

Intermediate School Curriculum

Humanities

Our 3rd through 5th graders learn about ancient civilizations, world geography, and US history on a three-year cycle through the exploration of literature, project-based learning, and engaging classroom discussions. While in class, students can be found conducting research, reading materials relevant to the subject, or participating in classroom discourse; sometimes, all three at once!

Global Languages

In the Intermediate School, all students learn both Mandarin and Spanish. Our language classes focus on speaking, reading, and writing through the lens of culture. Students master basic vocabulary and conversational skills while learning about the rich cultures where Spanish and Mandarin are spoken. Throughout the year, students enjoy cultural experiences and LOTCs that link to the languages we study. Greek and Latin roots are also examined and mastered through lessons in Humanities, English, and Leadership & Life Skills.

Leadership & Life Skills

We aim to develop students who have more than just strong academic skills. In Leadership & Life Skills, our youngest students are taught by our Head of School. The topics can include unpacking the latest local news, a deeper dive into an article of the Constitution, or practical advice about preparing for a guest speaker. This class provides guidance on a wide range of experiences, from meeting new people to preparing for an upcoming LOTC. Our school culture is intentional and L&L, as it is fondly called, is a cornerstone of building adults who are aware of the world and steeped in civics and students who are leaders and advocates. In place of traditional report cards, [our students receive an Intermediate School Skill Wheel](#). This helps our students assess their growth. This reflective learning tool includes feedback from their teachers and helps them assess their strengths and areas for improvement each quarter.



Math

Intermediate School Math is taught in small groups separated by ability level. This means a student can take the math class that is best for them without promoting them ahead a grade. For example, this could mean a Third Grader studying Fourth Grade math, a Fifth Grader taking Algebra, etc. This allows students to move through the curriculum at their own pace, while also ensuring a solid grounding in each foundational piece. Students are exposed to a variety of supplemental materials such as weekly HOT (Higher Order Thinking) topics, techniques such as model drawing, and math and logic-based puzzles. Being able to work with small groups allows for ongoing assessment, ensuring students are met where they are and challenged appropriately.

English

In the Intermediate School, we actively engage with the many reasons we read and write. Our students are typically voracious readers. Students are encouraged to always have a book of their choosing for pleasure reading and are asked to read weekly to prepare themselves for our LOTC experiences.

Over the course of the year, students read and write for the real-life purposes of being informed, entertained, or discerning opinions from facts. Students are guided to explore the genres of narrative, informational, and opinion/argument as both readers and writers using the workshop model. We work closely to support the three-year cycles reflected in Humanities and Science with our reading and writing choices. We also look forward to our annual participation in statewide Battle of the Books and Literary Meet competitions.

Science

Intermediate School Science is taught on a three-year cycle. We focus on Earth, Water, or Air. Our Science curriculum is taught through STEM projects, which encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Science instruction includes many hands-on opportunities for learning. Our weekly LOTCs often support our Science theme of the year. For example, our Water year might include trips to a water treatment plant, the local barrier islands to see firsthand the impact of erosion, or a walk down to Shem Creek for a scavenger hunt!



Art

Intermediate School students have a weekly Art class in which they study and practice in various forms and learn to express themselves creatively. The study and practice of various art forms are also integrated into their other courses. Several LOTC experiences each year also allow for further exploration and practice in the arts (for example, performances at The Gaillard Center and the Dock Street Theatre). We also host 3-4 cultural experiences at USL each year. For students exceptionally passionate about the arts, there is a no-charge Art Club that meets weekly after-school for all students.

