



7th Grade Syllabus 2023-2024

The 7th Grade Team:

Ms. Jill - 7th Teacher Leader
Ms. Jodie - 7th Science/Math
Ms. Nancy - 7th Humanities

Introduction

Welcome everyone to the 7th-grade experience! We're thrilled for the opportunity to work with our incoming students to push them to new areas of understanding, both of themselves and the world around them. 7th grade is a pivotal year for most students, and we love getting to be a part of their lives during this important moment in time.

Naturally, we spend a lot of time building and fostering meaningful relationships with our students, and we emphasize two-way communication between school and home. We see ourselves as part of a team, working with families to support 7th graders in every way we can to develop character and promote academic success. If you have questions, comments, concerns, or praise to share, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We're looking forward to a great year!

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Academic Overview

Here's a quick breakdown of what lies ahead in Humanities, Science and Math for your 7th grader this year.

Humanities

This year we're going to tackle 4, yes FOUR, units of inquiry, each with interdisciplinary themes and concepts. The thread that connects all units is our shared humanity and the role of story in our lives. I'm personally so passionate about history and literature because they help us connect to one another while also helping us better understand the world around us. By analyzing patterns in human history we can better understand our connections to the past, present, and future.

In the humanities classroom we'll read lots of fiction and non-fiction, participate in book circles and read-alouds, practice informational and narrative writing, work independently and collaboratively, and engage in public presentations and intimate seminars to stretch our thinking. We'll approach each project by examining how we are impacted as readers, writers, thinkers, and creators. Our objectives are to analyze patterns, write widely, read diversely, and think critically. Along the way, we will reflect on big questions in order to better understand ourselves and the world around us. We will also welcome guest speakers from our community and participate in several field study opportunities throughout the year.

I'm so excited to meet and work with each of you! Please reach out if you have questions, and be sure to see my D.P. for additional information and resources.

*** Homework Expectations-** In humanities, students should be prepared to do 20 minutes of reading each night in addition to 15 minutes of IXL or EdPuzzle work (3 times per week). Any additional homework would include work left incomplete during class time. *If you notice your child spending significantly more time on humanities homework, please reach out.*

Humanities Course Outline:

- Unit 1: "The Evolution of Human Storytelling"
- Unit 2: "Human Migration Stories"
- Unit 3: "Organizing Society"
- Unit 4: "Travels Along the Silk Road"

Science

This year in science students will explore life sciences with a focus on the roles of scientists and their research, cellular biology, and the role of living and nonliving organisms within ecosystems. Throughout the year students will be challenged to explore the following guiding questions:

- What do scientists do?
- How does energy move and change within ecosystems?
- How do cells contribute to the function of living organisms? How do living organisms pass traits from one generation to the next?
- How do organisms change over time in response to changes in the environment? How do our choices impact our environment?

***Homework Expectations:** In Science, students should be prepared to do 20 minutes of Science homework each night. This homework may be project work, Edpuzzles to prepare for the next day's lesson, and/or incomplete work.

Science Course Outline:

- Unit 1: What Do Scientists Do?
- Unit 2: Bio 101: Energy and Movement
- Unit 3: Organization of a Cell / Heredity
- Unit 4: Ecosystems /Human-Environment Interactions

Math

This year in Math we will be using [OpenUpResources](#) and [Delta Math](#) for the following units:

- Unit 1: Numbers and Operations (focus on operations using negative numbers and using expressions, equations, and inequalities)
- Unit 2: Geometry and Geometric Transformations
- Unit 3: Algebra (focus on linear equations and solving equations with one unknown)
- Unit 4: Using Data (Statistics and Probability)

Here are a few resources that can be used at home:

- [OpenUpResources Family Materials](#)
- [OpenUpResources Student Materials](#)
- [Math Help - Grade 7 OpenUpResources](#)

Homework Expectations: In Math, students should be prepared to do 20 minutes of Math homework each night. This homework may be work from their OpenUpResources workbook, Delta Math assignments, Khan Academy, IXL, or unfinished assignments from the day's lesson.

7th Grade Class Norms

Class Culture

In order to reach our full potential, all students and teachers need to strive to create a peaceful, fun, and exciting learning environment. This is achieved through mutual respect and acceptance of a variety of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

Students: as a member of this team, you are expected to:

- 1) Treat everyone with kindness.
- 2) Maintain respectful communication at all times.
- 3) Respect the classroom environment and materials.
- 4) Be kind, respectful, and specific when critiquing your peers.
- 5) Be prepared by having appropriate supplies for the start of each class period.

Conflict Resolution

We believe in taking a restorative approach to conflicts as they arise. We will work closely with students as a team to facilitate meaningful resolutions.

Classroom Management

Restorative practices shape our collective classroom management styles. As conflicts arise, individual conferences are held with students aimed at all parties walking away with a better awareness of motivations, classroom community impacts, and contributing factors. From this point, we extend the conversation to include any others involved in an incident if applicable as well as parents if necessary. We strive to address disruptive behaviors “in-house” in the hopes of building a positive classroom community and mutual respect but will communicate specifics as we deem necessary.

Seminars

Public discourse is a necessary component of any vibrant and evolving community. This is a skill we hope to foster in our seventh-grade students by engaging in regular, rigorous, cross-curricular seminars. Seminars will be held regularly throughout the year on a range of unit-relevant topics. This is an interdisciplinary practice that will connect the humanities and science curriculum through rich discussions.

7th Grade Classroom Policies

7th Grade Communication & Email Etiquette

Our team welcomes all forms of communication and hopes you will reach out whenever you have questions. We will happily answer emails within 24 hours and ask that you get in the habit of contacting all three of us when you do. By including all of us in email correspondence, we are better able to address your questions in a timely manner. Please note that we step away from email

after 5pm and on the weekends. If you need to reach out during those times, we'll get back to you the following day.

Attendance

Daily participation in class is critical to student learning and growth. It is the family's responsibility to notify the school of an absence and have their students on time and present for all of their classes. If a student will be absent, please include the school nurse, Ms. Tami, and the 7th grade team in your email. School starts promptly at 8:00 am. We request that students are dropped off by 7:50 in order to settle in and prepare for the day. Please understand that a lot of what we do in project-based learning cannot be made up (exhibitions, product development, team presentations, mock trials, student-led conferences, presentations of learning, field work etc.). Students must also understand the importance of their attendance in group projects. Attendance is important to achieving academic excellence. MMS encourages families to schedule vacations during the breaks that are built into our school calendar rather than school time. Please communicate with the teachers and administration about conflicting activities in order to ensure the student is on track to complete their school work.

Homework

7th graders should anticipate having 70 minutes of homework each night between their core classes. If you are noticing that your student is consistently exceeding this benchmark, please reach out to the 7th-grade team and we can work together to evaluate the situation.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom will be utilized for **all** classwork. All assignments and announcements will be found here, so it's essential that students check GC on a daily basis.

"Invitations" to Google Classroom will be sent during the first week of school. You will want your student's MMS login information in order to track progress and view grades.

Grades will regularly be recorded in Google Classroom before being finalized and transferred to IC. GC is the best place to monitor student work submissions and progress. If you notice your student has a lot of "missing" work or work marked as "zeros," please reach out to us; we'll do the same if necessary.

Grades & Infinite Campus GradeBook

Final grades will be posted each semester in IC and are available at: [Infinite Campus FOR MOUNTAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL](#) OR go to our website: www.mountainmiddleschool.org and select: "Current Families" Tab, select

"Infinite Campus" from Dropdown ****DO NOT use the IC from 9R School District!** Mountain has a separate site (looks the same but is completely different) that must be accessed from the link above or on our website.**

NEW FAMILIES:

Username: first.last (use parent name)

Temp Password: mountainmiddle

RETURNING FAMILIES: If you need a username or password reset, please email Tami at tami.hanson@mountainmiddleschool.org.

Please note that regular grades as well as work submissions and progress can be viewed in Google Classroom.

Standards-based Grading

Standards-based grading practices provide students and families with a more holistic understanding of student growth along the spectrum outlined by common core state standards. This system does not correlate with a traditional numerical grading system, but rather emphasizes the attainment of mastery of the grade-level standards. It is important to keep in mind that "Exceeds, Meets, Approaching, or Developing" do not correlate with traditional letter grades. In Google Classroom you will see a number to correlate with the standards-based grade (ex. 4 = Exceeds, 3 = Meets, 2 = Approaching, 1- Developing).

Additionally, standards are taught in a nonlinear fashion, which means student mastery will unfold similarly. For example, some standards will not be addressed until the second semester, so grades may be read as N/A in the grade book for the first semester. This system embraces learning as a journey, not as an isolated measurement. If you have any questions regarding grades, please reach out.

Blank Work Submissions in Google Classroom

In years past, we've noticed some students fall into a habit of turning in blank documents or hitting "turn in" before the work is actually completed. This can skew grades and our understanding of where a student is at with work completion. Our goal is to help students develop effective time management skills, a sense of accountability and integrity. As always, communication is important; if an assignment is accidentally submitted before it's been completed, please talk with teachers. If we notice such habits forming, we'll address it with the student and family.

Absent Work Policy

We ask that students communicate ahead of time if they plan to miss school.

Students: It is your responsibility to communicate and watch Google Classroom for the things you will miss. The bottom line is, communication is the key to success if you're going to be gone, so please reach out as soon as possible.

Late Work Policy

Late work happens from time to time; we simply ask that students communicate when work is unfinished for whatever reason. As we foster a culture of accountability and professionalism, we emphasize the importance of getting things in on time. An "exceeds" mark not only requires surpassing grade level expectations, work also needs to be turned in on time. Blank submissions will be marked as ZERO in Google Classroom and considered "missing" in Infinite Campus. Consistent late/missing work may require a parent meeting, impact "habits of heart and mind grades," or an academic plan. Exhibition work is always due by the due date in order to meet production timelines. Lastly, work requiring teacher feedback needs to be submitted on schedule in order to provide teachers with adequate time to comment and grade. These policies are designed with the intention of supporting students in developing self-efficacy and preparing them for the next steps on their road to high school.

Computers & Computer Use

This year students will be assigned one computer that they will use for all classes. Each student's computer will be checked into their homeroom at the end of the day.

Appropriate classroom use of computers includes research, writing, and classroom communication. Gaming is not permitted on class computers. If students are found misusing their computers, they will receive a warning, followed by a processing sheet and restricted use. If a pattern emerges, we may request a meeting with parents to discuss strategies for moving forward. We appreciate any help you can provide at home for fostering healthy use of technology.

Organization

In 7th grade, we put an emphasis on student organization skills as part of the foundation for success. Both classrooms will require the use of a binder for the safekeeping of all print materials. "O.T.I.S" (organize this important stuff) is the organizational system we'll be using and referring to. Because we view this as an important skill for students to foster, we'll have regular O.T.I.S. (binder) checks to help students stay on top of binder organization. Student daily supplies and materials will be stored in classroom cubbies. Additionally, students will have their own set of supplies which will include a canvas bag, pencils, markers, colored pencils, etc. It is important that

students also have a pencil bag/box of some sort to keep these supplies organized and contained.

Supply List

The updated student supply list can be found [here](#).

Final Note to Students:

Our team strives to ensure each one of you feels seen, heard, loved, respected, and appreciated. While our goal is to teach you, our priority is to ensure you feel safe and engaged.

We are still experiencing the dynamic ripple effects of a historic moment in time, with unique challenges, but with effort, communication, and commitment, we can find success in hard times, together.

We ask these 3 things of you: [Be kind, respectful, and always try your best](#). We promise to do the same.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jill, Ms. Jodie, & Ms. Nancy

Please complete the [Syllabus Contract Google Form](#) to verify that you and your family agree to the 7th-grade syllabus. If you have any questions, please email us.