Curriculum Guide
For grades Pre-K through 12 at Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School
Our academic principles stand the test of time.

Success does not happen by accident. It takes a strong work ethic and an unyielding commitment to excellence. But most of all, success takes preparation. At Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School, we lay the foundation for success in life by offering a curriculum that prepares your child to excel in college and all facets of life. Critical thinking skills and solid study habits are learned, and engaged parents play an integral role along the way. TJ does not waste time by following fads. Our focus is on a classic Western Civilization curriculum with texts that have stood the test of time. By learning about the history, culture, origins, and literature of Western civilizations, our students are able to better understand and appreciate other cultures. Laboratory sciences and advanced mathematics courses create opportunities to develop and strengthen problem-solving and research skills. World languages, art, and music offerings, which begin early on, further broaden the cultural scope of our liberal arts curriculum.
The Early Childhood Division—consisting of the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs—focuses on several discrete goals: preparing students for academic instruction; engendering enthusiasm for learning; developing an appropriate response to authority; and educating students to work collaboratively. The program strives to present developmentally-appropriate activities for each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>History/Social Studies</th>
<th>World Languages</th>
<th>The Arts</th>
<th>Program Enhancements</th>
<th>After School Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>The program centers on life science, earth science, and physical science. The student will learn through exploration and manipulation, relying on art projects, small group experiments, games, songs, finger plays, and group discussions.</td>
<td>The program focuses on geography, communities, and citizenship. Instruction relies on learning centers, thematic units, and hands-on activities.</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>This program stresses language acquisition through games, songs, oral practice, and proper pronunciation of Spanish expressions, numbers, nouns, verbs, and adjectives. They are able to produce some Spanish words in context, without prompting, before they enter the next grade.</td>
<td>Art — Grades Pre-K and K</td>
<td>Students in the Early Childhood Division learn to distinguish artwork in the studio from their more crafts-oriented activities in the regular classroom. Their early focus is on recognizing the qualities of shape, color, and line; they move on to learning the color wheel and mixing color, combining and manipulating shapes to create visual images, and beginning to depict space.</td>
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<td>The student will strengthen number recognition and the ability to quantify numbers through one hundred. Teachers will introduce the student to the general concepts of addition, subtraction, time, money, fractions, and measurement.</td>
<td>The program emphasizes life science, earth science, and physical science by relying on hands-on discovery, experiments, learning centers, and group activities. The student will learn how to use the scientific method.</td>
<td>The student will develop an understanding of community, family, and citizenship. The teacher introduces the student to the use of maps, globes, and charts to learn how to distinguish one place or region from another.</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>This program stresses language exploration through games, songs, oral practice, and proper pronunciation of Spanish expressions. Communication skills are expanded as students learn simple vocabulary; nouns, verbs, and adjectives surrounding many themes.</td>
<td>Music — Grades Pre-K and K</td>
<td>Students in the Early Childhood Division learn about music through songs, dances, story-telling and play activities. They also experiment with rhythm instruments and using their voices expressively. They learn nursery rhymes, folk songs, songs with actions, songs to accompany stories and games, and music of many styles. The classes perform three times a year at school concerts.</td>
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<td>Physical Education — Grades Pre-K and K</td>
<td>The Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten programs are aimed at challenging each student to demonstrate progress toward the mature form of selected manipulative, locomotor, and non-locomotor skills. Skills and games center on seasonal sports and recreational activities. In addition to focusing on fundamental age-appropriate skills and games, students will learn that physical activity and healthy nutrition are good for the body, and that they contribute to an active and healthy lifestyle.</td>
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The Lower School program focuses on establishing advanced core competencies. The course of study develops essential academic skills: reading, writing, listening, and critical thinking. Students develop skills in problem-solving, reasoning, and analytical thought, as well as a strong foundation in core academic subjects. The program is designed to foster a love of learning, curiosity, and a sense of wonder about the world. Students are encouraged to explore, question, and engage in a variety of activities to support their academic growth and development.

**English**

Students will develop language and oral skills, building a sight-word vocabulary. They will memorize a partial word list and write stories as means of developing writing skills. Students strengthen their pronunciation and spelling skills through practice and develop writing in complete sentences.

**Math**

Students will add and subtract two-digit numbers without regrouping. They will understand concepts of time, measurement, money, and sequencing. The teacher emphasizes the process as much as the solution. Students meet with the science teacher in the science lab and engage in an activity hands-on curriculum. Students learn scientific concepts and the scientific method through controlled experiments as well as reading and writing about science. Topics covered in first grade are Organisms, Comparing, Cooking, Balancing and Weighing, and The Moon and Beyond.

**Science**

The course of studies emphasizes critical thinking. The teacher needs to encourage a curiosity-driven approach, and students learn independently and present reports throughout the year. The program emphasizes spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and difficult science concepts. The program develops investigation and research skills, and students learn to work collaboratively. In the science lab, students engage in an entirely hands-on curriculum. Students learn basic theory, notation, singing, playing instruments, movement, and the elements of art. Along the way, students learn the scientific method and hands-on activities and experiments, as well as studying writing and science. Students will explore the nature of communities by focusing on the school and neighborhood community. Students will learn to identify the needs and wants of people and families. They will also learn about the importance of good organizational skills and how to frame ideas in an outline form. Students will also learn about the concepts of country, continent, city, state, and city.

**History/Social Studies**

In first and second grade class time is devoted to visual arts, songs, playground, role play, manipulatives, and learning practice in order to acquire vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. The program emphasizes the development of a love for literature and reading. Students learn to read, write, and spell simple words. They learn to identify the needs and wants of people and families. They will also learn about the importance of good organizational skills and how to frame ideas in an outline form. Students will also learn about the concepts of country, continent, city, state, and city.

**World Languages**

Students will engage in research and make a model of a city or town. They will learn about the history of the community and elements of the American way of life. They will also learn about the history of the community and elements of the American way of life. They will also learn about the importance of good organizational skills and how to frame ideas in an outline form. Students will also learn about the concepts of country, continent, city, state, and city.

**The Arts**

Students will explore the nature of communities by focusing on the school and neighborhood community. Students will learn to identify the needs and wants of people and families. They will also learn about the importance of good organizational skills and how to frame ideas in an outline form. Students will also learn about the concepts of country, continent, city, state, and city.

**Spanish — Grades 1-2**

In first and second grade, class time is devoted to visual arts, songs, playground, role play, manipulatives, and learning practice in order to acquire vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. The program emphasizes the development of a love for literature and reading. Students learn to read, write, and spell simple words. They learn to identify the needs and wants of people and families. They will also learn about the importance of good organizational skills and how to frame ideas in an outline form. Students will also learn about the concepts of country, continent, city, state, and city.

**Technology — Grades 1-5**

Lower school students meet in the computer lab once a week during the school year. The students gain confidence in accessing the local area network and become familiar with the basics of computer literacy. Students are introduced to concepts of hardware and software, as well as the features of the PC. The students participate in student-centered projects where they plan, design, and implement curriculum-related projects. Technology instruction reinforces and enhances mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science curriculum. In the classroom, combined classrooms, students also have access to a laptop cart, from which they can supplement their computer lab experience and integrate technology into the classroom. Specific topics include computer literacy, keyboarding, multimedia presentations, and the use of word processing, spreadsheets, and databases.

**Program Enhancements**

All students in grades 1-5 have several opportunities after-school enrichment of TJ. In addition to tutorials available every day from 3:00-5:00 p.m., students can participate in after-school activities including book club, chess club, math club, and computer activities. The After School Program provides grades K-5 students with an opportunity to participate in enrichment activities from 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Middle School confronts the formidable challenge of negotiating the transition from childhood to adolescence. The science of student development highlights the importance of providing a high degree of intellectual integrity and rigor yet does not expect the level of sophistication of a young person from childhood to adolescence. The course of study requires a high degree of patience and nurturing the emotional development of a young person into the intellectual integrity and rigor yet does not expect the level of sophistication of a young person from childhood to adolescence. The course of study requires a high degree of

**GRADE 6**

**English**

- **Pre-Algebra**
  - A gateway into the world of algebra and geometry. The topics—which include patterns, formulas, tables, real numbers, solving equations—are covered in a way that helps students develop an approach as an introduction to algebra.

**Science**

- Students explore topics in life science, physical science, and earth/space science. Cell structure, replication, ecosystems, genetics, plant and animal life cycles and adaptations, and countries are some of the concepts covered in this science. The focus is on basic content and the period of time. A table of contents is introduced, and students learn how to use the text, structure of matter, light, sound, chemical reactions, motion, and electricity. The earth’s composition, human behavior, volcanoes, and the solar system are concepts covered in this science.

**World Geography**

- The world geography course is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the world in which they live. The Earth’s physical features, climates, soils, vegetation, weather, and water are introduced. The student will study the world’s landforms, and learn to locate them on maps and in the world.

**Chinese**

- Introduction to Chinese
  - Chinese is the dominant language of China and Taiwan. The course is an introduction to the language and culture. Oral communication skills are the primary focus, but students are also introduced to the written characters. Students will learn how to write and read Chinese characters, and develop an understanding of the language for its origin and function.

**Physical Education**

- Grades 6-8
  - Middle School students engage in elective courses during 9th grade. These electives are designed to provide a menu of options that may not be part of the core course of study, or allow them to study a particular topic of interest in more depth. Examples of such electives are Middle School Musical, Team Sports, Book Club, Robotics, History Day, STEM, Sculpture, Strategic Games, and Drama.

**Grade 7**

**English**

- **Algebra 1 Grades 7 & 8**
  - Building on the basics of pre-Algebra, this course is an introduction to linear, quadratic, and radical equations and inequalities. Pre-Algebra students will find this a challenging and complex course in which they will focus on a variety of skills and concepts through the use of daily activities and homework assignments. The course will also cover topics such as functions, algebraic equations, and expressions, and the study of algebra in the context of real-world situations.

**Social Studies/History**

- **United States History**
  - The United States History course is a survey course based on a thematic theme. It covers the history of the country from the colonial period to the present day. Through the lens of the Constituent principles of government, major events in the history of the country, and the role of different leaderships, students will engage in critical thinking. They will learn how to analyze and interpret historical events. The student will study the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance.

**Latin**

- Introduction to Latin
  - This course introduces students to the fundamentals of Latin grammar. Students will be introduced to the use of formal perspective and vocabulary, and the study of grammar. The focus of the course is on the structure of Latin and its relationship to other languages. Students will learn vocabulary, grammar, and cultural information.

**Life Science**

- The life science course introduces students to the fundamentals of ecosystem science in the context of life. The course offers a basic study of biology, geology, and the diversity of living organisms. Life science also addresses ecology and environmental science.

**Fine Arts/Performing Arts**

- **Art**
  - The sixth grade students will still be drawing from direct observation of their surroundings. By the end of the school year, they will have learned about the basic rectangular forms of objects, as well as about perspective. They will learn to express increasingly complex ideas, retain vital facts and details necessary to the presentation of a credible work.

**Math**

- **Algebra 1**
  - This course builds upon the skills foundational in 8th Grade English, with students continuing to expand their knowledge of fundamental concepts. Students will be challenged by a variety of skills and concepts through the use of daily activities and homework assignments. They will learn how to write and read Chinese characters, and develop an understanding of the language for its origin and function.

**Social Studies/History**

- **World Geography**
  - This course is a comprehensive introduction to the world geography course. It covers the geography of the world, from the continents of the world to the countries within each continent. Students will learn about the diversity of cultures and the natural features of the world. They will also learn about the political systems of the world.

**World Languages**

- **Chinese**
  - The Chinese language and culture. Oral communication skills are the primary focus, but students are also introduced to the written characters. Students will learn how to write and read Chinese characters, and develop an understanding of the language for its origin and function.

- **German**
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**Science**

- **Physics**
  - This course deals with basic chemistry and physics. It also has two fundamental physical science courses that are closely related. One semester is spent on each topic. A major part of the course is to prepare students for the high school.

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**Chinese II**

This course is designed to expand upon the knowledge gained in the eighth grade and ninth grade levels. Students will continue to study both the oral and written language, in addition to studying Chinese culture. Students will engage in written assignments as well as the creation of new prostheses in the Chinese language.

**Spanish II**

This class continues the development of the speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills practiced in Spanish I. Constant review and introduction of new vocabulary, idioms, and phrases is integrated into the coursework throughout the year. This course provides an opportunity for students to study the examined topics in a variety of settings, including classes, workshops, and presentations.

**Latin II**

This course is designed to further develop the knowledge gained in the previous level of study. Students will continue to study the Latin language and culture, including topics such as literature, art, and history. The course will also involve the study of Latin grammar and syntax.

**History**

**Economics**

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the basic principles of economics. Students will learn how economic systems operate, how resources are allocated, and how decisions are made in a variety of settings. The course will also involve the study of economic theory and practice, including topics such as supply and demand, price determination, and market structure.

**Biology**

**Physics**

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the fundamental principles of physics. Students will learn how physics principles are applied in a variety of settings, including topics such as mechanics, electromagnetism, and relativity. The course will also involve the study of experimental methods and data analysis.

**Chemistry**

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This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the fundamental principles of chemistry. Students will learn how chemical principles are applied in a variety of settings, including topics such as atomic structure, bonding, and reaction kinetics. The course will also involve the study of experimental methods and data analysis.

**Spanish I**

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Our Mission

Through a dedication to academic excellence, Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School stands accountable for educating students to make the most of their abilities. The School educates students to acquire and refine essential academic knowledge and skills; cultivate an appreciation of the arts; develop lifelong fitness skills; assume responsibility for their behavior; seek out challenge, welcome criticism, test new capacities; practice self-discipline; and find joy in learning. The school brings students together with teachers who exemplify intellectual curiosity, a dedication to truth, and the advantages of living the examined life.