

כיתה א

The first grade curriculum builds upon the early steps taken in kindergarten and cultivates in each child a growing ability and confidence to take initiative, learn independently, and contribute actively as a member of a learning group. An enriched and stimulating learning environment provides the supportive setting within which children's emergent academic skills – as beginning readers, writers, mathematicians, speakers of Hebrew, scientists, artists, and so on – are further developed and refined.

First grade is also the year in which many of the conventions of study and learning are introduced to help children internalize and take responsibility for their own academic skills: editing in writing, standard notation in math, following directions, and completing tasks independently and in a timely manner, to name a few.

ART

We start first grade off with a project that will continue, each year, till graduation. At the beginning of every school year, each student draws a representation of his/her shoe. By eighth grade s/he will have a portfolio of the "shoe collection" to look back on and to use as a retrospective of the work that was completed in the studio over the almost decade of art work at our school.

The kick-off to the formal first grade curriculum is an exploration of the seven days of Creation. Each day is understood through the reading of the source text from Genesis and interpreted through a wide range of art supplies. This project introduces and reinforces the use of many materials to create different effects. Over the rest of the year, students complete two dimensional assignments that include still life, pattern drawing and painting, through which they develop skills in observation and representation. First graders also have opportunities for three dimensional work when they build figures and sculptures using various materials. The year-end, in-class literacy study of author Mo Williams' books culminates in drawings of the book's famous characters - pigeons.

In addition to the formal art curriculum, children also engage in a variety of art activities that relate to other curricular areas throughout the year. Students also visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see examples of artwork that inspire them.

עברית HEBREW

The Hebrew program in first grade incorporates both oral communication and literacy skills. The Tal Am program provides the structure and the foundation for reading and writing skills. Hebrew language is a *safa moreshet*, a heritage language, which is connected to *t'filah* (prayer), *Shabbat*, *Parsha* (weekly Torah portion), and of course Israel. Through games, books, stories, songs, puzzles, brainstorming sessions, and

worksheets, the children review and build on their vocabulary and knowledge of basic language patterns and sentence structures. Daily routines and parts of morning meeting are often conducted in Hebrew.

JEWISH STUDIES

In *t'filah* (prayer), the children phase out the class *siddur* (prayer book) that they used in kindergarten and begin to create the personal *siddur* that will accompany them throughout their elementary years. Each page contains the text of a prayer, as well as their illustrated commentary on it that they create based on class exploration and discussion of each prayer.

By midyear, they complete their study of the *Amidah*, and, having learned excerpts of each of the 19 *b'rachot* (blessings) and categorized them as prayers of praise (*shevach*), request (*bakashah*), or thanks (*hodayah*), they demonstrate their newfound proficiency by presenting a *Siyum HaAmidah* (culminating celebration) to family and friends. Later in the year, they learn more of the *Sh'ma* and excerpts of the *b'rachot* that precede and follow it. In addition, when they are called to the Torah for an *aliyah*, they recite the *b'rachah* before and after the reading.

First graders encounter the daily, weekly, and annual cycles of the Jewish calendar through new learning and immersive experiences. In their study of the Jewish holidays, they experience practices and review many of the stories that they encountered in kindergarten, and they also uncover new material and ideas that build upon what they

already know: the book of Jonah during the high holidays; a *midrash* about the *lulav* and *etrog* on *Sukkot*; an exploration of the concept of *pirsum ha-nes* (advertising the miracle) on *Chanukah*; a character study for Purim; an exploration of the concept of symbols for *Pesach*, focusing on the seder plate; and the *midrashic* origins of the customs of *Shavuot*. In addition, the children are exposed to the counting of the *omer*. They continue their study of *parashat hashavua* (the weekly Torah portion), focusing on sections different from those learned in kindergarten.

LANGUAGE ARTS

First grade is a year of tremendous growth in both reading and writing. Students build on the skills that they developed in Gan in reading, writing, listening and speaking. A key goal of the reading program is for children to become independent readers and writers who have mastered a variety of word attack and comprehension strategies to help them analyze increasingly difficult texts and derive meaning and enjoyment from a range of genres.

Our first grade literacy curriculum strikes a balance between continuing to develop phonological awareness and decoding skills to increase children's accuracy and efficiency, and comprehension strategies to promote meaning-making and understanding. Children learn and practice working with the sounds associated with various letter combinations; they learn sound out words, break down words into beginning sounds, middle sounds, and ending sounds, look for clues in language patterns, and use pictures to help build understanding. They learn new vocabulary, learn

how to self-monitor their reading for meaning, to make predictions and check them, to ask questions of the text, to make connections, to retell a story, and to read with fluency. Small guided reading groups and individualized reading goals provide opportunities for first graders at a wide variety of skill levels to grow as readers throughout the year.

The writing program in first grade guides and encourages students to grow into confident and expressive writers. Children learn to write non-fiction books, personal narratives, fictional stories, folk tales, and poetry. Through both direct instruction and collaboration with peers, children practice skills such as brainstorming, drafting, editing and revising. Students reflect on the writing process and their individual skills by re-reading their work, conferencing with teachers, sharing their writing with other children, and publishing their completed work. Phonics instruction helps children learn how sounds and letter patterns come together to form words, and transition from inventive to conventional spelling. Students learn and practice the use of proper punctuation and basic grammar, and appropriate use of capital and lowercase letters. The emphasis on language development through both oral and written language extends into play and to all content areas including theme, science, math and Jewish Studies.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics instruction in first grade is inquiry-based, with a balanced emphasis on mathematical thinking and developing fluency in computation and other mathematical

skills. Teachers introduce concepts and teach specific skills; children gain proficiency in these skills and concepts through guided practice in pairs, groups, or individually.

Children share problem-solving strategies throughout their math sessions.

Key goals for first grade include understanding place value, adding and subtracting, developing number sense, and identifying and describing numerical and geometrical patterns. Tangible objects, such as cubes, a number line, and a hundreds chart, help children comprehend mathematical ideas and support them in their early attempts to use them in calculation and problem-solving.

The concepts, skills, and strategies studied in first grade math may include the following:

- Addition (1-20 for all children; two-digit for those who are ready)
- Subtraction (1-20 for all children; two-digit for those who are ready)
- Odd and even numbers
- The number line
- Tens facts, doubles facts, and near-double facts (doubles plus 1 and doubles minus 1)
- Counting by 2's, 3's, 5's, and 10's
- The 100's chart
- Place value to three places
- Sorting
- Greater than and less than

- Estimation and prediction
- Solving and posing word problems
- Geometry – vertices and sides, symmetry, tangrams
- Measurement – non-standard, and the beginnings of standard measurement
- Patterns
- Data collection

MUSIC

First graders continue to develop a love for music and skill in singing and using percussion instruments. They have a more nuanced understanding of the elements that make up music – not only can they identify soft and loud, they can also listen for high and low notes. Rhythm work continues and children are introduced more explicitly to 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 time. Naturally, music in the first grade continues to be taught largely through movement activities. In one notable lesson, children interpret, through movement, the music of Ketelby's "Persian Market."

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The first grade PE classes begin to explore the idea of "organized sports." After reviewing and building upon previously learned skills, students learn the boundaries and rules to sports like soccer, kickball, and softball. Students begin to understand what it means to be part of a team and work together to achieve a common goal.

THEMATIC STUDIES, SCIENCE & SOCIAL SCIENCE

Theme is the focal point of the integrated first grade curriculum. It incorporates science, social studies, reading writing, art, Hebrew, and Jewish Studies.

Student choice is incorporated into projects and activities within the theme study of the parks of New York City, with a focus on the history, geography, and ecology of Central Park. Based upon essential questions that build upon the children's prior knowledge and questions, children read books, do research, conduct science experiments and explorations, go on museum visits and other field trips, and record their observations.

After spending most of the year exploring the Park's central role in the daily life of New York City residents, in the spring, first graders investigate the importance of nature and outdoor experiences to people who live in Israel. Students learn about the value of *teva* (nature) and *tiyul* (hiking) in Israeli life and how the natural landscape is cherished. They study about the diversity of terrain in different regions of Israel, and how this diversity affects people's daily lives.

First grade scientists develop skills such as observing, recording, measuring, graphing, comparing, analyzing data, and creative and logical thinking, hypothesizing, and experimenting. Science concepts explored include the physics of playgrounds, and animal classifications and adaptations. Social studies concepts and skills that children learn include understanding the characteristics of community, working effectively in a community, reading informational texts and taking notes, interviewing, and making observations and comparisons.

Students have a weekly coding class in which they learn foundational concepts such as sequencing commands and repetition of steps (loops). Students explore these concepts through a series of "unplugged" games and activities, as well as through iPad-based exercises using block-based languages. Students apply their understanding of coding by programming robots to navigate obstacles and follow simple commands.