

Plaza Vista GATER

Fourth Grade GATE

Reading: Students are grouped in RTI challenge group. Through the use of novels and the grade level anthologies, students explore complex levels of literature. Using the icons developed by Sandra Kaplan, elements of depth and complexity are applied to a variety of genres. Students look for elements such as: different points of view, patterns, changes over time ethics, and Big Ideas. We have just concluded reading the novel Frindle. As a culminating project, students are acting as “Amateur Inventors” creating a product, explaining its uses and target customer, and advertising it.

Writing: Students who are GATE identified are expected to use more advanced vocabulary and details in their writing. They are encouraged to use more complex sentence structure and ideas. We are involved in a descriptive essay. Using the story Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day, students look at the story from the opposite perspective and tell their own account of their “Awesome, Amazing, Super-Great, Very Good Day”.

Math: GATE students are given a Challenge packet. We meet weekly to discuss progress on activities such as Singapore Math activities, activities requiring student to problem solve and extend their learning through writing about math.

Social Studies: Students are learning about California’s four natural regions. As a culminating project they will research travel destinations in a specific region and create a postcard “sent to a friend” about the region, it’s geography and climate.

Fifth Grade GATE

Reading – Students are analyzing author purpose and expanding “The Lands Beyond.” In groups, students are developing their own “land” based on the novel The Phantom Tollbooth in which the protagonist Milo visits several “lands.” This land and the characters found living there are tied to figurative language. Be sure to ask your child about the land they created, its purpose, what Milo learned from the land, and to describe some of the inhabitants.

Math – Students are involved in solving higher level math problems on a regular basis that require critical thinking. These problems involve more than basic computation skills that students have focused on in prior grade levels. Students must examine all aspects of these challenge problems and be able to prove their answers beyond a shadow of a doubt.

History – Students challenged themselves by adopting the role of one of the early European explorers from the Age of Discovery. Students “became the explorer they selected.” Then a “News Conference” was held and each explorer was “grilled” with questions from small groups of student reporters. The students did an outstanding job and had fun with this extra challenge.

Science – Students have been learning words in Latin, Greek and other root languages that correspond to the current science unit we are focused on in class. This deeper level understanding helps our students make high level connections between curricular areas such as math, reading and history/social studies. This will be especially beneficial as we proceed headlong into our chapters on matter and the elements. Students are also developing a greater understanding of the connection between math and science.

Sixth Grade GATE

Language Arts: GATE students will be encouraged to read more challenging novels that contain advanced vocabulary, complex plots, and open-ended activities to demonstrate comprehension. Written expression will utilize expanded vocabulary (Word Masters), varied sentence structure, and well-developed paragraphs. Opportunities to write creatively will be given in Language Arts throughout the year.

History/Geography: GATE students will participate in the study of Ancient Civilizations in whole group situations, as well as, cooperative groups, and independent study. Students will develop their note-taking and research skills. Development of these skills will help them as participants in group research projects. Peer relationships will be enhanced by working together to create a well-balanced, articulate report. Leadership opportunities will be given at the conclusion of each project with the presentation of evidence to support their findings.

Science-Health: Incorporating science and health topics into their daily lives, GATE students will study Earth Science and Oceanography. Science Fair Projects will be a major focus the first half of the school year. Students will have the opportunity to select from a variety of higher-level investigative questions.

Math: GATE students will participate in whole group interaction, cooperative groups, and independent activities designed to challenge problem solving and mathematical reasoning. The opportunity will be given to explore additional mathematical disciplines, and application of math skills in real life situations.

Seventh Grade GATE

All 7th grade GATE students at Plaza Vista Middle School are enrolled in the ALEKS Program. This is a computerized math program that was developed by scientists from UC Irvine. ALEKS individualizes both assessment and learning for arithmetic, geometry, algebra 1, algebra 2 and pre-calculus. This program interacts with the student, moving between explanation and practice, as needed, correcting and analyzing errors, defining terms and changing topics on request. This program is a wonderful opportunity for our students to not only practice basic math skills, but to challenge themselves to excel in rigorous math concepts. Just since school began, all of our GATE students have progressed through the program's Arithmetic section, and into the Geometry section. An additional six students have even succeeded in passing Geometry and moving into the Algebra 1 section! We are very proud of the initiative that is demonstrated by these amazing seventh graders!

Eighth Grade GATE

Social Studies – GATE students will participate in history simulations and lessons/activities that promote higher-level critical thinking in discussions, investigations, and presentations. Students will be given many leadership opportunities. Curriculum will be delivered in a multi-layered approach, emphasizing depth of learning, research, presentation skills, and understanding.

Math – Students are placed in an accelerated math course of pre-algebra or algebra with an opportunity to explore additional mathematical disciplines and to apply their math skills and knowledge to independent projects. 7th Grade students have a yearlong license to the Aleks program which allows them to explore more advanced math skills and concepts.

Science – GATE students have many opportunities in science to develop scientific understanding with more depth and complexity. Differentiated activities will include honors level research opportunities that go above and beyond the basic assignment. GATE students will be trained as group leaders and will be given technological responsibilities that will enable them to communicate their scientific knowledge in a more sophisticated medium. GATE students will read higher-level science fiction novels for their twice-yearly science book report.

Language Arts – GATE students are encouraged to read more challenging novels with advanced vocabulary, complex plots, and open-ended activities to demonstrate comprehension. Written expression will utilize expanded vocabulary, varied sentence structure, and well-crafted paragraphs. Oral expression will work toward clarity of ideas. Vocabulary will be enhanced through structured assignments.