

South Lake Middle School

8th Grade Course Description 2006-2007

Core Classes

Humanities: Language Arts/History – Social Science: Humanities at South Lake Middle School integrates the study of history-social science and language arts. Students are enrolled in a two period class where they demonstrate mastery of both curricular areas through interdisciplinary study and activities. The 8th grade history - social science curriculum focuses on the philosophies and events that influenced the development of the Constitution through the time periods of the Westward movement, the Civil War, Reconstruction, immigration and industrialization. Language arts skills focus on literary response and analysis, reading comprehension, conventions of writing and spelling and intensive work on writing strategies, applications across the curriculum, and grammar.

Honors Humanities: Honors Humanities is a rigorous course designed to challenge our most capable students. The California Association for the Gifted recommends depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration as strategies to meet the unique needs of high achieving students. Students will explore the curriculum described above in “Humanities-Language Arts/Social Studies” in greater depth and will be expected to demonstrate a higher level of mastery in their application of the skills and knowledge acquired in their course of studies. Teacher recommendation is required for placement in Honors Humanities.

Introduction to Algebra: Introduction to Algebra is the second year of a two year program designed to prepare students for high school Algebra I in the 9th grade. This course focuses on developing a conceptual understanding of algebra topics through critical thinking, the analysis and solving of complex problems in realistic situations and mathematical communication. Students will also continue to work on maintaining standards-based skills.

Algebra I: Algebra I is a high school course, which is taught at an honors level for 8th grade students. It fulfills the high school requirement for Algebra I. Placement into Algebra is determined by Pre-Algebra teacher recommendations based upon grades, work habits, problem solving skills, standards-based testing and placement testing. Students that successfully complete Algebra I will move onto Honors Geometry in the 9th grade--with the intent of the student continuing their four-year honors sequence of mathematics in high school.

Honors Geometry: South Lake students who have successfully completed Algebra 1 in the seventh grade will be enrolled in Honors Geometry. This course is held on the Woodbridge High School Campus and continues the students’ four year mathematics honors sequence.

Science: The eighth grade science curriculum emphasizes the physical sciences. Students study chemistry, physics, and astronomy. Building upon the lab skills from seventh grade, students run independent, controlled laboratory experiments and participate in a school wide science fair. Winners have the opportunity to compete in district, county, and state competitions. In addition to lab process skills, writing and critical thinking are emphasized. Students keep class notes, essays, lab results, drawings, and outlines.

Physical Education: The South Lake Middle School Physical Education Staff is dedicated to implementing a physical education curriculum that enables all students to make connections between physical health, wellness, and exercise. Students at South Lake Middle School will have physical education every day of the week. The physical education curriculum is aligned to California State Standards. Each of our sports units integrates instruction in health, nutrition, conditioning, and injury prevention. Each unit of instruction will be developmentally appropriate and designed to meet the needs of every student from the physically gifted to the physically challenged. Instruction will emphasize building social skills, confidence, self-esteem, and guiding students toward appropriate decision-making. Class activities will be created to emphasize the importance of self-improvement, active participation, and cooperation.

Trimester-Long Electives

Art: This class will provide an enjoyable learning environment that will motivate and challenge the students' creativity and self-expression. Students will study and apply the elements of art and principles of design through a variety of projects and mediums.

ASB\Leadership: This class fosters student leadership, communication, and organizational skills through planning and implementing student and spirit activities. Students will develop their problem-solving capacity and the citizenship character traits of teamwork, respect, and community service. Students are elected to this course for a one, two, or three trimester term and their **advisor's signature is required on the registration card to verify that they are the advisement rep.**

Chorus: This elective welcomes all interested students. Chorus members will perform a wide variety of music including rock, folk, jazz, and pop at an entertaining end of trimester concert. Students will also develop their singing and note-reading skills while focusing on proper tone production, solfege and ensemble skills. Chorus may be selected as a trimester or as a year long elective.

Drama: This class is designed to so that students will become more comfortable and relaxed while performing in front of an audience. Students will engage in building their drama and acting skills through improvisations, skits and drama exercises. A main goal of this elective is for *all* students to have fun and to participate in the culminating end of the trimester performance which is carefully selected and appropriate for middle school students and audiences.

Media Literacy: An average child will see around 20,000 advertisements a year. Between one thousand and two thousand of those ads will be TV ads for alcohol alone. Advertisements (in particular) and mass media (in general) have had more influence over the lives of people and children than many other factors or institutions in society. This class is based on the belief that we are enlightened and empowered when we explore and understand the technologies and institutions that shape our lives. Students will be encouraged and expected to build their knowledge about mass media, explore the world they live in, the institutions and ideas that shape it, and ultimately, themselves.

Public Speaking/Debate: This elective will provide opportunities for students to feel more comfortable and gain confidence in public speaking. Students will develop an understanding of the purpose and definition of debate, as well as the importance of persuasive arguments and supporting evidence.

Reading Support: This class is designed to aid in the growth of individual students' overall reading comprehension through narrative, persuasive and expository reading support materials. The class will emphasize the habits and strategies of effective readers and is designed to meet the varied needs and interests of students, while fostering a love for reading. This course is highly recommended for students who need support with reading skills and strategies.

Study Skills: The purpose of this class is to help the students develop study skills that will allow them to be successful, not only in middle school, but also in high school. Students will receive help with their work and will be allowed opportunities to augment their nightly homework while working on current coursework. Periodic grade checks will be conducted to ensure that students are keeping current with assignments and grades in their core curricular classes.

Year-Long Electives

Spanish 1: Spanish 1 is considered a first year, high school honors level course. Criteria include: strong English language/grammar skills, excellent work habits, and A/B+ grades. In making this choice, it may be helpful to think about other information regarding high school and college entrance foreign language requirements. To remain in the course for the year and receive a recommendation for Spanish 2 in ninth grade, students must maintain an A/B+ grade. A minimum of two years is generally required for four-year college entrance and three years is highly recommended. **Enrollment in the course is by recommendation from seventh grade Humanities teachers. That teacher's signature is required on the registration card.**

Yearbook: Students enrolled in the Yearbook elective will create, design and produce our school's yearbook. They will learn skills associated with layout and design, digital imaging, photocomposition, journalism, and most importantly, collaboration and cooperation between staff members. Yearbook participants will be expected to spend time outside of school hours completing required assignments. Those students looking for a challenging honors level opportunity should consider the Yearbook class. **Enrollment in the course is by recommendation from seventh grade Humanities teachers. That teacher's signature is required on the registration card.**

Chorus: This elective welcomes all interested students. Chorus members will perform a wide variety of music including rock, folk, jazz, and pop at an entertaining end of trimester concert. Students will also develop their singing and note-reading skills while focusing on proper tone production, solfege and ensemble skills. Chorus may be selected as a trimester or as a year-long elective.

* **Beginning Instruments:** This class is designed for students who are interested in learning and playing strings, wind or a percussion instrument. Students with previous instrumental experience who would like to learn a **new** instrument are welcome as well as students with **no** instrumental experience. Instruments include oboe, bassoon, French horn, baritone horn, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, tuba, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, violin, viola, cello, string bass, and drums.

* **Wind Ensemble:** Wind, brass, and percussion players with previous musical experience will sign up for this ensemble. Students will refine their musical skills while performing advanced music literature. **Enrollment in the course is by recommendation from the seventh grade music teacher. That teacher's signature is required on the registration card.**

* **String Orchestra:** The South Lake String Orchestra is for students with previous musical experience. Students will refine their skills and perform a variety of literature. Students will increase their knowledge of scales, shifting, and vibrato.

**Please note: Placement into a music class is made based on the instrumentation needs of the ensemble and previous music teacher recommendation.*

7th Grade Course Description 2005-2006

Core Classes

Humanities: Language Arts/History – Social Science: Humanities at South Lake Middle School integrates the study of history-social science and language arts. Students are enrolled in a two period class where they demonstrate mastery of both curricular areas through interdisciplinary study and activities. The 7th grade history/social science curriculum focuses on world geography and the history of regions around the world from China and Japan to Islam, Feudal Europe and Central and South America. Language arts skills focus on literary response and analysis, reading comprehension, conventions of writing and spelling and intensive work on writing strategies, applications across the curriculum, and grammar.

Introduction to Pre-Algebra: This course is the first year of a two year program designed to prepare students for high school Algebra I in the 9th grade. Focus is on conceptual understanding of algebraic topics through the development of critical mathematical thinking. Students will analyze and solve complex problems in realistic situations and learn to communicate mathematically while continuing to work on standards-based skills. Students that successfully complete the two-year program are placed into Algebra I in the 9th grade.

Pre-Algebra: Pre-Algebra is an accelerated course offered to students in preparation for taking Algebra I in 8th grade. Placement in Pre-Algebra is determined by district placement and standardized tests along with a sixth grade teacher recommendation. Students that successfully complete Pre-Algebra will be placed into the high school equivalent course, Algebra I, in 8th grade with the intent of the student completing a four-year honors sequence of mathematics in high school.

Algebra I: Algebra I is only for those select students who have successfully completed a “middle school equivalent” Pre-Algebra course in sixth grade and are recommended by their teachers to be in Algebra I. Recommendations are based upon grades, work habits, problem solving skills, standards-based testing and placement testing. Algebra I is a high school course, which is taught at an honors level for both 7th and 8th grade students. Students that successfully complete Algebra I will move onto Honors Geometry in the 8th grade with the intent of the student continuing their four-year honors sequence of mathematics in high school through honors level Calculus.

Science: The seventh grade science curriculum focuses on life science. Students investigate cell biology, structure and function of living things, genetics, and health. A variety of projects, laboratory activities, small group and full class discussions are used to support our curriculum. The emphasis in this course is on learning how to think, analyze concepts, and develop ideas. Students will engage in assessments that include investigations, projects, writing assignments, class participation, quizzes and tests.

Physical Education: The South Lake Middle School Physical Education Staff is dedicated to implementing a physical education curriculum that enables all students to make connections between physical health, wellness, and exercise. Students at South Lake Middle School will have physical education every day of the week. The physical education curriculum is aligned to California State Standards. Each of our sports units integrates instruction in health, nutrition, conditioning, and injury prevention. Each unit of instruction will be developmentally appropriate and designed to meet the needs of every student from the physically gifted to the physically challenged. Instruction will emphasize building social skills, confidence, self-esteem, and guiding students toward appropriate decision-making. Class activities will be created to emphasize the importance of self-improvement, active participation, and cooperation.

Trimester-Long Electives

Art: This class will provide an enjoyable learning environment that will motivate and challenge the students' creativity and self-expression. Students will study and apply the elements of art and principles of design through a variety of projects and mediums.

Chorus: This elective welcomes all interested students. Chorus members will perform a wide variety of music including rock, folk, jazz, and pop at an entertaining end of trimester concert. Students will also develop their singing and note-reading skills while focusing on proper tone production, solfege and ensemble skills. Chorus may be selected as a trimester or as a year long elective.

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Year-Long Electives

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