

**FIFTH GRADE  
CURRICULUM**

# VILLA ACADEMY CURRICULUM INFORMATION

## FIFTH GRADE

### READING

Books, books, and more books! Our work this year will include student-selected books, as well as small group and whole class novels. To help create excitement about books and reading, there will be small group discussions reviewing books students have read. There is a focus on historical fiction and non-fiction reading supporting our Science and Social Studies curriculum. A well-stocked book corner, literature circles, and lots of sharing will make for a love of reading that will last a lifetime!

### VOCABULARY

Rather than a spelling-based program, Fifth Grade students use a more vocabulary-based program called *Wordly Wise*. Students are given two weeks to complete each section, with many of the assignments completed as homework and a test given on the Friday of the second week. This format teaches the students important lessons including organization and time management. Definitions, sentences, memorization, and vocabulary drills/games are just some of the techniques we use to encourage the development of a rich spelling and writing vocabulary.

### WRITING

It is difficult to separate reading and writing because the two are so intertwined. As we listen to good literature, we are inspired to write. When we learn to use more exciting language, our writing improves. Students write each day. Lessons taught during Language Block will focus on motivation and use the Six Traits Plus One model for writing (ideas and content, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, conventions plus presentation). Periodically we will publish a piece, sometimes in book form! We will write stories, poems, reports, essays, persuasive paragraphs, narratives, etc., during the year. Our main emphasis, however, is non-fiction writing.

### RELIGION

Our curriculum for the year is generated from the weekly Gospel readings found in an age appropriate format called "*Venture*." *Venture* provides a lectionary approach to religious education: each week's lesson flows from the good news of the Sunday Gospel. At the same time *Venture* also provides comprehensive catechesis, organizing doctrinal content around four pillars:

- The profession of faith (Creed) in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
- The sacraments of faith;
- The life of faith and its path toward beatitude;
- Prayer in the life of faith.

Class meetings and use of the violence prevention curriculum, *Second Step*, are embedded into the program to promote social competence and reduce children's social and emotional issues. Textbook *Blest Are We* by Silver Burdett Ginn religion is used as a supplemental resource.

## MATH

The *Everyday Mathematics* program, guided by standards set by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), encourages students to become math “thinkers” not just “number movers,” as they make the transition from concrete operations to thinking and using skills more abstractly. The exploration of patterns and the extension of mathematical concepts provide students with a look at a whole new world of possibilities. Partner and small group activities encourage students to share their thinking and ideas with their peers in a safe environment. There is a focus on the origins and language of mathematics, and students are expected to develop quick recall of number facts and arithmetic skills in performance of certain tasks (basic facts, rounding, estimating, mental math, multiplying with multiples of ten, finding equivalent fractions, etc.). Because one of the program goals is to provide students with opportunities to think about problems within the context of everyday experiences, mathematics instruction also integrates with other content areas.

## SCIENCE

Science begins with the exploration of the concept of variables through hand-on experiments. This prepares the students to participate in science fair later in the year. Earth Science takes the form of studying the formation and structure of the oceans. Finally, the students participate in a simulation called “Environmental Detective,” in which they become aware of the interconnectedness of the natural world and of environmental problems, and see how one small change can trigger a whole chain of events.

Textbooks: *FossKit: Variables*; *Delta Kit: Oceans*, *Addison Wesley Science*

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Our focus for the year is the geography and history of the United States. We will learn about the United States by completing various projects that inspire the love of history. We will use our textbook as well as magazines, articles, reference materials, etc. Students choose a state to research and create their own textbook while exploring the geography of their state and the country. Units in What is History, Native Americans, Explorers, Colonial America and the Revolutionary War will make the birth of our country come alive. Textbook: *The United States*. Current events are explored using [Time Magazine For Kids](#).

## STUDY SKILLS

Fifth Grade students begin to receive formalized instruction in specific organizational and study skills. These include, but are not limited to, time management strategies, methods for organizing work, study and test taking strategies, and how to effectively read informational text. Strategies and methods introduced in Fifth Grade are reinforced and expanded upon as students enter the Middle School.

## SPECIALISTS

Fifth Grade students also participate in a varied schedule and see specialists in the following areas:

**Art:** 60 minutes — *once a week*

**Spanish/French:** 45 minutes — *twice a week*

**Library:** 45 minutes — *once a week*

**Music:** 30 minutes — *twice a week*

**PE:** 30 minutes — *twice a week*

**Technology:** 60 minutes — *once a week*

## MUSIC

The purpose of the Music program is to expose students to a wide range of musical experiences in order that they may develop the foundation for a lifetime of music appreciation, a working knowledge of music in performance, and theory skills to aid in the understanding of musical structure. Students are graded on performance, effort, and attitude. Each class culminates in several performance-projects demonstrating skills learned through the study of music theory, music history, performance, acting, and singing.

## TECHNOLOGY

Lower School students come to Villa's iMac computer lab to build their computer literacy skills and experiment with a wide range of technologies, including digital cameras. Assigned projects undertaken in this class integrate with the students' classroom curriculum throughout the school year.

Over the course of the year, Fourth and Fifth Grade students utilize every program in the computer lab; from *KidPix* to *PowerPoint*, Excel to iMovie, iDVD and iWeb, Microsoft Word to the Internet. Many times students choose the application that best suits the assignment. For example, one student may choose to create a slide show using *PowerPoint* or *Print Shop Deluxe* to produce a brochure. At this point in their "computer careers" their knowledge of the varied programs in the computer lab is vast.

## FRENCH/SPANISH

In preparation for selecting an international language to study in Middle School, Fifth Graders continue taking French for half of the year and are introduced to Spanish for the other half. The French and Spanish programs present language in meaningful contexts and build continuity by using language in the development of specific themes. Students use the languages both to communicate and to express themselves and their needs. Fifth Graders also increase their ability to read and write in another language..

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Fifth Grade students are introduced to more complex activities such as Frisbee games, volleyball, soccer, basketball, floor hockey, and softball. Students participate in these activities in a slightly more competitive environment. We continue to focus on lifelong fitness, sportsmanship, self-improvement, individual growth, and teamwork. Students are evaluated primarily on effort and attitude.

## ART

The art curriculum is concept-based with concepts introduced, then used at each grade level with increasing complexity. Art history and cultural arts are integrated throughout the lessons. Art goals often overlap with classroom goals, so there will be some collaborative, integrated projects throughout the year. Some concepts covered include line and color families, focal point, pattern/rhythm, balance, and simple perspective.

## LIBRARY

The goal of our program is to develop students who value learning and have the skills, strategies, and processes to be independent users of information. The library curriculum provides learning opportunities for students to develop skills in information literacy, literature appreciation, and responsible library behaviors.

### Information Literacy and the Research Process

- Formulate central and sub questions for study
- Use pre search strategies
- Locate and use multiple, relevant and reliable resources
- Interpret and evaluate information
- Analyze text for similarities and differences
- Synthesize and organize information
- Take notes paraphrasing and summarizing information
- Apply new meanings demonstrating an understanding of information
- Match product to the establish criteria

### Literature Appreciation and Reading for Meaning

- Read, respond to and evaluate "Best Book" Nominees.
- Read and respond to a variety of literary genres
- Read and respond to a variety of stories representing different views, cultures, perspectives, and issues

### Library Responsibilities

- Understand organization, purpose and location of library resources
- Use web sites and online databases
- Select books based on readability, relevance, and/or recommendation
- Understand the fair use of resource and information

