Curriculum Guide
Overview
2025-2026

Curriculum Review Process -Valley Catholic Middle School

Valley Catholic Middle School's curriculum is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis with an in-depth study of individual subjects occurring at least every three years, as determined by the Archdiocese of Portland. In addition, Valley Catholic Middle School's staff and administration review curriculum as follows:

Middle School Curriculum Review Committees

Departments
Departments are based on the subject (math, fine arts, etc.) and all Valley Catholic teachers attend department meetings. These meetings happen at least quarterly. If a teacher has classes in more than one subject area (math and religion, for example), then the teacher attends both department meetings (split time between the two meetings).

Middle School Staff/Program
There are thirty staff members, plus the principal and counselors, identified as the middle school core staff. These teachers specialize in the needs of middle school students, from day-to-day classroom procedures to school environment (social, extra-curricular, transitional/age-appropriate adjustments, etc.) Middle School core meetings address everything from middle school-specific curriculum to individual student needs.

Tools for Review of the Middle School Program

Middle School Test Results
Summative standardized tests are administered to our current sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. The results are compared with those of students in other Catholic schools as well as to the national average.

High School Placement Tests
STS High School Placement Test Results are reviewed for our current eighth grade students. The results are compared to students throughout the Archdiocese who have applied as freshmen to a Catholic high school (This includes public and private school applicants). Note: All local Catholic high schools give the same entrance test to all freshman applicants.

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Tools for Review of the Middle School Program

High School Performance Results

The review process includes, but is not limited to the following feedback:

- PSAT and SAT scores of Valley Catholic Middle School (VCMS) alumni
- AP (advanced placement) test scores for VCMS alumni
- High school GPAs
- College acceptances and placement for VCMS alumni (as well as honors and awards received)
- Personal check-in at feeder high schools (admission directors, department heads, teachers) to see how VCMS alumni perform in general

Other

Content Review and Textbook Adoption Cycle

Valley Catholic Middle school staff members review each core content area annually. This review process is a key component in Valley Catholic's textbook adoption cycle so that as the state and Archdiocese make changes, VCMS can address the changes in our textbook adoptions.

Trends in Education and Department Meetings

Curriculum updates and educational trends are considered on a yearly basis within department meetings. This information is used to review, adjust, or confirm our current curriculum. Updates to the VCMS Curriculum Guide go into effect the following school year.

Annual Review of Other Programs

Each year, Valley Catholic Middle School reviews the programs of leading middle schools in the greater Portland area as well as new approaches in education. Through these reviews, the staff gains insight and evaluates whether the current middle school program could benefit from those changes. These reviews validate Valley Catholic Middle School's unique educational opportunities and approach while allowing the staff members to remain current on other trends in education. The reviews serve to explain why Valley Catholic may or may not choose to follow those trends.

Regular Student and Parent Feedback

Quarterly student surveys provide vital information about student perceptions, peer-to-peer interactions, and the effectiveness of cross-curricular skill development within each grade level. Students and parents are also surveyed after significant projects or events in an effort to continually improve signature projects.

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2025-2026

Sixth Grade English

English Department

2025-26

Required Texts – Grade Level (G)
Voyages in English Loyola Press
A Time to Dance by Padma Venkatraman
The Giver by Lois Lowry
Dragonwings by Laurence Yep
A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

Required Texts – Honors (H)
Voyages in English, Loyola Press
A Time to Dance by Padma Venkatraman
The Giver by Lois Lowry
Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson
The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Course Description:
In 6th grade English, students read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. They connect themes across genres and develop social responsibility through reading and writing. They develop the use of language to describe, entertain, inform, analyze, persuade, and express feelings in writing. Students express ideas with clarity and coherence in writing and oral communication. In addition, students build a larger vocabulary by looking closely at context clues in writing. They develop public speaking skills through in-class presentations.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Literature: *A Time to Dance*	Writing
Themes: understanding & overcoming our prejudices, different points of view, personal growth, family **Literary elements:** setting, conflict, point of view, plot structure, figurative language	**Writing Type:** Narrative **Grammar/Vocab:** simple parts of speech, subjects, predicates, focus on nouns
Literature: *The Giver*	Writing
Themes: history & memory, freedom vs safety, free will, social responsibilities, family, love **Literary elements**: utopia vs dystopia, science fiction, symbolism, theme	**Writing Type**: Argumentative, analytical **Grammar/Vocab**: simple sentence diagramming, focus on verbs
Literature: *Dragonwings* ***(G)****, Chains* ***(H)***	Writing
Themes: power structures, racial prejudice, oppression vs opportunity, family relationships **Literary elements:** setting, point of view, conflict, narrative style	**Writing Type:** Research, informative, explanatory **Grammar/Vocab:** Adverbs, introduction to pronouns
Literature: *A Wrinkle in Time* ***(G)*** */ The Hobbit* **(H)**	Writing
Themes: corrupting nature of power, greed, self-discovery, heroism, the power of words/stories **Literary elements:** the hero's journey, setting, characterization, conflict, narrative structure	**Writing Type:** Analytical, argumentative **Grammar/Vocab:** Focus on pronouns

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Seventh Grade English

English Department

2025-26

Required Texts – Grade Level (G)
Voyages in English, Loyola Press
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
The Pearl by John Steinbeck
The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper

Required Texts – Honors (H)
Voyages in English, Loyola Press
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
Animal Farm by George Orwell
A Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula LeGuin

Course Description:
In 7th grade English, students continue to build upon the skills acquired in 6th grade English. They master the use of language to narrate, describe, analyze, explain, argue, persuade, inform, entertain and express feelings in writing and orally. Students express ideas with clarity and coherence in writing and oral communication. They continue to develop public speaking skills through in class presentations. In literature, students compare texts, connect themes across genres, and develop social responsibility through reading, writing, and reflecting on important time-periods in history.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Literature: *The Outsiders* ***(G&H)***	Writing
Themes: conformity vs individualism, personal identity, friendship, sources of happiness **Literary elements**: characterization, dynamic vs static characters, slang & dialect	**Writing Type**: Argumentative analysis **Grammar/Vocab**: Greek & Latin Roots, Parts of Speech, focus on nouns
Literature: *Inside Out and Back Again* ***(G)*** */ Brown Girl Dreaming* ***(H)***	Writing
Themes: racial prejudice, family, identity **Literary elements:** narrative style and structure, setting, poetic elements, theme	**Writing Type:** Narrative/Poetry **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin Roots, adjectives, pronouns
Literature: *The Pearl* ***(G),*** *Animal Farm* **(H)**	Writing
Themes: power, greed, corruption, class structure **Literary elements:** rhetorical techniques, allusion, allegory, symbolism, author's style	**Writing Type:** Research **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin Roots, verbs, verbals
Literature: *The Dark is Rising* ***(G)*** */ A Wizard of Earthsea* **(H)**	Writing
Themes: the power of language, power, greed, corruption, self-discovery, redemption & destiny **Literary elements:** setting, characterization, The Hero's Journey, genre, motifs of fantasy, symbolism	**Writing Type:** Argumentative analysis **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin Roots, adverbs, prepositions

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Eighth Grade English

English Department
2025-26

Required Texts – Grade Level (G)
Voyages in English Loyola Press
The Wave by Todd Strasser
Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson
Uglies by Scott Westerfeld
Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata

Required Texts – Honors (H)
Voyages in English Loyola Press
The Wave by Todd Strasser
Lord of the Flies by William Golding
The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer
Night by Elie Wiese

Course Description:
In eighth grade English, students continue to build upon the skills acquired in 6th and 7th grade English. They maintain the use of appropriate vocabulary as well as develop a larger, more diverse vocabulary. Students use correct grammar with appropriate and varied sentence structure. They master the use of language to narrate, describe, analyze, explain, argue, persuade, inform, entertain and express feelings in writing and orally. Students express ideas with clarity and coherence in writing and oral communication. They continue to develop public speaking skills through in class presentations. In literature, students compare texts, connect themes across genres, and develop social responsibility through reading, writing, and reflecting on important time-periods in history.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Literature: *The Wave* + Individual Choice ***(G&H)***	Writing
Themes: prejudice, conformity, social hierarchy, societal change, social justice, empathy, social responsibility **Literary elements**: theme, tone, author's style	**Writing Type**: Analytical **Grammar/Vocab**: Greek & Latin roots, parts of speech, nouns
Literature: *Treasure Island* ***(G)*** / *Lord of the Flies* ***(H)***	Writing
Themes: greed, deception, human nature, power structures **Literary elements:** plot structure, conflict, theme, point of view, character development, symbolism	**Writing Type:** Argumentative analysis **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin roots, adjectives, adverbs
Literature: *Uglies* ***(G)*** / *The House of the Scorpion* ***(H)***	Writing
Themes: dignity of life, greed/power corrupts, self-discovery, identity **Literary elements:** symbolism, characterization, theme	**Writing Type:** Narrative **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin roots, verb, verbals
Literature: *Weedflower* ***(G)*** / *Night* ***(H)***	Writing
Themes: hope, family relationships, growth through conflict, systemic prejudice **Literary elements:** point of view, conflict, author's style	**Writing Type:** Research (Capstone) **Grammar/Vocab:** Greek & Latin roots, prepositions, punctuation

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Sixth Grade Level Math

Math Department

2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Big Ideas Math Modeling Real Life (6th Advanced) by Ron Larson

Course Description:
This course gives extensive practice and review of concepts, computational skills, and problem-solving strategies necessary for success in Pre-Algebra. In this course, students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Skills and concepts are tied to real-world applications and to other mathematics topics.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Tools for Problem Solving
- Order of Operations
- Variables and Expressions
- Powers and Exponents
- Solving Equations Mentally

Patterns and Number Sense
- Divisibility Patterns
- Prime Factorization
- Sequences
- Greatest Common Factor
- Least Common Multiple

Integers
- Comparing and Ordering Integers
- The Coordinate System
- Adding/Subtracting Integers
- Multiplying/Dividing Integers
- Solving Equations
- Integers as Exponents

Applications with Decimals
- Decimals: Comparing, Rounding and Estimating, Multiplying and Dividing
- Powers of Ten
- Scientific Notation

Applications with Fractions
- Mixed Numbers and Improper Fractions
- Simplifying Fractions
- Adding and Subtracting Fractions and Mixed Numbers
- Dividing Fractions and Mixed Numbers
- Ratios
- Proportional Reasoning

Investigations in Geometry
- Angles
- Polygons
- Triangles and Quadrilaterals
- Area
- Surface Area and Volume

Statistics and Data Analysis
- Mean, Median, and Mode
- Stem-Leaf Plots
- Misleading Statistics

An Introduction to Algebra
- Using Inverse Operations
- Addition and Subtraction Equations
- Multiplication and Division Equations
- Writing Algebraic Expressions

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Sixth Grade Honors Math

Pre-Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Big Ideas Math Modeling Real Life (7th Advanced) by Ron Larson

Course Description:
In this course, students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Skills and concepts are tied to applications that are part of the students' real world or to connections with other mathematics topics. There is a strong emphasis on efficient problem-solving. Students learn to analyze a new problem and discover different ways to solve it. Problem-solving activities and applications encourage the students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions and to classify geometric figures. This course gives extensive practice and review of concepts, computational skills, solving equations, and problem-solving strategies necessary for a strong mathematical foundation. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Equations and Inequalities
- Using Inverse Operations
- One-Step and Multi-Step Equations and Inequalities
- Writing Expressions, Inequalities, and Equations

Probability
- Developing and Applying Models
- Compound Events
- Theoretical and Experimental

Investigations in Geometry
- Circles
- Composite Figures
- Angle Measures
- Polygons
- Interior and Exterior Angles
- Area, Surface Area, and Volume
- Parallel Lines and Transversals

Exponents
- Write and Evaluate Expressions
- Equivalent Expressions with Product and Quotient of Powers
- Zero and Negative Exponents
- Perform Operations with Scientific Notation

Transformations
- Translations, Reflections, Rotations, and Dilations
- Similar Figures

Real Number System
- Classify Real Numbers
- Find and Estimate Square Roots
- Apply the Pythagorean Theorem and its Converse
- Convert Between Fractions, Decimals, and Percentages

Statistics and Data Analysis
- Measures of Center and Variation
- Representation of Data
- Samples and Populations

Functions
- Understand and Use Functions
- Represent and Model Functions
- Differentiate Between Linear and Non-Linear Functions
- Proportional Reasoning

Linear Equations
- Graphing Using Points, Slope-Intercept, or Standard Form
- Finding and Interpreting Slope
- Writing Linear Equations
- Solving Systems of Linear Equations

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Sixth Grade Advanced Math

Introduction to Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Big Ideas Math Algebra 1 by Ron Larson

Course Description:
This course introduces the material of first-year algebra with an emphasis on foundational math skills that will prepare them to be successful in high school Algebra I. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Algebra Basics ● Expressions, equations, order of operations ● Properties of addition and multiplication ● Operations with integers and rational numbers **Powers and Roots** ● Rules for operations with monomials ● Negative exponents ● Square roots **Solving Equations** ● Single-step and multi-step equations ● Equations with absolute value ● Equations with variables on both sides	**Solving Equations and Inequalities** ● Single-step and multi-step inequalities ● Inequalities with variables on both sides **Polynomials** ● Basic operations on ● polynomials ● Special products ● Factoring polynomials **Functions and Graphs** ● Definition of function ● Graphing linear relations ● Writing linear equations in various forms ● Proportional Relationships	**Introduction to Quadratics** ● Graphing quadratic functions ● Radical expressions ● Solving quadratics by completing the square ● Solving quadratics by using the Quadratic Formula **Systems of Equations** ● Graphing systems of linear equations ● Solving systems using substitution and elimination ● Solving systems of linear inequalities

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Seventh Grade Level Math

Pre-Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Big Ideas Math Modeling Real Life (7th Advanced) by Ron Larson

Course Description:
In this course, students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Skills and concepts are tied to applications that are part of the students' real world or to connections with other mathematics topics. There is a strong emphasis on efficient problem-solving. Students learn to analyze a new problem and discover different ways to solve it. Problem-solving activities and applications will encourage the students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions and to classify geometric figures. This course gives extensive practice and review of concepts, computational skills, solving equations, and problem-solving strategies necessary for a strong mathematical foundation.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Equations and Inequalities ● Using Inverse Operations ● One-Step and Multi-Step Equations and Inequalities ● Writing Expressions, Inequalities, and Equations **Probability** ● Developing and Applying Models ● Compound Events ● Theoretical and Experimental **Investigations in Geometry** ● Circles ● Composite Figures ● Angle Measures ● Polygons ● Interior and Exterior Angles ● Area, Surface Area, and Volume ● Parallel Lines and Transversals	**Exponents** ● Write and Evaluate Expressions ● Equivalent Expressions with Product and Quotient of Powers ● Zero and Negative Exponents ● Perform Operations with Scientific Notation **Transformations** ● Translations, Reflections, Rotations, and Dilations ● Similar Figures **Real Number System** ● Classify Real Numbers ● Find and Estimate Square Roots ● Apply the Pythagorean Theorem and its Converse ● Convert Between Fractions, Decimals, and Percentages	**Statistics and Data Analysis** ● Measures of Center and Variation ● Representation of Data ● Samples and Populations **Functions** ● Understand and Use Functions ● Represent and Model Functions ● Differentiate Between Linear and Non-Linear Functions ● Proportional Reasoning **Linear Equations** ● Graphing Using Points, Slope-Intercept, or Standard Form ● Finding and Interpreting Slope ● Writing Linear Equations ● Solving Systems of Linear Equations

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Seventh Grade Honors Math

Honors Pre-Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Big Ideas Math Modeling Real Life (7th Advanced) by Ron Larson

Course Description:
In this course, students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Skills and concepts are tied to applications that are part of the students' real world or to connections with other mathematics topics. There is a strong emphasis on efficient problem-solving. Students learn to analyze a new problem and discover different ways to solve it. Problem-solving activities and applications will encourage the students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions and to classify geometric figures. This course gives extensive practice and review of concepts, computational skills, solving equations, and problem-solving strategies necessary for a strong mathematical foundation. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Equations and Inequalities
- Using Inverse Operations
- One-Step and Multi-Step Equations and Inequalities
- Writing Expressions, Inequalities, and Equations

Probability
- Developing and Applying Models
- Compound Events
- Theoretical and Experimental

Investigations in Geometry
- Circles
- Composite Figures
- Angle Measures
- Polygons
- Interior and Exterior Angles
- Area, Surface Area, and Volume
- Parallel Lines and Transversals

Exponents
- Write and Evaluate Expressions
- Equivalent Expressions with Product and Quotient of Powers
- Zero and Negative Exponents
- Perform Operations with Scientific Notation

Transformations
- Translations, Reflections, Rotations, and Dilations
- Similar Figures

Real Number System
- Classify Real Numbers
- Find and Estimate Square Roots
- Apply the Pythagorean Theorem and its Converse
- Convert Between Fractions, Decimals, and Percentages

Statistics and Data Analysis
- Measures of Center and Variation
- Representation of Data
- Samples and Populations

Functions
- Understand and Use Functions
- Represent and Model Functions
- Differentiate Between Linear and Non-Linear Functions
- Proportional Reasoning

Linear Equations
- Graphing Using Points, Slope-Intercept, or Standard Form
- Finding and Interpreting Slope
- Writing Linear Equations
- Solving Systems of Linear Equations

*Supplemental materials are used in the 7th Grade Honors/Pre-Algebra course. They are taken from materials such as AMC8, The Math League, Gauss Contests, and Math Counts. The problems drawn from sources like these enrich the topics covered in the textbook and require a strong foundational understanding of the concepts.

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Seventh Grade Advanced Math

Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbook:
Elementary and Intermediate Algebra by Jerome E. Kaufmann and Karen L. Schwitters

Course Description:
This course covers all the material traditionally taught in a first-year algebra course, and introduces some of the concepts and computational skills usually seen in Algebra II. Some topics not covered in standard textbooks will be discussed. Students will also practice on competitive math exams. The course is designed for motivated students with high mathematical ability. The students will take Advanced Geometry their 8th grade year. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Basics ● Numeric and algebraic expressions ● Properties of the four operations ● Operations on real numbers **Polynomials** ● Operations on monomials and polynomials ● Zero/negative exponents ● Factoring general polynomials ● Long division of polynomials and synthetic division	**Equations and Inequalities** ● Solving linear equations ● Inequalities and compound inequalities ● Applied problems (interest, mixtures, rates, etc.) ● Problem solving practice **Rational Expressions** ● Simplifying rational expressions ● Operations on rational expressions ● Equations with rational expressions	**Coordinate Geometry** ● Graphing linear equations ● Four forms of a linear equation ● Solving linear systems (graphing, substitution, elimination, Cramer's Rule) **Exponents and Radicals** ● Simplifying and combining radicals ● Operations on radicals ● Radical Equations **Quadratic Equations and Inequalities** ● Completing the square ● The quadratic formula ● Complex numbers ● Graphing quadratic equations

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Eighth Grade Level Math

Introduction to Algebra
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbooks:
Big Ideas Math Algebra 1 by Ron Larson

Course Description:
This course introduces the material of first-year algebra with an emphasis on foundational math skills that will prepare them to be successful in high school Algebra I.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Algebra Basics ● Expressions, equations, order of operations ● Properties of addition and multiplication ● Operations with integers and rational numbers **Powers and Roots** ● Rules for operations with monomials ● Negative exponents ● Square roots **Solving Equations** ● Single-step and multi-step equations ● Equations with absolute value ● Equations with variables on both sides	**Solving Equations and Inequalities** ● Single-step and multi-step inequalities ● Inequalities with variables on both sides **Polynomials** ● Basic operations on ● polynomials ● Special products ● Factoring polynomials **Functions and Graphs** ● Definition of function ● Graphing linear relations ● Writing linear equations in various forms ● Proportional Relationships	**Introduction to Quadratics** ● Graphing quadratic functions ● Radical expressions ● Solving quadratics by completing the square ● Solving quadratics by using the Quadratic Formula **Systems of Equations** ● Graphing systems of linear equations ● Solving systems using substitution and elimination ● Solving systems of linear inequalities

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Eighth Grade Honors Math

Algebra

Math Department

2025-2026

Required textbooks:
Elementary and Intermediate Algebra by Jerome E. Kaufmann and Karen L. Schwitters

Course Description:
This course covers the material traditionally taught in a first-year algebra course. It is designed for motivated students with high mathematical ability. Students who master the content and pass an Algebra Challenge exam in the Spring will be able to take Geometry in their 9th grade year. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

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Basics
- Numeric and algebraic expressions
- Properties of the four operations
- Operations on real numbers

Polynomials
- Operations on monomials and polynomials
- Zero/negative exponents
- Factoring general polynomials
- Long division of polynomials and synthetic division

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Equations and Inequalities
- Solving linear equations
- Inequalities and compound inequalities
- Applied problems (interest, mixtures, rates, etc.)
- Problem solving practice

Rational Expressions
- Simplifying rational expressions
- Operations on rational expressions
- Equations with rational expressions

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Coordinate Geometry
- Graphing linear equations
- Four forms of a linear equation
- Solving linear systems (graphing, substitution, elimination)

Exponents and Radicals
- Simplifying and combining radicals
- Operations on radicals
- Radical Equations

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Introduction to Quadratic Equations and Inequalities
- Completing the square
- The quadratic formula
- Complex numbers
- Graphing quadratic equations

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Eighth Grade Advanced Math

Geometry
Math Department
2025-2026

Required Textbooks:
Glencoe/McGraw Hill Geometry

Course Description:
This course covers all the material traditionally taught in a first-year Geometry course, and reinforces some of the concepts and computational skills usually seen in Algebra I. Some topics not covered in standard textbooks will be discussed. The course is designed for motivated students with exceptional mathematical ability. The students will typically take Algebra II their freshman year of high school. Students in this class take the AMC8.

Class Scope and Sequence:

The Language of Geometry
- Language and symbols
- Segments, Midpoints and Distance
- Rays and Angles

Congruent Triangles
- Classifying Triangles and Testing for Congruent Triangles
- Angle Measure

Similarity
- Application of Proportion
- Similar Polygons
- Similar Triangles
- Proportional Parts

Polygon and Area
- Polygons and Polyhedra
- Areas and Polygons
- Area and Circumference of Circles
- Geometric Probability

Reasoning and Proof
- Logic
- Properties of Algebra
- Two-Column Proofs

Applying Congruent Triangles
- Right Triangles
- Inequalities of Triangles
- Triangle Inequality

Right Triangles and Trigonometry
- Geometric Mean
- Pythagorean Theorem
- Special Right Triangles
- Trigonometry
- Law of Sines and Cosines

Surface Area and Volume
- Prisms and Cylinders
- Pyramids and Cones

Parallels
- Parallels and Transversals
- Parallels in Proofs
- Slopes and Distances

Quadrilaterals
- Parallelograms
- Tests for Parallelograms
- Rectangles
- Squares and Rhombi
- Trapezoids

Circles
- Parts of Circles
- Angles, Arcs, and Chords
- Inscribed Angles
- Tangents
- Special Segments

Coordinate Geometry
- Linear Equations
- Algebra and Statistics
- Coordinate Proof
- Vectors

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Sixth Grade STEM

Multidisciplinary STEM Projects
2025-26

Class Description:
In 6th grade STEM, students develop a variety of tools to help them succeed academically and to help them transfer new skills into authentic life experiences. In STEM, students complete several projects aimed at building skills based in engineering and design philosophy. Projects consist of physical and digital projects designed to build critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. These projects include a Plastic Pollution Solution and a cross-curricular Mars Project in partnership with the Science and English departments.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Technology Skills
- Google Apps for Education
- Canva
- iMovie

Innovative Designer
- Learning new design programs to enhance project assignments
- Canva
- 3D Design in TinkerCAD
- Adobe Creative Cloud
- Glowforge

Digital Citizenship
- Copyright and Fair Use
- Online Safety
- Personal information

Creative Communicator and Collaborator
- Digital media creation
- Public speaking skills
- Slideshows
- Project teamwork

Engineering Design
- Project-based Learning
- Engineering Design Process
- Brainstorming
- Developing Prototypes

Plastics Project
- Research skills
- Engineering Design Process
- Prototyping

Mars Project
- Online research skills
- Research writing
- Engineering Design Process
- Brainstorming
- Presentation Skills

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Sixth Grade Mars Project

Multidisciplinary STEM Projects

2025-26

Project Description:
Students work with a team to develop solutions for barriers to human survival on Mars. Students work through the engineering and design process to create a brochure, poster, and promotional video of their design. After an in-class survey, each student is assigned a specific role in the group with responsibilities and deliverables. It is the responsibility of each student to complete their assigned pieces and work together with the students in their group to finish the project.

Goal: A team of (4) students will find solutions to barriers to human survival on Mars. They will apply these researched solutions in their choice of a design

Overarching Question: How can a _____ be designed on Mars? (Example: Ice-cream shop, football stadium)

Individual Project: Students will research barriers to human survival on Mars (oxygen, gravity, food and water, and an optional 4th barrier) and write a research paper in their English class.

Project Scope and Sequence:

Writing
- 5-paragraph essay: intro, explanation of three barriers, conclusion
- Description of solutions/design for brochure

Research
- Layout of infographic
- Solutions to barriers and how they can be applied to the design

Presentation
- Promotional video
- Final presentation
- Presentation Fair

Product
- Infographic that highlights solutions and design
- Poster to showcase design features
- Promotional video
- Model of building

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Seventh Grade STEM

Multidisciplinary STEM Projects
2025-26

Class Description:
In 7th grade STEM, students complete two major group projects aimed at honing their research, writing, presentation, and product skills and developing skills necessary to work effectively in a small team. The Future City project is part of a national competition that challenges students to imagine how a city that exists 100 years in the future has incorporated solutions to address or adapt to current global issues. The business project guides students through the process of creating, pitching, and advertising a business of their creation, complete with a session with a focus group and a spot at the VCMS booth at the Beaverton Farmers Market. The skills students develop in 7th grade STEM arm them with a variety of tools and strategies to succeed academically across the curriculum and are transferable to broader life skills as well. Projects are designed to team and foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Scope and Sequence:

Technology Skills
- Managing Google Drive storage
- Google Docs, Slides, & Sites
- Canva
- TinkerCAD & Glowforge

Presentation Skills (PVLEGS)
- Poise
- Voice control & delivery
- Life & energy
- Eye contact
- Gestures & body language
- Speed
- Use of scripts & speaker notes
- Creating & using visual aids

Design Skills
- Slideshows
- Posters & infographics
- Print & video advertisements
- Websites
- 3D modeling with recycled materials

Digital Citizenship
- Online safety
- Personal information protection
- Intellectual Property, copyright & fair use
- Citations

Future City & Business Projects
- Time management
- Scheduling and planning
- Effective & respectful communication
- Fulfilling group responsibilities
- Research & technical writing
- Mapping & scale
- Engineering & design
- 3D city & product models

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Seventh Grade Future City

Multidisciplinary STEM Project

2025-26

Project Description:

Future City is a semester-long collaborative project that connects students to the important work engineers, city planners, and infrastructure workers do to help a successful city function. Students imagine a city that exists 100 years in the future and research how it might incorporate advanced solutions to address current global issues to protect its citizens' health and happiness. Students follow the engineering design process to identify, research, write about, model, and present their own solutions to problems within that year's theme. Students begin by researching problems current cities face that relate to that year's target issue. They then select one problem to focus on developing an innovative futuristic solution for. They write an analysis of the problem and explain their solution, how it works, and the effects of its implementation in their imagined future city, using their research as support. Once these pieces are finalized, students build a scale model of their solution that showcases its most important aspects and incorporate it into a scale model of their city. To finish the project, students present their city model and individual solutions to a panel of adult "experts" who provide feedback on their ideas. Students then incorporate this feedback and change any relevant part of their previous work before presenting their new version a final time.

STEM teachers evaluate students' academic performance on their individual research, writing, product, and presentation skills. Additionally, teachers evaluate groups on their collective planning, communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills, and collaboration. More information about the Future City project, including all resource materials, can be found on the Future City website: https://futurecity.org/.

Project Scope and Sequence:

Research

- Critical thinking
- Source selection

Presentation Skills (PVLEGS)

- Poise
- Voice control & delivery
- Life & energy
- Eye contact
- Gestures & body language
- Speed
- Creating & using visual aids

Writing

- Topic selection & organization
- Technical & explanatory writing
- MLA citations

Product

- City Zoning, planning, & mapping
- 3D Modeling using recycled materials
- Simple machines

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Seventh Grade Business Project

Multidisciplinary STEM Projects

2025-26

Project Description:

The Business Project is broken into two parts: a short individual portion and the main long-term group portion. Over the course of this project, students learn about types of businesses, industries, branding, logos, marketing, and advertisements. Students create a business plan, marketing strategy, cost analysis, and more.

Individual Project: The purpose of this portion of the business project is for students to apply their research, writing, and presentation skills to to produce a creative project on an assigned company. Students research their assigned company, write a report on the "story" of the company, and create a product to share their company's main product(s)/service(s), financial information, leadership, production facilities, marketing strategy, and target market.

Group Project: Students work as a team to create their own business and product/service in a specific industry. Each student creates a resume and cover letter and applies for a job in a specific industry. Each student is interviewed by a VCMS staff member, hired for a specific role with unique responsibilities and deliverables, and assigned a group. It is the responsibility of each student to work with their group to build a business and product while completing their specific deliverables.

Project Scope and Sequence:

Essential Skills:

Research

- Company histories & leadership biographies
- Financial reports & production facilities
- Marketing campaigns & strategies

Writing

- Individual project report
- Business description & executive summary
- Marketing strategy & cost analysis
- Presentation script

Presentation

- Final presentation (Shark Tank style)
- Farmers market sales pitch
- Focus group session

Product

- Individual company research product
- Commercial, advertisements, logo
- Group company product & website

Roles and Responsibilities:

Business Director

- Delivers sales pitch
- Designs business structure
- Supports all roles

Marketing Director

- Designs & creates marketing materials
- Designs & creates advertising materials
- Supports all roles

Product Engineer

- Design & creates the product with the help of group
- Supports all roles

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Eighth Grade Capstone

Multidisciplinary STEM Projects

2025-26

Project Description:

In the 8th-grade Capstone class, students engage in a yearlong experience that reflects the VCMS Profile of a Graduate—openness to growth, curiosity, compassion, leadership, global citizenship, and wellness of mind and body.

The year begins with the *Designing Mobility Prosthetic Devices for Rescue Dogs* project, where students apply design thinking to create mobility aids for rescue dogs. Partnering with a local shelter and experts, they collect data, learn casting and modeling, and build prototypes that make a real-world impact. In the second semester, students design an independent inquiry project on a topic they're passionate about, conduct research, interview a professional, and present their work through a website and oral presentation.

Capstone strengthens students' research, writing, design, and presentation skills while fostering time management, communication, and self-advocacy that prepare them for high school and beyond.

Project Scope and Sequence:

Research and Writing

- Source analysis
- Conducting interviews
- Written presentation of evidence
- Conventions, language, and style

Project

- Time management
- Creative thinking
- Effort and ethical conduct
- Research, design, and prototype
- Creativity and originality
- Learning stretch

Presentation

- Content and Organization
- Communication skills
- Creating and using visual aids

Website

- Graphic design
- Functionality and accessibility
- Effective communication of student work

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Band

Performing Arts
2025-26

Course Description:
The goals of this class are to build the playing fundamentals and musical skills of all members. Rehearsal time will be spent on music methods, theory, scales, rhythms, and learning each musician's instrument. 6th and 7th grade band will be learning and performing multiple concert pieces throughout the semester ending with a public performance in the Winter and spring. Difficult sections of Concert Band and Pep Band music are reviewed and rehearsed within class. The Pep Band supports the school's sports teams at home games. Opportunities are provided for public performance.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Unit One:
- Finding our first notes
- Proper care of our instruments
- Practice versus rehearsal

Unit Two:
- Practice skills
- Sight-reading
- Building our musical literacy

Unit Three:
- Instrumental Technique
- Wind ensemble etiquette

Unit Four:
- Listening and Music appreciation
- Musical History

Evaluation:
- Daily preparedness and participation
- In class behavior
- Concert attendance

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Choir

Performing Arts

2025-26

Course Description:
Middle School Choir focuses on fundamental musical, vocal, and ensemble skills, such as listening, singing in unison and harmony, and music literacy. As the class progresses, the material moves into more advanced skills in music literacy, harmony singing, and sight-reading. The choir studies and performs a broad spectrum of music from various eras, genres, cultures, and styles. Students learn to use the voice as an instrument by learning healthy/proper vocal technique. They perform at least twice a year at Valley Catholic choir concerts.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Unit One:
- Healthy vocal production, good singing technique
- Unison singing and ensemble skills.

Unit Two:
- Basic music literacy: rhythmic and melodic notation, time signatures.
- Introduction to solfege
- Whole notes, half notes, quarter notes and rests.

Unit Three:
- Music appreciation through diverse repertoire
- Singing in languages other than English
- Unison and 2-part music
- Basic sight-reading

Unit Four:
- Listening and responding to music
- Applying solfege to sight-reading.
- 8^{th} notes, 16^{th} notes and rests.
- Expressive performing

Unit Five:
- Unison, 2-, and 3-Part Music
- Compound time signatures and triplets
- Intermediate sight-reading

Unit Six:
- Key signatures
- Minor scales
- Musical analysis

Unit Seven:
- Songwriting and improvisation.
- Chromatic melodies
- 4-Part music
- Advanced sight-reading

Evaluation:
- Daily work and class participation
- Music Theory and sight-reading work in class
- Concert attendance and participation
- Performance reflections

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Orchestra

Performing Arts

2025-26

Course Description:
The students in this course learn orchestral techniques and in music fundamentals and western music history. The objectives include the spiritual, musical, aesthetic, cultural, and social growth of each individual through participation in this musical group as well as an increase in love and knowledge of music. Opportunities are provided for public performance.

Class Scope and Sequence:

- Scales and warm-ups
- Sight-reading practice
- Ensemble playing taught through the selected literature, stressing expression, musicality, technical accuracy, and precision
- Performance etiquette and formalities
- Leadership qualities and responsibilities
- Abridged overview of the history of western music with an emphasis on commonly performed orchestral music. This includes the baroque, classical, romantic and modern historical periods and introduces an abridged view of major developments in compositional techniques and styles as well as prominent orchestral composers.
- Concerts

Evaluation: written quizzes, and evaluation through performance

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Sixth Grade PE

Physical Education
2025-26

Required Text
None

Course Description:
In 6th grade physical education, students are expected to engage in physical activity by participating in a variety of individual and team sports. The Valley Catholic Middle School physical education program is based upon the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are the foundation for engaging in physical activity. Our mission is to empower all students to sustain regular, lifelong, physical activity as a foundation for a healthy, productive and fulfilling life. Students will be exposed to the basic skills and rules of different games and sports. Students are expected to show a reasonable effort to learn and improve while participating in all activities. Sportsmanship and fair play will be exercised at all times.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Motor skill and movement pattern development

- Locomotor and non-locomotor movements, rhythmic movements, hand-eye coordination
- Introduction of manipulative skills (catch, kick, bounce, strike with hand, pass)

Knowledge of concepts, strategies and tactics related to performance

- Introduction of sports, rules and game play strategies
- On-the-ball tactical movements (passing receiving, attacking, preventing scoring, creating space)

Knowledge and skills to achieve a healthy lifestyle

- Introduction to physical fitness, cardiovascular and strength activities

Display of acceptable personal and social behaviors

- Introduction of personal and social behaviors (personal hygiene, group dynamics)
- Introduction to proper behaviors and actions during PE class (sportsmanship)

Ability to understand the health benefits, enjoyment and social interaction of physical activity

- Introduction of health benefits, enjoyment and social interaction within a physically active environment

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Seventh Grade PE

Physical Education

2025-26

Required Text
None

Course Description:
In 7th grade physical education, students are expected to engage in physical activity by participating in a variety of individual and team sports. The Valley Catholic Middle School physical education program is based upon the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are the foundation for engaging in physical activity. Our mission is to empower all students to sustain regular, lifelong, physical activity as a foundation for a healthy, productive and fulfilling life. Students will be exposed to the basic skills and rules of different games and sports. They are expected to show a reasonable effort to learn and improve while participating in all activities. Sportsmanship and fair play will be exercised at all times.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Motor skill and movement pattern development
- Locomotor and non-locomotor movements, rhythmic movements, hand-eye coordination
- Introduction of manipulative skills (catch, kick, bounce, strike with hand, pass)

Knowledge of concepts, strategies and tactics related to performance
- Introduction of sports, rules and game play strategies
- On-the-ball tactical movements (passing receiving, attacking, preventing scoring, creating space)

Knowledge and skills to achieve a healthy lifestyle
- Introduction to physical fitness, cardiovascular and strength activities

Display of acceptable personal and social behaviors
- Introduction of personal and social behaviors (personal hygiene, group dynamics)
- Introduction to proper behaviors and actions during PE class (sportsmanship)

Ability to understand the health benefits, enjoyment and social interaction of physical activity
- Introduction of health benefits, enjoyment and social interaction within a physically active environment

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Eighth Grade PE

Physical Education
2025-26

Required Text
None

Course Description:
In 8th grade physical education, students are expected to engage in physical activity by participating in a variety of activities. The Valley Catholic Middle School physical education program is based upon the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are the foundation for engaging in physical activity. Our mission is to empower all students to sustain regular, lifelong, physical activity as a foundation for a healthy, productive and fulfilling life. Students will be exposed to the basic skills and rules of different games and sports. They are expected to show a reasonable effort to learn and improve while participating in all activities. Sportsmanship and fair play will be exercised at all times. Students in eighth grade will choose a PE class similar to how they choose elective classes. Students will have the opportunity to select a class each quarter. Currently we offer: Racket Sports, Athleticism through Calisthenics, Lifetime and Leisure Sports, Dance, and Soccer.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Motor skill and movement pattern development (proficiency)
- Locomotor and non-locomotor movements, rhythmic movements, hand-eye coordination
- Development of manipulative skills (catch, kick, bounce, strike with hand, pass)

Knowledge of concepts, strategies and tactics related to performance
- Show proficiency/improvement in sport games, rules and game play strategies

Knowledge and skills to achieve a healthy lifestyle
- Show proficiency/improvement in physical fitness, cardiovascular and strength activities

Display of acceptable personal and social behaviors
- Development of personal and social behaviors (personal hygiene, group dynamics)
- Development of proper behaviors and actions during PE class (sportsmanship)

Ability to understand the health benefits, enjoyment, and social interaction of physical activity
- Development of health benefits, enjoyment and social interaction within a physically active environment

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Sixth Grade Religion

Old Testament
Religion Department
2025-26

Required Textbooks:
Christ Our Life 6: God Calls a People, Loyola Press, 2009
Family Life 6, RCL Benzinger
The New American Bible

Course Description:
Sixth grade religion looks at the origins of the Catholic faith by studying the development of the Old Testament. We will study the origins of the Jewish people in ancient Mesopotamia and follow their history until modern times; at the historical events that shaped the stories of the Old Testament and how they relate to the Catholic faith. The course also makes connections between customs and traditions of the Catholic Church and other religions. Students will learn the history of the Bible and how to navigate it. This course is meant to deepen your understanding of the history and faith of the Old Testament. In addition to the core content, we will spend time focused on character development. Students will be guided through lessons that are designed to develop a community of support and respect throughout the school. They will work to develop skills of compassion for others and think critically about how their actions impact the community. Students will work on skills that will help them make positive and responsible choices throughout their lives.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Historical Context	Geography and History of the Biblical World Jewish Customs and Traditions Connections between Abrahamic Faiths
Scripture	Organization and History of the Bible, Pentateuch Historical and Prophetic Books of the Bible Wisdom Literature: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, etc.
Catholic Traditions	Origins of Mass, Liturgical Year Styles of Prayer, Saints, Mary, Sacraments
Character Development	Empathy, Problem Solving, Relationships Effective Communication, Virtues Second Step, Family Life, Called to Protect
Service	Importance of Service Connections to Church Teaching Required Service to School Community

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Seventh Grade Religion

Life of Christ
Religion Department
2025-2026

Required Textbooks:
Christ Our Life 7: Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Loyola Press, 2009
The New American Bible www.usccb.org/books

Course Description:
This class presents a chronological narrative of the life of Christ from His birth to His Ascension using *The New American Bible* and the *Christ Our Life* textbook. It takes an in-depth look at all four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, specifically the stories and themes within them. Moral Christian living, peer relationships and other social-emotional skills are discussed throughout the year. Major projects and exams may include art pieces, presentations, creating videos, writing tasks and semester final exams.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Historical Context	Inter-testament Period 1st Century Palestine
Scripture	Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Acts of the Apostles
Catholic Traditions	Prayer, Liturgy, Sacraments Advent, Christmas, Lent Holy Days, Feast Days
Character Development	Empathy, Gratitude, Communication Growth Mindset Call to Protect The Beatitudes, the Virtues Emotion Management
Service	Waves of Love Importance of Service Connections to Church Teaching Required Service to School Community

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Eighth Grade Religion

Church History
Religion Department
2025-26

Required Textbooks:
Christ Our Life 8: The Church Then and Now, 2009
Family Life 8, RCL Benzinger
The New American Bible

Course Description:
The main focus of religion in 8th Grade is the history of the Catholic Church. Throughout the year we will also integrate important character development lessons and work towards students becoming the best versions of themselves as possible. The first unit of study begins with a deep look into identity, self-esteem, empathy. We use these topics as a jumping off point to explore ethical decision making and ultimately the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching. Students will then look at the history and development of the Catholic Church from the perspective of the following themes: Early Church, Conflict, Challenges, and Modernization. In exploring the early church, we will look at the biblical origins of the church with a focus on the Epistles. We will also look at the transition from a small group of Jesus' followers to a more formalized Church. Focusing on the theme of conflict we look at how various internal and external conflicts in the Church impact its development. The theme of challenges looks at how different events and time periods in history served as challenges to the Church and how they changed the Church. Finally, we look at the modern church and how it works in the modern world.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Historical Context	Early Church: Councils, Church Fathers, Heresies Conflicts: Medieval to Modern Period Challenges: Reformation, Scientific Revolution, Age of Enlightenment Modernization: Anti-Catholic Attitudes, 2nd Vatican Council, The Future Church
Scripture	The Epistles Scripture as foundations of Church teachings, practices, and traditions
Catholic Traditions	Prayer, Liturgical Year, Saints Sacraments, Catechism of the Church Catholic Social Teaching Monasticism
Character Development	Self Esteem, Empathy, Problem Solving, Motivation and Goal Setting Ethical Decision Making Effective Communication Second Step, Project Genesis, Called to Protect
Service	Importance of Service Connections to Church Teaching Required Service to School Community

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Sixth Grade Science

Science Department
2025-26

Required Textbook:
Everything You Need to Ace Science in One Big Fat Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide by Workman Publishing, Sharon Madanes, Brain Quest Editors

Course Description:
This inquiry-based course builds on the natural curiosity of students by asking questions about the world in multiple sectors of life, physical and space science. This course is designed to give students an appreciation for science while emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Scientific Problem Solving
- Lab safety
- Scientific processes
- Experimental design
- Metric System-Length

Life Science
- Cell Organelles
- Microscopes
- Biodiversity
- Levels of Organization
- Introduction to Ecosystems

Earth-Space Science
- Introduction to Atmosphere
- Space Exploration & Mars
- Gravity & Motion in Space
- Objects in the Solar System

Physical Science
- Introduction to Matter
- Introduction to Periodic Table
- Introduction to States of Matter
- Kinetic Theory of Matter

Science and Engineering Practices
- Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- Developing and Using Models
- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
- Engaging in Argument from Evidence
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information
- Microscopy

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Seventh Grade Science

Science Department

2025-26

Required Textbook:
Everything You Need to Ace Science in One Big Fat Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide by Workman Publishing, Sharon Madanes, Brain Quest Editors

Course Description:
This course explores topics in life, physical, and earth sciences. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are emphasized, as well as hands-on, laboratory experiences, and evaluation of data from primary sources. Performance expectations blend core ideas with scientific and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts to support students in developing usable knowledge as they explain real-world phenomena.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Scientific Problem Solving
- Lab safety
- Scientific processes
- Experimental design
- Metric System

Life Sciences
- Organ Systems
- Adaptations & Natural Selection

Earth Sciences
- Rocks and Minerals
- Landforms & Geologic Features
- Evidence of Plate Tectonics
- Weathering, Erosion & Deposition
- Natural Hazards

Physical Sciences
- Molecules
- Elements & Chemical Bonds
- Chemical Reactions
- Mixtures & Solubility
- Electricity
- Magnets
- Mechanical Waves
- Sound
- Electromagnetic Waves
- Light
- Thermal Energy

Science and Engineering Practices
- Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- Developing and Using Models
- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
- Engaging in Argument from Evidence
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information
- Dissection

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Eighth Grade Science

Science Department

2025-26

Required Text:
Everything You Need to Ace Science in One Big Fat Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide by Workman Publishing, Sharon Madanes, and Brain Quest Editors

Course Description:
In 8th-grade science, students will explore life, Earth, and physical sciences through hands-on investigations and real-world connections. The year begins with an overview of scientific practices and an introduction to Earth's history, the evolution of life, and natural selection. Students then investigate genetics, photosynthesis, and environmental science, with an emphasis on climate change and human impact. The course concludes with the study of forces and motion, analyzing Newton's Laws through the analysis of rocketry.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Scientific Problem Solving
- Lab safety
- Scientific processes
- Experimental design

Life Science
- Photosynthesis
- Adaptation and Natural Selection
- Mechanisms of Change
- Evidence for Evolution
- DNA structure and function
- Mendelian Genetics
- Gene Mutations & Disorders
- Bioethics

Physical Sciences
- Describing Motion
- The Laws of Motion
- Forces
- Rockets

Earth Sciences
- Air Masses and Weather
- Air & Ocean Currents
- Climate & Biomes
- Fossils & Earth's History
- Geologic Time Scale
- Human Impacts on the Environment
- Global Climate Change

Science and Engineering Practices
- Asking Questions and Defining Problems
- Developing and Using Models
- Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
- Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
- Analyzing and Interpreting Data
- Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
- Engaging in Argument from Evidence
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

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Sixth Grade Social Studies

World History, Culture, and Geography
Social Studies Department

2025-26

Required Textbook:
Social Studies Techbook: World Geography and World History–Discovery Education (digital)
The Nystrom Desk Atlas

Course Description:
6th grade students practice the skills of a student historian while learning about the Americas in semester one and the ancient world in Eurasia in semester two. Students interpret different map types and explore physical and human geography, seeing how people use and depend on the environment. Through a study of culture and history, students learn how people around the world organize their communities and interact with others. Students determine the achievements and learn how history has shaped cultures. Students compare and contrast forms of government, investigate current issues, and the means of change. Throughout their coursework, students will develop these foundational research skills: how to assess the credibility of sources, discern fact from opinion, paraphrase and take notes, and construct an argument using multiple sources. Students will improve their writing skills, plan projects, and give oral presentations.

Class Scope and Sequence:

The Americas
- Growth, achievement, and decline of pre-colonial empires; exploration and colonialism; modern societies

Asia
- Growth of civilization: rise of agriculture, religion, writing
- Achievements and influence
- Trade & cultural exchange

Mediterranean
- Greek city-states, the Roman Republic and Roman Empire to its fall
- Achievements and influence

Geography, Economics, Civics, and Research for All Regions
- Geography: map comparison, five themes, sustainability, respect and responsibility for God's creation
- Economics: labor and natural resources, trade as exchange and relationships
- Civics: types of government and social organization, roles of citizens, means of promoting the common good
- Research: investigate current challenges, analyze sources, explore solutions, and develop arguments

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Seventh Grade Social Studies

World History, Culture, and Geography
Social Studies Department

2025-26

Textbooks
Social Studies Techbook: World Geography and World History–Discovery Education (digital)
Student Atlas of the World, 6th Edition – National Geographic Society

Course Description:
In their 7th-grade year students will explore the history, culture, and geography of the Eastern Hemisphere including the continents of Africa and Eurasia, with a sub-focus on subcontinents of Europe, Southwest Asia, India, and Eastern Asia. The year will analyze the years between 400 and 1800. A 1400-year era examining the cultures and histories of the Eastern Hemisphere through the development of cities, language, and art. Students will analyze maps of the various regions, helping them develop an understanding of cities to prepare them for their STEM Future Cities projects; they will demonstrate their knowledge of each region through product creation, group, and individual presentations, short and long-term writing, along with discussions in small groups as well as whole class groups e.g. Socratic seminars. Historical knowledge will explain the growth of religions, and cultures e.g. language, literature, and art while analyzing the conflicts between the various groups in the regions, ultimately developing an understanding of how these histories shape the present. Students investigate current issues and the means of change in their role as global citizens. Students will have hands-on opportunities to investigate different cultures and explore and create different art forms. They will improve research, writing, citation, and presentation skills through the lens of social studies.

Class Scope & Sequence:

Early Medieval Period (400-900):
- Fall of Ancient Empires of Rome, Persian, Han
- How the rise of religions provided stability to societies
- Ancient Silk Road and human interaction across continents
- Importance of city development to cultures

High Middle Ages (900-1350):
- The Viking Age of Europe ravaged the region
- The re-establishment of the Silk Road provided economic stability
- Conflict begins with the desire to control important ports and cities
- The rise of nation-states in Western Europe e.g. France
- The rise of illness and the black plague

Early Modern (1350-1800):
- New dynasties and empires develop in Asia
- Recovering from conflict and illness leads to a period of prosperity
- Humanism and the Renaissance began to flourish
- The beginning of the age of exploration due to economic decisions
- The fall of the Eastern Roman Empire

Social Studies Fair Summative Assessment:
- The development of an essay on a selected topic
- The development of a presentation on the topic
- The development of a product to represent the research
- The development of research skills

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Eighth Grade Social Studies

American History, Culture, and Geography
Social Studies Department
2025-26

Textbooks:
Social Studies Techbook: United States History, World Geography, and *Civics* by Discovery Education (digital)

Course Description:
This course focuses on themes of migration, liberty and political development. Students learn about migration as a defining feature of the American experience. People's movements across oceans and across the continent have shaped the country's borders, economic and social development. Their cooperation and conflicts revealed the need for protection of all citizens' rights. Students will learn about struggles to formalize these rights for women, native people and African Americans. This country's emphasis on rights developed from English roots to a unique democratic experiment in the 19th century. Students will learn about our government's origins, how citizens have shaped it, and how the Civil War transformed the nation into a more centralized republic. Students will learn how citizens took action to defend the rights of all Americans and how the nation's history is represented in music, art and film. Students learn to think like a historian through close reading, analyzing primary and secondary sources, and defending claims with evidence.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Geography
- Physical characteristics and regions
- Expansion and settlement
- Resources, technological development, and human-environment interaction
- Respect and responsibility for God's creation

Civics and Government
- English political influence
- Declaring independence
- Constitution: values, structure, amendments
- Roles of citizens
- Civil Rights, Civil Wrongs

Migration and Cultural Change
- Colonial settlement and legacy
- Westward expansion: key individuals & groups
- Immigration: industrialism, urbanization and cultural diffusion
- Cultural regions of the United States
- American music, art, and film

Conflict, Cooperation & Interdependence
- Relations with Native Americans
- Roads, rails, and canals
- Social reform movements
- Mexican War
- Civil War and its impact
- Reconstruction and Jim Crow

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Sixth Grade Study Skills

2025-26

Required Materials: School-issued planner

Course Description:
Study Skills class is designed to help students build strong organizational and academic habits throughout the year. The class is divided into four sections, with students rotating through Beginning Spanish, Digital Art, Public Speaking, and Physical Art each quarter. In addition to these subject-specific experiences, students focus on essential study skills year-round, including the use of planners, backpacks, binders, and lockers, to develop strategies that support success across all classes.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Organizational Skills
- Locker, backpack, binder, and agenda organization
- Time Management
- Project/Long-Term Assignment Planning
- Test-taking strategies

Beginning Spanish
- Proficiency-based class
- Use of a multi-stage project to build confidence and exposure to the Spanish language

Presentation Skills
- How to prepare written & impromptu speeches
- Delivering presentations
- Engaging your audience

Foundation Skills in Art and Design
- Building a foundation in 2D and 3D hands-on skills while exploring
- Experimenting with a variety of materials

Digital Art
- Digital File Organization
- Basic Shapes and Design Principles
- Digital Art Project: Google Drawing

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Intermediate Art

Drawing (Portrait Collage)
Visual Arts Department
2025-26

Course Description:
In this course, students will refine their artistic skills by focusing on line, form, shape, and color as they create finished works of art. They will experiment with a variety of painting mediums while deepening their understanding of core art principles such as composition, balance, and contrast.

The semester will conclude with a final painting project that demonstrates the techniques and knowledge students have developed throughout the course. To complete their portfolio, students will also learn how to mat and present their artwork in a professional, gallery-ready manner.

Concepts include, but are not limited to:

- Observation
- Line
- Form
- Color Theory
- Texture
- Space
- Stretch & Explore
- Reflect
- Displaying of Work

Class Scope and Sequence (may include but not limited to):

Unit One: Color Theory
- Foundation: Science of Color (Color Theory)
- "Paint Your Emotion"

Unit Two: Monochromatic
- Monochromatic Masterpiece

Unit Three: Shape and Value Paintings
- Make Your Own Still Life
- Landscape Basics

Unit Four: Impression & Expression
- Impression in Motion
- Expression & Abstraction

Unit Five: Presentation
- Curating Your Art
- Discuss Display and Matting

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Advanced Art

Painting

Visual Arts Department

2025-26

Course Description:
This course invites 8th grade students to explore the expressive world of art through drawing and painting using a variety of techniques, materials, and themes. Through guided projects and personal exploration, students will learn how to mix and apply color, experiment with different painting styles, and study the work of historical and contemporary artists to inspire their own creations.

Students will develop essential drawing and observation skills that can be applied to future art classes such as acrylic painting, watercolor, and animation. They will learn that all subjects—whether drawn from real life or photo references—can be broken down into form, line, and space, and will practice translating what they see into expressive works of art.

Throughout the semester, students will strengthen their creative confidence, problem-solving abilities, and technical skills while experimenting across various art mediums. The course will conclude with students learning how to mat and present their artwork in a professional, gallery-ready format.

Concepts include but are not limited to:

- Observation
- Line
- Form
- Color Theory
- Texture
- Space
- Stretch & Explore
- Reflect
- Displaying of Work

Class Scope and Sequence (may include but not limited to):

Unit One: Color Theory
- Foundation: Science of Color (Color Theory)
- "Paint Your Emotion"

Unit Two: Monochromatic
- Monochromatic Masterpiece

Unit Three: Shape and Value Paintings
- Make Your Own Still Life
- Landscape Basics

Unit Four: Impression & Expression
- Impression in Motion
- Expression & Abstraction

Unit Five: Presentation
- Curating Your Art
- Discuss Display and Matting

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Sixth Grade Spanish

World Language Department

2025-26

Course Description:

When students learn another language, it not only opens doors of communication for them, it also brings lifelong benefits. Through their language studies, students practice skills such as pattern recognition and critical thinking that will serve them throughout their lives. Valley Catholic Middle School's Spanish Language curriculum is ACTFL-aligned and designed to build proficiency in the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Sixth grade Spanish meets daily for one quarter and offers students the opportunity to engage with the language whether students have experience with the language or are new to studying Spanish. Sixth grade Spanish is a project-based course that allows students to utilize the language to complete activities that allow them to build their communication skills.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Unit Title/ Source	Unit Themes	Language Skills
Viviendo con mascotas	Pets Names, ages Descriptions (size, color, personality) Responsibilities Tricks Breeds	Identifying Describing Giving opinions Asking simple questions Comparing

Seventh Grade Spanish

World Language Department

2025-26

Course Description:

When students learn another language, it not only opens doors of communication for them, it also brings lifelong benefits. Through their language studies, students practice skills such as pattern recognition and critical thinking that will serve them throughout their lives. Valley Catholic Middle School's Spanish Language curriculum is ACTFL-aligned and designed to build proficiency in the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will practice real-world communication skills while also engaging with the history and culture of the Spanish speaking world by reading, watching, and listening to authentic materials. The classroom is a dynamic space where students are encouraged to pursue the topics that interest them while utilizing the Spanish language. The goal for the first year of Spanish is for each student to reach the Novice Mid level of proficiency which includes the ability to navigate with some success in day-to-day survival situations as well as the ability to ask and answer simple questions. Additionally, seventh grade students will engage directly with the foundational grammatical structures of the Spanish language.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Unit Title/Source	Unit Themes	Language Skills
Foundational Skills for Language Learning	Classroom rules, procedures, and expectations Understanding language proficiency and ACTFL proficiency levels Recognizing cognates Correct Spanish pronunciation Question words in Spanish Numbers in Spanish Colors in Spanish Nouns and articles, subject pronouns	Recognize and use common Spanish cognates Practice correct Spanish pronunciation Use Spanish question words Correctly name and use numbers in Spanish Name colors in Spanish Nouns and articles, subject pronouns
Los super siete verbos	7 essential Spanish verbs Special Person Interviews High repetition of these essential verbs	Asking simple questions Answering simple questions Using the verb ser: to be
Nuevos amigos en la escuela	Families and communities Personal and public identities Daily life People at school Nationalities Feelings	Greetings and saying goodbye Telling basic personal information Asking simple questions Giving opinions
Día de los Muertos, Día de Acción de Gracias, y La Navidad	Traditional hispanic/latino activities and events Traditional food and drinks	Descriptive adjectives Giving opinions
Disfrutando los snacks	Snacks, candies, drinks from target cultures Flavors and types Places to buy snacks	Describing Giving opinions Comparing drinks
Investigando deportes y deportistas	Hispanic athletes Important characteristics of an athlete Traditional and extreme sports	Giving basic information Giving opinions Comparing
Animales del Amazonas	The Amazon rainforest Animals, habitats, weather Spanish Reader: El Capibara con Botas	Describing Comparing Telling basic information

Eighth Grade Spanish

World Language Department

2025-26

Course Description:

Through their language studies, students practice skills such as pattern recognition and critical thinking that will serve them throughout their lives. By rooting the program in communication, we are able to provide an immersive experience in which students and instructors speak Spanish almost exclusively. Students will practice real-world communication skills while also engaging with the history and culture of the Spanish speaking world by reading, watching, and listening to authentic materials. The goal for the first year of Spanish is for each student to reach the Novice High level of proficiency which includes the ability to navigate with some success in day-to-day survival situations as well as the ability to ask and answer simple questions. Additionally, eighth grade students will engage directly with the grammatical structures of the Spanish language.

Class Scope and Sequence:

Unit Title/Source	Essential Questions	Grammar Topics
La vida Escolar	How are schools in Spanish-speaking countries similar to or different from schools in our country? What can we learn about a culture by understanding its education system? How do daily routines in Spanish-speaking schools reflect their cultural values?	Functions: Lists, simple sentences, phrases Grammar: subject pronouns regular verb conjugation me gusta/no me gusta/me encanta
Language Acquisition	How do humans acquire language both in and out of the classroom? What can a person do to increase their proficiency in a language?	I can.. explain how humans acquire language. identify my role in the language acquisition process. say my current proficiency level. set a goal for my proficiency growth.
Familias y comunidades	Who are people that make up a family? How do families and communities work together? How do celebrations differ among communities and families?	Members of the family People in a community Types of homes Rooms in a home Chores Descriptive adjectives Possessive adjectives
Ratos Libres	What is free time? How does your culture influence how you spend your free time and how much you have? Are there healthy and unhealthy ways to spend free time?	Emotions Hobbies Activities Sports Friendship - Peer relationships Simple future Stem-changing verbs
Buen provecho	How does where you live determine what you eat? How does your family and community determine what you eat? What traditions and customs exist around food and eating? How do they differ between communities?	Food Opinions Comparisons Restaurant Cultural practices around food