Inspiring a Desire to Think, Create, and Innovate

The faculty and staff of Colorado Academy specialize in supporting and challenging early adolescents to develop academic, social, leadership, and life skills. In a learning environment that values and rewards intellectual curiosity, originality, motivation, and teamwork, we place a premium on the development of courage, resourcefulness, resilience, and kindness—skills that will prepare our students for an ever-changing world.

Our academic facilities, from maker labs to classrooms and from libraries to study nooks, are designed to inspire in students the desire to think, create, and innovate. Supported by a culture that reinforces relationships based on respect, our students develop both academic strengths and a passion for lifelong intellectual engagement.

It is often during the Middle School years that the script for long-term social and academic success is written. Through intentional programming, we encourage students to develop a growth mindset and a positive, “I can do it,” predisposition toward learning. Alumni often tell us that it was during the Middle School years that they learned to look for more, and expect more, from themselves.

Mission Statement

Colorado Academy: Creating curious, kind, courageous, and adventurous learners and leaders.

Our Values:
1. We foster courage: exploring new challenges in academics, athletics, the arts, and experiential learning.
2. We nurture curiosity: the foundation of lifelong, creative discovery.
3. We choose kindness: engaging graciously in an inclusive, joyful community.
4. We encourage understanding: listening to others and acting ethically, with integrity and respect.
5. We embrace inclusivity: working through education to create empathy and compassion.
6. We promote habits of health, both physically and mentally, strengthening resilience and confidence.
7. We believe in a dynamic response to the needs of an ever-changing world.
8. We inspire thoughtful individuals who are ready to transform the future.

The Colorado Academy Middle School

CA’s Middle School provides students in Grades 6 through 8 with a nurturing environment in which to pursue personal growth as well as academic excellence. Here, students begin to shape personal values and develop respect and responsibility for themselves, for others, and for their environment. We recognize that to feel valued and accepted is to feel safe, and that this is the foundation of empathy and the ability to see the world from another’s point of view. Supported by their school and community, Middle School students learn how to study and think independently as they prepare for secondary education. They acquire, demonstrate, and celebrate talents in the classroom, in artistic, musical, or dramatic endeavors, and on the athletic field. They also develop intellectual curiosity, discover the joy of learning, and take pride in their achievements.

Middle School Curriculum Contents

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## CA By the Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K through Grade 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in Middle School Division</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of Students to Teachers</td>
<td>8:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Faculty Members</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Faculty with Advanced Degrees</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Years of Classroom Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Years at CA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Colorado Academy Six Cs

In addition to core academics and experiences in the arts and athletics, Colorado Academy focuses on the teaching and practice of 21st century skills—skills we call the 6 Cs:

- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Communication
- Creativity
- Character
- Collaboration
- Cultural Competence

By connecting what children learn to what they will need to be successful in the world, students at each grade level receive instruction designed to develop each of these essential skills. In addition, Colorado Academy employs the Design Thinking framework, employed at Stanford University’s d-school, to teach students a very strategic and human-centered approach to problem solving.

## A Rigorous Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum

Middle School incorporates a rigorous liberal arts and sciences curriculum with leadership, service learning, and experiential education opportunities, as well as a structured advising program designed to promote both academic and personal growth. Colorado Academy provides students with increasing levels of challenge and responsibility as they move through consecutive grades. Small class sizes ensure that teachers know each child and that students have the opportunity to collaborate in small groups. Our curriculum is balanced across training and experiences in core academic subjects, visual and performing arts, and physical education. CA teachers provide learning experiences not only in classroom settings, but also through project-based experiences, outdoor and travel adventures, and student-run clubs and programs.

## Mindfulness, Culture, and Character

Colorado Academy places particular emphasis on how students contribute to the culture and character of the school. A student-generated focus on kindness, courage, grit, responsibility, inclusivity, and gratitude helps to shape daily conversations. These themes are supported throughout campus.

## Middle School Leadership

Middle School Principal Bill Wolf-Tinsman began his teaching career as a Middle and High School history teacher and coach. At the Kent Denver School, he taught courses ranging from Colorado history to social philosophy, psychology, and economics. During those years, he also ran the summer school and coached Varsity Boys Tennis and Varsity Girls Soccer. Eventually, he became the Assistant Head of the Middle School. His undergraduate degree is from Williams College. After earning a master’s degree at Harvard University with a concentration in Educational Administration, he moved to Greenwich, Connecticut, where he was the Head of the Greenwich Country Day Middle School for 13 years. There, he also served as Director of Professional Development and Dean of Studies Pre-K–Ninth Grade. He and his family returned to Colorado in 2007 when Wolf-Tinsman began his current position of Middle School Principal at Colorado Academy.
Middle School Mathematics

Our goal is for our students to be globally competitive, with each student able to think and problem solve mathematically. We believe all math students should develop the skills to question, invent, create, connect, reason, communicate, persist, risk, and accept challenge.

As a Middle School Math Department we:
- Have high expectations for all students
- Challenge and support each learner
- Improve mathematical confidence and competence
- Teach children to be creative, curious, and enjoy the learning process
- Develop students’ perseverance and resilience

Students are assessed and individually placed into a sequence of study which will be most appropriate for them as a learner. During the Middle School years, most students learn pre-algebra skills and complete Algebra I by Eighth Grade. Other students who demonstrate readiness for a more rapid progression begin with pre-algebra skills, progress through Algebra I, and complete Geometry in Eighth Grade.

All students who complete the Middle School program in good standing are on track for either calculus (regular or Advanced Placement AB) or for Advanced Placement BC Calculus as Seniors. When circumstances warrant, students are further accelerated to meet learning needs.

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### Middle School Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE 6</th>
<th>GRADE 7</th>
<th>GRADE 8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRE-ALGEBRA</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRE-ALGEBRA</strong></td>
<td><strong>ALGEBRA I</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADE 6**

Students solidify all operations with whole numbers and decimals while becoming more proficient with all operations with fractions. During this course, students continue to develop strong number sense and mathematical fluency with foundational arithmetic. Students explore algebraic thinking and apply it to real-world problems. With each topic that is explored, a balance between conceptual understanding, computational fluency, and problem solving is emphasized.

**Topics include:**
- integers
- percentages
- ratio
- basic geometry
- working with expressions and equations
- algebraic reasoning
- basic graphing
- data analysis

**GRADE 7**

Students solidify a foundation in integers, decimals, fractions, percents, and ratio and proportion. Variables are introduced in a more complex fashion and with more frequency. Problem-solving techniques are utilized as students learn to communicate their solutions verbally and in writing. With each topic that is explored, a balance between conceptual understanding and computational fluency is emphasized.

**Topics include:**
- operations with integers
- rational numbers
- proportions
- data analysis
- simplifying expressions
- solving multi-step equations and inequalities
- composite 2D and 3D constructions
- exploration of perimeter, area, surface area, and volume
- circles
- triangle properties and identification

**GRADE 8**

Students lay a foundation for future math and science courses and are immersed into thinking abstractly about mathematical concepts. Students use manipulatives to help make the abstract concepts more concrete. Students finish the year with a basic understanding of graphing calculators. They develop a stronger sense of how to solve word problems using variables and how algebra will be integrated into their science courses and geometry. With each topic that is explored, a balance among conceptual understanding and computational fluency is emphasized.

**Topics include:**
- radicals
- solving multi-step and complex equations
- solving multi-step inequalities
- solving and graphing linear equations
- working with expressions and word problems
- data analysis, including central tendencies and visual representations
- exponents
- scientific notation
- multiplying and factoring polynomials
- solving and graphing quadratics
- solving and graphing systems of equations
- solving and graphing systems of inequalities and quadratics
Middle School Mathematics (continued)

### PRE-ALGEBRA PLUS

Students solidify a foundation in integers, decimals, fractions, percents, and ratio and proportion. Variables are introduced in a more complex fashion and with more frequency. Problem-solving techniques are utilized as students learn to communicate their solutions verbally and in writing. With each topic that is explored, a balance between conceptual understanding and computational fluency is emphasized.

**Topics include:**
- operations with integers
- rational numbers
- proportions
- data analysis
- simplifying expressions
- solving multi-step equations and inequalities
- composite 2D and 3D constructions
- exploration of perimeter, area, surface area, and volume
- circles
- triangle properties and identification

### ALGEBRA PLUS

Students lay a foundation for future math and science courses and are immersed in thinking abstractly about mathematical concepts. Manipulatives are occasionally used to help make the abstract concepts more concrete. Students finish the year with a basic understanding of graphing calculators. Students develop a stronger sense of how to solve word problems using variables and how algebra will be integrated into their science courses and geometry. With each topic that is explored, a balance between conceptual understanding and computational fluency is emphasized.

**Topics include:**
- radicals
- solving multi-step and complex equations
- solving multi-step inequalities
- solving and graphing linear equations
- working with expressions and word problems
- data analysis, including central tendencies and visual representations
- exponents
- scientific notation
- multiplying and factoring polynomials
- solving and graphing quadratics
- solving and graphing systems of equations
- solving and graphing systems of inequalities and quadratics

### GEOMETRY (H)

Students explore points, lines, polygons, and circles in two dimensions, investigate three-dimensional figures, and problem solve with manipulating dimensions and formulas. There are frequent opportunities for independent and collaborative exploration using both inductive and deductive logic. Students also apply their understanding of definitions, postulates, and theorems to improve their logical reasoning and critical-thinking skills.

**Topics include:**
- congruency and similarity
- transformations
- parallel lines
- polygons and special triangle properties
- trigonometry
- surface area and volume
- properties of circles
Middle School Science

**Sixth Grade:** Students participate in significant collaborative work examining local, national, and global environmental issues while understanding their role in stewardship of natural resources. Twenty-first Century skills provide rich learning opportunities through Design Thinking and Performance Tasks. iPads are integrated into all class work, lab work, and projects.

**Seventh Grade** science introduces students to scientific processes and provides an introduction to cells and disease. Students begin with an investigation of the structure and function of cells, their evolution, and processes. With this foundation, students explore genetics and human health through a Health Design Challenge. Applying critical-thinking skills, students explore a genetic disease while learning about reproduction and heredity. Collaborative work is at the heart of their science practice. Twenty-first Century skills and the use of technology provide rich learning opportunities through Design Thinking and Performance Tasks.

**Eighth Grade** STEM is designed to give students the opportunity to explore the physical world through a meaningful study of data and analysis, aerodynamics and rocketry, robotics, and chemistry. In this hands-on, laboratory-oriented class, students become skilled in the proper use of laboratory equipment and technology tools as they discover scientific principles. The ability to apply conceptual understanding to a novel situation is an important outcome of this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earth Science:</strong> Planet Earth Through the Lenses of Water and Materials &amp; Minerals</td>
<td><strong>Life Science:</strong> Cell Biology and Disease; Genetics; and Human Biology &amp; Health</td>
<td><strong>STEM:</strong> Science, Technology, Engineering &amp; Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruitvale, a groundwater investigation: In this investigation, students gather evidence to determine why and how the water of the fictitious town of Fruitvale became contaminated. The module ends with a mock town meeting in which students need to make a decision on how to handle the contamination.</td>
<td>Studying People Scientifically: An introductory unit to build foundational skills using scientific processes and experimental design practices.</td>
<td>Data &amp; Analysis:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Water Challenge: Student teams develop a water project that focuses on a local community need. They create a skit to communicate the problem they investigated and their proposed solution.</td>
<td>Cell Biology and Disease: Understanding the basic mechanisms of disease and investigating the structures and functions of normal cells and some of the processes that occur inside these cells.</td>
<td>Reviewing how science is represented in our world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean studies: Students learn about oceanography and issues surrounding the oceans. They perform a dissection, along with other skill-based ocean water chemistry labs. Students learn real-world problem solving involving the oceans through The Great Ocean Rescue. A study of the ocean-atmosphere connection aids in the understanding of climate change.</td>
<td>Reproduction: A study of classical genetics, heredity, asexual and sexual reproduction, nature and nurture in the problem situation of a hypothetical student with Marfan Syndrome.</td>
<td>Collecting and representing real-life data with appropriate graphs and other visuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocks &amp; Minerals: Students learn about the rock cycle, rock formations, and minerals.</td>
<td>Endocrine and Human Reproductive System: Students learn functions of and explain functions of endocrine glands; describe the changes that occur during adolescence; explain the structures and functions of the male and female reproductive systems; and sequence the events that occur during the menstrual cycle.</td>
<td>Analyzing data and using relevant data to draw conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth’s resources: Students learn how humans affect the availability of natural resources. Examples explored include human use of oil, gas, mineral, and fresh water resources to meet human needs.</td>
<td>Bioengineering: Students study how engineering solutions can improve the health and functioning of people. Examples explored include artificial bones, artificial hands, and artificial heart valves.</td>
<td>Aerodynamics &amp; Rocketry:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring how standard and metric measurements are used and integrated into our society</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilizing measuring tools, such as angular rulers, clinometers, weight scales, etc. to design, build, and test a bottle rocket’s flight and recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Applying Newton’s Laws of Motion to examine the principles of rocketery and vertical flight</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Experimenting with different variables that may affect the flight of a rocket</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Using basic trigonometry to measure the peak height of a rocket in flight</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Examining the “hidden figures” of science, and explore the underrepresentation of marginalized people who have made significant contributions to science</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robotics &amp; Technology:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring how software is used to program robots such as Sphero and LEGO® EV3 Mindstorm</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Programming Sphero using drag-and-drop programming to complete light and game challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Designing, building, and programming EV3 robots to complete field challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigating the role technology plays in our lives and its integration into our society</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Middle School Science (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering &amp; Math</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemistry:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exploring the properties of matter through a variety of experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Investigating the characteristic properties of substances, such as density, hardness, and other physical properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observing and analyzing how physical changes compare to chemical changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Designing and conducting experiments to determine the chemical properties of substances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the Periodic Table to identify elements and their characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explaining the attraction between two atoms, creating covalent and ionic bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Applying the Lewis Dot Structure to determine the reactive properties of atoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Examining how the courage and tenacity of “the Radium Girls” saved hundreds of thousands of lives, inspired the creation of radioactive regulation, and encouraged research on nuclear weapons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools the World Over
Computer Science/Engineering & Design

The Middle School integrates technology into academic classes to emphasize core topics and appropriate, balanced use of technology. Computer literacy includes specially crafted units on digital citizenship, technology literacy, and computer science. As a 1:1 iPad school, CA views technology as a resource to enhance curriculum and engage students in learning. We emphasize and model using the iPad as a learning, creativity, and organizational tool and using technology in an ethical, healthy manner.

Students design toys with sewable circuits and microcontrollers and develop an understanding of the digital world. They also learn computer science fundamentals through game design and more sophisticated devices, including Hummingbird Arduinos, Spheros, and LEGO® EV3 robots. Students in Middle School are also invited to compete on CA’s FIRST LEGO® League robotics team and/or CA’s Future City team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School Computer Science/Engineering &amp; Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRADE 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TECHNOLOGY LITERACY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Citizenship: digital reputation, cyberbullying, electronic communication, private vs. personal information, presenter on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word processing: advanced layout and introductory desktop publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheet functions, formatting, basic formulas, and graphing data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations using a variety of software and different media (slides, audio, video, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation and manipulation of video, audio, and images</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding local, network, and cloud storage and the importance of back-ups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational skills using an electronic calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note-taking skills using electronic devices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional competitive robotics team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMPUTER SCIENCE/ENGINEERING & DESIGN**

In this class, students learn about circuits and use the Design Thinking process to build a toy with LED lights. **Topics include:**

- What is a Computer?
- Microcontrollers, Sensors
- Circuits, Design Process
- What is Making?
- Understanding of Basic Functionality of Lily Tiny microcontroller & LEDs

In this class, students learn key computer science concepts and apply the Design Thinking process to create new games and interactive robotic animals. **Topics include:**

- Design toys and games using the Snap programming language and a Hummingbird Arduino
- Programming Introduction, Sequence, Branching, Loops, Variables, Robotics and Procedures
- Learn about motors and sensors and additional programming concepts

**STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design and Math)**

This class is an interdisciplinary elective that integrates the application of literacy, design, imagination, and problem-solving. Through experimentation, investigation, and the use of Sphero robots, students generate and conceptualize artistic work, as well as explore action art and advanced concepts of logic, Design Thinking, and computer science. **Topics & Skills:**

- Developing spatial visualization skills to reach beyond one’s capacities, to explore playfully without a preconceived plan, and to embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes
- Using journals to think about an aspect of one’s work or working process, including successes, failures, and lessons learned

continued ▼
Middle School Computer Science/Engineering & Design (continued)

Skills & Concepts:
- Collaboration Ideation
- Sketching & Collaboration on Visual Ideas
- Drawing (by hand, dimensioning, joints)
- Journaling
- Tools, Safety, Measurement, Best Practices
- Prototyping—Design & Execution
- Testing—Collecting & Analyzing Feedback
- Iterating/Refinement

Skills & Concepts:
- Design Thinking process
- 2D Digital Design
- Prototyping with Laser Cutter
- 3D Modeling with SolidWorks
- 3D Printing

Skills & Concepts:
- Engaging and persisting in designing solutions to complex problems
- Accurately measuring, marking, cutting, and assembling various projects, using hand and power tools
- Working together as artists and engineers to design appealing and functional solutions to problems

Activity Examples:
- Assembling and decorating a wooden tool box
- Designing and crafting an effective carrying case, such as a wallet or purse for everyday use
- Studying and folding various origami patterns. Exploring the many applications of origami, including packaging, architecture, décor, storage, and structural engineering
- Exploring the FEEL of tactile technology, such as a typewriter, to get a sense of the effects modern, more efficient technology has on our everyday lives

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design and Math)
The Middle School (Raether) Library provides resources that support the Middle School curriculum. Library services are integrated into the curriculum and foster collaboration between teachers and library staff. Emphasis is placed upon encouraging independent reading and the development of research-related skills.

## Middle School Library Skills & Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library lessons include:</th>
<th>GRADE 6</th>
<th>GRADE 7</th>
<th>GRADE 8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Raether Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Citizenship</td>
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<td>Reader’s Advisory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copyright and Plagiarism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing &amp; Direct Quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works Cited - NoodleTools</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print, Digital, and Multimedia Resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Website and Print Resource Evaluation Techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Database Exploration &amp; Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Research Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Search Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating and Organizing Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question Creation and Revision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating and Revising Sub-questions for Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Beyond the Basics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject-specific Research Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note-taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assimilating Multiple Types of Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyzing and Synthesizing Information for Writing</td>
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</table>
Middle School English

Grade 6 Core: The Middle School Core program integrates language arts, social studies, and advisory. On four days out of the six-day rotation, students experience two academic periods along with advisory; on the other two days of the rotation, students experience one Core academic period plus advisory. The time allotted to the program is designed to bridge the gap between a Fifth Grade homeroom environment and the academic discipline-based schedule that exists in the Middle School. Students develop and hone reading and writing skills. The ability to read carefully for meaning is emphasized, and annotation and note-taking skills are further developed. Texts include novels, articles, and selected poems. Students write extensively, developing their ability to express themselves accurately and with precision in a variety of genres. The ability to support a point of view with evidence is taught and reinforced. Grammar and vocabulary instruction is a routine aspect of the curriculum. Students also learn study, organization, and time-management skills.

English 7: The Seventh Grade English curriculum combines reading, writing, grammar and mechanics, and vocabulary. The course is driven by the assigned readings of short stories and novels, and these readings are used to further class discussions and written work. The focus of many of the readings is on conflict and conflict resolution in a variety of settings (time and place). Texts include novels, short stories, articles, and selected poems and myths. Students should expect nightly and weekend homework. Reading and writing occur at home and at school. Students vary in their reading and writing speeds; therefore, the assignments may require the budgeting of time to meet deadlines. The ability to write persuasively across genres is a continued emphasis, and grammar instruction is a routine aspect of the curriculum.

English 8: The Eighth Grade English curriculum combines reading, writing, grammar/mechanics, and vocabulary. Grammar rules are reinforced and the introduction of new vocabulary continues. Reading in-class novels drives the course, and they are used to fuel abstract thinking, discussion, and the writing of expository and analytical essays and creative assignments. Novels address issues tied to coming of age, social justice, and personal growth in a variety of settings (time and place). They are selected in an effort to address current or future issues that each student may encounter in the Upper School academic setting or the wider world. Students should expect nightly homework with one assignment given over each weekend. Reading and writing occur at home and at school.

Middle School English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING</th>
<th>GRADE 6</th>
<th>GRADE 7</th>
<th>GRADE 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students read and analyze diverse fiction and nonfiction texts to increase interpretive and evidence-based abilities across formats and to enhance their knowledge and understanding of multiple cultures, languages, beliefs, and ideas.</td>
<td>Students read and analyze diverse fiction and nonfiction texts to increase interpretive and evidence-based abilities and to enhance their knowledge and understanding of various print sources.</td>
<td>Students read literature and supporting texts to build an understanding of diverse cultures and the ways in which characters strive for personal fulfillment while struggling with the realities of society. Emphasis is placed on diversity in language usage, word choice across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students engage with contemporary literature in various genres to increase reading skills and to use strategies to enhance comprehension, evaluation, interpretation, and appreciation.</td>
<td>Students engage with literature in various genres to increase reading skills and to use strategies that enhance comprehension, evaluation, interpretation, and appreciation.</td>
<td>Students employ a wide range of strategies and reading skills to enhance comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and appreciation of themes and symbols.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students employ multiple research methods and conduct original research using primary and secondary resources. They create a variety of products, share their findings, and conduct self- and peer evaluations of their research process and product.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Genres taught include narrative, expository, and research writing. Students write multiple essays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Mini lessons include the use of a Reader's/Writer's Journal to explore writing territories; combating writer's block; using proof-reading marks; reading to inspire writing; employing &quot;voice&quot;; enhancing focus; conveying purpose and incorporating emotional intensity; creating story maps; writing strong leads; incorporating sensory detail and vivid language; avoiding vague description; including action; and writing strong titles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students practice multiple research strategies and conduct original research using primary and secondary sources. They create several products (including traditional written research), share their findings, and conduct self- and peer evaluations of the research process and product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Through a variety of writing genres, students explore the importance of organization, audience, voice, word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, and fluency. Emphasis is placed on brainstorming, outlining, peer editing, and drafting. Students learn that a piece of writing is always a work in progress.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writer's Workshop</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lessons and practice employing end marks, capitalization, commas, apostrophes, abbreviations, parts of speech, noun-verb agreement, sentence/paragraph/essay structures, underlining, italics, and quotation marks.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>English Workshop</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lessons and practice employing end marks, capitalization, commas, apostrophes, abbreviations, parts of speech, noun-verb agreement, sentence/paragraph/essay structures, underlining, italics, and quotation marks.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Workshop Level A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Includes 20 spelling words per unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vocabulary taken from readings</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary Workshop Level B</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>- Includes 20 spelling words per unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vocabulary taken from readings</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary Workshop Level C</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Includes 20 spelling words per unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vocabulary taken from readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students revisit and enhance their understanding of end marks, abbreviations, apostrophes, colons, semi-colons, dashes, hyphens, capitalization, underlining, italics, quotations, sentence structure, fragments, clauses, parts of speech, agreement, and conventions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle School Social Studies

**Sixth Grade:** The Core program integrates language arts and social studies. The integration of content enables a focused development of skills essential to academic success: reading, note-taking, interpreting, analyzing, and communicating in written and oral formats. The social studies curriculum examines culture and the impact that globalization is having as cultures merge and evolve.

**Seventh Grade:** The Outside the Box: Critical and Creative Thinking course is designed to teach and practice Colorado Academy’s 6 Cs: character, collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and cultural competence, by engaging students in a series of challenges drawing upon content-rich subjects. These challenges incorporate design-thinking protocols, encourage an innovator’s mindset, and result in a multitude of final products—from debates to presentations to written arguments. A primary focus of the class is to develop students’ evidence-based reasoning skills. A yearlong theme is the examination of contemporary social issues from a variety of perspectives, culminating in students researching and exploring an area of personal interest.

**Eighth Grade:** The Civics course encompasses the background, creation, history, and current workings of the U.S. government. Students explore the history of the events, ideas, and the founding principles upon which the American republican government is based. We examine and interpret important primary documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Students study historical events that have influenced, and been influenced by, the Supreme Court’s rulings and interpretations of the Constitution. Finally, students learn about the political system, deliberate on controversial issues, attempt to define the role government plays in addressing these issues, and explore government’s overall impact on society.

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<th>Middle School Social Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRADE 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CORE</strong></td>
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</table>
| Students explore the extent to which a culture should be protected, promoted, isolated, or merged and the problems that result from choosing a particular approach. | In addition to the 6 Cs, the course includes these topics:  
- Innovator’s mindset  
- Debate skills  
- Design-thinking process and protocols  
- Performance tasks  
- Social justice—in a culmination of skills developed all year, students identify, examine, and present on a topic of personal interest at the 7th Grade level | Through activities designed to engage their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, students tackle complicated issues.  
**Topics:**  
- What is government and why is it necessary?  
- What types of government are there and what are the pros and cons of each type?  
- How and why is America’s government structured?  
- How does the United States Supreme Court safeguard the Constitution and the rights of the citizens?  
- What is the role government plays in addressing current controversial issues?  

**Topics:**  
- Geography & Mapping skills  
- Culture: What is it? What shapes it? How does it evolve?  
- North America: Why do people migrate? Analysis of historical and present-day immigration to the United States  
- Europe: Rise of the Nazi Party, including German expansion, WWII, and the Holocaust  
- Africa: A continent of diverse cultures—students explore historical realities and investigate prospects for the future  
- Asia: With a focus on China, students examine modernization’s impact on traditions
Middle School Global Languages

Middle School students study either three years of French or three years of Spanish. Our primary goal for students is to be able to communicate in the target language by "Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom." Receptive and expressive language skills are emphasized and students are taught the skills necessary to become culturally competent in the target languages and cultures. Students are placed into the level of Spanish or French that matches their skill level, which includes placing students in the Spanish Language Arts course or in an Upper School Spanish or French course, should that be the right match for the learner.

The Global Languages program in the Middle School emphasizes the acquisition and development of the following skills:

**Communication**
- Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
- Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

**Cultures**
- Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices, products, and perspectives of the culture studied.

**Connections**
- Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the global language.
- Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the global language and its cultures.

**Comparisons**
- Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of the language and the concept of culture through comparisons of the language and culture studied and their own.

**Communities**
- Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
- Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.
**Skill Development:**
French classes in the Middle School closely follow the ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) proficiency guidelines and the Can-Do Statements. Students are asked to speak French in responses to the teacher and in conversations with peers. Students experience a hybrid curriculum in which TPR (Total Physical Response) and CI (Comprehensible Input) teaching methods are embedded into various thematic units.

Additionally, students have the opportunity to experience a wealth of authentic materials to enrich their learning experience. The goal is for students to begin building a foundation for the love of the French language and open their minds to French language and culture in a way that is purposeful and meaningful to them.

Students learn how to speak, read, write, and listen to understand French in a variety of activities that include the three modes of communication: interpersonal, presentational, and interpretive. Grammar and vocabulary topics arise via various thematic units as well as readings.

**Reading Comprehension:**
Students read stories written for French language learners, including: *Les Aventures d’Isabelle: La France en danger et les secrets de Picasso* and *La classe des confessions*. These stories use natural language and are formulated to use the highest frequency French vocabulary and verbs (which will quickly help students to integrate new vocabulary and grammar into their speaking, reading, and writing, as appropriate). Students may also choose from French language magazines and books available in the classroom.

**Oral and Written Practice:**
Students read stories aloud, translate them, act them out, summarize the main events, and create presentations adding on to the stories. They answer comprehension questions and use their new grammar knowledge to write sentences about the content. Students steadily increase both production and accuracy.

**Cultural Competence:**
Cultural topics naturally emerge in the stories, and conversations organically arise as students reflect, have questions, and give feedback about their reading. Paris and French culture and history are the main areas of focus.

**Vocabulary:**
- Salutations and greetings
- Numbers 0 to 1,000
- Colors
- Classroom vocabulary, school subjects
- Leisure activities, family and pets, sports
- Physical descriptions and personality traits
- Days of the week, telling time, seasons, months, weather

**Grammar:**
- The partitive
- Regular present tense –re verbs
- Commands
- Irregular verbs prendre, mettre, voir, vouloir, boire, pouvoir, devoir, dormir, sortir, and partir
- Present tense of -er verbs
- The verbs connaître and savoir
- The passé composé with avoir of regular -er, -ir, and -re verbs
- The passé composé of irregular verbs
- The passé composé with être
- Negative expressions
- Expressions with faire
- Ordinal numbers

---

**In French B,** students continue their study of the French language with a focus on speaking, reading, and writing. Students quickly build on the basic vocabulary and elemental structures from the previous year. Students are able to describe the near future and the recent past; talk about interests, pastimes, and activities both in and out of school, and describe their experience with increasing accuracy.

Through the study of grammar and structure, students gain an understanding of question formation, present and past tense, the use of irregular and compound verbs, as well as the ability to identify direct and indirect objects. Students apply their growing skills to reading a short novel, *Brandon Brown à la conquête de Québec*.

Emphasis is placed on the ability to speak in a classroom context and in increasingly less-structured situations. Students also write short paragraphs, papers, and letters. We work almost completely in French, learning through direct instruction and immersion.

**Cultural Exploration:**
- Paris
- Sénégal
- Québec

**Vocabulary:**
- Breakfast foods and drinks; café foods; place settings
- Clothing and accessories, sports equipment
- High numbers (1,000 to 1,000,000)
- House and furniture, chores
- Places in the city

**Grammar:**
- The partitive
- Regular present tense –re verbs
- Commands
- Irregular verbs prendre, mettre, voir, vouloir, boire, pouvoir, devoir, dormir, sortir, and partir
- Present tense of -er verbs
- The verbs connaître and savoir
- The passé composé with avoir of regular -er, -ir, and -re verbs
- The passé composé of irregular verbs
- The passé composé with être
- Negative expressions
- Expressions with faire
- Ordinal numbers

---

**French C** is an immersion experience that allows students to hear and speak the language while in class in order to further develop speaking and listening skills. The goal of the course is to expand upon speaking, reading, writing, listening, and thinking skills while gaining confidence and enjoyment with French. We study a variety of topics, grammar tenses, and structures, and expose students to a variety of media tools.

Student skills are assessed through traditional tests as well as collaborative projects and multimedia work. There is an emphasis on active learning. Active Learning is defined as having a positive attitude, putting forth focused effort, striving to participate daily in meaningful and productive ways, remaining engaged in class, and finally, coming to class prepared for the day with homework and materials ready.

While maintaining a strong emphasis on learning new skills in French grammar and pronunciation, students are also exposed to contemporary cultural trends (music, fashion, and politics) in France and francophone countries. They read a short novel, *Le nouvel Houdini*.

**Cultural Exploration:**
- Paris
- Québec
- Bretagne

**Vocabulary:**
- Celebrations and parties
- Shopping for and preparing food
- School places and events
- Computers
- Childhood activities, daily routines
- Country life

**Grammar:**
- Direct and indirect object pronouns
- The verbs offrir, ouvrir, recevoir, suivre
- All of the passé composé past tense
- Expressions used in the past
- Reflexive verbs in the present and passé composé
- Negative expressions
- The partitive
- The pronouns y and en
- Contractions with à and de
- The imparfait and the passé composé
- Comparatives and superlatives
Middle School Global Languages (continued)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRENCH A (continued)</th>
<th>FRENCH B (continued)</th>
<th>FRENCH C (continued)</th>
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<td><strong>GRADE 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>GRADE 7</strong></td>
<td><strong>GRADE 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills:</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Il y a and il n’y a pas</td>
<td>Listening and reading skills may be higher, since those are receptive vs. productive language acquisition skills. Students can handle a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by using the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. They can respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions.</td>
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<td>The near future tense (aller + infinitive)</td>
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<td>Venir and the recent past</td>
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<td>Expressions with avoir</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic negation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noun-adjective agreement; possessive adjectives</td>
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<td>Contractions with à and de; conjunctions; adverbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question words</td>
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<tr>
<td>C'est vs. Il/Elle est</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some imperfect (c'était/il y avait)</td>
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**Skills:**

By the end of the year, students should be able to communicate at a Novice Low to a Novice Mid level on ACTFL proficiency guidelines. They should be able to manage in predictable situations, communicate through memorized phrases, producing at least a few sentences at a time. They should be able to create personalized meaning with the language (especially written).

**GRAMMAR:**

- Subject pronouns
- Il y a and il n’y a pas
- Definite and indefinite articles
- The present tense forms of the verbs avoir, être, faire, and aller
- Regular present tense forms of -er and -re verbs
- The near future tense (aller + infinitive)
- Venir and the recent past
- Expressions with avoir
- Basic negation
- Noun-adjective agreement; possessive adjectives
- Contractions with à and de; conjunctions; adverbs
- Question words
- C’est vs. Il/Elle est
- Some imperfect (c’était/il y avait)

**SKILLS:**

By the end of the year, students’ speaking and writing skills should be at Novice Mid or Novice High of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Listening and reading skills may be higher, since those are receptive vs. productive language acquisition skills. Students can handle a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by using the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. They can respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions.

**GRADE 7**

**Grammar:**

- Subject pronouns
- Il y a and il n’y a pas
- Definite and indefinite articles
- The present tense forms of the verbs avoir, être, faire, and aller
- Regular present tense forms of -er and -re verbs
- The near future tense (aller + infinitive)
- Venir and the recent past
- Expressions with avoir
- Basic negation
- Noun-adjective agreement; possessive adjectives
- Contractions with à and de; conjunctions; adverbs
- Question words
- C’est vs. Il/Elle est
- Some imperfect (c’était/il y avait)

**Skills:**

By the end of the year, students’ speaking and writing skills should be at Novice Mid or Novice High of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Listening and reading skills may be higher, since those are receptive vs. productive language acquisition skills. Students can handle a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by using the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. They can respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. They are also able to ask a few formulaic questions.

**GRADE 8**

**Skills:**

By the end of the year, students’ speaking and writing skills should be at Novice High to Intermediate Low or Mid of the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Their listening and reading skills may be a little higher, since those are receptive vs. productive language acquisition skills. Students at the Intermediate Low or Mid skill for speaking and writing can convey their ideas if the topic is one that they are familiar with. They can carry on a brief exchange with some errors and hesitancy.

**SPANISH A**

**Skill Development:**

Spanish classes in the Middle School closely follow the ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines and the Can-Do Statements. Students are asked to speak Spanish in responses to the teacher and in conversations with peers. They typically develop their reading and listening skills first, as they are absorbing the language. All students progress at different rates in their speaking and writing skills, and by the end of their Spanish A year, they may be at the Novice Low or Novice Mid level, meaning that they can express their ideas in short phrases around topics that they are comfortable talking about.

**Reading Comprehension:**

Students use a variety of resources encompassing high-frequency verbs and words in order to achieve a Novice Mid level according to ACTFL benchmarks for reading comprehension. At the end of Spanish A, students can understand some learned or memorized words and phrases when they read. Also, students read continued

**SPANISH B**

**Skill Development:**

Spanish classes in the Middle School closely follow the ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines and the Can-Do Statements. Students are asked to speak Spanish in responses to the teacher and in conversations with peers. They typically develop their reading and listening skills first, as they are absorbing the language. All students progress at different rates in their speaking and writing skills, and by the end of their Spanish B year, students may be at Novice Mid level, meaning that they can express their ideas in short phrases around topics that they are comfortable talking about. Some students are able to form sentences in their speech, as well. At this point, students are able to understand language that they read and hear at a higher level than they can produce.

**Reading Comprehension:**

Students read stories written for Spanish language learners. These stories use the language as it naturally exists, and they are formulated to continued

**SPANISH C**

**Skill Development:**

Spanish classes in the Middle School closely follow the ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) Proficiency Guidelines and the Can-Do Statements. Students are asked to speak Spanish in responses to the teacher and in conversations with peers. They typically develop their reading and listening skills first, as they are absorbing the language. All students progress at different rates in their speaking and writing skills, and by the end of their Spanish C year, students may be between the Novice Mid and Novice High level, meaning that they can express their ideas in short phrases around topics that they are comfortable talking about. Some students are able to form sentences in their speech, as well. More advanced students are able to carry on a long conversation about a topic that is less familiar to them. At this point, students are able to understand language that they read and hear at a higher level than they can produce.

**Reading Comprehension:**

Students read stories written for Spanish language learners. These stories use the language as it naturally exists, and they are formulated to continued

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Middle School Global Languages (continued)

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<tr>
<th>SPANISH A (continued)</th>
<th>SPANISH B (continued)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral and Written Practice:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening Comprehension:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading Comprehension:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the end of Spanish A, students achieve a Novice Mid level according to ACTFL benchmarks for oral and written practice. Students can communicate in writing and speaking on a variety of familiar topics, using words and phrases that they have practiced and memorized through use of a variety of resources, such as reading stories out loud, translation, skits, and acting. Students read stories and other reading selections out loud, translate them, act them out, summarize the main events, and create presentations. They answer comprehension questions and use their new knowledge to write sentences about the content. Students steadily increase oral and written production and increase their accuracy. <strong>The majority of class time is spent engaged with Spanish. The purpose of this is to help the learner's comfort in hearing Spanish consistently. To that end, students are exposed to spoken Spanish in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, video shorts, geography videos, and cultural videos.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening Comprehension:</strong></td>
<td>Students read stories written for Spanish language learners and also use authentic resources that are related to themes covered throughout the year. <strong>Oral and Written Practice:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening Comprehension:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing original poetry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Topics &amp; Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The majority of class time is spent engaged with Spanish. The purpose of this is to help the learner's comfort in hearing Spanish consistently. To that end, students are exposed to spoken Spanish in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, video shorts, geography videos, and cultural videos.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analyzing poems by well-known Spanish language poets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading short novels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish Language Arts is designed for native or heritage speakers of Spanish with oral proficiency but little or no formal training in writing the language. Native/heritage speakers expand their existing proficiency and develop reading and writing skills. Spanish learners have the opportunity to integrate the grammar and vocabulary that they have studied in a full immersion setting and experience colloquial Spanish and authentic materials.</strong> Emphasis is placed on usage appropriate to academic and professional settings, as well as deepening understanding of Hispanic cultures. Various assignments are meant to expose students to different styles of writing and communication, spur discussion, increase cultural competence concerning historical and cultural differences among Spanish-speaking countries, improve research skills, and practice spelling and grammar with targeted exercises and hands-on practice. Performance is evaluated by demonstrating growth and development, with differentiated expectations depending on each student’s level of experience.</td>
<td><strong>Writing a research-based expository essay</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing a short fictional narrative</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Creating a book folio, including a formal book review</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing a research-based expository essay</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading current events articles for discussion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creating a social/political research project and multimedia presentation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creating a book folio, including a formal book review</strong></td>
<td><strong>Watching a documentary/movie in Spanish and writing a review or reaction paper</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry Unit:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creating a social/political research project and multimedia presentation</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>□ Writing original poetry</td>
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**SPANISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

- Reading short novels
- Writing a short fictional narrative
- Reading current events articles for discussion
- Writing a research-based expository essay
- Creating a book folio, including a formal book review
- Creating a social/political research project and multimedia presentation
- Watching a documentary/movie in Spanish and writing a review or reaction paper
- Poetry Unit:
  - Analyzing poems by well-known Spanish language poets
  - Translating poetry
  - Writing original poetry
Middle School Visual & Performing Arts

The Middle School Arts experience provides a link between laying groundwork of artistic awareness, expression, and understanding in the Lower School and the next step, the actual production and public presentation of complex art work. Students are given the freedom, tools, space, and mentorship to apply the skills learned in Lower School and transform their base knowledge into tangible products that are skill and age-appropriate. The variety of choices and expansion of offerings allows students to begin to define themselves within the framework of artistic expression.

Colorado Academy values the idea of students as artists, and as a result, the visual and performing arts program encourages creative exploration. There are four quarterly exploratory arts rotations in Sixth Grade: Choir, Drama, Studio Art, and an arts-related Computer Science/Engineering & Design class. Seventh and Eighth Grade students experience the additional electives of theater production, filmmaking, digital photography, ceramics, dance options, graphic design, band options, and technical theater and design. In addition, Seventh Grade students take a required trimester of Computer Science/Engineering & Design, and Eighth Graders are offered a STEAM elective. There is an opportunity for all students to perform each year in the music program and through a variety of theater productions, both on the main stage and in smaller performing venues such as the Black Box basement theater and assemblies. The focus on student performance allows all dedicated students to participate in production and performances according to their interest and readiness. Our goal is to lay strong foundations for continued study and exploration in Upper School.

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<th>Middle School Visual &amp; Performing Arts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRADE 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VISUAL ART &amp; DESIGN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>6th Grade Studio Art</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This class focuses on deepening students’ understanding of the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design. A variety of media inspires the creative minds of young artists, and we use a balance of structured skill-based learning and open-ended, design-based projects. Students are encouraged to push the boundaries of their thinking and technique, to engage critical-thinking skills, and to use creative expression to highlight and develop their own unique style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Portrait in Graphite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Painting with Acrylic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Color:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Bug oil pastel study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Art Portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Renderings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linoleum printmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled Sculpture Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Clay Figurines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texture:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linoleum Block Printmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contrast:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notan Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Heine-Inspired Graphite Drawings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **GRADE 7 & 8**                       |
| **7th/8th Grade Studio Art**          |
| Artists explore their personal style in a choice of art media. Students have the opportunity to use drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and more to expand their individual creativity, technical skills, and knowledge of art history. Drawing skills are emphasized, along with color theory and composition. Paint, pen and ink, printmaking, and clay design are all possible media for exploration. |
| **Value:**                            |
| Self-Portrait Grid Technique          |
| Still Life Painting in Acrylic        |
| **Form:**                             |
| Recycled Sculpture Design             |
| Paper Clay Figurines                  |
| **Texture:**                          |
| Linoleum Block Printmaking             |
| Altered Books                         |
| **Contrast:**                         |
| Notan Design                          |
| Ben Heine-Inspired Graphite Drawings  |

| **7th Grade Computer Science/Engineering & Design** |
| In this class, students learn key computer science concepts and apply the Design Thinking process to create new games and interactive robotic animals. They develop skills for using 2D and 3D modeling tools, including CorelDraw, Solidworks, the laser cutter, and 3D printers. (See above under Computer Science/Design & Engineering for detailed information.) |

| **8th Grade STEAM**                   |
| (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) is an interdisciplinary elective that integrates the applications of literacy, design, coding, imagination, and problem solving. Through experimentation, investigation, and the use of Sphero robots, students generate and conceptualize artistic work, as well as explore action art, advanced concepts of logic, design thinking, and computer science. (See above under Computer Science/Design & Engineering for detailed information.) |
VISUAL ART & DESIGN (continued)

6th Grade Computer Science/Engineering & Design
In this class, students learn about circuits and use the Design Thinking process to build a toy with LED lights. (See above under Computer Science/Design & Engineering for detailed information.)

7th/8th Grade Graphic Design
Students discover how to utilize imagery, text, printmaking, and computer technology to produce artistic imagery. Using traditional techniques and digital software, they apply elements of composition to real-world projects, including illustration, logo design, and poster design.

7th/8th Grade Ceramics:
This 3D class gives students the opportunity to explore a variety of hand-building methods, including pinching, coiling, slab building, and sculpting. Students learn how to apply several surface treatments and glazes to their projects, as well as a basic understanding of the kiln-firing process.

7th/8th Grade Photography:
Students study the fundamentals of taking a picture and learn the basic mechanics of a DSLR camera, the use of iPads to capture images, and how to frame their compositions using the principles of design. They explore the varied complexities of how to see the world through a different lens.

7th/8th Grade Video
is a dynamic class that introduces students to key concepts of the filmmaking process. Students learn to use dedicated video cameras, to upload footage, and to edit with professional editing software. Students are introduced to the concept of film grammar as well as exploring the rich culture and history of film, from silent movies to contemporary Chinese cinema, such as the legendary and prolific Stephen Chow. Students create their own narrative shorts and explore art cinema, from video haikus to green screen techniques.

Skills:
- Write, direct, shoot, and act in one’s own films
- Learn the use of iPad, iPhone, and a dedicated video camera to produce a film
- Learn to use professional editing software
- Learn film grammar and terminology
- Watch, appreciate, and critique silent movies and foreign films
- Learn techniques for lighting, audio recording, and shot selection
- Produce a film

Topics include:
- Terminology, such as close-up, POV, wide shot
- Sound Recording techniques, including microphone selection
- Types of Audio: Dialog, Ambient, Special Effects, and Music
- Lighting techniques, such as Key light, Fill light, Down light, and Back light
- Auteur Theory—the film as an expression of the director’s creative vision
### Middle School Visual & Performing Arts (continued)

#### MUSIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6th Grade Choir</strong></td>
<td>Develops a stronger understanding in reading and hearing music. A variety of repertoire and voice parts helps the young singer to become a stronger musician. There is a balance of structured skill-based learning and collaboration with a group. Students are encouraged to understand their own personal vocal growth as well as how their voice works in an ensemble. There is also a musicianship component to this class, in which students learn the fundamentals they will build on in preparation for their future music experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7th/8th Grade Choir</strong></td>
<td>Middle School Choir is an opportunity for students to sing a wide variety of repertoire. A cappella, classical, folk, pop, and holiday music is studied throughout the year. Students sing in a group of their peers and have the opportunity to perform with Upper School students in at least one major performance each trimester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7th/8th Grade Jazz Ensemble</strong></td>
<td>Jazz ensemble is a performance group. Students learn creativity and discipline through the study of jazz music. An emphasis is placed on understanding music theory as the basis for improvisation. There is one performance per trimester. Students are encouraged to provide their own instruments, excluding drum set and piano, which CA provides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7th/8th Grade Rock Band</strong></td>
<td>Rock Band is a performance group. Students learn creativity and discipline through the study of rock and pop music. Emphasis is placed on understanding music theory as it relates to songwriting and musical form. There is one performance per trimester. Students are encouraged to provide their own instruments, excluding drum set and piano, which CA provides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7th/8th Grade Pops Orchestra</strong></td>
<td>This class focuses on the educational components of playing in an orchestra, including music history, music theory, instrumental technique, and ensemble skills. The class performs “classical” pops, as well as recent pop music. Prerequisite: previous experience on instrument to be played; private lessons strongly recommended; most instruments accepted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### THEATER/TECHNICAL THEATER & DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Class</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6th Grade Creative Dramatics</strong></td>
<td>This course introduces students to the basic skills of the performing arts and creative dramatics and serves as a step toward the more advanced performance levels to be experienced later in Middle School. The class helps students become more poised and confident when speaking in front of a group, giving a speech, or making a presentation in class. <strong>Basics:</strong> Theatrical terminology and concepts are introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7th/8th Grade Play/Musical Productions</strong></td>
<td>These classes are production courses designed to give students the experience of participating in a theatrical production. One play and one musical are produced each year. The unifying theme of these production challenges is that the student learns to become more comfortable speaking and presenting in front of others. Whether singing a solo or giving a book report, these experiences benefit students throughout their academic and social life. Ensemble work, which enhances students' collaborative skills, is also emphasized in these classes. All students who sign up for the classes are cast in the production. There is an audition process for specific roles. Students must be able to meet the rehearsal schedule, which includes some after-school rehearsals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THEATER/TECHNICAL THEATER & DESIGN (continued)

Scripted Work:
- Monologues
- Scenes

Original work:
- Public Service Announcement
- Musical Stories
- Stage Combat

Game days:
- Developing imagination and stage presence through acting and improvisational games

7th/8th Grade Theater Workshop/Acting
This active, creative course introduces the young performer to the foundations of actor training, and students explore how actors build a character through games, improvisation, and scene study.

7th/8th Grade General Technical Theater
This class explores the design process of producing theater. Students work through practical and theoretical productions and use a variety of programs, including Sketchup, Sound Studio, Audacity, Garage Band, and Q Lab to design projects. Students are introduced to the basic shop tools, and are responsible for building the sets, lighting, and sound for Upper and Middle School productions.

7th/8th Grade Set Design and Construction
The goal of this class is to work closely with the adult team to design the sets, lights, sound, and props for the Middle School musical and the play. Students develop a design, learn to work within a budget, and set a schedule in order to meet the production deadlines. Students are also offered the option to work as running crew for the Middle School productions. This class also covers the basics of working in the shop and acts as support team for Upper School productions.

DANCE

7th/8th Grade Tap Dance (all dance classes are co-ed)
This class teaches techniques and styles relevant to Tap dancing and is geared to break down the basics and then move on to exciting combinations of choreography. The class uses contemporary music, Pop, Rock, and Rap, as well as classical big band tunes and jazz. More advanced students are given challenges to fit their level. Beginners discover that they quickly make progress. Tap shoes are necessary. If students do not wish to purchase their own, the school has a number of pairs which can be borrowed.
Middle School Athletics and Physical Education

Colorado Academy’s Middle School athletics program focuses on fostering positive team experiences, developing and improving students’ sport-specific skills and strategies, and exhibiting sportsmanship in all types of game circumstances. In addition to participating in a well-rounded fitness and sports curriculum, Middle School students can opt to participate in competitive interscholastic athletics. All athletic options are appropriate, fun, and beneficial to both advanced and novice athletes.

The Sixth Grade physical education program provides a transition from the Lower School physical education curriculum to the competitive and recreational activities in the Upper School. Sixth Grade is the introduction to Middle School Athletics, and our intent is to prepare students for the more competitive athletic opportunities that begin in Grades Seven and Eight. Each trimester, Sixth Grade students have the opportunity to participate in a competitive or non-competitive activity for four-week sessions. Competitive teams play against local schools (practices always take place during regular P.E. time, and games are played after school). Students not wishing to pursue a competitive sport have the option of participating in a regular physical education class.

The Seventh and Eighth Grade athletic programs offer students a full range of competitive and team and individual-oriented sports. Students choose to participate in a sport or activity each trimester. Students that choose a competitive sport receive intensive instruction to develop skills and strategies and the opportunity to hone skills through participation in a competitive game schedule. Coaches recognize that teams have a wide range of abilities and create practices designed to challenge and support each player. Practice for competitive sports is during the school day, with scheduled games requiring participation on weekdays after the regular school day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7 &amp; 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Education</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 6th Grade program focuses on developing strong character and life skills, including sportsmanship and teamwork, and instilling a positive self-image and encouraging physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Students choose from an exciting and diverse curriculum, which introduces them to a variety of individual and team sports and lifetime activities. Students gain new skills and enhance the skills they may already possess. Students enroll in a “Competitive” or “Non-Competitive” sport each trimester. Competitive sports require after-school commitments during each “Competitive Season,” which is one month long. Students participate in a minimum of four and a maximum of eight games against local schools. Non-Competitive sports do not require any after-school commitments. Between sports seasons, students participate in a P.E. curriculum. They rotate through a variety of sports, including, but not limited to, golf, tennis, badminton, yoga, flag football, floor hockey, ultimate Frisbee, and pickleball. Students also participate in large group games (Capture the Flag, Kickball, etc.) with the entire Sixth Grade.</td>
<td>The 7th/8th Grade program focuses on developing strong character and life skills, including sportsmanship and teamwork, instilling a positive self-image, and encouraging physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Students enroll in a “Competitive” or “Non-Competitive” sport each trimester. Competitive sports require after-school commitments. Students participate in a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve games against local schools. Non-Competitive sports do not require any after-school commitments. Students participate in practice daily with their team and coaches. Team Practice and non-competitive activities take place during the last block of the school day from 2:30-3:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Competitive Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Competitive Sports</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fall Sports</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sports Performance</td>
<td>• Sports Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Winter Sports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yoga</td>
<td>• Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rock Climbing</td>
<td>• Rock Climbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sports Performance</td>
<td>• Racquetball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring Sports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</table>
### Rock Climbing
Whether a student is a beginner or an experienced rock climber, this class has a route just for them. This course teaches students the basics of safe and responsible rock climbing, including equipment, knots, belaying, and a range of climbing techniques. Students challenge themselves both mentally and physically on a daily basis. Classes take place in the CA Climbing Center.

### Racquetball (7th/8th only)
This course is designed for the beginner to the advanced racquetball player. Students learn basic racquetball skills, including shot execution, rules, and strategies. Class tournaments are conducted throughout the trimester. Racquetball provides students the opportunity to improve their fitness level and self-esteem, and exposes them to a fun, lifelong activity.

### Sports Performance
Based in the Bansbach Strength and Conditioning Center, the Sports Performance class is intended to aid in the development of health and wellness in each student, with a structured plan designed to enhance strength, speed, mobility, and specific energy systems, while also developing educational and character traits.

**Topics:**
- **Strength:** Work Capacity, Strength Base, Strength Power, Strength Speed, and Muscular Endurance
- **Speed:** Mechanics, Speed Strength, and Change of Direction.
- **Mobility:** Correctives, Warm-up, Cool-down
- **Energy Systems:** Training for the activity, Anaerobic vs Aerobic, and Activity Demands
- **Education:** Nutritional Needs, Cognitive Reconditioning, and Independence in Movement
- **Character:** Time Management, Respect, and Effort

### Yoga
This is an introductory vinyasa Yoga class. Students gain flexibility and strength while learning basic poses and connecting mind and body to enhance relaxation and awareness.

---

**Non-Competitive Sports Course Descriptions - Grades 6, 7 & 8**

#### Rock Climbing
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### Competitive Sports - Grades 6, 7 & 8

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall (September) Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fall Sports</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>Golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Soccer</td>
<td>Girls Soccer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Boys Lacrosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Girls Lacrosse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter (January) Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Winter Sports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys Basketball</td>
<td>Boys Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Basketball</td>
<td>Girls Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring (April) Sports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring Sports</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Soccer</td>
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<td>Boys Lacrosse</td>
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<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Cross Country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle School Experiential Education

Experiential education provides a context for classroom learning outside the classroom and fosters multisensory engagement that leads to connections and understanding. Experiential Education at CA includes outdoor education, service learning, global travel, Interim, class retreats, and field studies.

The focus of the experiential curriculum includes environmental education, outdoor skills, leadership development, and cross-cultural understanding. The core principles are:
1. The primacy of self-discovery;
2. Curiosity about the world;
3. Responsibility for learning;
4. Struggle is imperative;
5. Respect for the natural world; and

### CURRICULAR TRIPS

#### Outdoor Overnights (7th & 8th Grade)
- Promote solitude and reflection as modality for personal growth
- Push students off balance through physical discomfort
- Set challenging group objectives to promote teamwork and organic leadership
- Provide a common experience to facilitate shared identity and community building
- Teach skills such as map reading, non-technical hiking, nature interpretation, and camp craft

#### Interim
A weeklong immersive experiential program that includes the arts, outdoors, physiology, and community engagement. All students participate in Interim and can choose from a variety of experiences:
- Promotes community building through small group interactions and cross-grade interactions
- Provides challenging, hands-on experience
- Promotes student leadership through trip planning and execution
- Fosters grit and resilience through physically and emotionally challenging activities
- Examples of past Interims include: fly fishing, scuba diving, cooking, mountain biking, slam poetry, play production, Utah canyoneering, canoeing, and language immersion in a Spanish- or French-speaking country

### SAMPLE OPTIONAL LOCAL ACTIVITIES

#### Hike a ‘14er
Mt. Bierstadt, one of the closest “fourteener” to Denver, is a great introduction to bagging peaks in Colorado. It is a seven-mile round-trip hike up gentle scree slopes to the summit at 14,060 ft. From the peak, one can see for 100 miles in all directions. With a little luck, students might catch a glimpse of pikas and marmots.

**Skills & Topics:**
- Challenge students’ physical strength and stamina
- Enjoy the aesthetic beauty of the Colorado wilderness
- Explore plant and animal adaptations in the alpine environment
- Learn the role of erosion on heavily impacted sites
- Identify pika and marmot via habitat, coloring, calls, and size

#### Winter Hut Trips, e.g., High Lonesome Hut
Students ski or snowshoe in and out to comfortable huts and lodges for a winter backcountry recreation experience.

**Skills & Topics:**
- Introduce winter travel skills
- Provide opportunities for cross-grade interactions
- Promote principles of self-care (hydration, hypothermia, nutrition, pacing, etc.)
- Provide a novel experience
- Learn to prepare a healthy and nutritious meal
- Learn to build a minimal fire
- Observe winter weather patterns
- Identify avalanche terrain, snow instabilities, and how to travel safely in the backcountry
Middle School Experiential Education (continued)

**SAMPLE OPTIONAL LOCAL ACTIVITIES (continued)**

**South Platte River Fly Fishing**
- Students explore portions of the South Platte River. They learn to cast a fly rod, manage a line, and hook and land trout.

**Skills & Topics:**
- Learn a new skill
- Foster patience and attention to detail
- Bond with classmates outside of the classroom
- Learn about watershed dynamics
- Fly fishing strategy
- Fly pattern selection
- Fish behavior

**Earth Treks & Clear Creek Canyon Climbing**
- Earth Treks is a world-class climbing gym in Englewood, Colo., which offers hundreds of roped climbs and bouldering. Staff belay students and play climbing games to improve movement and skills. Clear Creek offers excellent climbing on granite cliffs. Students learn or perfect climbing techniques.

**Skills & Topics:**
- Face fears and perceived limitations
- Create community
- Understand fundamentals of climbing movement
- Introduce climbing equipment (harnesses, ropes, shoes, belay devices, and carabiners)

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Middle School Global Travel & Exchange

At Colorado Academy, we nurture dynamic thinkers and active citizens of the world through a curriculum that develops intellectual aptitude and character. Part of that curriculum includes experiences designed to offer students extended study outside the classroom, outside the school year, and out of the country.

These programs are strictly optional. Some are more academic and exploratory; others are more service-oriented. Each is designed to be a memorable and educational experience. The Travel and Exchange program provides a wide range of opportunities for enhanced learning. CA faculty members lead trips, and some trips include arrangements by a trusted professional travel vendor. We are committed to helping students gain invaluable experience as part of a secure and safe travel experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle School Global Travel and Exchange</th>
<th>GRADES 6, 7 &amp; 8</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAMPLE CURRICULAR TRIPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SAMPLE OPTIONAL TRIPS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>French Language Immersion Interim: Québec, Canada</strong> <em>(curricular trip offered approximately every other year)</em></td>
<td><strong>Peru: Sacred Valley, Peruvian Hearts, and Lima</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to Middle School Students enrolled in French. Students take French classes in the morning, are engaged in cultural activities in the afternoon, and experience homestays with local families in the evening. The last two days, the group travels to Mont Tremblant for a ropes course and a yoga class. This is a challenging experience designed to improve students’ French language skills, as well as their awareness and appreciation of a different culture.</td>
<td>Students learn about the Peruvian culture through visits to local markets, Inca ruins, and local restaurants. They have a unique opportunity to visit with the girls supported by Peruvian Hearts and visit the homes of two Peruvian Hearts scholars. Students engage in a half-day service project to support the program. Participants travel by train through the breathtaking Sacred Valley to Aguas Calientes, where a private guide helps students experience and understand the wonder and majesty of the Inca citadel, Machu Picchu. The program includes two days in the Lima area with a visit to Pre-Incan sites and a day trip to the Callao Islands. This trip is offered in partnership with Peruvian Hearts, non-profit founded in 2003 by a then-CA student and managed by a CA alumnus.</td>
</tr>
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| **Costa Rica Spanish Language & Cultural Immersion Interim** *(curricular trip offered approximately every other year)* | **Dominican Republic Service Program** |
| Open to current 7th/8th Grade Spanish students. Application required, including essay/letter in Spanish. This is a trip to Costa Rica and CA’s sister community there located north in the vicinity of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. Students explore the natural surroundings, including the nearby rainforest, whitewater raft on the Rio Sarapiquí, and/or see the rainforest from a canopy zip line. In small groups, students live with homestay families in the community. In the mornings, the group works on a community project, designed in consultation with the needs and desires of the local community. In the afternoons, there is time to pursue an experiential curriculum designed to promote the understanding of global issues, leadership, and local culture. | This is an exciting opportunity to expose students to Dominican culture and a new way of thinking while giving back and digging deep. Service work in our host community begins in the morning and ends around 2 p.m. The rest of the day entails cultural exchanges, recreation, and other activities anchored in the community. Students experience the must-see sights of Santo Domingo, as well as engage in activities—like merengue lessons!—that help strengthen the long-standing relationships built with community members. |
Middle School Global Travel and Exchange

GRADES 6, 7 & 8

SAMPLE CURRICULAR TRIPS
SAMPLE OPTIONAL TRIPS

French Language Immersion Interim: Québec, Canada
(curricular trip offered approximately every other year)
Open to Middle School Students enrolled in French.
Students take French classes in the morning, are engaged in cultural activities in the afternoon, and experience homestays with local families in the evening. The last two days, the group travels to Mont Tremblant for a ropes course and a yoga class. This is a challenging experience designed to improve students' French language skills, as well as their awareness and appreciation of a different culture.

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Costa Rica Spanish Language & Cultural Immersion Interim
(curricular trip offered approximately every other year)
Open to current 7th/8th Grade Spanish students. Application required, including essay/letter in Spanish.
This is a trip to Costa Rica and CA's sister community there located north in the vicinity of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiqui. Students explore the natural surroundings, including the nearby rainforest, whitewater raft on the Rio Sarapiqui, and/or see the rainforest from a canopy zip line. In small groups, students live with homestay families in the community. In the mornings, the group works on a community project, designed in consultation with the needs and desires of the local community. In the afternoons, there is time to pursue an experiential curriculum designed to promote the understanding of global issues, leadership, and local culture.

Dominican Republic Service Program
This is an exciting opportunity to expose students to Dominican culture and a new way of thinking while giving back and digging deep. Service work in our host community begins in the morning and ends around 2 p.m. The rest of the day entails cultural exchanges, recreation, and other activities anchored in the community. Students experience the must-see sights of Santo Domingo, as well as engage in activities—like merengue lessons!—that help strengthen the long-standing relationships built with community members.
Middle School Advisory Program

Each Middle School student has an Advisor who is the child's primary academic, social, and emotional support, and who serves as the primary contact and resource for parents. Students meet with their Advisory, usually 12-15 students, and their Advisor every day. The Middle School has adopted a program developed by the Institute for Social and Emotional Learning (IFSEL) to help students develop skills that will help them to be successful in Middle School and as young adults.

Skill practice occurs twice a week and takes the shape of engaging, interactive lessons designed to create a strong sense of community and to practice skills in the following areas: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; relationship skills; and responsible decision making. Each unit addresses important issues for adolescents in a grade-level age-appropriate manner, and helps students identify and practice the skills that enable them navigate their world and integrate gratitude into their daily experiences—gratitude for each other, their community, their teachers, and their family. Areas of practice for Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade are described in detail below.

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<th>Middle School Advisory Program</th>
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<td><strong>GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK:</strong> Learning how to give and receive feedback is an essential collaboration and learning skill. Without the skill to deliver informative and effective feedback, one’s ability to collaborate is severely limited. Additionally, being open to receiving feedback is equally important, as it is the acceptance of feedback that leads to growth and change. Students learn strategies and common pitfalls to avoid during the feedback process.</td>
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<td><strong>CULTURAL COMPETENCE:</strong> Students learn about cultural competence, think about their cultural background, cultural practices, and learn about their classmates and how to work effectively across cultures. Cultural competence is all about acknowledging, understanding, and appreciating that our school, neighborhood, community, state, country, and world have a diversity of people who have different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Students practice collaboration and communication to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.</td>
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<td><strong>BULLYING:</strong> Our goal is to explore the bullying dynamic, have students practice conflict resolution and expand their circle of influence to productively deal with conflict in their school community. Students learn to practice “upstanding” to make a positive difference and to understand the dynamic between the bully, witness, and victim. Students practice appropriate responses to conflict that deescalate vs. escalate, honor vs. degrade, and empower vs. humiliate. Finally, we explore the roots of conflict, misunderstanding, insecurity, etc., and challenge students to “expand their circle of influence” to care for members of their community.</td>
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<td><strong>MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES:</strong> Information in this unit raises student awareness of various strengths we each have. We want students to be aware of many ways they are smart, in addition to the type of aptitude often measured on school and placement tests. We explore the meanings of linguistic, logical and mathematical, musical, kinesthetic, spatial-visual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. Through discussion and surveys, students develop a better understanding of their own strengths.</td>
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<td><strong>CRITICAL CITIZENS IN THE INFORMATION AGE:</strong> Students analyze sources and types of information (media), looking to better understand how and why we consume it, as well as how it is delivered to us. The goal is to increase students’ ability to select, absorb, and use media with a critical eye.</td>
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<td><strong>WELLNESS:</strong> Students explore ideas surrounding their mental health, as well as physical and social wellness. Many lessons begin or end with some form of stress-relieving strategies, such as simple breathing techniques, yoga, and meditation. We identify common stressors and differentiate between negative and positive stress. Students develop over time a greater awareness of warning signs, coping strategies, and tools to approach stressful situations. Personal wellness goals are also encouraged.</td>
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<td><strong>DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:</strong> The unit on drugs and alcohol is meant to give a comprehensive overview of the major issues inherent in drug and alcohol abuse, as well as encourage children to make smart personal decisions not to experiment at this age. Students discuss the beneficial and harmful aspects of pharmacology, focusing specifically on the most commonly abused “gateway” drugs, tobacco/JUULing, alcohol, and marijuana. As part of this study, students role play “real world” responses to peer pressure to try drugs and/or alcohol. Children also think through ways to assist friends who may have put themselves at risk with exposure to drugs and/or alcohol.</td>
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<td><strong>LIVING WITH DIGITAL MEDIA:</strong> What is the place of digital media in our lives? How does one judge the intentions and impact of people’s words and actions online? What are the benefits and risks of presenting oneself in different ways online? These are a few of many questions we tackle in our advisory lessons. Students become more aware of the role digital media plays in their lives and learn to navigate the many choices they need to make while using technology, sharing information, and using social media.</td>
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<td><strong>GRIT:</strong> Students discuss the meaning of grit and its importance as a life skill. Students think of experiences throughout their lives in which they have practiced grit, or know someone who has practiced it. They then research and share the story of how someone meaningful to them (e.g., a celebrity, a historical figure, family member, friend) demonstrated grit and perseverance to accomplish something important.</td>
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Middle School Signature Programs

**ThinkingLAB & 21st Century Skill Instruction**

At Colorado Academy, the skills we call the “Six Cs” are central to teaching and learning during the middle school years: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Cultural Competence, and Character Development. In the Middle School, we call our program of study the ThinkingLAB.

We teach students how to define a problem, analyze factors, make decisions, and support them with evidence. We also teach a process for developing insights and creative solutions. We make it a regular practice for students to solve problems that matter to students, not problems that adults tell them they should care about. And we give every student the time to practice these skills over and over again, making it safe to make mistakes and to realize that failure leads to success.

**ThinkingLAB Teaching Tools**

**Design Thinking**

Design Thinking stands for a design-specific problem-solving process that develops empathy, problem definition skills, and the ability to generate a wide range of possible solutions. Students learn to prototype, receive constructive feedback, and improve their solution through iteration. Design Thinking was articulated by IDEO, an award-winning global design firm that takes a human-centered, design-based approach to problems.

**Performance Tasks and D-Quadrant Strategies**

Performance Tasks integrated into each grade level provide intensive practice at problem solving and supporting their point of view with evidence. The tasks also provide students and teachers detailed information about which critical thinking and analysis skills students have mastered and which are still being developed. Quadrant D tasks or strategies are an educational tool based on the two dimensions of rigor and relevance. Tasks that fall in the “D” quadrant of that matrix are those that require students to think, analyze, compare, create, and evaluate. These kinds of tasks teach students to think in complex ways and then apply their knowledge to other parts of their world, even when confronted with unknown issues or complicated problems.

**Capstone Projects**

The Capstone Project is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for Eighth Grade students. The projects demand critical and creative thinking to solve a real-world problem. Students are guided by faculty members and also have the opportunity to consult with subject matter experts. Successful completion of capstone projects demands that students demonstrate the ability to learn a new perspective, assimilate new knowledge, work collaboratively, create a solution or product, and publicly present what has been learned to a target audience. Examples of Capstone Project topics include Mock Trial, Architecture, Invention, and Interior Design.

**Character Education**

As a school we are committed to helping each student develop courage, kindness, responsibility, inclusivity, grit, and gratitude. Unlike many schools, we do not view these traits as something that someone either has or does not have, but instead, as skill sets that can be developed through intentional practice in the same way that students progress from a basic math fluency to the ability to solve calculus problems. By creating an environment of high expectations and by viewing each interaction as an opportunity for reflection and growth, students are given feedback and practice at those life and character skills central to our community.
Leadership Opportunities
Colorado Academy’s Middle School provides many opportunities for students to develop leadership skills—from student government to the Captains Council in athletics. Opportunities include:

- **Middle School Leadership Team:** a group of Eighth Graders that welcomes Sixth Graders during student orientation, teaches conflict resolution skills to Sixth Grade advisories, and represents the school during admission events
- **Student Council:** Each grade elects five representatives to the council, for a total of 15 students
- **Captains Council:** Athletic team captains who participate in leadership training
- **Student Speakers Club:** A small group of students that facilitates the monthly Middle School town meetings
- **STAMP Inclusivity Group:** Students represent CA at the annual STAMP Inclusivity Conference and present at Town Meetings
- **Seventh Grade Advisory Groups Overnight**
- **Eighth Grade Class Leadership & Communication Retreat**

Student Clubs
Students may form a club that matches their interests. With the support of a faculty sponsor, students invite members and run a five-week session of their club. Clubs have included cooking, logic, sewing, circus arts, innovations, golf course design, chess, video game design, knitting, debate, and more.

Service Learning and Philanthropy
Students participate in a variety of grade-level service learning projects throughout the year. The Middle School Philanthropy Board, to which students must apply, provides an annual opportunity for Middle School students to learn about nonprofit organizations and nominate organizations to receive grants totaling $2,500 each year. Sixth Grade students do research on charitable organizations of interest to them and then write persuasive letters to request a grant. Finalists’ letters are read by the Alumni Board and one is selected to receive a $1000 grant.

Town Meeting & Assembly Program
Frequent town meetings bring all members of the division together, providing the opportunity to share knowledge and friendship. Several times each year, the students and faculty from every division gather for all-school assemblies and performances.

SPEAK (Series for Parent Education About Kids) Program
Colorado Academy hosts an annual lecture series for CA parents and the greater Denver community as part of the school’s commitment to lifelong learning. Presentations on a variety of topics are available during the school year featuring speakers from across the country. Programs are held at varying times to accommodate parent schedules. Events are free, and seats may be reserved via the CA website.

Private Music Lesson Program
The private music program at Colorado Academy has been a powerful experience for generations of CA students. CA has been offering this program since 1973. The heart of the program has always been the desire of students and families to have music lessons and recital performances as a part of their formal education training. Lessons are scheduled as part of a student’s regular school day, and music students participate in a variety of recital performances throughout the year, as well as string orchestra and jazz/rock orchestras. Lessons are offered to Middle School students on the following instruments: Piano, Viola, Violin, Cello, Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Classical Guitar, and Music Composition. More than 11,000 private music lessons are given at CA each year in Grades K-12.