

# Fourth Grade Curriculum Overview



## **Literacy**

Literacy provides the foundation for learning. Children learn to read in the primary grades, moving forward into the intermediate grades. The mission of the District 30 English Language Arts program is to challenge our students through effective instruction in the skills required to live and work in a 21st century global community.

The primary grades lay the foundation for learning and skill development. Each succeeding grade builds upon the achievement of students, as they become fluent readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers. With texts and tasks that become increasingly sophisticated through the grades, students develop confidence and proficiency in oral and written language, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. District 30 recognizes the importance of differentiating instruction to maximize achievement for all students. Language skills are essential to furthering learning, communication, career development, and the human spirit.

The fourth grade balanced literacy curriculum includes:

- Explicit reading comprehensive strategy instruction (integrating all reading strategies with an emphasis on “inferring”, determining importance”, “synthesis”)
- Reading and writing in narrative, information, and opinion genres; including research, essays, poetry, and mythology
- Word work (vocabulary, spelling, and phonics)
- Grammar
- Independent reading and writing
- Small group work
- Conferences



## **Social Studies**

Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences to promote informed citizenship. Our curriculum is designed to tell the story of who we are as citizens of the United States and of a larger global society. As educators of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, our job is to prepare students to be able to critically participate as active citizens with the ability to intelligently and compassionately participate in our democracy in this millennium (NCSS, Media Literacy, 2009).

Our curriculum thoughtfully integrates the disciplines of history, geography, economics, and civics to encourage young people to use inquiry to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an increasingly interdependent world.

The theme of the 4th grade curriculum is “Our State, Our Nation”.

Units include:

- What is the Story of America
- Our State (Illinois)
- Our Nation (Regions of the United States)

During the 2019-2020 school year, District 30 will be reviewing and revising our social studies curriculum to incorporate more inquiry and to insure alignment to the most recent research and current Illinois standards.

The District 30 curriculum is being developed in alignment with Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards and C3 Standards and has been informed by current research and best practice in the field.



### **Mathematics**

The District 30 mathematics curriculum emphasizes deep mathematical understanding and reasoning with problem solving at the center of math learning. Concepts are taught utilizing a concrete, pictorial, abstract learning progression through daily lessons, hands on activities, real-world problems, and differentiated math workshop experiences.

Mathematical thinking and fluency is embedded throughout the curriculum. Students become mathematicians engaging in a mathematical practices such as making sense of problems, persevering in solving problems, modeling mathematics, and utilizing appropriate math tools. These mathematical practices are distinct from specific content students learn because the practices are characteristics of broader behavior, rather than mastery of a single concept or idea.

The mathematical practices, skills and concepts connect and build across the grade levels. In grades K-5 students utilize Math in Focus by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as the primary resource.

The fourth grade mathematics curriculum includes:

- Building problem-solving skills and strategies
- Multiplying and dividing with 1-digit and 2-digit numbers
- Increasing understanding of tables, graphs, data, and probability
- Understanding relationships between fractions and decimals
- Adding and subtracting with fractions and decimals



### **Science**

The District 30 elementary science curriculum engages students as scientists. Students investigate questions relevant to their lives by conducting investigations; collecting and analyzing data; developing and using models to explain phenomena, and engaging in argument from evidence. Students build understanding of core ideas in science as well as understanding and use of scientific practices in earth science, life science, physical science, and engineering design.

The fourth grade science curriculum includes the following units:

- Soils, Rocks, and Landforms: This unit provides modeling experiences using tools such as topographic maps and stream tables to study changes to rocks and landforms at Earth's surface. Investigations focus on concepts including weathering, erosion, and deposition. Students conduct controlled experiments with models by incrementally changing environmental conditions to determine the impact of changing the variables. Students interpret data from models, diagrams and visual representations to build explanations from evidence and make predictions of future events.
- Renewable & Nonrenewable Energy Resources: In this unit students investigate energy and fuels that humans use and their impact the environment. Students will research both renewable and nonrenewable resources including wind energy, water behind dams, sunlight, and fossil fuels. Environmental effects such as loss of habitat and air pollution will be discussed.
- Waves, Energy, and Information: In this unit students will investigate dolphin communication to learn about patterns of motion in waves. They will explore the patterns to help them develop models for sound waves. Lastly, students examine patterns in human communication.

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