

Fifth-Grade Curriculum

“Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish, and he will eat for a lifetime.”

People learn through experience. The goal of the Blue Room is not only to increase the size of a student’s knowledge base but also to create possibilities for student invention and discovery through projects and inquiry.

Language Arts

Reading and writing are integral parts of the Blue Room curriculum. The students will read and write across science, social studies, language arts, Spanish, and computer technology. We will read an assortment of literary works - classics and contemporary by a variety of authors. Much of our reading material will relate to science and social studies. We will also incorporate current events into our language arts program.

We will study the steps to becoming proficient writers as well as the processes for developing well-written work. The students will learn to use various resources to research topics and write expository (non-fiction) papers. The students will be exposed to a variety of poems and have opportunities to write the same. The students will use prewriting, drafting, revising for content, and editing for grammar and spelling before publishing.

Most days, the students will alternate between reading or writing and will consist of any of the following activities:

Reading (students will be required to keep a reader’s response journal.)

Mini-lesson – A short lesson on reading, such as reading comprehension strategies, identifying plot elements, studying genres, or guided reading (the teacher selects a level-appropriate text and provides supportive teaching as the group co-reads the text).

Independent Reading – Students read a text, usually of their choosing. Literacy skills improve when students choose the books they can and want to read. Over time, students will read and respond to a variety of texts independently. I will guide text selection, confer with individual students, and facilitate a shared discussion to extend students’ understanding and enjoyment.

Literature Circles – A student-led group of readers discusses various aspects of a text or a set of related texts and sometimes works on projects to extend and share learning. Students will analyze and discuss texts to create shared meanings that are more refined and complex than they would discover on their own. The teacher will monitor and support the groups as needed.

Readers goals:

- Making connections between prior knowledge and the text
- Questioning
- Predicting

- Visualizing
- Drawing inference
- Determining important ideas or themes
- Synthesizing information
- Researching a topic of interest
- Noticing creative language
- Describe character development.
- Understand that the plot is developed through a sequence of events.
- Identify the events in a sequence that leads to the resolution of the conflict.
- Distinguish between fact and fiction.
- Form opinions and draw conclusions from the text.
- Identify cause and effect relationships.
- Identify, compare, and contrast relationships.

Strategies will be taught through modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and various reading situations. Regular strategy practice, combined with the teacher and peer response, is central to reading improvement.

Writing

Mini-lesson – A short lesson on some aspects of writing, such as the writing process, parts of speech, sentence structure, or paragraph writing.

Independent Writing – Students work individually and silently on their writing. Students may write or sketch in the writing section of their binders. They may work on drafting, revising, editing, or publishing a writing project at other times. The students will write for a variety of purposes, including narrative and expository writing. I will confer with individual students to support and address their needs.

Writing Conferences – The teacher works with individual students or groups of students and teaches the craft, strategies, and skills those writers need at that particular time to complete a written project or paper.

Investigations – Students will explore a piece of literature or content area topic in-depth, using writing, reading, and various resources, including technology. The investigation will often culminate in an oral presentation, performance, or display.

Language, Word, and Vocabulary Study – This instruction varies based on student needs. Through the writing process, we will build principles of phonics and spelling, focusing on parts of speech, root words, prefixes, suffixes, chunking patterns, and various parts of a sentence.

Writing, word study, and communication goals:

- Use practical oral communication skills in a variety of settings.
- Maintain eye contact with listeners.
- Use appropriate facial expressions to support or dramatize verbal messages.
- Use visual aids to support presentations.
- Use context to infer the correct meaning of unfamiliar words.

- Identify parts of speech.
- Use spelling strategies and tools such as knowledge of root words, prefixes, suffixes, and spell checkers.
- Use punctuation correctly.
- Write a variety of literary forms, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
- Write for a variety of purposes to describe, to inform, to entertain, and to explain.
- Use the writing process of pre-writing/outlining, drafting, revising, editing, and then publishing.
- Use descriptive language such as similes and metaphors
- Vary sentence structure.
- Develop characters and plot arches.
- Use reliable resources to research a topic and cite sources.
- Use headings, tables, and graphics to organize and find information in informational texts.

Mathematics

Students are placed in math classes based on their needs. Please see the specific math curriculums for additional information.

Science

Science education aims to help children acquire the skills necessary to investigate more thoroughly and systematically. Students will be expected to observe, develop questions, formulate simple hypotheses, make predictions, design and implement an experiment, gather and analyze data, make inferences, and draw conclusions. They will use the metric system for measurement as needed. Students will also participate in the school's annual science fair. (The science fair may need to be modified or canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, the student will participate in scientific investigations throughout the year.)

Science topics for the Blue Room this year include, but are not limited to:

- Biomes
- Cells
- Animal kingdoms
- The Building Blocks of Matter/Scientific Investigation Methods
- Electricity and Magnetism/Scientific Investigation Methods
- Human Body
- Rocks, Minerals, and Tectonic Plates (if time permits)
- Natural Disasters (if time permits)

Social Studies

History is more than a collection of facts for students to memorize. It is an understanding of how people, places, and events came about – an understanding of how people relate and respond to each other’s needs and desires. It develops an understanding of different viewpoints and cultural beliefs.

Topics for the Blue Room this year include, but are not limited to:

- Geography
- 50 States and Capitals
- US Government, constitution, and the Election Process
- The War of 1812
- The Louisiana Purchase
- Lewis and Clark
- Westward Expansion (Pioneers) and the Industrial Revolution
- The Trail of Tears
- Slavery
- Civil War
- Anthropology/International Studies including, but not limited to, select African Cultures and Africa’s connection to America (if time permits)

Current events will be a component of social studies, science, and language arts. Students will respond to a news or magazine article on a tri-weekly basis. History is ongoing.

(Depending on COVID regulations, the students may complete a biographical study of a historical figure and participate in a “living wax museum” for History night).

Computer Technology

Computer skills are an essential component of every student's education. This year the students will continue to develop their keyboarding skills. They will learn to process, store, retrieve, and transmit electronic information. They will use electronic resources for research. They will present projects using word processors, presentations, and spreadsheets. Students will also use Canvas, a learning management system, which they will continue to use throughout middle school. (Canvas will not be used as much as in the previous year. I plan to use it for project guidelines and resources as needed.)

In Blue Room, we use a variety of technology resources including, but not limited to:

- Canvas
- Google Drive
- Jupiter Ed. (I use this as a personal gradebook)
- Discovery Education
- Google search engine (for research)
- YouTube (for educational videos)
- Online News Sites

- Edpuzzle
- Reflex Math

We encourage our students to use technology safely and responsibly as outlined in our technology use policy.

Community Action

The students will engage in some community action. Parents are encouraged to assist with this activity by providing ideas or activities through which students could give back to their community.

Assessment

The students will be assessed using a variety of formal and informal assessments. Documentation of the student's learning will be kept on file and shared through reports or during parent-teacher conferences three times a year.

- Students will be formally assessed using a Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) twice, once at the beginning and once at the end of the year. They may also be assessed through reading comprehension questions. Students will be informally assessed through literature circles and comprehension activities.
- Students will use personal writing samples for revision and peer/self/teacher editing throughout the writing process. Writing may be formally assessed using rubrics and informally assessed throughout the writing process.
- The students will be formally assessed using publisher-created materials in mathematics. They will also be given daily practice through practice problems and corrections.
- Students will be assessed through projects, research papers, observation, discussions, activities, rubric evaluations, and tests or quizzes in science and social studies.