

Grade 5 Pedagogical Overview

In the first four years of school there is a strong emphasis on form, both of the class as a whole, and of each child's habits. In the next four years, there is a subtle and gradual shift in emphasis toward content, in lessons and in the world at large. This shift in emphasis, of course, follows the child's own lead, responding to his or her changing consciousness. By age eleven, children reach a kind of balance and regular alternation between their awareness of the world and of their own inner lives. There is balance, too, in their mental, emotional, and physical growth.

The fifth grade curriculum seeks to extend the children both outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly, in terms of space, they expand their horizons of the earth and the plants that cover it. In terms of time, they experience five civilizations spanning thousands of years. Inwardly, they extend their awareness of the math processes they perform, and also of the words they speak and the sentences they write. As their intellectual faculties become stronger, students are able to approach their cognitive work in a more realistic and reasoning manner.

By the fifth grade, students have generally attained a certain ease and grace of physical movement intrinsic to their age. The celebration of their unique abilities at this time culminates in their participation in a Greek Olympiad, a pentathlon event with other regional Waldorf schools.

The Language Arts and History curriculums introduce students to the cultures and religions of ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. The richness of this study provides a foundation for understanding and appreciation of the cultural and religious diversity within our world. Independent writing is developed out of lesson content, and students learn to express themselves succinctly and with clarity. Spelling skills strengthen and the study of grammar expands into its practical application. Students now begin to edit their own writing as well as that of classmates.

In Math, students are expected to master the use of the multiplication tables and to demonstrate proficiency with basic addition, subtraction, and division facts. They learn to apply all four operations to fractions, including mixed numbers, and eventually to decimals. The fifth grader learns skills in rounding and estimation and works with numbers into the billions.

During this year, botany is introduced and the study of geography expands to include North America. While there is an understandable emphasis on their own country, students also learn about their closest neighbors, Canada and Mexico.

While lessons in drawing and painting continue, this work is also integrated throughout the curriculum.

Language Arts:

- Ancient mythology and legends from India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece
- Sacred and secular texts from various cultural epochs
- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Original compositions based on curriculum
- Research projects
- Letter writing
- Book reports

- Speech work

Mathematics:

- Decimals
- Calculation of area
- Double and triple-digit multiplication
- Long division with double-digit divisors
- Word problems and mental arithmetic

Social Studies:

- Biographies of historical figures such as Pericles, Socrates, Sophocles, Solon, Xerxes, Darius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Demosthenes, Aristotle, and Plato
- North American geography (U.S. states and capitals, bodies of water, land formations, climates, and vegetation)
- Mapmaking

Botany:

- Flowering plants: monocotyledons and dicotyledons
- Lower orders of plants
- Coniferous and deciduous trees
- Stages of plant life
- The insect world (Bees and Pollinators)

Artistic Work:

- Freehand geometric drawing
- Watercolor painting
- Clay modeling
- Drawings inspired by Greek and Egyptian forms

Specialty Subjects:

- Eurythmy
- Games
- German
- Handwork
- Music
- Spanish
- Strings
- Woodwork

English and Language Arts

Stories from the ancient cultures of India, China, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece are the emphasis in Grade 5. These stories are retold and written into compositions for Main Lesson Books accompanied with a colorful drawing. In other blocks the emphasis is in detailed descriptions of what is observed. Writing assignments are mostly compositional and/or taking dictation. Reading should be fluent with awareness of punctuation including direct speech. Students should be able to use a dictionary to find an unfamiliar word for either spelling or meaning. Quotation marks, colon, and semi-colon are introduced as well as the appropriate use

of paragraphs. All major parts of speech should be known as well as the simple and continuous verb forms in all tenses. Speech work throughout the year includes the recitation of numerous poems, tongue twisters, and alliterative verses related to topics in the Main Lesson. New vocabulary is introduced throughout the year, and spelling words are assigned with weekly quizzes. Every student performs in a play during the year based on a story from the curriculum.

Writing

During this year, a greater majority of student writing is done independently. Students are asked to complete rough drafts, which are edited for content, grammar, and correct punctuation before going into main lesson books. Students are also introduced to basic letter writing conventions, and they deepen their understanding of grammar concepts.

The aim during the fifth grade year is for the students to learn how to state information succinctly and with clarity. Independent writing will be developed out of lesson content and personal experiences. Students will write rough drafts for most assignments and will then be expected to edit their own work.

At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate grade-appropriate editing and revision skills
- Write legibly with a fountain pen
- Develop simple outlines to organize ideas
- Use a variety of sentence structures
- Show competence in using the four sentence types
- Use details to develop characters, setting, plot
- Add details to clarify meaning or enhance impact of writing
- Write first-person narratives based on historical themes
- Transcribe a two-paragraph dictation

Reading

In addition to reading books assigned in school, students are expected to continue reading independently at home throughout the school year. Weekly reading groups may continue, and independent book projects are assigned for the first time. Students may continue to enjoy reading aloud with parents and friends, and simple non-fiction reading may be encouraged.

Stories and in-class reading material for fifth grade are taken from ancient eastern cultures up to the time of classical antiquity. In addition to reading class materials, students will be expected to select books to read independently throughout the school year. Book projects may be assigned for one or more of these selections.

At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

- Select and read at least 6 books for independent reading during the school year
- Read a variety of texts and answer questions regarding content
- Complete a book report project with written and oral component
- Read aloud with understanding and clear expression
- Research and report on a social studies topic

Grammar and Study Skills

Before focusing on the technical aspect of grammar rules, emphasis should be placed on the qualities of various types of language usage. During the fifth grade year, students will focus on direct speech and will work with the four basic types of statement—declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative. The concepts of subject, predicate, and direct and indirect object may also be introduced during this year. Punctuation, including commas, quotation marks, colons, semi-colons, hyphens and brackets will be introduced and/or reviewed.

At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

- Identify parts of speech including prepositions, articles, and conjunctions
- Identify and create declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative statements
- Identify active and passive voice; direct and indirect quotes; subject and predicate; synonyms, antonyms and homonyms; and prepositional phrases
- Use punctuation and capitalization
- Use a dictionary
- Alphabetize a list of words beginning with the same letter
- Achieve at least 80% accuracy on spelling quizzes
- Maintain a standard of no more than 5 misspelled words per 100 on homework and in-class compositions

Mathematics

Number Sense and Computation

The fifth grade year begins with a thorough review of all math concepts from previous grades. Students should now have all times tables in place and be comfortable doing mental math using simple facts. They should also be proficient in all operations involving whole numbers and fractions. Decimal fractions are introduced in fifth grade, and an understanding of place value in numbers less than one is cultivated. Children work with decimals in all operations and become familiar with the relationship between fractions and decimals. Calculations with inverse operations and reciprocals, brain twisters, and humorous stories arouse an appetite for discovery and train active forces of thinking.

At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

Whole Numbers

- Read, write and order numbers through the billions
- Round or estimate any whole number to a specific place
- Use notational symbols $<$ $>$
- Recognize and use factors and multiples of 1-12 through 144
- Discern proper operation in word problems
- Recognize prime and square numbers through 50
- Solve 4-digit addition and subtraction with regrouping
- Solve 3-digit multiplication problems with 3-digit multiplier
- Solve long division problems with 2-digit divisors and a remainder

Fractions

- Place common fractions in sequential order
- Reduce and expand fractions
- Establish common denominators
- Change mixed numbers to improper fractions and back
- Add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers
- Multiply and divide of simple fractions and mixed numbers

Decimals

- Identify decimal place to the tenths, hundredths, thousandths,
- Order decimals from least to greatest
- Change fractions to decimals and back
- Change decimals to fractions and back
- Solve problems involving all four processes with decimal fractions

Geometry and Measurement

The study of geometry is based on observation and imagination. Various elements of geometric form are rendered freely, without the use of instruments, and children explore geometric principles through drawing various transformations of the forms. The basic language of geometry is introduced and visually depicted. Students continue to work with money and time.

At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

- Draw freehand geometric shapes
- Draw the freehand division of a circle into fourths, sixths, and eighths
- Recognize different orientations of shapes in relation to one another
- Calculate the perimeter of polygons using whole numbers
- Find the area of a rectangle
- Measure objects to nearest 1/4-inch
- Comprehend and solves problems using simple standard length, weight, liquid capacity, and time measurements, including conversions
- Proficiently add and subtract time
- Use money in real life situations to compute change
- Interpret, extend, and create number patterns
- Identify the missing operation or number in a given equation
- Explain how a change in one quantity will affect another in a given problem

Social Studies and Science

In the early grades, the social studies and science curriculum lays a rich foundation for the more explicit history and science instruction provided in the middle and upper grades. By Grade Five, instruction is becoming more explicit. Fifth grade topics of study include: Ancient Cultures, North American Geography, and Botany. These subjects meet the expanding consciousness of the students and provide opportunities for rich exploration and observation.

Ancient Civilizations

The study of ancient civilizations in fifth grade mirrors the children's turn from the realm of myths and fairy tales into the study of history. The curriculum spans thousands of years, beginning with the tales of ancient India, and continuing through Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. Legends and stories as well as factual information about each civilization are woven into the lesson material, bringing the children both a general understanding of the historical context of each civilization and a feeling experience of what it was like to live in those places and times. Emphasis is given to allowing the children to live into each culture through biographies, stories, songs, poetry, sculpture, and visual arts. Lesson content acknowledges the children's growing ability to comprehend, recall, and retell long and complex stories (e.g., the Mahabharata, Gilgamesh, the Odyssey) and their developing ability to understand sequences of cause and effect in historical narrative.

North American Geography

In fourth grade, children were introduced to the subject of geography through the study of their local surroundings, venturing as far as their home state. In fifth grade their horizons are considerably extended to encompass an entire continent. Additionally, elements of fourth grade Zoology and fifth grade Botany are steadily incorporated into the children's study. They learn to compare and contrast various regions, for example the hot, dry Southwest with the cool, moist Northeast, and go on imaginary journeys to see what lies between the two. Through this understanding, they develop a knowledge of major climate regions and geographic features of North America. They deepen their work with maps, including reading, drawing, and modeling various states and regions. Regional songs, tall tales and poetry further enrich the subject. Books on the Lewis and Clark expedition or descriptions of the Mississippi River by Mark Twain may also be included. The study of North American geography often culminates with an individual research project on a particular U.S. state.

Botany

The study of Botany deepens the children's sensitivity for the earth as a living organism. They begin by following the flowering plant's life stages, from old seed to new seed. They experience the breadth of plant life in relation to the developing human. Afterwards, they learn to observe local plants in the context of their relationship to landscape, soil, and climate. They also gain knowledge of the range of plant forms over the earth. Plant life is explored through descriptive writing, drawing, painting, and poetry.

Specific topics may include:

- Flowering plants: monocotyledons and dicotyledons
- Lower orders of plants
- Coniferous and deciduous trees
- Stages of plant life
- Relationship between insects and flowering plants
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At the completion of Grade Five, students should be able to:

- Germinate and observe the growth of seeds.

- Write compositions and poems describing the six stages of the flowering plant's life cycle.
- Cite characteristics of monocotyledons and dicotyledons.
- Give examples of lower plants.
- Identify common names of local plants and trees.
- Select and draw a tree through the seasons
- Identify the particular communities of plants, animals, and insects associated with various local trees.
- Describe vegetation in various climatic regions (e.g. desert, tundra, rainforest).
- Describe the life cycle of various insects (e.g bee, butterfly)
- Develop a working knowledge of perennial and annual plants and the relationship of plants to climate zones.
- Describe plant physiology, the cycle of breathing, the major parts of a plant etc. and compare these to human physiology and human cycles.