science, oceanography, matter, and science fair. The curriculum is aligned with the state's new science framework. Emphasis is on making the connections and seeing the relationships between concepts and ideas. The interdisciplinary thematic teaching approach helps students investigate high interest problems that show students the scientific thinking processes and how scientific principles are applied. Students develop critical thinking skills with problem solving, decision-making, and research and inquiry. As students move through the program, they are challenged by more sophisticated thinking processes using experimental manipulatives and other laboratory-oriented projects that are related to current scientific issues. Authentic assessment tools, such as oral presentations,

science fair projects and cooperative activities are incorporated into the program. A comprehensive science project is required of all 6th grade students.

7TH GRADE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS OF REQUIRED CLASSES

PRE-ALGEBRA: The instructional program is based on the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline. 7th grade prepares students for Algebra instruction in 8th grade. Our program offers students opportunities to learn mathematical/algebraic concepts, apply concepts, and develop skills in mathematical communication, thinking and problem solving. Emphasis is on understanding process and justification of answers. Typical topics include: algebraic thinking and language, rational numbers, geometry, measurement, and introduction to linear equations and inequalities. This course is specifically designed for students who have demonstrated proficiency in basic calculations and problem solving, but opportunities exist for them to explore topics in Algebra or to transition into Algebra if warranted by testing or performance.

ALGEBRA: The instructional program is based on the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline as our guides. Our program offers advanced 7th grade students opportunities to learn algebraic ideas and their connection to mathematical operations, to communicate their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways, to develop critical thinking skills, to maintain basic computational skills, and to use technology as a tool in problem calculation and presentation. Typical topics include symbolic language, functions, multiple representations (diagrams, models, tables, graphs, and symbols) which allow students to understand and solve problems in a variety of ways, first and second degree equations and their graphs, rational numbers, exponents, and radical expressions. Opportunities exist for students to take courses in Geometry at the high school.

SOCIAL SCIENCE: Students in grade seven study the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, America, and Asia from 500-1789. After reviewing the ancient world and the ways in which archaeologists and historians uncover the past, students study the history and geography of great civilizations that were developing concurrently throughout the world during the medieval and early modern times. They examine the growing economic interaction among civilizations as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs, technologies, and commodities. They learn about the resulting growth of Enlightenment philosophy and the new examination of the concepts of reason and authority, the natural rights of human beings, and the divine rights of kings, experimentalism in science and the dogma of belief. Finally, students assess the political forces let loose by the Enlightenment, particularly the rise of democratic ideas, and they learn about the continuing influence of these ideas in the world today.

SCIENCE: In their two years in middle school science, Plaza Vista's students will learn many new skills and scientific concepts. The curriculum is closely aligned with the IUSD and State Science Standards. The content delivery is spiraled and becomes increasingly challenging as the students progress through the two years. Seventh grade areas of study include Animals and Plants, Meteorology, Evolution and Earth's History, and Wave Physics. Science process skills are stressed both years with an emphasis on metric measurement labs and quantitative analysis of data. Teaching strategies used to deliver the curriculum include textbook information acquisition and note taking techniques, scientific illustrating, critical thinking and problem

solving activities, cooperative group projects, hands-on laboratory experiences, science fiction book reports, science research projects, directed teaching, and authentic assessment. Students are encouraged to be inquisitive and analytical. A lifelong enthusiasm for science is fostered with science-based field trips and real world experiences.

LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING: The emphases in the 7th grade reading classes are two fold: to teach students to read increasingly difficult material with greater understanding and to encourage students to be life-long readers. Vocabulary development is extensive. A variety of materials are used. Students read novels, short stories, essays, and poetry. Reading skills, literary analysis and higher-level comprehension work is incorporated while using the California State Standards as a guide. Students participate in extensive free-choice reading in addition to the required assigned reading. Classes are literature-based and thematically organized around the four domains: narrative writing, expository writing, descriptive writing, and persuasive writing. Students are given the opportunity to experience all phases of the writing process, which include pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. The program also focuses on teaching coherence and unity in paragraphs and essays. Students will learn specific reading strategies to strengthen comprehension skills and will respond to literature by examining elements of plot, characterization, and themes in various literary works such as novels, short stories, and poetry. Emphasis will be placed on teaching students to become independent and strategic learners and critical thinkers. To establish the necessary foundation for developing critical thinking skills, students will continue to strengthen their basic skills in the areas of spelling, vocabulary, and grammar usage.

8TH GRADE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS OF REQUIRED CLASSES

PRE-ALGEBRA: The instructional program is based on the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline. 7th grade prepares students for Algebra instruction in 8th grade. Our program offers students opportunities to learn mathematical/algebraic concepts, apply concepts, and develop skills in mathematical communication, thinking and problem solving. Emphasis is on understanding process and justification of answers. Typical topics include: algebraic thinking and language, rational numbers, geometry, measurement, and introduction to linear equations and inequalities. This course is specifically designed for students who have demonstrated proficiency in basic calculations and problem solving, but opportunities exist for them to explore topics in Algebra or to transition into Algebra if warranted by testing or performance.

ALGEBRA: The instructional program is based on the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline as our guides. Our program offers advanced 7th grade students opportunities to learn algebraic ideas and their connection to mathematical operations, to communicate their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways, to develop critical thinking skills, to maintain basic computational skills, and to use technology as a tool in problem calculation and presentation. Typical topics include symbolic language, functions, multiple representations (diagrams, models, tables, graphs, and symbols) which allow students to understand and solve problems in a variety of ways, first and second degree equations and their graphs, rational numbers, exponents, and radical expressions. Opportunities exist for students to take courses in Geometry at the high school.

INTRODUCTION TO ALGEBRA: Using the California Mathematics Framework, the State Board of Education Mathematics Standards, the Irvine School District Math Standards, collaboration of Plaza Vista teachers, and the Irvine School District Grade Level Transition Timeline as our guide our program offers students the opportunity to develop basic algebraic skills. Students will learn to demonstrate their mathematical thinking in a variety of ways, to develop problem-solving skills, and to use technology as a tool in problem calculation and presentation. Emphasis is on justification of answers with supporting evidence. Students are taught at the highest level; however, testing emphasizes understanding of basic algebraic ideas. Typical topics include equations, integers, ratio/proportional reasoning, percent applications, data analysis, functions, graphing, and advanced geometric topics. This course is specifically designed for students who have demonstrated competency in basic calculations and problem solving, but lack the proficiency needed for success in a one-year Algebra course. We will be exploring topics from our Algebra book at various times throughout the year, and the opportunity does exist for students to transition into Algebra if warranted by testing or performance.

SOCIAL SCIENCE: Eighth grade students study U.S. History and Geography as they learn about growth and conflict. The goal of the course is for students to learn about democracy, civic values, content knowledge, and cultural. Units include our Colonial Heritage, American Revolution, Constitution, Civil War, and Rise of Industrial America. Students do presentations, develop magazines, research books, use the internet, and many simulations. Students learn to appreciate and understand the development of American, its history and its culture.

SCIENCE: In their two years in middle school science, Plaza Vista's students will learn many new skills and scientific concepts. The curriculum is closely aligned with the IUSD and State Science Standards. The content delivery is spiraled and becomes increasingly challenging as the students progress through the two years. Eighth grade students will study Astronomy, Chemistry, Cell Biology and Genetics, Health, Motion, Force and Energy. Seventh graders are required to complete comprehensive science fair project, which includes a research paper, computer graphs and a backboard. Science fair projects are optional for 8th graders. Science process skills are stressed both years with an emphasis on metric measurement labs and quantitative analysis of data. Teaching strategies used to deliver the curriculum include: textbook information acquisition and note taking techniques, scientific illustrating, critical thinking and problem solving activities, cooperative group projects, hands-on laboratory experiences, science fiction book reports, science research projects, directed teaching, and authentic assessment. Students are encouraged to be inquisitive and analytical. Lifelong enthusiasm for science is fostered with science based fieldtrips and real world experiences.

LANGUAGE ARTS: Classes are organized around eight types of writing, which include: report of information, speculation about effects, story, problem solution, observational writing, firsthand biography, autobiographical incident, and evaluation. The program provides students with the opportunity to experience all phases of the writing process, beginning with sentences, and paragraphs evolving to essays. A thematic and multidisciplinary approach to content is utilized. Grammar, spelling and work presentation skills are also a part of the class. Students are assessed through class work, presentations and exhibitions. From first draft to publication, assignments and projects are completed within the classroom writing technology lab or school media center. Researching, prewriting and polishing may occur at home. Top caliber work is expected. In 8th grade, the reading class continues to use novels, short stories, essays and poetry to strengthen the students' reading and thinking skills. An interdisciplinary approach is utilized

with students reading material that supports and extends their learning in U.S. History. The students also read, discuss and write about works that reflect a variety of genres and authors recognized for quality writing. Vocabulary development is extensive and sequential. Specific reading skills and literary analysis skills are taught. The California State Standards guide the program. Students are encouraged to do extensive free choice reading in addition to the required assigned reading, in order to meet the state standards of reading one million words in print in their 8th grade year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Intermediate String Orchestra: The Intermediate String Orchestra consists of students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who are beginning to intermediate level on violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Students in the Intermediate String Orchestra will learn intermediate string skills such as shifting and tuning, and will have several introductory lessons in vibrato. More advanced bowing styles and rhythmic patterns will be explored through a wide variety of repertoire. Mid-year, all students interested in auditioning for the Irvine Unified School District Honor Orchestra may do so with permission from Mrs. Gray. There will be three performances during the year. In order to achieve the highest level of success on their string instruments, students will be expected to participate in the Intermediate String Orchestra for the entire year.

Advanced String Orchestra: The Advanced String Orchestra consists of students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who are demonstrating an advanced level of string playing on violin, viola, cello, and string bass. Students will work on mastering advanced string skills such as playing in third and second position, vibrato, and tuning. Students will be able to play all major and minor scales up to five sharps and five flats. More advanced bowing articulations and rhythmic patterns will be introduced through a wide variety of repertoire from Baroque to Contemporary styles. Mid-year, students interested in auditioning for the Irvine Unified School District Honor Orchestra may do so with permission from Mrs. Gray. There will be three performances and a performance at the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association's Music Festival. In order to achieve the highest level of success, students will be expected to participate in the Advanced String Orchestra for the entire year.

Intermediate Band: The Intermediate Band class is a one-year course of study that offers instruction on flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, tuba and percussion. This class is designed for sixth-grade students who have received at least one year of instruction, for seventh or eighth grade students who want to improve their skills, or for any student who would like to begin a new instrument. A limited number of school owned instruments are available but most students will need to obtain their own. The class performs at least four times during the year and attendance at all concerts is mandatory.

Wind Ensemble: The Wind Ensemble is an instrumental music class for wind and percussion students who are of the highest caliber at Plaza Vista School. It is open to eighth grade students, advanced seventh grade students, and a limited number of sixth grade students that may enter by permission of the instructor only. Placement in this group is based on an audition process that occurs at the beginning of the year. Besides our four concerts, class activities include a recital, IUSD Band Spectacular, Honor Orchestra audition preparation and performance at the District

Instrumental Music Festival. Attendance at all performances is mandatory. A limited number of school owned instruments are available but most students will need to obtain their own.

Vocal/General Music: This is designed for any 6th, 7th, or 8th grade student who wishes to perform in a vocal ensemble. Students will learn various vocal techniques and styles. Students will sing in parts and work in music reading and notation. Students will also study general music, musical theater, and acting techniques. There will be three to four performances per year. Grades are based on a combination of written work, tests, performances, and participation. Participation in this class qualifies the students to audition for the IUSD Middle School Honor Chorus.

Advanced Musical Theater Ensemble: This class is an audition only advanced performing ensemble for qualified 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. Students will study various vocal and theater methods. There will be four to six performances per year including vocal concerts, musical revues, and a major theater production. Grades are based on a combination of written work, performances, tests, and participation. Participation in this class qualifies the students to audition for the IUSD Middle School Honor Chorus.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is offered to all middle school students. It allows students the opportunity to develop skills, interest, and sportsmanship. Our physical education curriculum stresses warming up and conditioning, as well as team sports, and includes guided exercise, and sport/fitness instruction, as well as testing of particular sports and rules.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATORIES

Provide students with an opportunity to participate in a variety of enjoyable, challenging and educational activities in a structured and positive environment. Students experience a variety of intellectual, creative, artistic, and physical forms. New exploratories are offered each quarter and are designed by the teacher; some exploratories are team taught. Students are given the opportunity to make their choice of exploratory at the start of each new quarter. A list of choices, along with fees, are given to students during their homeroom period. Classes may be a full trimester or a half trimester.

Presentation Skills: Students will understand and practice the process of creating and presenting information, as well as becoming more comfortable speaking in front of an audience. The elements of a good presentation, such as projection of voice, eye contact, scanning, posture, and enunciation, are also taught. Students will be given the opportunity to practice and present before a group of their peers.

Calligraphy: This is a beginning calligraphy course open to all students. We will focus on learning correct hand posture and hand positions, as well as various alphabet styles such as Roman capitals, Uncials, Gothic, and Italics. Students will routinely practice in class and at home. The final culminating project for students consists of designing their name with illuminated letters and decorative border.

ALEKS and Neufeld Math: This class allows students to improve math skills using an individualized math program. Their instructor in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade math class may assign students to this class. Students may also choose to take this class to help improve and strengthen math skills. This class is for students who need to improve mathematical proficiency, or for students who like a challenge.

Cooking/Sewing: Students learn the basics of cooking, from proper nutrition to cooking tasty dinners. Simple sewing instruction allows students to make a project using sewing machines and hand stitching.

Art Sketching: Techniques in sketching are what separate a good artist from someone who just draws. This class teaches the techniques of sketching simple drawings to complicated shapes.

Watercolor Art: Students will learn basic watercolor technique, blending and brush strokes, and color mixing and will complete several projects of increasing complexity.

Moot Court: Student will learn about the American court system by taking on the role of a lawyer, juror, or judge.

Student Aides: Students with a 2.5 G.P.A. or better will be instructional assistants in the K-8th grade classrooms, office, or library.

Math Tutoring: Strong math students will sign up to assist other students with basic mathematical skills and/or pre-algebra.

EXTENDED OPPORTUNITIES

Spanish I is a full year course open to eighth grade students who have a B or better in Language Arts. Upon successful completion of this yearlong course students will be eligible to enroll in Spanish II in ninth grade. This class serves as an introduction to Spanish language and culture. It is an accredited high school course and is considered an Honor's course at the middle school level. This course follows the guidelines and course descriptions from Woodbridge High School. Students will be required to purchase a student workbook. (Not available 2002-2003)

Leadership is a full year program for students who have been elected by their peers to the Student Council. Students in this class meet regularly with their advisors and plan student activities. Students will plan fund raising activities, community service interactions, dances, fun days, spirit activities, assemblies, and work with administration.