



SUMMIT SCHOOL OF AHWATUKEE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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August 2015

Inspiring and Educating Tomorrow's Leaders

We understand the importance of the middle school years. Social confidence is equally important as strong academic preparation for high school. That is why your child's middle school teachers have developed activities like cross age team building programs, an active student council, eighth grade ROPES, and a focus on community service.

Students are continually encouraged to ask questions, share ideas and insights, all in a safe environment that lets them develop the person they aspire to be. We are proud of our students. We are here to partner with you to guide them. Please contact us anytime throughout the year. Welcome to middle school!

The emails of each of your student's teachers are at the bottom of this monthly newsletter.

Eighth Grade

Algebra

Algebra students wasted no time diving right into the algebra curriculum. Students wrote and evaluated expressions, equations, and inequalities. They learned to apply the order of operations and to use a problem solving plan to solve real world problems. Students represented functions as rules and as tables. They also graphed functions given a rule or table of values. In unit two, students learned about the real number system. They classified real numbers, compared and ordered integers and rational numbers, performed basic operations, found square roots, applied properties to evaluate and simplify expressions and used the Distributive Property to write equivalent expressions. Students also used conditional statements and logical reasoning to reason with real numbers. What a great first month of school!

Geometry

Geometry students named and sketched geometric figures, used postulates to identify congruent segments, found lengths of segments, in the coordinate plane, and found the midpoints of segments. Students also named, measured, and classified angles, identified complementary and supplementary angles, and classified polygons. They found the circumference and the area of circles, and area and perimeter of rectangles.

In unit two, students described patterns, and used inductive reasoning to make and test conjectures. They analyzed conditional statements and wrote the converse, inverse and contrapositive of conditional statements. Students explored how conditional and biconditional statements are used to state definitions. Students also used deductive reasoning, the Law of Detachment, and the Law of Syllogism to develop simple logical arguments. Students learned what they can and cannot be assumed from diagrams. Finally, they used properties of equality and the laws of logic to prove basic theorems about congruence, supplementary angles, complementary angles, and vertical angles. Bring on more proofs!

Literature

During the first weeks of school, students have been engaged in the literature study of Night by Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Elie Wiesel. In addition to reading the novel, students have researched, discussed, and taken a closer look at the events of the Holocaust. Throughout our study, we undoubtedly found moments of introspection as we read Wiesel's novel. Night was a poignant reminder of how low humanity fell during the Holocaust, and one man's ability to overcome adversity during his time at the Auschwitz concentration camp. This powerful novel, which captured an unforgettable and devastating time in history, had an impact on each of us.

We will be taking it our literature study one step further in the upcoming weeks by reading Left to Tell by Imaculee Ilibagiza, a story of survival during the Rwandan Holocaust. We will compare and contrast the two works as part of our 8th grade literature class

Language Arts

About, above, across, after, against.... Prepositions galore have been the focus in 8th grade grammar. Students have diligently applied their skills in grammar by diagramming sentences. We have been placing attention on subjects, verbs, helping verbs, prepositions, objects of the preposition, direct object, infinitive, adverbs, and understood 'you'. In vocabulary, students are doing well with our vocabulary program, Wordly Wise. Students are gaining an increased understanding of the words through antonyms, synonyms, and analogies. In writing, 8th grade students are completing their fall writing assessment focusing on the pros and cons of social media for teens.

Science

We jumped right into physics and the scientific process as we conducted our first lab using balloon propelled helicopters. Each student chose their own variable, then created their procedures to test the independent variable's effect on the helicopter's flight. Next we moved onto distance and speed, as students conducted a lab to determine how the elevation of a ramp affects a car's speed as it rolls down various angles. Students focused on data analysis and relationships between variables as they determined direct and inverse relationships in data. The students' favorite lab involved measuring and comparing the speeds of a pull-back car and a motorized car. Once determining the different speeds, they determined the time in which they would have to start each vehicle to allow them to reach the same distance at the same time.

Spanish

The theme for the chapter is *Los pasatiempos* (Hobbies) and this chapter is called *¿Quieres ir conmigo?* (Do you want to go with me?).

Your student is currently learning how to:

- talk about after-school activities and hobbies
- accept/ decline invitations and be able to provide a reason/explanation for declining or accepting an invitation.
- elaborate and follow up on an invitation by asking where, when or at what time
- tell when an event happens
- understand cultural perspectives on after-school activities
- talk about how people are feeling
- talk about what people are going to do using *ir + a + infinitive*
- compare the use of the stem-changing verb *-jugar*

We will also explore:

- the influence of Spanish-speakers in areas like politics, music, poetry and science
- the correct pronunciation of the letter *d*
- some Spanish words that are borrowed from English

The textbook, *Realidades* helps with the development of reading, writing, and speaking skills through the use of strategies, process speaking, and process writing. In this chapter, students will:

- write an invitation to a special event via e-mail
 - film and present a situational scenario with the class
 - record a conversation record themselves either leaving a phone message or extending an invitation to a friend to join them to go somewhere or do something.
 - Student will act out at least one of the situational scenarios from *Capítulo 4B ¿Quieres ir conmigo?*
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Social Studies

Students have been studying how the Native Americans in eight cultural regions adapted to their environments, in addition to learning how the European nations explored and established settlements in the Americas between the 15th and 17th centuries. They have been working hard on their note-taking skills and are demonstrating great progress! The ongoing current events mini projects is a great way to stir up lively discussion in class and the students have been very well prepared to present. Keep up the great work Eighth Grade!

Summit's National Jr. Honor Society

Students are committed to serving the Summit Community this semester. The students are volunteering in the classroom the Month of September. Some volunteer activities include cleaning and organizing for teachers, reading to students, setting up the playground for recess and after school activities, helping in preschool and assisting with the upcoming book fair. NJHS students are required to serve 5 hours per month at Summit. This semester the volunteers will focus on projects and opportunities that exist in and around the Summit School of Ahwatukee.

Seventh Grade

Social Confidence

The tradition of breakfast lives on in 7th grade. The students and seventh grade homeroom teacher, Melissa France, will all have breakfast together on the first Friday of each month! Students were excited to hear that they could eat the food provided for snack and lunch, too! Thank you in advance to all of the parents who are supporting this social time for the students and providing us with food and supplies. We can't do it without you!

Algebra

Algebra students wasted no time diving right into the algebra curriculum. Students immediately wrote and evaluated expressions, equations, and inequalities. They learned to apply the order of operations and to use a problem solving plan to solve real world problems. Students represented functions as rules and as tables. They also graphed functions given a rule or table of values. In unit two, students learned about the real number system. They classified real numbers, compared and ordered integers and rational numbers, performed basic operations, found square roots, applied properties to evaluate and simplify expressions and used the Distributive Property to write equivalent expressions. Students also used conditional statements and logical reasoning to reason with real numbers. What a great first month of school!

Literature

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Seventh grade students are currently enjoying Avi's *Nothing but the Truth*. This novel written in play format takes a closer look at how a simple miscommunication and small lie has the ability to go awry, even making national news! Miss Narwin and Philip Malloy find themselves in a serious situation revolving around patriotism. Students are enjoying reading this novel aloud and acting out the parts in class. In addition to reading, students are completing assignments writing from the perspective of a student attending the same high school as Philip Malloy. Students are completing editorials, newspaper articles, and diary entries pertaining to elements of the plot. Our next literature study will be Jack London's *To Build a Fire*.

Language Arts

Students have been learning to expand their vocabulary with the Wordly Wise program; and are on the 3rd unit already! Grammar lessons are woven into their writing assignments to strengthen specific areas in their written work. We kicked off the year with Personal Narratives where students could demonstrate vivid word choice using imagery and colorful adjectives in their storytelling. This connects with the other half of their LA class, Literature, in reinforcing their knowledge of literary elements and thematic development. Coming up, we will learn the art of argumentation and constructed response to their reading. We are looking forward to a year of becoming confident writers; building upon our grammar and vocabulary skills along the way.

Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra students began the year with a great attitude, evaluating variable and numerical expressions using the order of operations. Students worked on comparing and ordering, adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing integers. They also identified and plotted points on a coordinate plane. In unit two, students used properties of addition and multiplication as well as distributive property to evaluate expressions. Students worked on simplifying variable expressions and solving equations using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve them. Finally, students performed operations with positive and negative decimals, including solving equations involving decimals. Now they are ready to solve multi-step equations and inequalities.

Science

Our first unit of study in seventh grade is the human body with a focus on the brain and senses. Students began by determining how their brain's best process information by taking a number of memory tests, each presenting information in a different way. The students were asked to analyze their data and determine how they could use the information to help them efficiently study and learn new things. We then began our focus on the eye as they learned about some of the major parts of the eye and their function. In order to experience this, students dissected a cow eyes while identifying and taking pictures of the different components. From there, students experimented with various shapes of lenses as they explored how the shape of the eye and cornea

has a large impact on overall vision and focus. We continued to isolate different parts of the eye as students began to measure data of their actual retinas. These measurements allowed them to determine the positions of their photoreceptors (cones and rods) and the optic disk on their retina by measuring areas of peripheral vision, color vision, detail vision, and their blind spot. Students will use all of this information to build a physical model of their actual eye.

Social Studies

We began our explorations with the mighty Roman Empire. Students will incorporate reading and note-taking strategies to deepen their comprehension of the text. Our online textbook allows student to interact with the text in small pieces and analyze information that they have read. This will be an important skill in their future academic years! Our first unit text also provided the opportunity to express their substantiated opinions of why the Roman Empire actually fell. An extra credit essay is offered once a quarter and they certainly had much to say in this written piece. This also reinforces the use of text evidence in supporting their arguments and claims. The next unit, Feudalism, will end with a project rather than a text. Every other unit will be either a test or a final project.

Spanish

Seventh grade students are also familiarizing themselves with their e-book *Realidades 1*, which is a high school level textbook. Seventh graders are also learning about personality traits and being able to provide a detailed description of their friends and family members using more than one adjective. The expectation is for students to be able to elaborate on a description and be able to respond to follow up questions so they can engage in a conversation. In this Unit, seventh graders are practicing their reading, speaking and writing skills in order to be able to describe friends and talk, about their likes and dislikes. They are also learning how to talk about vocabulary through the recognition of cognates, how to differentiate between the definite and indefinite articles, word order, the correct pronunciation of the vowels *o* and *u*, and negatives.

Seventh graders will also complete both a written and oral presentations titled *Yo Soy... / I am, Amigo por correspondencia* as well as several situational scenarios and a song.

Life Skills Class: Grades 6, 7 and 8

Students heard from a notMYkid speaker on Friday, September 11 from 2:00 – 3:00 in the MPR. The speaker presented their story regarding internet safety. This is a very important topic, especially for this age group, and I look forward to continuing this discussion with the classes during Life Skills. **SAVE THE DATE and invite your friends and family to hear a Parent Only Presentation from notMYkid on October 16 from 4:00 – 5:00.** The location on campus is TBD so stay tuned. notMYkid.org and commonsensemedia.org have some great parent and student resources to utilize at home as well. I hope to see you all on October 16!

Sixth Grade

Literature

Students downloaded a free E-book about Online Etiquette and Safety. Students became an “expert” on a select chapter and presented their information to the class. After that, students read biographies from the book, *Tech Titans*. Using this book, sixth grade students learned more about non-fiction elements and titanic entrepreneurs in the tech field.

We are currently reading Priscilla Cumming’s novel, *The Red Kayak*. This is a fictional piece about a boy’s struggle between right and wrong. While reading, students are keeping track of literary elements and working on comprehension activities.

During the school year, sixth grade will be reading one non-fiction article each week. These are simply called, “A of W”. (articles of the week) Students read the weekly article and answer three big questions, in essay format. Some of the articles we read were: “The Compliment Guys”, “Are Smartphones Making Us Stupid?” and “Sleep”.

Independent reading will focus on works from our visiting author, Gordon Korman.

Language Arts

Students have been learning to expand their vocabulary with the Wordly Wise program; and are on the 3rd unit already! Grammar lessons are woven into their writing assignments to strengthen specific areas in their written work. We kicked off the year with Personal Narratives where students could demonstrate vivid word choice using imagery and colorful adjectives in their storytelling. This connects with the other half of their LA class, Literature, in reinforcing their knowledge of literary elements and thematic development. Coming up, we will learn the art of argumentation and constructed response to their reading. We are looking forward to a year of becoming confident writers; building upon our grammar and vocabulary skills along the way.

Math

Students have been diligently working to incorporate note-taking into their math class! They are doing a great job of successfully navigating the digital math program, participating in class discussions and submitting homework electronically! Students recently completed their first online test in which they were tested on variables and expressions. Currently, students are learning about the various properties in math to include, the Identity and Zero Properties, the Commutative Property of Addition and Multiplication and the Associative Property of Addition and Multiplication. Ask your son or daughter to tell you why these properties don’t work for subtraction and division. Keep up the focused work, Sixth Grade!

Science

I have enjoyed getting to know this new 6th grade group of students! We began by focusing on scientific models and design. Students first completed a black box challenge in which they drew and built physical models demonstrating how they thought a marble was moving through a hidden and enclosed system.

Next they built models of a system called the “humdinger” which is a device that hums when you pull a string and dings when you release the string. Students were given a bag of materials such as sticks, paperclips, rubberbands, a motor, and a bell, and were asked to make a working model of the humdinger. Every group in class was eventually able to replicate the design in their own unique but successful way!

They then moved onto engineering as they were challenged to make a self-propelled car without the use of a motor or gravity as an outside force. Next we move onto Solar Energy with a focus on data collection, analysis and application.

Spanish

Sixth grade Spanish uses a Middle School level textbook *Realidades A*.

In seventh grade students will use the text *Realidades 1*, which is a high school level text.

Students have been familiarizing with their e-books and are enjoying learning español with it! The theme for the chapter is *Mis amigos y yo* (My Friends and I) and this chapter is called *Y tú, ¿cómo eres?* (What are you like?).

Your student is currently learning how to:

- talk about personality traits
- ask and tell what people are like based on their likes and dislikes
- use more than one adjective to describe people
- use expressions to talk about what other like or don't like do
- understand cultural perspectives on what makes a good friend

Your child will also explore:

- how to talk about vocabulary through the recognition of cognates
- how to differentiate between the definite and indefinite articles
- the correct pronunciation of the vowels *o* and *u*
- how to recognize words in Spanish that begin with *es-*
- word order
- making negatives
- how to write a *Poema Diamante* to describe himself/herself
- how to use technology to create a Shadow Puppet or Audio file of their Poem.

The three written and oral presentations for this Unit are un *Poema Diamante* y Un amigo ideal and our song *Y tú ¿cómo eres?* / *What are you like?*

Social Studies

Students have been working hard at learning how early man came to be. We've done an amazing job as a class community reading, taking notes and completing our first project: the Meandrethal Story. Now that we've established what early man has accomplished, we will embark on a global journey studying early civilizations such as Egypt and China. Our focus will be on how communities were formed by analyzing their customs, beliefs, economic systems and leadership. Each unit will include reinforcing reading strategies and note-taking skills. The final grade will either be a test or a project and we will alternate every other unit as such. Looking forward to great explorations with this group! We have fun, but work hard as well.

Middle School Electives

Art

The creative energy in the studio is visible as the Visual Arts students are immersed in individualized projects that express their unique point of view, stretch skills to new levels, and challenge expectations with new media techniques. We began with Art21 videos and discussed how contemporary art crosses boundaries, merges diverse subjects, and expands media use. Students set personal goals in a written Creative Learning Plan.

The first project reviewed images and ideas for new glass techniques including casting, painting, drawing, sculpting, and printmaking in kiln forming. The glass studio became completely open to the students. We encouraged experimentation with glass that could lead toward discovering new directions and fabrication techniques. The diversity of completed works includes the humorous, celestial, scientific, urbanism, neo-modernist, ethereal, and whimsical! The majority of our students set goals to sharpen realistic drawing abilities. Exploring traditional exercises, sketches expanded toward more complex studies that can be grouped and framed. However, strengthening realistic drawing skills requires daily drawing! Students who are headed toward a creative future in any field of study are encouraged to maintain a sketchbook of drawings, ideas, writings, and observations.

Our present painting study invited image collecting, research, and the development of a concept or artist's statement. Sketches and media explorations assist in skill strengthening as the final painting is created. Acrylic, ink, pastel, watercolor, textile, and mixed media are open for discovery and representing creative ideas.

Band

Middle School students in the Sabre Cat Band Elective discuss criteria for selecting a performance repertoire, including why the music is good fit for the performers in regard to student interest, musical abilities, performance context, and programming. Students choose three songs from the pop/rock genre to begin the quarter: "Clocks" by Coldplay, "Everything Has Changed" by Taylor

Swift, and "Superheroes" by The Script. The band features female vocals, keyboard, drums, bass guitars, and guitars.

Culinary Arts

Students have been progressing in their cooking skills and growing their confidence in the kitchen! Often, the class will be divided into 2 groups, and each group of students will manage their portion of the recipe or their entire recipe with little direction. The students work together to resolve any difficulties and are proud of their work!

Last week we worked on creaming and baking techniques. In addition we discussed dining etiquette in various types of restaurants, special dinners of celebration and at home dining. This included fine dining table settings, and when to use which utensil or glassware. While discussing the history of etiquette we noted how it has changed in the U.S. over time. We also discussed the importance of learning dining etiquette when traveling to other parts of the U.S. as well as to other countries and partaking in other cultures.

This week we have travelled to Japan to learn about the history and components of Sushi, the etiquette of using chopsticks and eating sushi. We will round out the week by making and enjoying our custom made Maki-sushi rolls.

Debate

Students have been working on the skills necessary for argumentation: how to present effectively, how to clash, how to use a claim-data-warrant strategy, and how rhetorical appeals such as logos, pathos, and ethos can enhance an argument. We've begun our first individual debates and are tackling topics such as whether television is a bad influence on children, if the penny should be eliminated, and whether Arizona should follow California's lead on banning plastic bags.

Game Design and Programming

We have been having a great time in the Game Design and Programming elective class! After learning about the elements of game design (space, goals, rules, components, and mechanics), students were given the choice of several programs to try out. They vary in difficulty and layout, and include the following: Kodu, Construct 2, Sploder, Scratch, and RPG Game Maker. So far students have been having pretty good luck at creating some interesting games. We will be soon be learning a little more about some of the more common programming languages. If students want to try using any of them to create games, they will be given opportunity to do so. This is an individualized class, where students can work on programs that are at their comfort level, and yet provide a challenge as well.

Physical Education

Physical Education is off and running this quarter! The students began by ranking their top 10 fitness for life activities. From this list, we will spend the quarter focusing on as many of the top 10 choices that the students want to do! We spent the first few weeks on cooperative and team building games and activities. The next unit involved team handball, one of Summit students' favorite! Golf followed with a culminating Summit Par 3 golf game, including a sand trap, on the field and playground.

The students began the Fitnessgram Fitness Test the beginning of September. The purpose of the Fitnessgram is to give students a baseline score that compares them with other students throughout the world on basic health-related skills such as muscular strength and endurance (push-ups and curl-up tests), flexibility tests (backsaver sit and reach and shoulder stretch) and finally the PACER test, a test of cardiovascular endurance. Students then set goals for the rest of the semester on how to improve and/or strengthen the current scores that they have. We learned the game of Speedminton - a fast paced badminton game, and are ready to spike it over the net with volleyball! I am proud of the students' "physical" activity and camaraderie as well.

Theater

Theater is kicking off the year with a lot of fun and excitement! We began by learning the basic rules of improvisational acting with some creativity exercises. This also helped our multi-aged class get to know one another better. After looking at multiple scripts, the class voted to perform "Odd Ball", a funny play about all of the unique differences and idiosyncrasies we all have inside of us. We are in the process of rehearsing our play and hope to have a show date set. Next we will cover the elements of theater production including stage makeup, lighting, and set design. It's going to be a blast!

Yearbook

This elective is offered second and third quarters. Stay tuned!

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