



## **First Grade Curriculum**

### **Language Arts**

Reading and writing are at the heart of our first grade program. Children read and are read to daily in reading workshop, shared reading, and guided reading groups. They read a variety of genres at their independent and instructional reading levels. They increase their reading skills through instruction in decoding strategies, analysis of word patterns, and continuous reinforcement of high frequency words from the word wall. Extra support for some beginning readers is provided daily by our Learning Resource Team. Comprehension skills are developed through discussions of literature read aloud to the class and practiced during independent reading and in guided reading groups. Our daily writing workshops give the children the opportunity to focus on concepts of print and the craft of writing as they compose personal narratives and explore nonfiction writing.

### **Mathematics**

Our math program is based upon the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The children develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and their facility with numbers as they investigate problems, share their strategies, and discuss their results. They are introduced to and practice reading and writing one, two and three digit numbers, recognizing and extending patterns, describing attributes, telling time on analog and digital clocks, using the calendar, identifying coins, counting money, measuring using standard and nonstandard forms, identifying two- and three- dimensional shapes, collecting, charting, and analyzing data, solving addition and subtraction problems, and using arithmetic symbols. They develop a beginning understanding of fractions and place value. Extensive use of the hundreds chart and a variety of manipulatives help to foster a visual and kinesthetic understanding of the concepts and number relationships. Games and activities involving number facts provide addition and subtraction practice and computation strategies. Our program is based upon Math Trailblazers, and we supplement it with calendar activities from Every Day Counts.

## **Quakerism**

Throughout the year we explore the testimonies of peace, stewardship, simplicity, equality, community, integrity, and service. We emphasize the idea that everyone matters and that we must find ways to make sure all people are included and treated with respect.

## **Social Studies**

The social studies curriculum in first grade begins with building community in our classrooms by formulating our class rules and learning to resolve conflicts peacefully. Throughout the year we explore the theme “same and different” by learning about people of different races, cultures, genders, and physical differences and noticing what we all have in common. We meet for social studies once a week. The themes introduced during this time are then integrated across the curriculum.

## **Art**

Our Studio Arts Program is designed to develop self-confidence, pride, trust, and initiative in each child as well as the uninhibited freedom to create with expression. Curriculum balances the academic study of art history and cultural arts with the elements and principles of design to cultivate a lifelong love and appreciation for art and art history and puts art works into perspective relative to the past. Hands-on activities foster growth in fine motor ability, technical skill, creative thinking, independent problem solving, and observation. Cultivating creative, “out of the box” thinkers is emphasized by offering studio challenges that are sequential and meet each student at their developmental level and particular learning needs.

This developmentally-based curriculum strengthens the skills of decision-making, critical thinking, visual communication, and evaluation. Viewing, analyzing, reflecting, group discussion, and writing about art encourages students to synthesize concepts. Through studio-based experiences, students develop an awareness of the relationship between themselves, others, the environment, and the world. First graders are introduced to regular studio work and curriculum focuses on them and their immediate world balanced with developing fine motor skills, basic creative principles, and problem solving skills.

## **Library**

By the end of first grade, a student should be able to listen to readings attentively, allowing classmates to listen as well, and then volunteer ideas on how two book plots compare and contrast. The student should be able to notice subtler plot elements, such as emotions, as well as obvious ones (“There’s a dog and a cat in each book”).

## **Music**

First grade music classes are designed to build upon the musical experiences of the students as preschoolers, pre-kindergarteners, and kindergarteners. Many students will enter first grade with basic music competence- the ability to independently sing in tune and keep a steady beat. For those who have not achieved that developmental milestone, the beginning of the first grade year offers an opportunity to continue to develop those skills. About mid-way through the year, first graders embark on their first official foray into a sequential and music skills-based curriculum. First grade students begin basic formal music literacy studies, which facilitates experiencing music and being active music makers – the primary goal and aim of the entire music curriculum at Friends School Haverford. Additionally, they build skills for more sophisticated music making in the future such as patterned dances, singing in harmony, and instrument playing. First grade music classes take on a variety of musical experiences from speech activities, to singing, to playing games, to formal and informal movement activities, to simple rhythm and instrumental activities. An ideal class contains a range of activities, touching on various musical concepts and skills, and utilizing a range of teaching and learning modalities.

## **Physical Education**

Goals and Objectives for K-2:

- 1) For each child to develop confidence in their physical abilities.
- 2) To learn to work cooperatively with a group, solve conflicts peacefully, and to share equipment with others.
- 3) To develop a sense of fair play and good sportsmanship.
- 4) To enjoy physical activity and have fun.

This program includes a wide variety of movement experiences, simple tagging games, body management, and fundamental skill building. We use various types of equipment in order to challenge each individual student. Emphasis is placed on cooperation within the group, individual and small group activities, sharing, and following directions. Kindergarten classes meet for a half hour period three times a week. First grade classes meet five days a week. Second grade classes meet four days a week for P.E.

## **Science**

Science in first grade begins with a focus on "being scientists" as students practice skills of observing, describing and wondering about things in the world around them. Our science program emphasizes student inquiry and hands-on experiences; and throughout the year students work on honing their discussion, writing and drawing skills to record and share what they are learning.

During the early fall we'll concentrate on using senses as tools for observing the world and gathering information. Our study of sense organs will lead to a focus on the human body and how it works, using a variety of activities to understand muscles, bones, hearts and lungs. Our physical science unit explores the properties of matter, especially solids and liquids. Students do a great deal of describing, sorting, testing, mixing, dribbling, and comparing. Comparing the properties of solids and liquids with those of air leads into a unit on weather and the tools meteorologists use to measure temperature, wind, and rain. In the spring we will concentrate on diversity of living things and their environments, observing similarities and differences and how various organisms get the things they need to survive and grow.

About three times during the year we will develop a concentrated thematic unit to explore a particular topic in depth, for example, nutrition and how food affects our bodies, the water cycle and its importance for all living things, and why and how we can care for the environment. These units will enhance opportunities for deeper understanding and for making connections to other areas of the curriculum.

### **Technology**

In first grade much emphasis is placed on helping students become more comfortable with the computer interface, teaching them how to open and close various programs, and teaching them how to save and open files using appropriate folders. The first graders have used Kid Pix and Kidspiration to draw pictures, add text and create scenes centered around various themes, such as snowfalls, holidays, or their favorite activities.

We use both Kidspiration and several online sites to teach students various math skills, such as the value of coins and dollars in order to count money. Students learn to type using Simple Text.

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