

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 Blue Room’s goals are to increase students’ knowledge base and create possibilities for student invention and discovery through projects and inquiry while preparing students for middle school.

Language Arts

Reading and writing are practiced across the Blue Room curriculum. The students develop expository (non-fiction) reading and writing through science, social studies, and current events. They will also read fiction/narrative novels through literature circles. Finally, students will explore some poetry.

We will practice the steps to become proficient writers. Before publishing, the students will use prewriting, drafting, revising for content, and editing for grammar and spelling. They will also learn to use varied and reliable resources to research topics and write expository papers.

Most days, the students will practice/develop reading or writing using any of the following activities:

Reading

Mini-lesson – A short lesson on reading, such as reading comprehension strategies or guided reading (the teacher selects a level-appropriate text and provides supportive teaching).

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 texts independently. The teacher will guide text selection, confer with individual students, and facilitate a shared discussion to extend students’ understanding and enjoyment.

Literature Circles (Students will keep a reader’s response journal for literature circles.) – Student-led groups of readers discussing various aspects of a text or a set of related texts and sometimes working 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/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 and summarizing main ideas
- Discuss plot development
 - Identify the events in a sequence that lead to resolving the conflict
 - Identify cause-and-effect relationships

- Researching a topic of interest
- Noticing creative language
- Use context to infer the correct meaning of unfamiliar words
- Identify, describe, compare, and contrast characters
- Distinguish between fact and fiction
- Form opinions and draw conclusions from the text
- Use headings, tables, and graphics to organize and find information in expository texts

Strategies will be taught through modeling, guided practice (small or large group), and independent practice. Regular strategy practice and teacher and peer response are central to improving reading.

Writing

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

Independent Writing – Students work individually on their writing. Students may engage in creative writing or work on drafting, revising, editing, or publishing a writing project. They will write for various purposes, including narrative and expository writing. The teacher will provide students with feedback to support them during the drafting and revision process.

Investigations—Students will explore a piece of literature or a topic in depth, using writing, reading, and various resources, including technology. The investigation often culminates 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 develop principles of phonics and spelling, including root words, prefixes, suffixes, chunking patterns, and the use of parts of speech and various sentence components.

Writing, word study, and communication goals:

- Use practical oral communication skills in a variety of settings
- Practice maintaining eye contact with listeners
- Use visual aids to support presentations
- Identify parts of speech
- Use spelling strategies and tools such as knowledge of root words, prefixes, suffixes, and spell checkers
- Revise for punctuation errors (use punctuation correctly)
- Write various literary forms, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
- Write for various purposes to describe, inform, and entertain
- 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
- Use reliable resources to research a topic and cite sources

Mathematics

Students are placed in math classes based on their needs. For additional information, please see the specific math curricula.

Science

The science goals are to help students expand their scientific knowledge and practice the skills necessary to investigate scientific questions. During labs, students will observe, ask questions, formulate simple hypotheses or predictions, conduct experiments, gather and analyze data, make inferences, and draw conclusions. They will use the metric system for measurement as needed. They will also participate in simple engineering design activities during the force and motion labs. Finally, students will participate in a Science Expo where they will design an experiment and then collect and analyze data.

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

- Force, Motion, & Energy Transfer
- The Building Blocks of Matter
- Cells
- Human Body
- Electricity
- Magnetism
- Sound
- Light
- Scientific investigations will be used in labs
- Life skills (taught by the middle school science teacher)

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 and how individuals relate and respond to one another. While studying past events, we explore different perspectives and beliefs.

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

- Geography
- 50 States and Capitals
- US Government, the Constitution, and the election process
- The War of 1812
- The Louisiana Purchase
- The Corps of Discovery (Lewis and Clark)
- Westward Expansion (Pioneers)
- The Industrial Revolution (of the late 1700s and early 1800s)
- Impact of Expansion on Native Americans (The Trail of Tears)
- Select African Cultures and their forced transition to the USA (slavery)
- Civil War
- Students will research a historical figure who impacted U.S. history between the 1750s and 1850s and present what they learned in "Living Wax Museum" for History Night

- Anthropology/International Studies (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.

Computer/Technology Use

Computer skills are an essential component of students' education. The students will continue to develop their keyboarding skills using typing.com. They will learn to process, store, retrieve, and transmit electronic information. They will use electronic resources for research and present projects using Google Docs, Slides, and Sheets. Students will also use Canvas, a learning management system, which they will continue to use in middle school. The Blue Room teacher uses Canvas to post project guidelines and resources. Math and Spanish teachers use Canvas to post assignments and announcements instead of a weekly newsletter. Parents will be added as observers in Canvas.

In the 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.)
- Google search engine (for research)
- YouTube (for vetted educational videos)
- Online News Sites
- Prodigy
- Reflex and Frax
- Various language learning programs, such as Garbanzo and Duolingo

We encourage our students to use technology safely and responsibly, as outlined in our Technology Use Policy. Teachers monitor students as they use technology in class.

Community Action

The students will engage in some community action. Parents are encouraged to assist by providing ideas or activities that enable students to give back to their community.

Assessment

The students will be assessed using a range of formal and informal evaluation methods. Documentation of the student's learning will be kept on file and shared through reports or during parent-teacher conferences, which are held three times a year.

- Students will be formally assessed for reading using DORA from *Let's Go Learn* at least twice, once at the beginning and once at the end of the year. They will also be assessed through reading comprehension questions. Students will be informally evaluated through literature circles and comprehension activities.
- Writing may be formally assessed using rubrics and informally assessed throughout the writing process.

- The students will be formally assessed using publisher-created and teacher-created mathematics materials. They will also be given daily practice problems and correct errors (as needed).
- Students will be assessed through projects, research papers, observations, discussions, activities, rubrics, and tests or quizzes in science and social studies.