Curriculum Guide

Staten Island Academy

A COEDUCATIONAL COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL
FOR GRADES PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12

THERE IS A place...

THE ACADEMY'S MISSION is to provide a child-centered education of superior quality, one that will serve as the door to America's finest colleges and universities. Our objective is to educate "the whole child," by fostering intellectual, creative, social and physical development. On a private country campus, in small classes and through stimulating extracurricular activities, we encourage our students to participate actively in an educational community that promotes ethical leadership, self-reliance and critical thinking. We believe in the inherent strengths of a diverse citizenry. We celebrate the cultural differences, individual interests and personal talents of our student body. And we adhere steadfastly to our principal values: independence, integrity and achievement.

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The Lower School Curriculum Guide

THE ACADEMY'S LOWER SCHOOL PROGRAM begins with Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. These programs are emotionally nurturing, intellectually rigorous and unique on Staten Island. Using thematically crafted units of study, our youngest students begin to approach learning through inquiry-based studies. Critical thinking, questioning and forming hypotheses are habits of mind that begin in the earliest years at Staten Island Academy.

In Grades 1 through 4, students continue building their understanding and their sense of community in self-contained classrooms, where they investigate to better grasp reading, writing, mathematics and social studies. Specialists teach computer, music, drama, art, dance, library, physical education, health and wellness, and science. In these years, student assignments and class projects focus on allowing students to build important fundamental habits and strategies, discover a love of learning and develop the curiosity, skills, insight and self-confidence that will ensure their success in our Middle School.

The Lower School Experience

A Collaborative Effort

We believe that a quality education is a collaborative effort between a school and a student's family, and that in order for students to become contributing adults, students must see their parents and teachers working together for their benefit. To that end, the Academy encourages parents to become active participants in the life of the school, and that can happen in many ways. Through involvement in our Parents' League, parents become integral members of the Academy community, helping to plan and execute many of the school's most exciting events. We also invite parents to join faculty, students and alumni at all of our athletic competitions, academic fairs, art shows and performances.

Academic Year and Reporting

In Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, the academic year is divided into two semesters. Student progress is reviewed at Parent Teacher Conference Days held in December and March. Written reports are distributed on these conference days; an end-of-year report is mailed home in June. Parent communication is an integral part of the academic program at Staten Island Academy. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers about their child's progress.

In Grades 1 through 4, the academic year is divided into three trimesters. Written reports are prepared for each trimester in December, March and June. Student progress is reviewed on Parent Teacher Conference Days held in December and March. Written reports are distributed on these conference days; an end-of-year report is mailed home in June.

Values and Ethics

From the moment our youngest children enter Pre-Kindergarten, there is an understanding that we are all members of the classrooms and larger school body, so we must work together to form a community. Community service begins in Pre-Kindergarten and becomes more expansive, serving the larger community, as the children get older. Literature and classroom projects present opportunities for children to expand their understanding of the larger world, creating diverse understanding.

Language Arts

The comprehensive literacy approach at the Academy is the basis of a lifetime of learning. We realize that individuals who can listen actively, speak eloquently, read deeply and write powerfully are prepared for success in the 21st century. The development of intellectual curiosity begins with a simple spark in the eye of a child. Through lively discussion in all the Lower School classrooms, our faculty is able to further ignite curiosity. Questioning is encouraged as our students grapple with rich texts and universal themes. Toward that end, students are exposed to varied literature in the classroom, in the library and online. Interpreting the nuances of language and the conventions of English grammar and writing is an ongoing process with increasing challenges.

In order to accomplish this demanding process, language arts study is built on a daily double period in all grade levels. In addition, each Lower School classroom is equipped with classroom libraries that offer a range of reading levels and genres, big books for shared reading and multiple copies of texts for literature circles. During these language arts sessions, teachers model specific reading strategies, use published texts to demonstrate writing craft, work with small groups and confer with individual students. The information the teachers are constantly receiving from the students guides the instruction, in contrast to a published program that does not focus on individual growth. This style of learning not only encourages independent growth, but self-reflection and metacognition. Students develop a community of learning and a sense of responsibility, a small microcosm of the larger academic community at the Academy.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

The language arts learning process begins in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, where the youngest students are exposed to a variety of written materials. Print-rich classrooms help the students develop a curiosity about letters, words and phrases. They begin to construct an understanding of how reading happens. Students learn to recognize lower and uppercase letters, write the alphabet and identify the variety of sounds. The children participate in daily reading and writing workshops. The Kindergarten children publish several forms of writing during the year, ranging from a short personal narrative to an instructional guide. Multiple strategies are used throughout the program to build confidence and comfort as children move from letters to literature, all with one goal in mind: to become avid readers!

Grade 1

In Grade 1, children build on the strong foundation of their earliest years, extending their knowledge of sounds and their ability to decode and understand the written word. Continued attention to comprehension strategies ensures that the children build more independence in their abilities to make meaning as they read. Reading and writing workshops continue, and the children are introduced to a wider range of nonfiction forms in both reading and writing. Monthly publishing celebrations motivate the children and help them understand that writing has purpose and audience.

Grade 2

Students in Grade 2 are avid readers and writers who, through past exposure, are able to note favorite authors, discuss their current writing project and even set some literacy goals for themselves. Classroom discussions about literature are open-ended and require the use of their developing oral language skills. Students are asked to retell stories, draw inferences, identify main ideas and predict conclusions, and they often serve as mentors to our younger students. At this level, more advanced research skills are introduced and children begin to understand the impact of grammatical structure and word usage. Again, publishing is ongoing and solidifies the connection between reading and writing.

Grade 3

In Grade 3, the language arts program grows more complex, building upon the established foundation and exposing students to increasingly advanced literature, enhancing their ability to communicate clearly on paper and within group discussions. Students develop a rich and varied vocabulary and acquire a deeper understanding of grammar, as well as more sophisticated writing skills. In order to complement their improved writing, students transition from print to cursive handwriting form by year's end. In Grade 3, the children formally begin to use the Writer's Notebook. Through this notebook, children look at themselves as real writers who closely observe their world, and begin to chronicle entries to draft into published pieces. This is an exciting right of passage for the Grade 3 children.

Grade 4

Students in Grade 4 polish their skills in preparation for leaving Lower School. The language arts curriculum includes mastering basic skills, developing a strong understanding of literature and enhancing each student's ability to analyze literature. Reading and writing take on new dimensions, as students are asked to be more reflective and analytical in their writing. Writing projects include personal narratives, paragraph comparisons, letters, directions and descriptive and persuasive paragraphs; each one is carefully crafted to improve students' skills and build confidence in their own written expression. The year culminates with a developmentally appropriate research essay that includes a bibliography.

Looking Ahead

The Lower School Language Arts curriculum provides the groundwork for further study of the English language, analysis of the canon of American literature, the study of creative writing, as well as the study of foreign languages in Middle School. Students complete Lower School enthusiastic about words, books and their ideas. They speak and write confidently, analyzing the world around them with a keen attention to detail. They understand the resources available to them and know how to access and use them. Student leave Lower School ready to tackle the challenges of the Middle School.

Mathematics

The mathematics program is a spiraling curriculum that takes students on a journey from the concrete to the abstract. It is the basis for further study in the math and sciences at the Academy and provides students with high-level skills and tools to become sharp conceptual thinkers. Using manipulatives, traditional computation, charts, graphs, geometry, games and units of measure, students acquire a solid mathematical foundation and methodically build on their knowledge year after year, constantly strengthening their skills. From Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4, problem-solving, in groups and individually, is a vital part of the school's mathematics program. Students develop a valuable skill set that includes persistence, flexibility and a strong knowledge of conventional mathematics and mathematical notation. These skills and habits provide students with the keys to higher thinking and help unlock sophisticated concepts. "Math for Fun" is a theme that runs throughout the program, and "Lower School Math Night" is a high point on the Academy calendar.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

From their earliest days at the Academy, students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten develop familiarity and dexterity with numbers, learning how to count to 20 and beginning to work with money and computation, length, capacity, volume, weight and geometry. They are exposed to the earliest forms of mathematical concepts in their daily work with numbers, shapes and patterns, first understanding math from the fingers on their hands and the objects in them.

Grades 1 – 4

In Grades 1 through 4, students begin working with up to four-digit numbers, odd and even numbers and continue their work with mathematical operations. They begin to collect and evaluate data, work with money and currency calculation, explore probability and chance, master fractions and lay the foundation for the future understanding of algebraic concepts.

Looking Ahead

Completion of the Lower School mathematics curriculum allows for more complex study of mathematics in Middle School. Students leave Grade 4 as competent and curious young mathematicians who function comfortably with numbers and their applications, both in their physical world and on paper. Students have learned how to use technology to support their learning, and they understand the role mathematics plays in everyday life.

Science

The science program builds upon the natural inquisitiveness of children and introduces basic scientific skills and concepts in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, refining and strengthening those skills through Grade 4. The program's goal is for students to understand and appreciate their natural world and hone the skills necessary to experiment within it using a hands-on, minds-on approach to learning.

Grades 1 – 4

Students' voyage to Grade 4 takes them from matter to machines, from sound to space and from plants and trees to Planet Earth. With each passing year, the curriculum becomes more sophisticated. While children explore the cycles of nature early on, they have studied insects, fish, reptiles, amphibians, flora, fauna, birds and mammals by the time they leave Lower School. Over the course of the six years of Lower School, students journey from that which is closest to them to the galaxy beyond, from an exploration of their own backyard to a thorough examination of the solar system and outer space exploration. Health and the workings of the human body are also an important component of the science program at each level.

Looking Ahead

The lessons of the Lower School science program are the groundwork for the future study of biology, chemistry, physics and earth science. Students leave Lower School curious and prepared for more complex study in Middle and Upper School. They are competent young scientists who are knowledgeable about plants, trees, animals and the physical world. They know the inner workings of the human body and understand their role in caring for their own nutrition and well-being. Students tackle experimentation and hypothesis formation with a keen sense of the right questions to ask.

Social Studies

The social studies curriculum in the Lower School uses a theme-based approach, exploring rotating topics through a multitude of academic lenses: archaeology, economics, geography, history, mapping and research.

Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4

Building and evolving at each grade level, social studies begins in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten with a focus on community and neighborhood, giving children an understanding of the varied communities to which they belong. Study progresses through the grades as students expand their awareness of those communities, centering their work on Staten Island, New York City, the 50 states and American history. In order to best develop their understanding of the historical, geographical, economic and social contexts and concepts presented, students are exposed to a large set of analytical methods and build their skills by reading and creating maps, charts and graphs, and investigating challenging questions. All social studies units include a literature component that helps enliven and enhance each student's understanding of the material. Projects and role-playing also help to support each child's understanding and build critical-thinking skills. In addition, the Lower School's concentration on character development complements the social studies curriculum by asking students to address monthly themes on community and character.

When students understand the smallest of worlds around them and how best to negotiate them, they can continually expand those worlds and their study of them. The social studies program continues throughout Lower School with a study of continents, maps, rules and society in Grade 1. Topics covered in Grade 2 include mapping and the community of Staten Island. In Grade 3, students learn about immigration, the Lenapi Indians and the 50 states, and they complete their first year-end social studies research project. In the last year of Lower School, students study the westward movement, the Civil War, the explorers and the 13 original colonies.

Looking Ahead

Students are fully prepared when they leave Lower School to take on the challenges that lie ahead. They are aware of the communities of which they are members and can understand concepts like order, service and society. They develop an appreciation for the history of their own borough, New York City, the state and our nation. Ultimately, they leave as strong community members with a solid foundation in the history of their own country, which builds a greater understanding of the history of western civilization, the ancient world and current events, all of which they will study in the years ahead.

Art and Music

The Lower School's art program is built on three important forces: individual creativity, daring exploration and artistic expression.

Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4

Art

Starting in Pre-Kindergarten, students begin to recognize and develop their individual talents, and become aware of art as a vehicle for self-expression. They develop an awareness of color, patterns and the basic elements of art appreciation, such as composition and meaning. With each passing year, the art program grows in sophistication, and by Grade 4, students have enjoyed numerous opportunities to express their unique creativity. They have used a host of artistic media and have been exposed to numerous artistic concepts, processes and eras in art history. Over the six years in Lower School, student artists work individually and in groups, building their skills in cooperation, responsibility and problem-solving. They learn to keep an art journal, how best to care for materials and how to maximize their talents within the community. Ultimately, young artists at the Academy develop a critical eye for art and are exposed to the limitless possibilities that come with the freedom to create.

Music

In music, Lower School students learn the foundation of music appreciation, take personal risks by performing and develop an astute understanding of the musical world. Using many of the ideas and methods of Carl Orff, the music curriculum involves movement, participation and creation. All music classes are participatory, and students in all grade levels engage with the basic elements of music by singing—individually and in chorus—playing instruments, listening, moving and creating. Students are exposed to a variety of legendary and classical composers, and each year, each grade rehearses and performs a short play for teachers, parents and friends. Ultimately, the music program seeks to help each child become an independent, strong contributor and a confident musician.

Technology

With the best computer technology resources on Staten Island, Lower School students have a fully integrated academic program that supports technology use. Every Lower School student attends multiple computer classes weekly, and each classroom is equipped with the latest computer hardware and software.

Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 4

Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, students become familiar with the computer and the keyboard, building an appreciation for technology as a learning tool and as a rich medium for expression. In Grades 2 and 3, they learn how to use the computer to handle more complex research, creative and processing tasks. By Grade 4, students have been exposed to an array of programs, including PowerPoint, Excel, PageMaker and e-mail. The computer becomes a real tool that students can use in each area of their schoolwork as they access sources, complete research and publish their work on the computer.

Library

Students in the Lower School complete many of their research projects in the Academy's multimedia hub, the Stanley Library. Each class from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4 meets for a formal class period once a week with the librarian to explore books and resources. The library houses over 16,000 volumes, as well as state-of-the-art computer facilities and wireless laptops. Students have personal library accounts, requiring no cards, and check out books for homework, projects and for fun! The school's librarians work in tandem with the Lower School faculty to design lessons that perfectly complement and enrich class work. For example, as classroom teachers focus on the ideas of fantasy and reality in literature, the librarian will read a choice of fantasy books with the students and ask them to check out their favorite fantasy selection. By the time students leave Lower School, their library experiences have made them savvy researchers, resourceful academics, knowledgeable readers and lovers of the vast literature available to them.

Physical Education

The physical education program aims to foster wellness, lifelong fitness, social skills, fair play and fun. In an activity-based, sequential program, students work to maximize their physical fitness while individually developing personal and social competence. Good nutrition, self-esteem, decision-making, problem-solving and proper attitudes and practices all play an integral part in the physical education program. Students work to master these skills individually and in groups where sportsmanship and cooperative play are stressed. As students mature, team sports are introduced in class and reinforced in a series of intramural programs. Dance and movement are integrated into physical education classes. Skill development, basic strategies and teamwork become increasingly important as students approach Middle School. Students in Grade 4 begin to use the Fitness Center in the third trimester.

The Middle School Curriculum Guide

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT STATEN ISLAND ACADEMY comprises Grades 5 through 8. Students work within a departmentalized academic structure wherein each teacher is a specialist in his or her discipline. Students, therefore, are taught by experts, not generalists. Musicians teach Middle School students music, for example, historians teach Middle School history and English scholars teach Middle School English. Students move from classroom to classroom to benefit from faculty expertise. Grades 5 and 6 function as a transitional program between the self-contained classroom structure of the Lower School and the fully departmentalized structure of Grades 7 and 8. A separate, albeit departmentalized, faculty who are not only specialists in their academic area but who also specialize in the developmental needs of early Middle Schoolers teach students in Grade 6 and 7. Befitting their status as more mature and independent learners, students in Grades 7 and 8, on the other hand, enjoy the benefits of a fully departmentalized faculty that even includes some Upper School teachers.

In addition to the rigorous academic program, Middle School at Staten Island Academy is characterized by extensive co-curricular initiatives that meet the special developmental needs of Middle School students. Unique on Staten Island, a comprehensive advisory program provides students and families with one faculty member who has oversight for the academic, social and emotional development of a small group of Middle School students. Advisors conference with parents regularly during the school year, meet daily with their advisees, oversee advisees' academic strengths and weaknesses, and provide the support of a caring adult. Working in concert with the Head of Middle School, the Middle School Dean and the School Guidance Counselor, the advisory program ensures that no child falls through the cracks.

Twice weekly Middle School Morning Assembly provides the opportunity for both community and leadership building initiatives. To help develop their leadership skills, all Grade 8 students lead morning assemblies and act as hosts of the assembly by calling upon their teachers and peers for announcements. Community concerns and successes are presented for discussion and celebration at Morning Assemblies. Athletic team results are announced, and individual birthday greetings are given. A talent showcase enables students to demonstrate their expertise in a variety of formats. Young violinists, pianists and actors are able to perform before their peers, which gives the performers an informal recital opportunity and simultaneously increases all students' appreciation of cultural accomplishments. Additionally, activities such as year-long faculty/student "Trivia" contests help build community through friendly competition.

All four Middle School grades have overnight trips that are curriculum based. Grade 5 students travel to Mystic, Connecticut, stay overnight on a whaling ship and study about life in America when whaling was a major industry. Grade 6 students visit Washington, DC, to study American government and history. Grade 7 students head to Boston, and Grade 8 students attend team-building workshops at Nature's Classroom in Connecticut. All of these experiences help develop bonds among students and prepare them both for the travel experience in Grade 9 to London, as well as serving as a preparation for leaving home when they go away to college.

Every spring, all students in Grades 7 and 8 are invited to participate in a full scale, Broadway-style musical. Students participate as performers or stage crew, and nearly all students choose to do so. Recent productions have included "Oliver," "Honk," "Seussical" and "Cinderella."

English

Middle School English classes cultivate passionate readers, writers and thinkers. Literature provides opportunities for reflection on the human experience and the study of literary works enriches our lives. Courses help develop a love of the English language and foster a community of active listeners, powerful writers and articulate speakers. English classes build upon the literacy foundation laid in Lower School and employ extensive writing, literary analysis, grammar and vocabulary building, discussion, debate, cooperative learning and role play.

Grade 5

Reflection through World Literature strengthens and enriches students' reading, writing and organizational skills through the study of world literature. The year begins with a study of the short story using the *Junior Great Books* series and continues with Greek and African mythology. The English curriculum and social studies curriculum are coordinated so that students can explore how particular themes translate across various fields.

Grade 6

Adventuring through American Literature develops self-reliant, independent readers, thinkers and writers through the study of American literature. It, too, draws on motifs introduced in the social studies curriculum. Students begin the year continuing their study of the short story in the *Junior Great Books* series. Following the first trimester, they study novels, reading *My Brother Sam is Dead, Johnny Tremain* and *Call of the Wild*.

Grade 7

Transcending Time and Place challenges students to find their voice, develop opinions and constructively and eloquently express their thoughts. In addition to short stories, mysteries and poetry, students read and react to *Macbeth, The Pearl* and *Inherit the Wind*. Students expand their study of the civil rights movement that begins in Grade 7 history by reading the historical novel *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963,* followed by *Through My Eyes*.

Grade 8

Writing For Justice fosters an in-depth understanding of structure and form, literary devices and author's intent. In addition to short stories and poetry, texts include *The Outsiders, Animal Farm, Forgotten Fire, To Kill A Mockingbird* and *Othello*. Students explore these various literary genres with an emphasis on developing critical analysis and comprehension skills.

Mathematics

Middle School mathematics enables every child to learn mathematical concepts and operations in a deep and meaningful way. Students discover, understand and predict arithmetic patterns, and create models of inquiry so that results may be analyzed and generalized. Once understanding is achieved, arithmetic facts are mastered. Students are expected to challenge hypotheses and engage in discussion, so that learners discover concepts and formulas by truly owning them. Middle School math classes employ problem-solving, analytical reasoning, mathematical writing and concept-building strategies.

Grade 5

Mathematics

This course forms the bridge between the *Everyday Mathematics* instruction presented in the Lower School and the Prentice Hall series begun in Grade 6 and followed throughout the Middle School years. Students are supported in their endeavors to use mathematical reasoning to analyze mathematical situations, make conjectures, gather evidence and construct an argument.

Grade 6

Mathematics

This course allows students to continue to create and use representations introduced earlier to organize, record and communicate mathematical ideas. In order to effectively communicate with their teachers and peers in the language of mathematics, students express mathematical ideas in words and symbols, through models and oral explanations. Beginning in Grade 7, students are tracked by ability in math classes. Those students who are placed in honors sections will be able to complete Advanced Placement Calculus BC in Upper School. This program is designated the Middle School Power Track Mathematics Program.

Grade 7

Pre-Algebra

In this course, which formally begins the algebra series, students explore seven key mathematical ideas: mathematical reasoning, number and numeration, operations, modeling and multiple representation, measurement, uncertainty, and patterns and functions.

Pre-Algebra 7H (Honors)

The first course in the Middle School Power Track Mathematics Program, this course challenges and teaches students how to think for themselves and how to problem solve. Students are taught to realize the importance of choosing the most effective technique, how to use that technique properly and how to analyze problems from every possible viewpoint.

Grade 8

Algebra

This course emphasizes pre-algebra skills and concepts such as variables, equation solving and problem-solving. It continues to challenge students through the use of sophisticated problems and concepts. Emphasis is placed on understanding, not memorization, and students are required to analyze the mathematical material so that it becomes part of their intellectual makeup.

Algebra 8H (Honors)

The second course in the Middle School Power Track Mathematics Program, Algebra 8 Honors continues to challenge students to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to multiple problem-solving situations. The course is taught at an extremely sophisticated level as students are expected to explore and apply the techniques and concepts they learn.

Science

The Middle School science program is based on the national science standards and uses an issues-based inquiry approach to the study of science. Students carry out activities to solve problems and make decisions based on their observations. The development of higher order thinking skills and the use of observations to reach conclusions is an important outcome of the program. Grades 5 and 6 study the life sciences, Grade 7 studies the earth sciences and Grade 8 concentrates on the physical sciences. The curriculum includes the use of local resources such as the Greenbelt, the unique geology of Staten Island, the coastline and our beautiful campus.

Grade 5

Life Science I

The Grade 5 curriculum explores the life sciences, centering on the major themes of *Studying People Scientifically, Ecology,* and *Tools and Ideas*. Strong emphasis is given to the scientific method and experimental design. Real life applications of this methodology, such as clinical drug trials, are investigated. Fossils, speciation and classification are considered in their place in history and in relation to continued questions regarding the changes in evolution theory. Humankind's alteration of environments can be observed firsthand during trips to the Greenbelt that augment the study of ecology.

Grade 6

Life Science II

The Grade 6 curriculum continues the study of living systems. It begins with a review of the scientific method and the collection and use of data. Major topics include *Body Works, Micro Life* and *Our Genes, Ourselves*. Much of this course concentrates on the study of human systems, disease and genetics, both classic Mendelian genetics and more recent advances in DNA technology. Bioethics and the ways in which biotechnology has and will change our lives are investigated in depth.

Grade 7

Earth Science

The Grade 7 course introduces students to the broad topical areas of *Rocks, Minerals and Soils, Shaping the Land, Weather and Atmosphere,* and *Earth and the Solar System*. Earth science is, by its very nature, a very diverse field of study. Areas of concentration include; the Earth's crust and its components, volcanoes, earthquakes, plate tectonics and continental drift, meteorology, climate, global warming, planets, stars and other celestial bodies. Special attention is paid to local geologic features and their relatively unique characteristics.

Grade 8

Physical Science

The Grade 8 Physical Science course introduces students to the broad topical areas of *Water, Materials, Energy, Environment,* and *Matter and its Changes*. In each area, students study, experience through activities and investigate such diverse concepts as: solution chemistry, pH, the water cycle, solar energy, pollution, density, rates of reaction and chemical bonding. Students also hone their scientific writing and observational skills in preparation for the specialized courses of the Upper School.

History

History classes inspire in students a respect for the past and an appreciation for cultural diversity through the examination of evidence, the fostering of debate and the articulation of conclusions. The curriculum aims to promote community and global awareness, stimulate independent and creative thought, and instill ethical leadership and good citizenship in students who live in a rapidly changing and complex world. History classes employ extensive writing, research, analysis, discussion, problem-solving, cooperative learning and role play to help students deeply understand historical trends and concepts.

Grade 5

Ancient Civilizations

This course uses an anthropological approach for the study of ancient civilizations, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Rome and the Ancient Israelites. As students examine these different cultures, they consider each society's values, institutions, religions, languages and forms of government, and compare and contrast these concepts to their lives today.

Grades 6 and 7 history classes are a two-part comprehensive sequence.

American History Part I

This course begins with the Native North American cultures and concludes with the American Civil War. Students examine significant people and events of the colonial era, the formation of democratic government, westward expansion and the events that contributed to the Civil War.

American History Part II

This course begins with Reconstruction and concludes in the 21st century. Students examine the major social, political and historical events, and people of these eras in order to better understand how the past affects the present. Particular attention is given to Reconstruction, immigration, the wars of the 20th century, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War era.

Grades 8 and 9 history classes are also a two-part, comprehensive sequence.

Non-Western History Part I

This sequence focuses on non-western history, which focuses specifically on India, China, the Middle East and Africa. Students explore ancient history, as well as contemporary topics including imperialism in Africa, the rise of communism in China, the Taliban in Afghanistan and the philosophy of Gandhi in India. Many topics explored in this course connect to American development, such as the African slave trade.

World Languages

World Languages fosters the linguistic, intellectual and social growth of all students by providing a multi-modal curriculum that guides students through ascending levels of language fluency and cultural understanding. All foreign language classes are taught primarily in the target language.

Grade 5

Introduction to Classical Studies

Students learn about the legacies of the ancient Greco-Roman world through the study of elementary ancient Greek and classical Latin. Students explore ancient Greco-Roman world views through the study of mythology, fables and history. Classical studies provides a foundation for learning French and Spanish and supports the study of English, especially grammatical terminology and vocabulary roots.

Grade 6

Introduction to French, Spanish or Latin

Students in Grade 6 embark on the study of French, Spanish or Latin. The focus is on the correct approach to language learning, stressing class participation, as well as the development of speaking and listening skills.

Grade 7

French 01 or Spanish 01

The first year of formal study, these courses present the foundations of the language with equal attention to the basics of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, aural comprehension and oral expression. Active use of these newly acquired skills is stressed, as are the cultural and geographical aspects of the Francophone and Spanish-speaking world, respectively.

Latin IA

This course prepares students for reading, writing and translating elementary classical Latin. Emphasis is placed upon vocabulary acquisition and the application of principals of grammar and syntax. An introduction to the social, cultural and political events of the late Republic provides the framework for study.

Grade 8

French 02 or Spanish 02

This course constitutes the second half of *Level I*, including further study of the basics of the language. More active use of the language is encouraged as students begin to develop proficiency in communication. Upon successful completion of *French 02* or *Spanish 02* and of the placement test at the end of Grade 8, students will be placed in *Level II* in Upper School.

Arts

The arts foster self-confidence and artistic expression in all students, while developing each student's unique talents. Building on a strong foundation of skills, students learn to think creatively and understand that risk-taking is a natural part of the artistic process. Through exposure and experience, students develop a life-long love and respect for the arts.

Orchestra

There are two Middle School orchestras; one for Grades 5 and 6, the other for Grades 7 and 8. A non-competitive environment recognizes the potential in every student. The orchestra includes string, woodwind and brass instruments, piano, percussion and drums. Students work on various styles of music, and attention is given to developing musicianship and instrumental ability.

Chorus

Choral students in Grades 5 and 6 begin to sing in two and three parts in both polyphonic and homophonic styles. Basic music theory is discussed, and good vocal habits are encouraged. Literature includes classical and contemporary work, and requires students to sing in languages other than English to appreciate cultural diversity. In Grade 7, students sing both homophonic and polyphonic pieces in three-part harmony (soprano, alto and baritone). The Grade 8 Chorus also completes a special project involving the history and influence of rock music.

Visual Arts

Staten Island Academy's studio arts program is designed to help young people develop creative and critical thinking skills. Students learn to solve problems and communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom. Studying aesthetics, art history and art criticism enables students to be visually literate consumers of art so that they may analyze and evaluate their own art and that of others. Students review the basic elements of art and principles of design and explore different media in completing projects in two and three dimensions. They use creative problem-solving and personal effort with a wide range of media and techniques to advance their art production skills.

Projects are based on the basic vocabulary of art and allow interpretation and freedom to explore personal direction. Middle School art projects include the color wheel, printmaking, cut-paper design, ceramics and the study of Impressionism.

Computer Sciences

Computer use is integrated into all academic disciplines in Grades 5 through 8. Students attend computer lab sessions with their respective subject teachers and use laptops in classrooms as writing, research, creation and presentation tools.

Grade 5 and 6

In Grades 5 and 6, students attend classes in a computer lab with a computer specialist once a week. Students complete interdisciplinary projects as they master skills acquired in prior grades, using a Windows environment with the Microsoft Office software suite. They become proficient in basic file management and Internet searching techniques, and use word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software. Internet safety topics and keyboarding skills are continually reinforced. Students also work with digital media generated from scanners, and still and video cameras.

In addition to fully integrated computer use, students in Grades 7 and 8 may choose computer electives.

Library Sciences

The Stanley Library is the heart of the school where students gather for research, quiet study and reading. The library underwent extensive recent renovations and provides a warm, inviting environment for scholarly pursuits in a technologically rich environment. The librarians collaborate with the core curriculum teachers to ensure that students acquire the requisite research skills for the 21st century. Students are guided in the use of a variety of media: more than 19,000 texts, 20 laptop and seven desktop computers, online databases, Internet research, videos/DVDs and CDs. The online catalog can be accessed on- or off-campus, enabling members of the Academy community to identify available resources and reserve selections. The library also serves as a center for peer tutoring and for the newly created Writing Fellows program.

The library is open from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

Health and Physical Education

In Grades 5 through 8, the curriculum includes: physical education, dance, health and wellness, fitness and team sports. Each student's program is individualized, in part, by the sport season in which they choose to participate. Through integrated experiences and individualized programming, coursework emphasizes skill development, team effort, sportsmanship and a positive attitude.

Grades 5 and 6

Physical Education

The development of skills and strategies used in game situations is emphasized. Offerings include: soccer, football, tennis, basketball, floor hockey, volleyball, lacrosse and softball. All units culminate with intramural competition played with age-appropriate rules.

Grades 7 and 8

Physical Education

Students progress from modified play to more advanced play, with emphasis on applying game strategies and concepts. Interaction and assisting team members is a focus, and units include all of the above sports, with the addition of European handball, field hockey and baseball.

Grades 5 – 8

Middle School Dance

All students in Middle School take dance as part of their physical education regimen for at least one trimester, three times a week or the equivalent thereof. Students are introduced to formal dance exercises and terminology to create a common language, with a main emphasis on individual expression, building self-confidence and understanding dance as an art form.

Middle School Fitness

In Grades 5 through 8, students use the Fitness Center at least once each week for the entire year. Beginning in Grade 5, students are required to chart their daily fitness activities. In each class, students do cardio exercise and resistance training.

Health and Wellness

The health and wellness education program in Grades 5 through 8 focuses on holistic wellness issues to ensure that students make sound decisions concerning their own health. In Grades 5 and 6, topics include: developing a sense of self, interpersonal relationships, personal care and abuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. In Grades 7 and 8, topics include: social health, physical well-being, safety and first aid, nutrition, stress reduction and transmission of disease.

Electives

In addition to the regular core curriculum, Middle School students have the opportunity to choose from a variety of elective offerings. Offerings change yearly, and the descriptions below serve as examples.

Grades 5 and 6 Elective

The Grade 5 and 6 interdisciplinary elective explores media literacy. Students analyze and critique past and present advertising venues and produce counter-ads. Projects include posters, flyers and video advertisements produced in the computer lab.

Grades 7 – 8 Electives

- *Journalism* is a hands-on course in which students are responsible for every stage of production of the Middle School student newspaper, *The Tiger*. Students explore news writing, feature writing and sports writing in addition to authoring editorials, opinion pieces and reviews, and contributing graphic, comic art and photographs. Students also learn important desktop publishing software, like Adobe Photoshop and InDesign. As they prepare *The Tiger* for publication, students develop a portfolio of stories and photographs, as any professional journalist would do.

- *Debate* is a year-long elective that enables students to learn the fine points of formal debate, public speaking and speech writing. Students learn the skills and benefits of effective research, developing solid arguments, defending a position, cooperating with teammates and becoming effective speakers and leaders.

- *Drama* allows students to study improvisational techniques and theater games and transform a Shakespearean play into a present-day production, creating the adaptation and performing their work.

- *African Art and Culture* provides students with an introduction to the continental and diaspora African experience. Through intense studio experiences, the students explore how African culture has helped contribute to making the United States a unique and diverse country.

- *MicroWorlds* provides students in Grades 7 and 8 with a setting that supports idea exploration while developing problem-solving skills. Students learn the basics of the Logo programming language and create interactive multimedia and simulations in the MicroWorlds environment. During Trimester II, students add claymation animations to their MicroWorlds projects, and they use the Paintshop Pro animation wizard to create more sophisticated animations. In the final trimester, students use the robotics edition of MicroWorlds to control robots they build with LEGOS. They write basic programs and download them to the LEGO RCX brick through an infrared tower. These projects culminate in an exciting year-end project that enables student-designed robots to interact with the MicroWorlds environment.

Grade 8 Elective

Latin IB

This course introduces students to a rigorous study of Latin grammar and the incremental examination of Latin passages based upon the writings of the author Ovid. Basic topics of cultural literacy are also covered, including the geography of the ancient Mediterranean, Greco-Roman mythology, art, architecture and archaeological discoveries. This course is equivalent to *Latin I* in Upper School, and it may be taken simultaneously with one of the modern foreign languages.

The Upper School Curriculum Guide

THE RICH AND VARIED COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM OF THE UPPER SCHOOL, Grades 9 through 12, at Staten Island Academy builds upon the foundation that was laid by the Lower and Middle Schools. Unique for high schools on Staten Island, all Upper School students at the Academy are college-bound, and they and their families have high aspirations for the future. Consequently, college placement and counseling are high priorities, and significant effort goes into ensuring that all students are fully prepared academically, socially and emotionally to meet the admissions standards of America's most highly selective institutions of higher learning. The entire Upper School program is designed to accomplish this goal.

Grade 9 lays the foundation for the rich Upper School experience. An integrated curriculum of history, English, music and art provides an outstanding and unique experience for freshman. A curriculum trip to England in the fall of Grade 9, which is included in tuition, ties together all that students are learning about renaissance and medieval history. As in all subjects at the Academy, however, learning is not just "about" a subject; learning is an in-depth, experiential engagement that helps mold each student into a sophisticated thinker.

All individual classroom activities and explorations, plus programs like the Model United Nations, drama productions, athletic competitions, leadership training, public speaking, global travel, Advanced Placement courses, the development of critical thinking skills, and training in research and writing help all Upper School students achieve an impressive level of success. In spite of the school's small size, Academy students regularly score at the top of Island-wide, city-wide and national competitions in foreign languages, writing, the sciences, mathematics and history, a testament to their level of preparation and expertise. In addition, a heavy emphasis on the arts ensures that all students are cultured, well-rounded and able to think creatively.

The House System of the Upper School provides additional opportunities for student leadership and community building. Named after prominent figures in the school's history, houses compete against each other for the House Cup, which is awarded at Commencement. All students and Upper School faculty are members of a specific House. Students remain in their House for their entire Upper School career, as do faculty. Houses are cross-grade and compete in events like House Soccer, House Literary Jeopardy, highest grade point average, most improved grade point average and least number of detentions.

Other leadership opportunities abound. *The Quill*, the nation's oldest continuously operating student newspaper, attracts student writers and potential journalists. Literary magazines in several languages are managed by students, and clubs and activities are often initiated. Recently, an Asian Club, Environmental Club and Lower School Tutoring Initiative were founded by students, adding to the already rich array of student extracurricular activities.

The Academy offers 32 interscholastic teams for boys and girls, and the school regularly dominates Staten Island in tennis, golf and lacrosse. Basketball, soccer, baseball and volleyball are played interscholastically on Staten Island and in the wider metropolitan area. Students are given opportunities both as players and as coaching assistants for younger students. Additionally, students often work as lifeguards, counselors and sports leaders in the Academy's summer day camp, an enormously successful program that attracts hundreds of children every year.

The Upper School arts program is nationally recognized. The Staten Island Academy Dance Company performs at an annual concert, as well as at showcases and competitions throughout New York City. Several choruses, a jazz ensemble, orchestras, co-ed and single gender choruses, and recital opportunities provide significant exposure to the performing arts, as well as opportunities to participate at the ensemble level. Two annual student theater productions include a musical and a dramatic play. Actors,

musicians and stage crew are Upper School students. Recent productions have included "Hamlet," "Into the Woods," "The Birds," "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Sweeney Todd."

Unique on Staten Island, the advisory program in the Upper School provides each student with a faculty member who remains the student's advisor from Grade 9 through Grade 11. Overseeing the student's academic program and monitoring their experience in the Upper School, the advisor is each student's guide and mentor. He or she is also a primary communication link to the student's parents. In Grade 12, senior advisors take over to ensure that the transition to the college application process is seamless. The Director of College Counseling coordinates the initiatives of the senior year, writes the school's letters of recommendations for students to colleges and interfaces with college admissions officers to ensure the very best fit and placement for our students. The student to college counselor ratio is the lowest on Staten Island.

Inspired teaching in the Upper School of Staten Island Academy prepares students to take advantage of all that the best colleges in America have to offer. Upper School students are active participants in their own education. Through sophisticated pedagogy and a demanding curriculum, students learn to think critically and creatively. They are broadly educated in the tradition of the liberal arts and graduate with knowledge of and expertise in many areas. They conduct themselves as educated, cultured citizens who care for each other, their community and their world. They have learned to think globally and take that attitude with them for the rest of their lives.

English

The English Department cultivates passionate readers, writers and thinkers. Literature provides opportunities for reflection on the human experience, and the study of literary works enriches our lives. All students study English every year. In all Upper School grades, vocabulary, diverse writing assignments and grammar are interwoven daily in the classroom. Classroom discussions are central to developing students' understanding, application and creative thinking.

Grade 9

English 9 or English 9 Honors

This course uses the theme *Heroes and Journeys* in its literature and writing program. Readings include novels, short stories, plays and poetry, including *Antigone, Romeo and Juliet, The Catcher in the Rye, Lord of the Flies* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Grade 10

English 10 or English 10 Honors

A survey course of American literature from the year 1600 to the present day, this course presents relevant religious, political and social issues as portrayed by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Steinbeck.

Grade 11

Public Speaking

This course is required in Grade 11. Debates, extemporaneous speeches, interviews, personal reflections, humorous speeches, tributes and journalistic reporting are covered. All students deliver a two-minute commentary at an Upper School morning assembly.

Grades 11 and 12 – Electives

All English offerings in Grades 11 and 12 are elective and are offered on a rotating basis, dependent upon student and faculty interest and expertise.

- *Advanced Placement English* prepares students for the Advanced Placement Literature exam in May. Literature includes: *Great Expectations, Age of Innocence, Jane Eyre* and Shakespearean and modern drama and poetry.

- *The Journey Theme in Literature: Quests of Enlightenment and Self-Destruction* explores journey literature in the form of poetry, myths, short stories, nonfiction narratives and novels. Readings range from Homer to Amy Tan.

- *New Voices in Writing and Literature* is designed to cultivate writers and expose students to new writers of contemporary fiction such as David Sedaris and Zadie Smith.

- *Literary Censorship: Banned and Challenged Books* surveys a number of books that have been banned and examines why they were censored. Readings include *Lysistrata, Frankenstein, Johnny Got His Gun, The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Fahrenheit 451*.

- *Psychological Profiles in Literature* allows students to delve deeply into the minds and lives of various literary figures, both real and fictional, from such classical literary figures as Hamlet and Othello to the protagonists of the 21st century.

- *Sports Literature: Sports in the Face of a Changing Society* examines the wide-ranging influence of sport in society. Readings include: *The Miracle of St. Anthony, Friday Night Lights* and *Into Thin Air*, with opportunities to study sports journalism and broadcasting.

Mathematics

Math curriculum, materials and methodologies allow students to discover, understand and predict arithmetic patterns, creating models of inquiry so that results may be analyzed and generalized. Students are expected to challenge hypotheses and discover concepts and formulas by truly owning them. Multi-sensory teaching strategies support various learning styles. Students study three or four years of mathematics in either a regular track or the Power Track, which concludes with two years of calculus.

Algebra I

This course establishes a strong foundation in mathematics. Topics covered include solving equations and inequalities, graphing functions (including linear and quadratic functions), polynomials, factoring, radicals, right triangle trigonometry and solving equations with quadratic formulae. Problem-solving is emphasized.

Geometry

This course covers all the fundamental topics of plane Euclidean geometry to facilitate the development of logical thinking. Topics from solid geometry and constructions are studied. The relationship between geometry and algebra is stressed.

Algebra II with Trigonometry

This course begins with a study of equations, linear relations, systems of equations, inequalities and functions. Much focus is given to the study of quadratic and polynomial equations. Trigonometry is introduced from a circle and triangle standpoint. All students use TI83 or TI83 Plus graphing calculators.

Electives

- *Advanced Placement Calculus – AB Level* is a college-level course that prepares students for the AB examination. The three relative concepts that are studied and analyzed in this course are the limit, the derivative and the integral. A research paper is required of each student.

- *Advanced Placement Calculus – BC Level* is a more extensive college-level course that prepares students for the BC examination. It requires a theoretical and applied understanding of the material.

- *Mathematical History and Philosophy* focuses on the development of mathematics beginning with ancient Greece. Topics include important mathematicians and philosophers, mathematics in science, art and music, mathematics in different ancient cultures, and crucial events in the history of mathematics.

- *Pre-Calculus* emphasizes the study of function theory through the use of the graphing calculator. Students investigate the trigonometric functions, logarithmic and exponential functions, polynomial functions and rational functions, polar coordinates, complex numbers, conic sections, and sequences and series.

Science

The science program prepares students with the skills and knowledge necessary to understand and appreciate scientific theories, concepts, and laws governing and pertaining to the living and physical worlds. A rich variety of course offerings integrate historical knowledge into the present context to encourage students to examine, organize, test and communicate information coherently. Three years of science are required, and individual research projects are encouraged and supported. Biology and chemistry are required in Grades 9 and 10, respectively; all other courses are elected by students.

Grade 9

Biology

This course gives students a well-rounded appreciation of biology using experimentation and observational skills. Topics covered include biochemistry, macroevolution, human anatomy and physiology, comparative taxonomy, plant biology, ecology, structural and functional features of cells, and genetics.

Grade 10

Chemistry

This course emphasizes the application of practical knowledge of chemical principles to daily situations in fields such as technology, medicine, ecology, consumerism, and health-related issues and careers. Open-ended laboratory experiences form an integral part of the course.

Electives

- *Physics* covers Newton's Laws of Motion, vector analysis, mechanics, laws of thermodynamics, wave motion, energy and work, light and optics, magnetism, nuclear physics, relativity and field theory. Laboratory work is an integral part of this course.

- *Advanced Placement Psychology* is a college-level course of study. Theories studied include those proposed by Freud, Rogers, Maslow, Gilligan and other psychologists. The course culminates in the Advanced Placement examination.

- *Advanced Placement Biology* is a survey course covering all areas of biology. The class includes after-school work in the laboratories of the College of Staten Island. The course culminates in the Advanced Placement examination.

- *Advanced Placement Chemistry* is a survey course in chemistry commensurate with an introductory college-level course in chemistry. Laboratory work is an integral part of the course to allow students to hypothesize, observe and experiment with concepts covered. The course culminates in the Advanced Placement examination.

- *Environmental Science* is an introductory college course in environmental science in which students come to understand the inter-relationships of the natural world, identify and analyze environmental problems, evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and examine alternative solutions for resolving and/or preventing them.

- *Astronomy and Oceanography* covers such topics as the origin, development and dynamics of the oceans and the heavens, star formation, planetary systems, space exploration, and chemical and physical properties of the oceans.

- *Anatomy and Physiology* is commensurate with an introductory college course in the study of human systems. All systems are studied and emphasis is placed on the relationship of structure to function.

History

The history program inspires a respect for the past and an appreciation for cultural diversity through the examination of evidence, the fostering of debate and the articulation of conclusions. A rich variety of offerings provides a curriculum that promotes community and global awareness, stimulates independent and creative thought, and instills ethical leadership and good citizenship in students who live in a rapidly changing and complex world. Three years of history are required.

Grade 9

World History: Western Civilization

This course is the second year of a two-year sequence of study that begins in Grade 8. Beginning with ancient Greece, the Hellenistic Age and the Roman world, the course identifies the key forces that have contributed to the development of western political and cultural life.

Grade 10

History of the United States

This course is required in Grade 10 and includes topics such as the Colonial period, the American Revolution, the Confederation-Constitution Era, Jacksonian Democracy, causes of the Civil War, Civil War and Reconstruction, the Industrial revolution, the United States in the 21st century and the war in Iraq.

Electives

- *Advanced Placement Modern European History* is the equivalent of a college survey course, and examines the major themes, figures and events in European history between 1450 and 1970.

- *Advanced Placement U.S. History* is the equivalent of a college survey course. This course examines, at an advanced level, the history of the United States from the Colonial period to 2000. Approximately three non-fiction books are read over the course of the year.

- *Gender and Society* draws on a diverse collection of classic and contemporary readings from a variety of sources and presents the fundamental concepts and characteristics of sociology.

- *The Rise of the Indian Sub-Continent* explores India as an economic and geopolitical giant, a sub-continent that has the 21st century stamped on it more visibly than any other nation other than China and the United States.

- *International Relations and Politics of the United Nations* is designed to examine the primary functions of the United Nations and its diplomatic role with respect to the political, economic and cultural concerns of the global community. Students read background papers, write position papers and resolutions, debate, and learn and use parliamentary procedure. This course is preparation for and participation in the Ivy League Model United Nations Conference held in January.

- *Practical Economics* introduces economic principles in the context of real-life applications, by showing how they work in the real world. Current topics from Internet piracy and legal reform to outsourcing, globalization and the phenomenon that is Wal-Mart are explored.

- *Theater History* is the study of the historical development of world theatre, with an emphasis on the western dramatic tradition, as a way to understand how the theatrical experience reflects the society in which it exists. A broad range of theatrical literature and theoretical material is explored. Students attend several live theatrical performances and compose reviews of these works.

- *Criminal Justice* explores how the American criminal justice system balances individual rights (freedom) with the need for public order (safety). The course examines the impact that expanding multiculturalism and growing social diversity have on the American system of criminal justice. Using real-life stories, excerpts from recent statutes, important court cases and relevant documents, this course will study methods of policing terrorism, the crime of terrorism, anti-terrorism legislation—including the US Patriot Act of 2001—as well as terrorism prevention and control and how new Homeland Security initiatives are affecting the criminal justice system.

- *Current Issues* uses newspapers, periodicals, the Internet and television, and is taught by a rotating group of faculty who teach the class according to their areas of expertise. With *The New York Times* as the core document, students examine international, national, regional and local events of the day. Also included is how foreign newspapers cover and report topical events compared to American newspapers. Students study political cartoons and also hone their geography skills in this class.

- *Western Art History* is a traditional survey course taught with the use of Internet technology designed to impart the culture of the western world. Paintings and sculpture are scrutinized for their formal, as well as expressive, components. The course begins with the ancient Greek civilization and continues through the periods and styles until modern art. Students learn to analyze work, write descriptive and comparative essays, and visit museums. They are well-prepared with a working vocabulary, which is an excellent foundation for future college studies in the humanities.

- *History and Philosophy of Mathematics* focuses on the development of mathematics beginning with ancient Greece. Topics include important mathematicians and philosophers, mathematics in science, art and music, mathematics in different ancient cultures, and crucial events in the history of mathematics.

World Languages

This curriculum enables students to acquire a working language in which to understand and express themselves within the range of their experiences and needs. Students are required to study three years of a foreign language and to understand the way of life of people of another culture and its history. Teaching is done in the target language.

French I presents the foundations of the language with equal attention being given to the basics of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, aural comprehension and oral expression. Active use of newly acquired language skills is stressed in this first year of study. Cultural and geographical aspects of the Francophone world are introduced over the course of the year.

French II builds on the skills mastered in *French I* and continues the study of the language through further practice of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students' use of idiomatic expressions and familiarity with a larger vocabulary increases. Developing proficiency in the spoken language is expected, along with a growing command of grammar, including past, future and conditional tenses. Cultural material is presented collaterally with the core curriculum and includes units on Paris, the Loire Castles and the Overseas Territories.

French III provides the student with more extensive practice in the active use of the French language. Contemporary readings and writing exercises of graduated length allow the students to refine their command of the more subtle points of French grammar and expression. Classroom instruction and discussions ensure continued mastery of the oral/aural components of the course. Cultural considerations are treated implicitly through class presentations of major French regions around the world. Readings include *Le Petit Prince*. Films studied include *La Gloire de mon Pere, Le Chateau de ma Mere, Jean de Florette* and *Mannon des Sources*.

French IV–V looks at contemporary life in France and French-speaking regions. Contemporary social issues such as human rights, equality between sexes, crime and violence, diversity, emigration, prejudice and discrimination, science and medicine, nature and ecology are discussed. Students are expected to watch French news on TV several times a week. Grammar and vocabulary are carefully reviewed and honed; essays and class discussions further refine the students' expression skills.

Spanish I is an introduction to the Spanish language and includes the basic elements of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, aural comprehension and oral expression necessary for further study of the language. Active use of language skills is stressed while proceeding with the mastery of the foundations of the language. Cultural and geographical aspects of the vast Spanish-speaking world are introduced during the year and include music videos and films.

Spanish II expands the skills mastered in *Spanish I* to continue the study of the language through further practice of the four linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students' use of idiomatic expressions and familiarity with a larger vocabulary increases. Developing proficiency in the spoken language is stressed, along with a growing command of grammar and vocabulary. Cultural material is presented collaterally with the core curriculum and projects are assigned that require use of the Internet.

Spanish III provides more extensive practice in the active use of the Spanish language including contemporary readings and writing exercises of increasing length and complexity. This permits the student to apply skills in the written language while refining a command of the more subtle points of Spanish grammar and expression. Classroom instruction and discussions ensure continued mastery of the aural/oral components of the course. Cultural perspectives are thoroughly explored.

Spanish IV–V is articulated over two years so that students may take both levels. Selections from Spanish literature, history and culture include *Lazarillo de Tormes, Don Quixote, El Cid* and *Don Juan,* and the plays and poetry of Lorca are highlighted. Jorge Luis Borges, Garcia Marquez, Quiroga, the poetry of Neruda and other well-known authors are read. Grammar is reviewed and both written and verbal expressions continue to be developed.

Advanced Placement Spanish prepares the student for the Advanced Placement test in Spanish Language and/or the Advanced Placement test in Spanish Literature. There is an intensive review of Spanish grammar along with essay writing, oral reports, oral discussion and lectures—all in Spanish.

Latin I prepares students for reading, translating and writing elementary classical Latin. Emphasis is placed upon vocabulary acquisition and the application of principles of grammar and syntax. An introduction to the social, cultural and political events of the late Republic, from Caesar to Augustus, provides a framework for study.

Latin II builds upon the principles mastered in *Latin I.* Emphasis is placed upon mastery of a cumulative, working vocabulary and upon the further refinement of Latin grammar and syntax. Students at this stage read, analyze and translate intermediate and adapted passages based on Roman authors. Political developments from the collapse of the Republic through the Principate of Augustus are introduced, thus forming a framework for the subsequent study of Latin prose written by Caesar, Cicero, Livy and Augustus.

Latin III reviews vocabulary and syntax from the previous two years and completes the study of grammar. This is the transitional year in which students advance from reading adapted passages to working on Latin written by authors of the classical period. Prose writers such as Caesar, Cicero, Livy and Augustus are introduced, as are the poets Catullus, Ovid and Vergil. A survey of the transition from Republic to Empire, from civil wars of Caesar to the imperial dictates of the Julio-Claudians, places the literature within context. Supplemental readings in English include an overview of literary developments and a survey of Roman history based on primary sources.

Latin IV is an intensive reading course designed to facilitate an appreciation for Roman authors writing in a variety of styles. Attention is given to the cultural, social and political events that inform the literary developments, and emphasis is placed on acquiring both advanced translation skills and reading comprehension abilities that enable students to read Latin proficiently. By building upon a working vocabulary and making judicious use of the dictionary, the student who has mastered the grammar and syntax of previous study is able to embark upon a detailed study and appreciation of Latin literature and style, referencing both prose and poetry written during the late Republic and early Empire.

Department of the Arts

The Department of the Arts fosters self-confidence and artistic expression in all students while developing their unique talents. Building on a strong foundation of skills, students learn to think creatively and understand that risk-taking is a natural part of the artistic process. Through exposure and experience, students develop a life-long love and respect for the arts. Two years of arts classes are required.

Foundations of Art

This course is integrated with the Grade 9 history and English curriculums. The class balances theory with practical work designed to impart the visual culture of the western world. Paintings and sculpture are scrutinized for their formal as well as expressive components. The course begins with the ancient Greek civilization and continues through the periods and styles until modern art. Students learn to analyze work, write descriptive essays, draw, paint and visit museums. They are well prepared with working vocabulary and historical design techniques, which are an excellent foundation for future studies in history or fine art.

Music History

This course is integrated with the Grade 9 history and English curriculums and is designed to survey music through the ages from Gregorian chants to jazz. Students explore how trends in world history helped influence the development of music. Listening skills are emphasized along with research assignments. Students create musical instruments, write reviews and attend live performances.

Electives

- *Upper School Orchestra* uses a repertoire that is varied and selected on the basis of group ability. Classical pieces are rehearsed and performed at a winter concert; lighter, popular pieces are rehearsed and performed at a spring concert. Shorter programs are also prepared for other school events.

- *Concert Choir* includes students in Grades 9 through 12 who enjoy singing. Voices are tested for vocal range and placed into soprano, alto, tenor or bass sections. After thorough rehearsal, the choir engages in a varied repertoire: sacred music for a winter concert and secular music for a spring concert.

- *Stagecraft* examines the art of scenic and lighting design and various techniques for the implementation of these designs. Hands-on experiences are required of all students who are expected to work in some capacity on all dramatic productions.

- *Introduction to Theater* is designed for students to explore many aspects of theater production. The course focuses on basic acting and emphasizes theater games and scene study. Design and directing are also covered. The course culminates in performances of student-directed plays.

- *Dance – Level I* is an introduction to all aspects of dance. Students learn a variety of technical dance styles with an emphasis on creative movement and improvisation. Students are introduced to the basic elements of dance. These elements are explored through a sampling of jazz, modern and ballet techniques and improvisation. Devices for creating original choreography, basic anatomy for the dancer and dance history are introduced.

- *Dance – Level II* is an in-depth study of dance technique, improvisation and composition, working toward a greater mastery of skills and an increased dance vocabulary. A strong emphasis is placed on choreography. Students create original works that are presented in a variety of informal performances. Students continue their studies in dance history and dance criticism through specific research projects and attendance at dance events.

- *Painting* begins with a traditional sequence of structured assignments, including drawing and color theory, with emphasis on observation and developing themes from still life, landscape, the figure, abstraction and working from imagination. Painting is an intellectual, as well as emotional, process that requires both perceptual and conceptual approaches to problem-solving. Advanced painting students are given the freedom to explore their own personal direction after being exposed to a variety of media and modes of expression.

- *Sculpture* is approached as an exploration of relationships with form, process, material, transformation, context and content. Students use a variety of traditional and non-traditional materials and processes. Students learn to bring their visions into three-dimensional form using casting, carving and woodworking, as well as painting, photography, location and placement. Professional documentation and presentation are emphasized.

- *Drawing* is an intensive studio experience designed to increase students' abilities to visualize ideas, analyze structure and work in a variety of media and techniques. Through guided studio exercises, assignments, and individual and group critiques, students develop their own artistic vision, technical abilities and visual art vocabulary. Field trips, visiting artists and guided presentations on historic and contemporary approaches to drawing provide context for student research. Traditional subjects of still life, figure and landscape are explored.

- *Graphic Design* stresses artistic expression by integrating art and technology while building a strong foundation in graphic design. Students first receive an overview of the graphic design process and learn about the fundamentals of formal elements, principles of design and manipulation of graphic space. Projects include montage, logo, poster, book jacket, CD cover and product design. Students work in the art studio and computer lab. The Adobe Creative Suite, including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, is used.

- *Commercial Art/2D Design* applies the principles of visual perception to the practice of visual communication. Students develop a full range of conceptual and technical art and design skills. Students use a variety of materials while developing projects such as newspaper and magazine ads, posters, postcards and printmaking.

- *Art History* is a traditional survey course taught with the use of Internet technology designed to impart the culture of the western world. Paintings and sculpture are scrutinized for their formal, as well as expressive, components. The course begins with the ancient Greek civilization and continues through the periods and styles until modern art. Students learn to analyze work, write descriptive and comparative essays and visit museums. They are well prepared with a working vocabulary, which is an excellent foundation for future college studies in the humanities.

Other visual arts electives such as printmaking and multi-media classes are offered on a rotating basis.

Computer Sciences

The Computer Science Department uses current and emerging technology to enhance and support the teaching and learning process.

Computer Skills 9 is project-based and covers: Windows, file management, the Internet, word processing, spreadsheets and PowerPoint. This class is offered for students who are new to the Academy and who have not had previous training in their elementary schools.

Web Page Development provides students with a solid foundation in the design and creation of pages for the World Wide Web. Students begin by analyzing and critiquing pages that already exist on the Web in order to gain an insight into successful design and layout concepts. They are taught to create pages using HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and learn all the basic tags needed to format pages, create links and insert images, sound files, tables, screen forms and frames. Graphics software is used to edit images and create animations and banners. Students also learn about the different options available for publishing their work and managing a professional site using the Macromedia Studio software suite. JavaScript is introduced after HTML is fully mastered. Students use JavaScript to create dialog boxes and animations to further enhance their pages. Student projects include creating their own home pages, creating Web pages for teachers, departments or school clubs, and participating in a group project.

Introductory Programming and Robotics begins with an introduction to Visual Basic 6.0. It is designed for the beginning programmer. Students learn to build sophisticated-looking Windows applications with features such as command buttons, images, text boxes, radio buttons, and drop-down lists and menus. Visual Basic provides the tools necessary to create such an interface without having to write many lines of code. The course covers all the basic elements of computer programming, including program design, standard algorithms, use of variables, conditional statements and looping. Students work in pairs to build robots using LEGOS, motors, sensors and the RCX programmable brick and infrared transmitter. The Java language is used to program the robots to perform simple tasks such as line following, bumper cars and even dancing.

Advanced Placement Computer Science provides intensive instruction in program design and implementation using the Java programming language. Topics include: problem specification, control structures and program flow, including conditions, loops and recursion, interactive GUI input/output, standard data structures, and testing and debugging programs. The course offers instruction in object-oriented programming covering the use of classes, understanding inheritance and information hiding, and the use of standard algorithms for sorting, searching and run-time analysis.

Physical Education

The mission of the Physical Education and Health Department is to promote a healthy lifestyle. Exposure to and proficiency in all aspects of the curriculum ensure that students leave Staten Island Academy prepared to lead healthy lives in mind, body and spirit. Physical education is required every year.

Grade 9

Physical Education

This course provides basic instruction in a variety of activities. The goals of the program are to improve and further develop physical skills with emphasis on eye/hand and eye/foot coordination, have fun and gain an appreciation for physical activity. Activities, which focus on developing team play and applying strategies to game situations, include soccer, football, field hockey, tennis, basketball, softball, handball, floor hockey, golf, tennis, and fitness and strength training.

Healthful Living

This course provides students with accurate and up-to-date information on topics they need to understand in order to make sound decisions about health. The curriculum covers mental, social and physical health. Students learn the necessary skills of decision-making and assessment of lifestyle choices.

Grade 10

Dimensions of Human Relations

This course provides students with a thorough background to further examine issues outlined in *Healthful Living*. Students examine more detailed information about eating disorders, stress, substance abuse, exercise and weight control, peer pressure, human sexuality and AIDS. They also tackle global issues like the obesity epidemic, poverty, emergent viruses and global warming.

Grades 10 – 12

Physical Education

This course gives students opportunities to further develop and refine their skills and use more complex tasks strategies. Activities include aerobics, floor hockey, tennis, basketball, badminton, handball, football, cross-country running, soccer, volleyball, fitness, dance and yoga.

Library and Information Media

The Stanley Library is the heart of the school where students gather for research, quiet study and reading. The library underwent extensive recent renovations and provides a warm, inviting environment for scholarly pursuits, in a technologically rich environment. The librarians collaborate with the core curriculum teachers to ensure that students acquire the requisite research skills for the 21st century. Students are guided in the use of a variety of media: more than 19,000 texts, 20 laptop and seven desktop computers, online databases, Internet research, videos/DVDs and CDs. The online catalog can be accessed on- or off-campus, enabling members of the Academy community to identify available resources and reserve selections. The library also serves as a center for peer tutoring and for the newly created Writing Fellows program.

The library is open from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

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"INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS are different. We are free to develop our own philosophy of education, free to choose the students we can serve best, and free to employ those teachers we deem best suited to instruct and to lead by example. That kind of autonomy and liberty does not exist in schools where teachers are test-driven and regulation-bound. The freedom in our classrooms allows us to approach the material in a way that is meaningful to the learner, and it allows students to be active participants. We believe that children's ideas matter."

DIANE J. HULSE, *Head of School*

IT'S A DIFFERENT WORLD... AT Staten Island Academy.

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