

Sixth Grade Course of Study

Core Classes

6th Grade Science

The 6th grade life science course is designed to provide students with the skills and foundational knowledge needed for a smooth transition from elementary life science standards to high school biology. The course introduces common strands in life science, including the structure and function of cells, heredity, plants, animals, and human body systems.

Students develop essential scientific skills as they learn to record observations, analyze collected data, and use evidence to explain the diversity of living organisms and how they are classified. They use a variety of models to represent biological systems such as cells, tissues, and organs.

Throughout the course, students compare and contrast human body systems and explore how these systems work together. Sixth graders learn to describe observations and represent information in graphical form, recognizing relationships within simple charts and graphs. Technology is used as a tool to investigate, research, create projects, and deepen understanding of life science concepts.

American History 6

Offering an interactive and comprehensive study of early American history, this course engages and inspires students as they explore the rich and diverse histories of America's Indigenous peoples, early European colonization and settlement, and the creation of a new nation following the American Revolution. Sixth graders then examine the major political, social, and economic changes that shaped the United States leading up to the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Throughout the course, students trace the building of a nation by studying the development of government, westward expansion, and the challenges and opportunities that accompanied a growing country. Instruction emphasizes close reading of historical texts, purposeful writing, content-specific vocabulary, and map work to strengthen geographic and historical understanding. Students are encouraged to think critically, make connections across time, and reflect on how these historical moments continue to influence the United States today.

English Language Arts 6

Sixth grade English Language Arts is a comprehensive course that integrates literature, grammar, writing, and vocabulary. Students read a variety of short stories, poetry, and novels, with four core novels studied throughout the year—one per quarter. Vocabulary development and reading comprehension are emphasized consistently across all units.

Grammar instruction is embedded within reading and writing and includes sentence structure, sentence types, and parts of speech. Writing units focus on narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing, allowing students to develop clarity, organization, and voice as they grow as writers. Students also learn to cite sources to support claims with clear reasoning and relevant evidence, strengthening both analytical thinking and academic integrity. Close reading skills are reinforced through the identification of figurative language using annotation strategies.

World Cultures and Languages 6

World Cultures and Languages is the sixth-grade language course. Building on the foundational language awareness developed in fifth grade, this course broadens students' understanding of the world through the study of culture, language, and geography. Students explore countries and regions from a global perspective, learning through research, reading, writing, discussion, and targeted vocabulary development.

Emphasis is placed on understanding the global impact of cultures and languages. Students are introduced to the United Nations Development Goals and analyze how these goals are applied across different regions of the world. Through interactive lessons, students engage with cultural practices, foundational grammatical concepts, and practical vocabulary. The course encourages comparison, critical thinking, and meaningful discussion, while fostering cultural awareness and global citizenship. Sixth grade World Cultures and Languages serves as a bridge between language exploration and the more focused language study that begins in seventh grade, helping students make informed choices about their future language pathways.

Math 6

In sixth grade, mathematics begins to branch into two instructional pathways designed to support students' individual readiness and learning pace. One pathway moves at a more accelerated pace and provides extended depth of study, preparing students for Pre-Algebra in seventh grade. The other pathway emphasizes skill development and conceptual understanding, preparing students for the seventh-grade math course that follows.

Across both pathways, instruction focuses on developing strong problem-solving strategies and mathematical reasoning. Students work with positive and negative numbers, fractions, decimals, ratios, rates, and percents, and are introduced to foundational algebraic concepts such as simplifying expressions, solving equations and inequalities, and representing relationships using tables, graphs, and coordinates. Statistical reasoning is also emphasized through the analysis of data sets, including measures such as mean, median, and mode. Instruction is highly focused and grounded in real-world applications, balancing conceptual understanding, skill development, and meaningful problem solving.

German International Program 6 (native speakers)

Sixth Grade German / International Studies is aligned with the German Gymnasium Grade 6 curriculum and is designed for native German speakers. The course further develops students' ability to think critically, read closely, and write effectively in their native language. Students are introduced to foundational literary theory through the study of texts examined within their social and historical contexts.

Throughout the year, students complete a variety of writing assignments aligned with the German curriculum. They write about both real and imagined experiences, learning to build tension and develop meaningful high points and turning points in narrative writing. Students explore multiple perspectives, compose scenes based on literary sources, and create original poems. In addition, students learn to present information clearly and factually, follow logical sequences, and develop linear arguments in their writing.

A strong emphasis is placed on reflection, revision, and rewriting as part of the writing process. Grammar, spelling, and syntax are reinforced through grade-level practice and applied directly to students' written work. Course materials include two novels, along with a text and workbook. Assessments include grammar and written tests (such as reports, legends, adventure stories, and argumentative pieces), presentations, and active class participation.

Electives:

In addition to the five core academic classes, all sixth grade students participate in elective courses. These classes provide opportunities for creative expression and hands-on, applied learning that complement the core curriculum. Electives support the development of well-rounded students by engaging creativity, physical activity, problem-solving, and different ways of thinking. Elective offerings may vary slightly from year to year.

STEM 6

STEM is a hands-on elective that integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through project-based learning. Students work collaboratively to design, build, and test creative projects while developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. The course includes a winter competition where student groups present their work, after which students continue to explore new challenges and projects. Throughout the class, emphasis is placed on curiosity, creativity, teamwork, and fun.

Physical Education 6

Physical Education is an active elective focused on developing fitness, coordination, and teamwork through a variety of movement-based activities. Students participate in individual and group exercises that build strength, endurance, and healthy habits. The course emphasizes sportsmanship, cooperation, and personal goal-setting in a supportive environment. Throughout the class, students are encouraged to challenge themselves, stay active, and have fun.

Music 6

Music is a semester-long elective taken opposite Art that builds on the musical foundations introduced in fifth grade. In this course, students learn to play the ukulele while developing rhythm, basic music reading skills, and ensemble awareness. Lessons are hands-on, engaging, and collaborative, allowing students to learn through practice and performance. The class emphasizes creativity, confidence, and fun while fostering an appreciation for making music together.

Visual Art 6

Visual Art is a semester-long elective taken opposite Music that encourages creativity and artistic exploration. Students work with a variety of mediums and materials while learning basic artistic techniques and creative processes. The course is hands-on, engaging, and emphasizes experimentation, self-expression, and craftsmanship. Having fun while creating and exploring ideas is an important part of the Visual Art experience.

