



**Aurora Waldorf School
Curriculum Guide
Grades 1-8**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Students in the Grades experience a wealth of age-appropriate subject matter. Academic work is concentrated during the beginning of the day, when children are most alert and receptive. A two-hour “Main Lesson” is presented by each class teacher at the start of the day. Main Lesson is followed by a morning snack, after which a lively rotation of academic and practical subject classes begins. These are outlined on the following pages.

Two rhythms work concurrently in the Grade school: the daily rhythm of lessons, and the rhythm of seasonal festivals celebrated throughout the year. Grade-school age children need the ordering quality of rhythmic activity in order to develop the security and confidence necessary for academic achievement and self-disciplined work habits.

II. CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Main Lesson Subjects

Each class teacher starts the day with a brief circle of awakening activities, usually including verses, singing, rhythmic clapping and moving games, recorder-playing, math games, and recitation. Then the concentrated work of the Main Lesson begins: In a three- to four-week subject block, the teacher has time to enter an important primary academic subject in depth and to approach it in a variety of ways. (For instance, one class may have a Main Lesson on history for several weeks and then move on to science, math, language arts or geography.) The content is enlivened with poetry, painting, movement, music, beeswax or clay modeling, and drama. Thus, intellectual learning is always combined with artistic, rhythmical, and practical work. Subjects like English and mathematics, which need frequent practice, are taught in both Main Lessons and skills classes at regular intervals. The daily Main Lesson is concluded with work in the Main Lesson book; the student writes and illustrates a Main Lesson book in the course of each block, gaining much practice in handwriting, grammar, art, and composition along the way. The enthusiastic pride children take in creating their books shows that joy in learning has been preserved and promoted.

Reading

Children begin to write in Grade 1; as they go over what they have written, they begin to decode. Each letter has its own dynamics and personality, expressed in its shape. As the “M,” for example, is presented as two mighty mountains that must be climbed by a story’s heroine, the child’s experience of the sound and the form will remain long after the mountain has been metamorphosed into the letter. In Grade 2 the students make the transition from reading what they have written and illustrated in their Main Lesson books to reading both aloud and silently from selected books. The teacher stresses enunciation and expression as much as phonetics. Throughout the remaining grades the students read a wide variety of literature, including Norse and Greek sagas, Arthurian legends, poetry, tales of tribal life, adventure and discovery, ending with Shakespeare poems and plays.

Math

Students begin with whole numbers and Roman numerals presented qualitatively as well as quantitatively, and all four processes of arithmetic in first Grade, progressing to Roman numerals, mental math and measurement in Grades two and three. Long division, fractions and word problems are introduced in Grade 4, with decimals, business math, geometry, graphing and algebra in later grades. Noting the amazing symmetry of number patterns, working from the whole to the parts, and building logically from lower to higher-level skills, are hallmarks of the Waldorf approach to math.

Science

All science begins with the observation of phenomena leading to the drawing of conclusions and the formation of concepts, rather than the other way around. Science study begins in the early grades with nature stories and continues through farming, soils, and the cycles of the year. Zoology, botany and geology, and the relationship of plants and animals to the earth, round out the earth sciences in the middle Grades. In the upper grades, students conduct and observe physics and chemistry experiments, and study astronomy and human anatomy/physiology, always with an eye for beauty, and a sense of wonder and respect.

History and Geography

Fairy tales, fables, and stories of heroes of many cultures launch the study of history and geography, followed in Grade 3 by Native American and Hebrew Scriptures stories. The first historical concepts are presented through study of the ancient cultures of India, Persia, Egypt and Greece, and the lives of Gilgamesh, Alexander the Great, Buddha, and others. Students compete in an Olympic decathlon, learn about Ancient Rome and the Middle Ages, research the explorers, scientists and artists of the 1400-1700's, and in 8th Grade (the age of the urge for independence!), study the French and American Revolutions.

Artistic and Movement Activities

Artistic and movement activities permeate every aspect of the school's curriculum. Among the many good reasons for this, two stand out: first, children experience accomplishment when they create something useful and beautiful with their own hands or conquer a new athletic skill. Second, artistic and movement activities help develop and round out academic skills. For example, learning to knit and crochet develops the powers of discipline, concentration, and skillfulness; painting, drawing, and clay or beeswax modeling develop the powers of observation and aesthetic sense.

Form Drawing

Form drawing is an integral and unique part of the Waldorf curriculum. The students trace invisible straight and curved lines in the air and through physical movement, then at last draw the same forms on paper. In the interplay of the straight and curved line, all possibilities of form live. Beautiful and intricate forms are created as the children progress through the grades, culminating in geometric drawings and solid forms in the upper grades.

Cyber Civics

These lessons address the urgent and growing need to prepare students with the skills to become ethical, confident, and empowered digital citizens. The lessons, which emphasize ethical and critical thinking, discussion and decision making through hands-on projects, problem solving, and role-play, are designed to be taught entirely without technology, because experts widely agree that among the most important new media skills are social and behavioral.

Block Schedule Themes

Language arts, history, math and science are taught in concentrated blocks of time of three to five consecutive weeks, during morning lesson hours when the children are freshest for academic work.

<p><u>Grade 1</u> Fairy and folk tales Introduction to the alphabet and writing Reading Qualitative aspects of numbers up to 10 Arithmetic: the four processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) Nature stories</p>	<p><u>Grade 2</u> Fables and legends of saints Reading, writing, spelling Introduction to elements of grammar Arithmetic: the four processes; place value, carrying, and borrowing Nature stories</p>
<p><u>Grade 3</u> Hebrew Scriptures stories Cursive writing Reading, spelling, grammar Arithmetic: the four processes; linear, liquid, and dry measurement; weight; money; and time House-building Farming and gardening Nature stories</p>	<p><u>Grade 4</u> Norse mythology Reading, spelling, grammar Language arts Arithmetic: the four processes; long division; fractions Local history and local geography Zoology Introduction of stringed instruments</p>
<p><u>Grade 5</u> Greek myths Language arts Arithmetic: fractions, decimals Ancient history: India, Persia, Babylonia/Chaldea, Egypt, Greece North American geography Botany</p>	<p><u>Grade 6</u> Roman history, medieval history Language arts Arithmetic: percentage, business math, geometrical drawing, ratio and proportion Geography Mineralogy Earth-centered astronomy Physics: acoustics, optics, heat, magnetism</p>
<p><u>Grade 7</u> Renaissance and Reformation Age of Exploration and Discovery Creative writing, poetry Mathematics: Algebra I, Geometry Geography Sun-centered astronomy Physics: mechanics, electricity, combustion Chemistry Physiology I Nutrition</p>	<p><u>Grade 8</u> Mathematics: Algebra II, Solid Geometry American history (to present) Language arts Geography Physiology II Meteorology Chemistry</p>
<p><u>Activities recurring throughout the Grades</u> Eurythmy, developmental movement, gymnastics, athletics, games, form drawing, recorder, singing, music theory, instrumental ensembles, recitation and drama, painting, foreign language, beeswax,</p>	

practical arts, handwork and wood working.

III. TEACHING METHODS

Storytelling

Throughout the day, while the students are active and moving through their rhythmic schedule, it is through storytelling that they are able to be transported into a place of wonder and curiosity. During this time, the students are presented with characters, places, and adventures that help bring the curriculum content to a different level.

Storytelling is a gift the teacher gives to the students. Through these stories, students experience myriad emotions, learn to empathize with the characters, and are left with questions for future seeking and reflection.

The Main Lesson Book

The daily Main Lesson includes work in the Main Lesson Book, a portfolio of a child's school year. The student writes and illustrates one of these in the course of each block, gaining practice in handwriting, grammar, art, and composition. Each year, the amount of original work increases.

What is recorded in the Main Lesson book varies by grade. In first and second grades, lessons are often recorded word-for-word in the Main Lesson book. In later grades, entries of the daily lessons become more selective, and include compositions, drawings, charts, maps, diagrams, portraits, science project write-ups, book reports, and more.

IV. HOMEWORK

No formal homework is assigned in Grades 1 and 2. These students are encouraged to participate actively in their home lives (chores, reading/being read to aloud, outdoor play, pet care, etc.) as "homework". In Grade 3, homework begins gently and minimally with multiplication tables and reading aloud at home.

In Grade 4, spelling lists are introduced, and math homework and independent reading may be assigned. One independent project with a written report is assigned in Grade 4, usually in the zoology block. In Grade 5, the aforementioned homework continues, along with book reports and/or related activities.

In Grade 6 through 8, the level of homework increases to include math assignments, spelling and/or language arts assignments, independent reading, and Main Lesson Book completion. In addition, a major, independent report, project, and presentation is assigned.

V. LITERACY SKILLS CHECKLIST

Academic skills are introduced and practiced at specific grade levels in a manner consistent with the Waldorf curriculum. Following is a progression of literacy skills through the grades. Most children within the average range of ability will be able to:

Grade 1 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read confidently and understand what they have written in the classroom
- Use the correct grip when holding a pencil
- Recognize the sounds, shapes and names of all vowels and consonants in capital letters, and most of the lower case letters
- Know alphabetical order of letters
- Draw each letter with care, accuracy and artistry
- Distinguish vowels from consonants
- Copy accurately from teacher's work
- Write their own first name
- Sound out simple words
- Write a simple sentence without assistance
- Spell a very few familiar words (e.g. the, and, in, to, so)
- Demonstrate working knowledge of letters that represent more than one sound
- Demonstrate understanding of the fact that every word has at least one vowel
- Write from left to right and from top to bottom

Speaking and Listening:

- Recite in chorus
- Speak short verses alone
- Listen to the teacher and other children
- Follow verbal instructions given by teachers in all subjects
- Speak simple speech exercises and tongue twisters in chorus
- Speak multiplication tables in chorus
- Recall main points of recent events or a story told by the teacher
- Share news with the class

Grade 2 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read with developing enthusiasm
- Read and spell simple letter combinations, including consonant digraphs, vowel digraphs and 2-letter consonant blends
- Demonstrate mastery of pluralizing by adding s or es
- Write their own address correctly
- Read the text of class poems or songs
- Recognize, write and read printed letters and cursive script
- Sound out letter combinations and unknown words with increasing knowledge of phonetics

- Read and spell using the soft c rule and magic e rule, and correctly add -ing or -ly
- Spell using 3-letter blends
- Read, write and spell correctly the days of the week, months, numbers and other familiar topics, including words such as was, were, are, said, their/there, have
- Write short descriptions or accounts of recent events or stories

Grammar:

- Demonstrate ability to hear when a sentence starts and stops
- Know how to use capital letters and full stops, and recognize questions
- Recognize and characterize verb, noun, adjective, and adverb (e.g. an adjective describes a noun; an adverb tells how an action is done)

Grade 3 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read simple books aloud and silently
- Read aloud smoothly and clearly from texts containing mainly familiar words
- Spell vowel and vowel/consonant digraphs
- Spell simple compound words
- Recognize common homophones
- Demonstrate mastery of the soft g rule
- Arrange lists in alphabetical order
- Write thank-you letters and personal letters
- Write in well-formed cursive script
- Correct own work with help from the teacher (focusing on capitals, correct punctuation, and spelling)
- Write longer descriptions of events or stories

Grammar:

- Demonstrate mastery of basic punctuation (commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points)
- Demonstrate understanding of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs

Speaking and Listening:

- Recite a poem alone
- Recall more complex events and stories
- Give an explanation of own actions to an inquirer
- Perform in short plays

Grade 4 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read confidently and independently
- Spell new words with increasing confidence, using visual memory and knowledge of phonetics
- Demonstrate beginning skills with using a dictionary
- Demonstrate control of handwriting while using an ink pen
- Demonstrate mastery of irregular plurals and working knowledge of irregular families of spellings
- Demonstrate mastery of all vowel and vowel/consonant digraphs

- Make reasonable guesses at unknown words in a text
- Write on his/her own an accurate account of events or stories heard in class

Grammar:

- Recognize and name the nine parts of speech
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of simple and continuous verb forms

Speaking and Listening:

- Speak several lines from a play individually, increasing in length by the end of Grade 5
- Be able to perform on stage before the school community

Grade 5 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read aloud fluently with awareness of punctuation, including direct speech
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of formal and informal language use
- Differentiate between the delivery of facts and opinions
- Recognize sensory details in a story and employ them in their own writing
- Indicate setting, conflict, and main characters within a story
- Use outlining as a means of organizing thoughts
- Use topic and supporting sentences when writing paragraphs
- Demonstrate beginning proofreading skills with one's work
- Construct a three-part essay (includes an introduction, a body, and a conclusion), continuing a thought over many paragraphs
- Take down a dictation on a known subject with reasonable accuracy
- Demonstrate beginning note-taking skills
- Decode unfamiliar words using context, prefix/suffix clues, and related words
- Use a wide variety of reference material
- Demonstrate mastery of common suffixes and prefixes

Grammar:

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the parts of a sentence (subject, object, predicate)
- Identify sentence errors such as fragments and run-ons
- Demonstrate mastery of grammar, including simple and compound sentences, plural possessives, and the use of prepositional phrases
- Demonstrate understanding of the use and character of all major parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adj, adv, prep, the articles, conjunctions, interjections
- Use simple and continuous verb forms in all tenses, including present perfect and forms of the future, in questions and negatives as well as active and passive moods

Grade 6 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Read books in a range of styles and give a verbal summary of the main content
- Demonstrate mastery of active and passive voice
- Develop a feeling for the subjunctive mood
- Identify first, second, and third person points of view

- Demonstrate improved note-taking skills
- Describe an event accurately aloud and in writing
- Organize independent research and create outlines for written assignments
- Effectively use topic and supporting sentences in paragraph
- Revise written work based on feedback
- Demonstrate working knowledge of different essay writing styles
- Write a formal business letter or inquiry for information
- Compose imaginative introductions for written assignments

Grammar:

- Confidently identify types of sentences
- Demonstrate mastery of punctuation use, especially contraction and possession
- Demonstrate understanding of different meanings of modal verbs: can, may, should, ought, would
- Demonstrate mastery of the main parts of a sentence: subject, predicate, object, indirect object and adverbial phrase

Speaking and Listening:

- Memorize and expressively recite a poem alone
- Give a short talk using notes

Grade 7 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Give a written summary of a book highlighting main characters or events in the narrative
- Use books as reference resource for independent study
- Use a thesaurus and etymological dictionary
- Use a bilingual dictionary in German
- Write in different styles including: an account of a scientific experiment, a personal diary, a description evoking a specific mood (early morning in winter, anger or frustration, curiosity about some unresolved situation), a formal letter (e.g. complaint), adventure story, short poem
- Make notes summarizing a spoken presentation, following a recall session
- Write an essay on a theme discussion in lesson, summarizing the main points or highlighting a chosen aspect
- Properly use direct and indirect quotes
- Use reported speech
- Use the conditional forms and If clauses
- Demonstrate working knowledge of the following figures of speech and their uses and meanings: simile, metaphor, image, analogy, proverb, aphorism, euphemism

Speaking and Listening:

- Be able to give a short talk freely on a prepared topic, using notes as prompt only

Grade 8 students will:

Writing and Reading:

- Imitate the style of an author or poet
- Attempt to interpret literary works

- Demonstrate working knowledge of poetic style e.g. characterize lyric, epic, dramatic poetry

Grammar:

- Use subordinate clauses and relative clauses

Speaking and Listening:

- Be able to perform in a full length play
- Be able to debate chosen theme

VI. NUMERACY SKILLS CHECKLIST

Academic skills are introduced and practiced at specific grade levels in a manner consistent with the Waldorf curriculum. Following is a progression of numeracy skills through the grades. Most children within the average range of ability will be able to:

Grade 1

- Have a working knowledge of the four processes and their symbols (+, -, x, ÷)
- Read and write number sentences, beginning with whole and moving into parts
- Appreciate number qualities 1-12
- Read and write Roman numerals I-X
- Read and write Arabic numbers 1-100
- Count from 1-100, forwards and backwards
- Know number bonds up to 10
- Count by 2, 5, 10
- Use concrete objects (stones, fingers, acorns, etc.) to solve arithmetic problems
- Describe basic geometric shapes through movement, walking patterns, and drawing
- Draw straight line, curves, linear forms, symmetry on vertical axis

Grade 2

- Mastery of the four processes and their symbols (+, -, x, ÷)
- Understand difference between odd and even numbers
- Know number bonds up to 20
- Count to 1000, forwards and backwards
- Have a working knowledge of place value to four places, carrying, and borrowing
- Understand how to use estimation to predict an answer to a problem before doing it
- Count by 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
- Answer mental math problems with addition and subtraction
- Draw common geometric forms free hand

Grade 3

- Read and understand problems up to seven figures
- Be able to recite tables 1-12 in chorus and individually
- Work with tables as division (short division)
- Know patterns in multiplication tables 10,9,5,4,11
- Have a working knowledge of the multiplication tables 1-12 in random order
- Multiply with two-and three-digit multipliers
- Mastery of place value to four places, carrying, borrowing
- Answer mental math problems using the four processes
- Comfortably use linear measurement, liquid measure, dry measure, weight, and time
- Use money for simple bills and calculating change
- Tell time using hours, half hours, quarter hours on 12 hour clock
- Show proficiency in drawing and naming geometrical shapes: circle, square, rectangle, triangle
- Draw symmetrical reflections: about horizontal and diagonal axis

Grade 4

- Carry out all four processes of number confidently
- Show mastery of short and long division with and without remainders
- Read and understand numbers up to six figures
- Know the multiplication tables up to 12 out of sequence
- Do long multiplication with numbers up to 122 as multiplier
- Find factors of a given number
- Identify prime numbers less than 100
- Have a working knowledge of four processes with fractions, including mixed numbers and improper fractions
- Convert between mixed numbers and improper fractions
- Find the lowest common multiple or highest common factor
- Record information such a height, weight, volume, etc.

Grade 5

- Answer more complex mental arithmetic questions involving a mix of processes
- Do long division including making use of remainder and estimating approximate answers
- Show mastery of all four processes with fractions including mixed numbers and improper fractions
- Have a working knowledge of how to use decimal notation, decimal fractions, and interchange of decimal with common fractions
- Carry out four processes with decimals
- Use long division and multiplication using the decimal point
- Apply the Rule of Three (if, then, therefore) to practical problems
- Show mastery of times tables up to 12 in random order
- Demonstrate mastery of work with factoring, rounding off, and estimation
- Understand the concept of prime and square numbers

- Memorize the table of perfect squares up to 13x13
- Work with metric measurement including estimation
- Work with aspects of time including 24 hour clock
- Draw freehand archetypal geometric shapes; different kinds of triangles, rectangles, quadrilaterals, polygons and circles
- divide circles into 17, 16 or 20 parts, deriving regular figures like pentagon and hexagon from them

GRADE 6

- Show familiarity with calculating percents
- Have a working knowledge of percentages to fractions and vice versa
- Estimate results by rounding off number prior to accurate calculation
- In business math: understand credit, interest, tax, and profit
- Work out averages including speed
- Read coordinates (e.g. for map reading)
- Use letters in formula
- Have a working knowledge of exponent and roots
- make precise use of compasses, ruler, set of squares to draw constructions of major geometric figures
- Make use of freehand perspective
- Present information via pictograms: use pie charts, bar charts, linear graphs (foreign currency exchange)

GRADE 7

- Know powers of numbers
- Use algebra as a general solution to specific problems
- Use negative and positive integers
- Know how to work with square roots
- Calculate compound interest, mortgage rates, income tax
- Comfortably use protractor and instruments to draw linear perspective
- Draw translations, reflections, rotations
- Comfortably use Pythagoras Theorem and its applications
- Know properties of triangles, parallel lines and intersecting lines
- Know and apply formulae for area of regular geometric forms, including triangle, circle, parallelogram, derivation and use of
- Use algebraic graphs

GRADE 8

- Calculate mechanical advantage in simple machines, e.g. pulleys, levers
- Calculate areas of irregular forms

Sources:

Assessment for Learning in a Waldorf Classroom
Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum