



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF SÃO PAULO

# Middle School Course Handbook 2019-2020

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## Curricular Overview

### Core Classes Grade 6

Humanities  
Science  
Math  
Portuguese or Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL)  
Brazilian Social Studies (for students in the Brazilian Studies Program\*)  
Physical Education and Health  
Bridges

### Core Classes Grade 7

Humanities  
Science  
Math  
Portuguese or Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL)  
Brazilian Social Studies (for students in the Brazilian Studies Program\*)  
Physical Education and Health

### Core Classes Grade 8

English  
Social Studies  
Science  
Math (Standard or Extended)  
Portuguese or Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL)  
Brazilian Social Studies (for students in the Brazilian Studies Program\*)  
Physical Education and Health

*\*Required for all Brazilian students and those wishing to pursue a Brazilian diploma and highly encouraged for all other students. Brazilian Studies students receive priority in the scheduling of electives due to the need to incorporate Brazilian Social Studies in their schedule.*

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## Electives Overview

### Grade 6

*Students in the Brazilian Studies Program: 1.5 blocks available for electives + BRSS 6*

*Students not in the Brazilian Studies Program: 2 blocks available for electives*

*All students in grade 6 must take the Bridges course.*

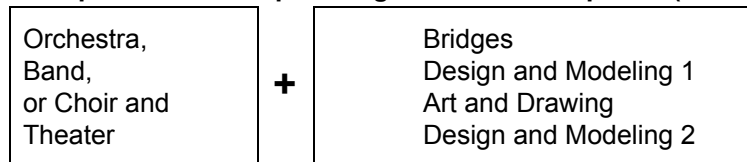
*Elective requirements:*

*All students in grade 6 must take a full year of Performing Arts (Music or Theater).*

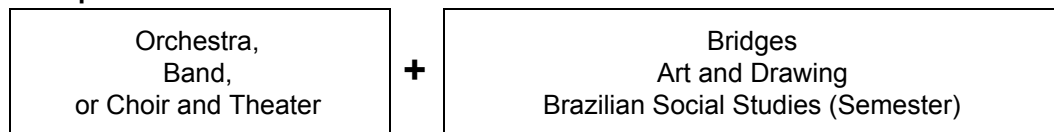
#### 2019-2020 Elective Offerings for Grade 6 Students:

Course	Year, Semester, or Quarter Long
Beginning Band	Year
Beginning Choir (Vocal Music)	Semester or Year
Beginning Orchestra	Year
Drama 6	Semester
Art 6	Quarter
Bridges	Quarter
Design and Modeling	Two quarters

#### Example - Those not pursuing the Brazilian diploma (non-Brazilian nationals):



#### Example - Brazilian Studies students:



**OR**



**Grades 7 and 8***Students in the Brazilian Studies Program:**1.5 blocks available for electives + BRSS 7 / BRSS 8**Students not in the Brazilian Studies Program:**2 blocks available for electives**Elective Requirement:**All students in grade 7 and 8 must take an Arts elective.***2019-2020 Elective Offerings for Grade 7 and 8 Students:**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Year or Semester</b>
Junior Band	Year
Junior Choir (Vocal Music)	Year
Junior Orchestra	Year
MS Theater: Welcome to the Stage!	Semester
MS Guitar	Semester
Art and Clay	Semester
Art and Color	Semester
Digital Art	Semester
Digital Video	Semester
App Creators: Introduction to Computer Science	Semester
Automation and Robotics I	Semester
Automation and Robotics II	Semester
Virtual Reality and the Web	Semester
Journalism	Semester
Reader's Workshop	Semester
History of and Through Film	Semester
Service Learning	Semester
Spanish*	Year

*\*Only open to grade 8 students*

# PROGRAM AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## Academic Support

### *Optimal Learning Services*

The Optimal Learning Services (OLS) program supports students with identified learning differences, empowering them to become confident, autonomous learners who meet or exceed grade level standards. Learning specialists in the OLS collaborate with students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the community to provide individual, small-group, and classroom-level interventions. These include strategies within daily routines, classroom structures, and curricular activities.

### **Academic Support Grades 6-8**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 6, 7, and 8  
**Note:** By special enrollment

The Academic Support Program (ASP) provides support and accommodations for students who have identified learning needs. Students who are part of ASP are capable of meeting Graded's academic standards, but require reteaching of some concepts, additional practice on classroom material, and direct instruction in the skills necessary to be an independent and successful learner.

Depending on their learning profile, students may spend their full day in their mainstream classes or may receive 80 minutes of support every other day in a small-class setting designed to offer support and instruction and meet their specific needs. Some students may receive in-class support as well.

### **English for Academic Purposes Grades 6-8**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 6, 7, and 8  
**Note:** By special enrollment

In the Middle School we believe that second language learners make a more rapid academic, social, and emotional adjustment to the school environment through mainstream immersion. To facilitate this, the Middle School English Language Learner (ELL) program at Graded is designed to foster the acquisition of English and to assist students in acquiring the cognitive and academic proficiency necessary for success in the mainstream curricular program of the school. Students attend mainstream classes (humanities, science, and math), and those who need it receive 80 minutes every other day of additional content language instruction and support in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class. In addition, students receive additional push-in language support in their mainstream classes.

## Arts

The philosophy of the Graded Arts faculty is that the arts are among mankind's greatest and most noble achievement. Transcending all other forms of communication, the artistic expression of deep human feeling and emotion is among the most basic of human needs and a measure of all great civilizations past and present.

The experience of working together with one's peers with the sole objective of creating a work of great power and beauty is an important and profound experience and one that has tremendous relevance in today's rapidly changing world. As members of the Graded staff and community, we believe the arts to be an absolutely essential part of every young person's education, and it is our mission to provide the finest experiences possible.

### *MUSIC*

#### **Beginning Band**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

Students in the Beginning Band class will receive basic skills training on a specific wind instrument such as the flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, or tuba. Instruction is provided in a mixed-instrument class setting, and the class eventually becomes a performing music ensemble as skills develop. Playing fundamentals are stressed, including proper posture, breathing, embouchure development, and playing technique appropriate to this level. Music literacy is also a priority, and students are expected to demonstrate the ability to read simple music notation fluently upon completion of this course. **All students in Beginning Band must attend concert performances.** Successful students will be prepared to enter the Junior Band upon completion of this course.

#### **Beginning Choir (Vocal Music)**

**Length:** Semester or Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

Students will have the opportunity to develop their musical skills through the performance of a wide range of choral music. We address music reading, vocal production, ensemble performance techniques, musical analysis, the historical context, and the emotional/psychological aspects of choral music performances. Advanced students will have the opportunity to audition for the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Latin American Honor Choir. **All students in Beginning Choir must attend concert performances.**

#### **Beginning Orchestra**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

This course is an introductory course for string instrument players. Students will learn how to play violin, viola, cello, or bass in a group setting performing a wide range of music styles. Students who already know how to play a string instrument are also welcome to join this class and develop their skills working on advanced projects. We prepare successful students to enter the Junior Orchestra upon completion of this course. **All students in Beginning Orchestra must attend concert performances.**

#### **Guitar**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

This course is for guitar players of all levels. Students will learn how to play and develop chords, solos, and fingering on acoustic guitar in a group setting. They will also learn music theory, music appreciation, and how to listen to and read music. No previous experience is required.

## **Junior Band**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Upon prerequisite of Beginning Band or teacher approval

Students in Junior Band receive intermediate level wind and percussion instruction and work collectively as a performing music ensemble on their chosen musical instruments. Fundamentals such as posture, breathing, embouchure development, and playing technique are constantly reinforced, and students will be studying a wide range of concert literature suitable to their ability level. Music literacy is emphasized, and students are expected to demonstrate fluency with music notation at the intermediate level upon completion of the class. Successful grade 8 students will be prepared to enter the Senior Band upon completion of this course. **All students in Junior Band must attend concert performances.**

## **Junior Choir (Vocal Music)**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

Students will have the opportunity to develop their musical skills through the performance of a wide range of choral music. We address music reading, vocal production, ensemble performance techniques, musical analysis, the historical context, and the emotional/psychological aspects of music. Advanced students will have the opportunity to audition for the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Latin American Honor Choir. **All students in Junior Choir must attend concert performances.**

## **Junior Orchestra**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Upon prerequisite of Beginning Orchestra or teacher approval

This course brings together students of varied levels and grades to play a repertoire of orchestral pieces. Students will acquire the necessary theory and technical dexterity to improve their playing skills. We encourage advanced students to play in select ensembles, and they may apply and prepare auditions for the AMIS International Orchestra Festival. **All students in Junior Orchestra must attend concert performances.**

# ***THEATER ARTS***

## **Drama 6**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grade 6  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

The focus of the drama course is to introduce students to the skills of storytelling and develop the core theater skills of clarity, collaboration, concentration, confidence, control, creativity, and positive risk-taking. Through dramatic play and rehearsal, students will create and develop an original, collaborative piece which they will showcase at the end of the course. **All students in Drama 6 must attend performances.**

## **MS Theater: Welcome to the Stage!**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

This course gives students a broad understanding of the basics of theater and how we use performance to tell stories. Throughout the semester, students will study three distinct areas: creating, designing, and performing stories on stage.

- Creating Stories: Students focus on how to develop stories for original performance. Units of study include improvisation, devising, and playwriting.
- Designing Stories: Students focus on how designers use aesthetics to build a deeper understanding of a story, character, or place. Units of study include set, costume, props, publicity, and sound design.
- Performing Stories: Students focus on how actors create character and story through movement, gesture, facial expression, and voice. Actors will develop their skills through scripted and unscripted scenes. This unit concludes with a performance. Units of study include monologues and duets, commercials and radio shows, masks and puppetry.

Each semester will have a different focus for the three areas; so students are able to repeat the course while learning new content. (Students may repeat this course for credit.) **All students in theater must attend performances.**

## ***VISUAL ARTS***

### **Art 6**

**Length:** Quarter  
**Grade:** Grade 6  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

Art 6 is a project-based class, where students will explore mixed media - drawing, sculpture, photography, and digital arts. Projects aim at empowering students' creativity by engaging them with their observation, imagination, and ability to self-reflect.

### **Art and Clay**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

In Art and Clay, we introduce students to three dimensional projects using clay. Students explore the techniques of coiling and slabs to create the different projects: a mask, a slab project, a coil project, and a combination of both. We only consider projects finished after they have been fired and glazed. We also expect students to understand and use vocabulary related to ceramics.

### **Art and Color**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

In Art and Color, we review drawing skills and improve the student's sense of composition. Elements and principles of design are the focus of our first unit so that students improve their understanding of creating a balanced composition. Color is an important aspect of this class and is our focus during the second unit, when the students are introduced to color theory and color mixing.

### **Digital Art**

**Length:** Semester



**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

Students learn to communicate in the visual language of our digital age. The class combines the study of photography and graphic design. Students learn about important artists and their styles, how to best utilize a digital camera, and how to use the medium to express themselves. Through Adobe Photoshop, they will learn about photo editing and the software possibilities of creation and manipulation. We also introduce students to design basics to create original design pieces and some basic motion graphics in Adobe After Effects.

## **Digital Video**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Note:** Course may be repeated

Students will engage in individual and group projects for personal and educational purposes with an emphasis on learning by doing. By getting involved with all aspects of moviemaking, students will have the opportunity to experience script writing, acting, directing, and post-production. They learn how to capture video with digital cameras, experiment with different filming gears, and use more sophisticated editing software. The goal is to increase students' capacity to create in and for this medium.

## Brazilian Social Studies

Os cursos, semestrais e ministrados em Língua Portuguesa, têm como objetivo garantir a problematização do Brasil a partir do conhecimento histórico e geográfico, abordando seus diferentes momentos e experiências históricas. Para tanto, analisam-se dimensões do passado, buscando compreender as condições e as razões dos acontecimentos, identificar os movimentos de resistência, confrontar perspectivas históricas conflituosas e examinar as permanências existentes no cotidiano da atualidade brasileira. Nessa perspectiva, trabalham-se conceitos básicos do ensino da História, como: tempo/espaço, continuidade/ruptura, semelhança/diferença e quanto à Geografia, integram-se os diversos temas, especialmente aqueles ligados à Geografia Física e à Geografia Humana, através dos conceitos de região, regionalização, escala, território, paisagem e lugar, observando como a natureza vai sendo modificada e reestruturada pela técnica e pela ação do homem.

Nosso objetivo principal é contribuir, a partir do ensino da História e da Geografia do Brasil, e dialogando com as perspectivas da Sociologia e da Filosofia, para que o aluno possa adquirir instrumentos intelectuais e de caráter social que possibilitem a formação de uma consciência crítica e atuante.

### Brazilian Social Studies 6

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grade 6

**Note:** Required for all Brazilian students and those wishing to pursue a Brazilian diploma

O curso de Geografia para o sexto ano desenvolverá a linguagem cartográfica (analógica e digital) e apresentará alguns conceitos essenciais da disciplina, como por exemplo, paisagem, lugar e espaço geográfico, estudo dos estados brasileiros e suas capitais e o Distrito Federal e Brasília. Após essa introdução, o estudo do Brasil será construído através desses conceitos estruturantes do conhecimento geográfico. Esse estudo será feito com enfoque na construção do espaço rural e do espaço urbano nacionais, bem como a sua formação populacional de modo a problematizar os fenômenos sociais desnaturalizando modos de vida, valores e condutas sociais e identificando as principais formas de estratificação social.

### Brazilian Social Studies 7

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grade 7

**Note:** Required for all Brazilian students and those wishing to pursue a Brazilian diploma

O curso de Geografia para o sétimo ano desenvolverá os conceitos de região e regionalização e escala em articulação com os conceitos estudados no sexto ano. Iniciaremos com a localização do Brasil em relação ao continente sul americano, e as Américas Central e do Norte, em relação ao planeta (retomando as questões referentes ao estudo das zonas térmicas do globo). Em sequência será trabalhado com os alunos a formação do território brasileiro, quanto à sua divisão política-administrativa e regional.

Ainda tendo como eixo central a discussão natureza X sociedade, propomos o estudo da poluição tanto no ambiente urbano quanto rural. Desta forma, primeiro apresentaremos uma base conceitual para esta análise (definir o que é poluição e quais seus tipos, como as sociedades produzem lixo-o conceito de consumo e consumo consciente; tempo geológico e tempo histórico; crescimento econômico e desenvolvimento sustentável). A partir desses referenciais trabalharemos alguns estudos de caso.

### Brazilian Social Studies 8

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grade 8

**Note:** Required for all Brazilian students and those wishing to pursue a Brazilian diploma

O curso de BrSS do oitavo ano dedica-se ao estudo do Brasil nos séculos XVI e XVII, quando este era colônia de Portugal, sendo por isto mesmo ainda denominado de América portuguesa. Investigar a chamada colonização portuguesa nos trópicos possibilita a compreensão dos elementos constitutivos da formação sócio-econômica daquela época, ao mesmo tempo em que permite lançar luz sobre a sociedade brasileira atual.

O eixo temático que articula as três unidades consiste nas matrizes de origem europeia, ameríndia e africana que, por meio de trocas, conflitos e choques entraram em contato para formar um grande “rio” chamado Brasil – para aludir a expressão de Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen, historiador do século XIX. Qual a contribuição de cada uma delas para a constituição do povo brasileiro em geral? Que marcas imprimiram na cultura brasileira? Quais heranças nos legaram? De que maneira os desdobramentos desse “encontro” continuam a se fazer notar na contemporaneidade?

Responder essas questões significa passear pelo mundo da conquista de terras e de homens; do desbravamento de mares e de sertões; da ambição de invasores franceses, holandeses e espanhóis; da exploração de recursos naturais e da espoliação de riquezas; do comércio ultramarino e da lógica do capitalismo nascente; da colonização da mente e da alma; da guerra e da paz; da África e da Europa; do doce do açúcar ao amargo da escravidão.

Nesse percurso, os alunos são desafiados a pensar a História tendo por base fontes primárias e secundárias que, como janelas, lhes permitem conhecer o passado, problematizando-o. Cartas, crônicas, relatos de viagem, tratados, decretos, leis, gráficos, tabelas, mapas e charges são algumas das fontes que os alunos aprendem a ler e analisar criticamente. Ao fazerem isso, eles vão aos poucos entendendo e incorporando os métodos que o historiador usa para estudar “os homens no tempo”. Assim, sem perceber, eles aprendem a lógica subjacente ao exercício do fazer histórico. Eles tornam-se aptos para compreender o passado, superando seus mitos e equívocos, e intervir no presente de modo a não repetir os erros do passado.

# Humanities

The Graded Middle School humanities course integrates the philosophies of the language arts and social studies programs.

## *Language Arts*

At its core, Graded School's language arts and literature program teaches students to write effectively, read critically, speak coherently, and engage the world imaginatively. The program is designed to cultivate intellectual curiosity and a lifelong love of language, helping students to deepen their sense of humanity and enhance their capacity for wonder.

## *Social Studies*

The mission of the Graded social studies program is to provide students with a strong foundation in history and at the same time to provide options for students to explore their interests in geography, economics, cultural studies, and government. At its core, we hope to nurture critical thinking and effective communication while helping students learn to value diverse views and ideas in an effort to apply an understanding of these perspectives to contemporary issues. Through our teaching, we hope that students learn to look beyond themselves and feel empowered to engage thoughtfully and empathetically with the world as citizens and individuals.

## **Humanities 6**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

This rigorous, integrated course is guided by the question, "How can an individual take action to address inequality in the world?" In this course, students will find their voice through written work, projects, presentations, and discussions. Our class novels expose students to various themes that address social issues in historical and cultural contexts. With an emphasis on human rights and inequality, the course will culminate in students being charged with solving a global issue.

Middle School reading and writing at Graded thoughtfully integrates close and directed reading of a variety of texts, including primary documents and literary novels with a variety of analytical, argumentative, and narrative writing tasks. Students build on these skills each year in order to increase proficiency and develop complexity so that they are prepared for grade 7 and high school English and IB courses.

## **Humanities 7**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 7

In Humanities, students are guided by the question, "To what extent does humanity's aspiration for power produce progress?" We will dive deeply into themes presented through literary novels and social studies and think critically together. The course combines collaborative work and individual projects. We study social studies concepts such as power and conflict in order to inform, analyze, and reflect upon our modern world.

Middle School reading and writing at Graded thoughtfully integrates the close and directed reading of a variety of texts including primary documents and literary novels with different analytical, argumentative, and narrative writing tasks. Students build on these skills each year in order to increase proficiency and develop the ability to handle complexity so that they are prepared for grade 8 and high school English and IB courses.

## **English 8 and Social Studies 8**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 8

In grade 8, English and social studies classes challenge students to hone their skills in the respective disciplines while pursuing the unified theme of the individual's participation in society and society's impact on the individual.

English 8 grapples with the question, "How do we use our voice to participate meaningfully in society?" It examines this role through a variety of literary forms, from drama to autobiography, from allegory to direct address. The class encourages students to think critically, not just about their roles in their community but also about the ways in which they give voice to their own stories. Capstone projects include the composition and delivery of an original speech, the staging of a dramatic scene, a formal literary essay, and a creative personal narrative.

Social Studies 8 is an exploration of the history of revolution and change in society that asks students to examine the question, "Why do people (as individuals and groups) choose to change their government?" The course builds the skills a historian uses to analyze the past and then examines two major historical political transformations: the Russian and Iranian Revolutions. Students engage with historical documents and other sources of information, applying the analytical skills necessary to understand these historical events. Major assessment projects include writing historical essays, writing and performing role plays, participating in oral debates, and analyzing of historic political cartoons and other primary source documents. The capstone project is a combined history and English research project: students apply their analysis and research skills to develop understanding of a topic of personal and public importance and then craft and deliver a call to action speech that encourages change.

Middle School reading and writing at Graded thoughtfully integrates close and directed reading diverse texts, including primary documents and literary novels, with a variety of expository, argumentative, and narrative writing tasks. Students build on these skills each year in order to increase proficiency and develop the ability to handle complexity so that they are prepared for high school English, IB, and other courses.

## Other Electives

*Note: Not all courses run each year; courses rotate.*

### **App Creators: Introduction to Computer Science**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

This course introduces students to computer science and coding by building mobile applications. The class utilizes the Project Lead the Way curriculum, which says, "This course will expose students to computer science as a means of computationally analyzing and developing solutions to authentic problems through mobile app development and will convey the positive impact of the application of computer science to other disciplines and to society."

### **Automation and Robotics I**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

In this hands-on course, which also uses the Project Lead the Way curriculum, students learn about automation and robotics while acquiring design, coding, and problem-solving skills. As the curriculum describes, "Students learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and robotic arms."

### **Automation and Robotics II**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8  
**Prerequisite:** Robotics I

Using the Project Lead the Way curriculum, this course is a continuation of Robotics I. In this hands-on course, students continue to learn about automation and robotics through problems that engage and challenge. Students explore a broad range of engineering topics including mechanisms, the strength of structures and materials, and automation. Students develop skills in problem solving, research, and design while learning strategies for design process documentation, collaboration, and presentation. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects.

Students have the opportunity to develop skills and understanding of course concepts through activity, project, and problem-based learning. By solving rigorous and relevant design problems using engineering and science concepts within a collaborative learning environment, this course challenges students to continually hone their creative abilities and interpersonal problem-solving skills. Students also learn how to document their work and communicate their solutions to their peers and others in their community. This course also allows students to develop strategies to enable and direct their own learning, the ultimate goal of education.

### **Bridges**

**Length:** Quarter  
**Grade:** Grade 6  
**Note:** While listed under electives, all Grade 6 students are enrolled in this course

While listed under electives, Bridges is required for all grade 6 students and serves as an academic and social-emotional introduction to Middle School. Students build study skills, explore the appropriate use of technology, and learn effective research skills. Students also explore group dynamics, developmental changes, and interpersonal and public speaking skills.

## **Community Building**

**Length:** Quarter

**Grade:** Grade 6

This course is designed to give students a better understanding of community and its meaning and importance. Students will have the opportunity to shadow members of our Graded community (for example, staff in the cafeteria, maintenance, security, library, and nurse's office), bringing together many of the skills acquired in other courses to establish a relationship outside the classroom walls.

## **Creative Writing**

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grade 7 and 8

This course will explore the writing techniques of storytelling, poetry, and other creative forms. We will delve into the personal and cultural impact of writing narrative and expressive pieces. Students will have the opportunity to compose daily and find their writing voice, culminating in a writing submission for a yearly literary publication.

## **Design and Modeling**

**Length:** Two Quarters

**Grade:** Grade 6

Students discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They are then challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the course to design various solutions to real world problems. Building on their creative skills, Design and Modeling introduces the tools and skills needed in various fields to plan, design, and model. This elective exposes students to the Design Thinking process to solve problems and introduces them to different media resources to communicate their solutions. In the process, students develop a better understanding of the influence of empathy, creativity, and innovation in their lives.

## **History of and Through Films**

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

This class is a broad introduction to the study of movies, which offers a selective overview of the history of cinema and explores the basic tools for analyzing the art of film. We will examine how camera, lighting, sound, script, and acting affect movies. Hands-on projects, written analyses, and participation in class discussions are requirements for successful completion of the course.

## **Journalism**

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

**Note:** Course may be repeated

This course introduces students to all journalism skills: reporting, interviewing, writing, editing, photographing, and both digital and print publishing. Students will choose their topics for investigation and practice their-new skills as they create authentic articles for publication and presentation in the Middle School and beyond.

## **Reader's Workshop**

**Length:** Semester

**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

This course involves students in authentic reading experiences. Student choose books to explore their individual strengths and needs and walk away with specific strategies that make comprehending text easier. Kids who love to read, and even those who don't, will find the class powerful.

## **Service Learning**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

Service Learning is a course that empowers students to address community needs that are relevant and meaningful. Students will implement authentic projects that aim to make a significant impact. This is done through a series of steps: investigation, planning and preparation, implementation and action, reflection, and demonstration and celebration. Service Learning encourages reflective practices that enrich learning, build civic engagement, and strengthen communities.

## **Virtual Reality and the Web**

**Length:** Semester  
**Grade:** Grades 7 and 8

Introduction to Virtual Reality is a technical course that introduces students to the basics of building virtual reality worlds using HTML and the A-Frame JavaScript Library. Through this course, students will build their own virtual reality worlds that are compatible with VR devices including smartphone VR headsets. This course is meant to be a first time introduction to virtual reality and does not require students to come in with any programming experience. It does, however, involve some challenging content with 3D coordinates and geometry.



# Math

## Graded Middle School Math Placement

In Middle School, we make placement recommendations based on where we believe students will have the highest possibility of academic success. We differentiate in each class to ensure all students are appropriately challenged and supported.

In grade 8 math, Graded considers three points of data when making placement recommendations for extended courses. Generally, these are weighted equally:

- Math course grades at the grades 6 and 7 level
- Northwest Education Association (NWEA) math scores in the HIGH category
- Math Learner Habit scores of 3 or 4

Teachers consider all of the above criteria after the second round of NWEA Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) tests in April to make placement recommendations. We communicate placement decisions when we share schedules at the end of the academic year. Please note that in exceptional cases, course changes can be made at the mid-year point based on student performance.

### ***What does assessment look like in math?***

We vary assessment types between tests or projects.

At Graded, we welcome opportunities for communication about student learning. In both the Middle School and High School, we provide different levels of challenge, called Descriptors of Achievement, within as many activities and lessons as possible as we design our curriculum and assessments. We use the Levels 1 to 7 as communication to the students of their current performance. The number they receive is the teacher's feedback on each student's current level of understanding. Therefore, students find challenge in moving from their current level to the next level. The levels help the student understand what type of problems they are currently able to show their understanding of and what types of problems they will be approaching.

As students gain the skills and problem-solving strategies for each level, they gain confidence and competence in problems of that type. As a guide in developing our daily curriculum and our assessments, teachers strive for the following, according to the Descriptors of Achievement:

#### **Levels 1 and 2**

Activities/Problems to identify which skills from earlier years a student still needs to practice and strengthen.

#### **Levels 3 and 4**

Activities/Problems to practice and master current grade level material that is step-by-step in nature, algorithmic, or out-of-context skills.

#### **Levels 5 and 6**

Activities/Problems to put those taught skills of Levels 1 to 4 into a context (often seen as "word problems") or use those skills in more complicated ways.

#### **Levels 6 and 7**

Activities/Problems are challenging and developed with the idea that students build on content and concepts from earlier units and use the learned skills in new combinations with creative problem-solving strategies. These problems are **unfamiliar but accessible** with the skills that have been learned. This level requires a deep understanding of the skills and concepts and the ability to recognize, choose, and execute the proper skills to solve an unfamiliar problem.

### **Assessments**

Our assessments are designed to ensure that students can practice and showcase various levels of achievement. Mathematical work that students engage in at Levels 3 to 5 on our Descriptors of Achievement allows students to

showcase their knowledge and understanding of our curriculum. At Levels 6 and 7, students are accessing work that targets a depth of knowledge that requires both strategic and extended thinking. At this level, students build on skills and apply them in unique and novel ways. Assessment is differentiated and may include tests and projects. All students can reassess summative assessments, which allows them to re-apply their learning or extend their thinking.

### ***How do we differentiate within math classes in the Middle School?***

#### ***Instruction/Classroom Activities***

Throughout the Middle School math program we use a variety of strategies to provide a differentiated environment to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged. Students engage in math through a variety of learning experiences that target problem solving, reasoning, communication, and mathematical connections. Student reflection and teacher feedback is a critical piece that helps students grow as math learners.

[Differentiated instructional strategies](#) in math may include:

- Student choice in practice levels and topics
- Flexible groupings
- Project based learning
- “Low floor, high ceiling” problems
- Learning stations
- Entry point exams
- Focus on process standards and communication
- Guided discussions
- Peer tutoring and coaching
- Challenge by Choice
- Feedback with the Optimal Learning Services (OLS) team on classroom practice
- Self-directed computer-based practice including IXL, Khan Academy, and MAP Skills

#### ***Outside of Class***

In addition, outside of class students may participate in MathCounts, Fermi Math, and STEM electives such as robotics, computer science and design, problem of the week, or math-based Friday activities.

### **Math 6**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

This year of math focuses on encouraging students to grow in their problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding of math in the following areas: numbers and operations, measurement, patterns, functions, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. Through a combination of projects and traditional skill-based practice, students are guided to see the connection between math as an academic exercise and math with practical applications in real-world situations.

### **Math 7**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 7

Grade 7 math students study a variety of topics in six main units based on the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards. Students explore numbers and operations and their use in real life decision making. This will include exploring the real life use of rational numbers, percentages, ratios, and proportions. They use probability and data analysis to make informed decisions and use angle relationships to solve problems as well. Students will explore unknown quantities in expressions, equations, and inequalities; solve problems in two and three dimensional geometry; and investigate number patterns in linear algebra.

The grade 7 math course builds upon the-grade 6 course in a fully differentiated environment. Students are given a wide

choice in their level of practice. Class discussions and group work happen at a variety of levels within the classroom. Enrichment and rigor is provided through a variety of open-ended activities, projects, and practice tasks.

## **Math 8 Standard and Math 8 Extended**

**Length:** Year

**Grade:** Grade 8

**Note:** Math 8 Extended is by special enrollment

The grade 8 math program at Graded emphasizes algebraic skills like algebraic and rational expressions, equations, factoring, applications, inequalities, graphing, and irrational numbers. These skills form the foundation for High School math studies. Students cover the AERO core topics including algebra (expressions, equations, and linear systems), geometry (2D and 3D shapes), statistics (bivariate data), number skills (the real number system including rational and irrational numbers).

In first semester the content of the Standard and Extended courses run in parallel with the extended students moving through content more quickly to develop a deeper understanding of complex concepts and skills. In the second semester, the extended course progresses at a significantly faster rate to complete an additional topic, quadratic equations. to prepare for extended mathematics in High School.

# Physical and Health Education

Graded's Physical and Health Education (PHE) program engages learners in a curriculum that fosters the physical, social, and emotional growth of each student. The program promotes physical and health literacy through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that emphasize collaboration, responsible decision-making, and the benefits of an active lifestyle. The overall goal is to enable students to make well-informed, healthy choices and develop behaviors that contribute to their well-being and the well-being of others. Students complete a variety of formative and summative tasks in PHE classes and are assessed through teacher observations, reading and analyzing articles on current issues, participating in guided discussions, reflecting, and completing various projects and tests.

## Physical and Health Education 6

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

This year-long program encourages students to focus on personal and social behavior, develop their motor skills, and appreciate the value of developing healthy lifelong skills. These skills and concepts are promoted through participation in net and wall, invasion, target, strike and field, and recreation activities.

In health class, students focus on three domains: the benefits of healthy lifestyles, personal wellness choices, and relationship choices. In grade 6, students explore the following topics: making choices, personal transitioning with family and peers, the challenges and responsibilities of growing up, balancing personal responsibilities, bullying and conflict-resolution skills, and the importance of paying attention to stress, sleep, and good nutritional habits.

## Physical and Health Education 7

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 7

This year-long program promotes students' continued growth in personal and social behavior, motor skills, and the development of healthy lifelong habits and abilities. These skills and concepts are promoted through participation in net and wall, invasion, target, strike and field, fitness, and recreation activities.

In health class, students focus on three domains: the benefits of healthy lifestyles, personal wellness choices, and relationship choices. In grade 7, students explore topics that focus on the use and abuse of tobacco and alcohol, changes during adolescence (puberty and parenting), and basic nutrition issues.

## Physical and Health Education 8

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 8

This year-long program promotes students' continued growth in personal and social behavior, motor skills, and the development of healthy lifelong habits and abilities. These skills and concepts are promoted through participation in net and wall, invasion, target, strike and field, fitness, and recreation activities.

In health class, students focus on three domains: the benefits of healthy lifestyles, personal wellness choices, and relationship choices. In grade 8, students explore topics that focus on physical fitness and exercise, body systems, advanced nutrition issues, body image and eating disorders, and changing peer relationships.

## Science

The Graded School science program provides an environment that enables students to become independent learners through observation, questioning, hands-on investigation, and analysis to construct scientific knowledge. Through activities that develop a variety of skills, students are encouraged to become proactive and responsible problem solvers, capable of making informed decisions based on evidence. As they become scientifically literate, Graded students develop an awareness of the connections between society, the our local environment, and the world as a whole.

### Science 6

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

In grade 6 science, students enhance their observation and investigative skills and begin to work independently in a lab setting. Science concepts and skills are explored through lab activities, online simulations, class discussions, and research projects. Students delve into topics that help them understand the interconnectedness among different life forms, the environment, and how human actions affect our surroundings. Our units of exploration include an introduction to chemistry, biology, and physical science.

### Science 7

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 7

In Science 7, students improve their communication and investigation skills during the following units of study: ecology, energy, water systems, scientific inquiry, and geology. Students begin by analyzing different ecosystems, including those visited on our grade-level Classroom Without Walls (CWW) trip. In addition, students practice and refine their digital research skills as they build their own self-sustaining eco-bottle, a project based on their study of ecological principles. Then students learn about energy forms and energy changes. Students choose a specific energy investigation, collect and process data, and draw conclusions from data. In the second semester, students analyze global and local water systems and choose a specific water issue, research it, and present their findings. Furthermore, they conduct multiple investigations into the properties of water. Finally, students evaluate geological evidence found by scientists over centuries, an inquiry which culminates in the theory of plate tectonics. Students' well-developed communication and investigation skills prepare them for continued success in the sciences.

### Science 8

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 8

Big questions and ideas are some of the most exciting parts of learning about science:

- What do atoms and molecules have to do with delicious food and beautiful art?
- Do we want to genetically engineer human traits or know if we have inherited a disease?
- How are life forms on this planet so diverse and yet often similar to each other?

Building on students' experiences from grade 6 and 7 sciences, grade 8 science focuses on developing lab and thinking skills for High School science through investigating big ideas and challenging questions. Students apply knowledge and creativity to design projects and explore ethical questions facing science and society. Major topics for the year include lab techniques and experimental design, applied chemistry, genetics and society, and diversity of life.

# World Languages

Graded's world languages program not only empowers students to achieve fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in various languages, but also develops intercultural competence and active global citizenry. By engaging in purposeful and collaborative communicative and academic activities that provide insight into the students' own heritages, they increase their awareness of the identities of others and learn to respect and embrace differences within an international community of learners.

## Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) A

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 6, 7, and 8

This course is designed for students who have never been exposed to the Portuguese language or have had very few opportunities to interact in it. For these beginners in Portuguese, this course is an important introduction not only to the language, its sounds, and simple structures but also to the Brazilian culture. The main goal is to help students interact using important basic vocabulary that will help them communicate. By the end of the year, students are able to talk about everyday topics that affect them directly as well as to engage in "real-life" situations such as going to restaurants and parties. Also, students produce a book called "Minha vida no Brasil", a result of their year-long work, which is an important reflection about their lives in Brazil and their own cultural identities.

## Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) B

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 6, 7, or 8  
**Note:** Upon prerequisite of PAL A or teacher approval

This course is designed for students who have been exposed to the Portuguese language for at least one year or who may have a strong Latin-rooted linguistic background and who show a minimum proficiency in interacting in the target language without referring to their native language(s). PAL B is more focused on consolidating fluency in Portuguese, increasing essential vocabulary in topics such as family, cities, and transportation, and starting to learn writing skills. Students start to consolidate past tense structures at this level. Conversation, comprehension, and written abilities will continue to increase through projects that allow students to learn the language and understand aspects of Brazilian culture. Every project provides students with opportunities to practice and explore all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

## Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) C

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grades 6, 7, or 8  
**Note:** Upon prerequisite of PAL B or teacher approval

This course is designed for students who have been exposed to the Portuguese language for a year and a half to two years and who have knowledge of present, future, and past tense structures. There is consistent work towards progressing from sentence to paragraph level productions. Students talk about memories through poems, read a variety of legends, and then write their own poems and legends. They also begin to speak more freely in Portuguese when talking about familiar topics. By the end of the school year, students are able to tell a personal anecdote with the proper rhythm, intonation, and style. Students interact with authentic sources as their language becomes more refined and proficient.

## Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) D

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6, 7, or 8

**Note:** Upon prerequisite of PAL C or teacher approval

This course is designed for students who have been exposed to the Portuguese language for at least two to three years and have knowledge of present, past, and future tenses, and the indicative, imperative, and subjunctive modes. At this level, students are able to use Portuguese to share aspects of their own cultures and heritages and of the places they have lived. The emphasis is to refine and improve fluency and accuracy while interacting in Portuguese. Students' proficiency in speaking will continue to improve as they discuss contemporary subjects and issues. We teach students a strong structural foundation-through listening, speaking, reading, and writing practice. Objectives are achieved through a social/historical/cultural approach that encompasses both linguistic and cultural studies.

## **Portuguese 6**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 6

Este curso anual destina-se a alunos de Português como língua materna ou com nível avançado de proficiência. O objetivo geral é aprimorar habilidades de expressão oral e escrita, bem como ampliar o repertório de leituras, abrangendo gêneros como o seminário, notícias de jornal, crônica, conto, lenda, relato pessoal, romance e outros.

O curso tem uma bibliografia comum centrada em textos de autores brasileiros e africanos de língua portuguesa. Trabalhamos com quatro romances de autores brasileiros contemporâneos e um romance traduzido, além de contos e poemas selecionados pela professora. A lista de leituras obrigatórias inclui as seguintes obras: *A droga da obediência*, de Pedro Bandeira; *O menino que caiu no buraco*, de Ivan Jaf; *Nuno descobre o Brasil*, de José Roberto Torero e Marcus Aurelius Pimenta; *O livro Selvagem*, do mexicano Juan Villoro, e alguns contos do livro *Os da minha rua*, do autor angolano Ondjaki. A bibliografia é atualizada periodicamente e inclui, ainda, artigos da plataforma Guten News, recentemente adotada pela escola, bem como outros textos selecionados pelo professor.

A experiência cinematográfica complementa o estudo da linguagem e das narrativas. A produção audiovisual na sala de aula é mais uma fonte geradora de debates e problematizações temáticas e estéticas, tendo como um dos princípios norteadores a inserção do aluno na produção cultural do Brasil.

As atividades de produção escrita têm como ênfase a exploração dos elementos e momentos da narrativa - ficcional ou não - e uma introdução aos textos expositivos, com exercícios que estimulam, também, a criatividade e o próprio desenvolvimento do hábito da escrita. Em termos de análise linguística, o foco é a introdução e aprofundamento dos conteúdos de morfologia, juntamente com a revisão de questões ortográficas, acentuação, pontuação e outras convenções da escrita.

## **Portuguese 7**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 7

Este curso anual destina-se a alunos de Português como língua materna ou estrangeiros com nível de proficiência muito próximo ou igual ao de um nativo. O objetivo geral é aprimorar habilidades de expressão oral e escrita, bem como ampliar o repertório de leituras, abrangendo gêneros como o debate, a apresentação oral, poesia, conto, resenha crítica, romance e outros.

O curso tem uma bibliografia comum obrigatória, bem como leituras adicionais de escolha do aluno, com a orientação do professor. Alguns dos autores lidos: Moacyr Scliar, Adriana Falção, Clara Averbuck, Osman Lins, Yves de la Taille, Paulo Leminski, Manuel Bandeira, Carlos Drummond de Andrade e Augusto dos Anjos, dentre outros. A bibliografia é atualizada periodicamente e inclui, ainda, artigos da plataforma Guten News, recentemente adotada pela escola, bem como outros textos selecionados pelo professor.

As atividades de produção escrita têm como ênfase a exploração dos elementos da narrativa - ficcional ou não - e os

fundamentos da argumentação, com exercícios que estimulam, também, a criatividade e o próprio desenvolvimento do hábito da escrita.

A experiência cinematográfica complementa o estudo da linguagem e das narrativas. A produção audiovisual na sala de aula é mais uma fonte geradora de debates e problematizações temáticas e estéticas, tendo como um dos princípios norteadores a inserção do aluno na produção cultural do Brasil.

Em termos de análise linguística, o foco é o aprofundamento dos conteúdos de morfologia já introduzidos no 6o ano, especialmente o estudo dos verbos, e a introdução à sintaxe, juntamente com a revisão de questões ortográficas, de acentuação e outras convenções da escrita.

## **Portuguese 8**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 8

Este curso anual destina-se a alunos de Português como língua materna ou com nível avançado de proficiência. O objetivo geral é aprimorar habilidades de expressão oral e escrita, bem como ampliar o repertório de leituras, abrangendo os gêneros poesia, conto, romance, relato pessoal, biografia, autobiografia, memória, entrevista, documentário e artigo de opinião. A bibliografia se divide em livros de leitura obrigatória e coletâneas de contos, poemas e outros gêneros textuais, permitindo ao aluno escolher. O trabalho é feito com autores contemporâneos brasileiros, portugueses e de países africanos com expressão em língua portuguesa, como Bernardo Kucinski, João Anzanello Carrascoza, Michel Laub, Pepetela, Mia Couto, Gonçalo Tavares, Francisco Alvim, além de autores canônicos como Pedro Nava, Carolina Maria de Jesus, Machado de Assis, Marques Rebelo, Guimarães Rosa, Carlos Drummond de Andrade entre outros. As atividades de produção escrita são o cerne do curso. Trabalha-se, primeiramente, a escrita pessoal, com foco no relato pessoal, passando ao gênero ficcional (romance, conto e poesia) para que possamos terminar com uma introdução ao estudo dos gêneros argumentativos. As atividades de leitura e de expressão oral se desenvolvem em torno das atividades de produção escrita. Em termos de análise linguística, o foco está na revisão de questões ortográficas, de acentuação e outras convenções da escrita, assim como a introdução ao estudo aprofundado da sintaxe, dando início ao estudo do período simples. A experiência cinematográfica complementa o estudo da linguagem e das narrativas. A produção audiovisual na sala de aula é mais uma fonte geradora de debates e problematizações temáticas e estéticas, tendo como um dos princípios norteadores a inserção do aluno na produção cultural do Brasil, focando-se, neste curso, nas produções documentais

## **Spanish as an Additional Language A**

**Length:** Year  
**Grade:** Grade 8

The students' first encounter with Spanish is designed to engage them in learning a new language and exploring different cultures. This course introduces students to the basic skills in Spanish. The focus of this course is the development of oral skills through a variety of communicative activities. Structures vary according to the theme, topic, or unit studied and students constantly acquire vocabulary related to these themes. Students will be able to communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. The course covers the following topics: the individual and society, leisure and work, the urban environment, and the rural environment. Students will be in contact with movies and different forms of art from different Spanish-speaking countries.

**Updated: January 2019, Roberto d'Erizans**