

# Curriculum Guide by Grade

## MIDDLE SCHOOL



At Baker, students deepen their understanding of the arts, humanities, languages, mathematics and sciences through inquiry-based learning, where they grow as independent, capable advocates for themselves and others. Our Middle School curriculum supports students academically at this crucial stage in their development. Our teachers work together to develop curriculum that is age appropriate, and meets students where they are.

## Advisory Program

Students begin the **Advisory Program** in sixth grade and remain with their cohort throughout their time at Baker. The advisory program targets four main concepts: Social-Emotional Learning, Executive Functioning, Community Building, and structured resource time. Advisors support students over their three years in Middle School as they navigate academic courses and build community through outdoor education field trips, community circles, and whole group activities. In Advisory, students take part in community events and serve as buddies to younger grade levels. Students also practice their academic and organizational skills during designated Resource times. They learn to prioritize homework assignments, meet and email with their teachers for extra support, and manage their time effectively.

# Sixth Grade

## Mathematics

In **Math 6**, students start their journey into a more abstract mathematical world. They work to form a deeper understanding of foundational processes, explore new concepts through inquiry and build their mathematical tool boxes. Students begin to think flexibly about numbers and patterns, work independently and collaboratively and explore problem-solving strategies.

## Science

**Sixth-grade science** focuses on the study of life sciences, including organisms (structures and processes), ecosystems (interactions, energy and dynamics) and evolution (unity and diversity). Students perform inquiry-based experiments and use deductive reasoning to explore these concepts. Students apply the scientific method to their lab work and provide evidence from experiments and data to showcase their understanding of a lesson. In sixth grade, students spend three days and two nights at the Indiana Dunes Learning Center, studying ecology and the region's natural resources.

## Social Studies

Students begin the first year of a **two-year social studies course** in sixth grade. The course focuses on global studies. Rooted in the 10 Themes of Social Studies, as laid out by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), students discover, discuss and explore the following themes during two years of classes, including people, places and environments; individual development and identity; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology and society; culture; time, continuity, and change; individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; and global connections. The coursework and content is related to current events, allowing the students to integrate these themes to real life situations, such as Model United Nations and Amnesty's International's Write for Rights campaign.

## Language Arts

In **sixth-grade Language Arts**, students read multiple, engaging texts featuring diverse protagonists, relationships that foster strong communities, and reading comprehension strategies that can be utilized in any context. Students explore books from across genres. By reading books with myriad genres, students learn how to analyze techniques that authors use. Every class tackles every domain of SWIRL: speaking, writing, interacting with reading, reading and listening.

## World Languages

### LATIN

In **sixth-grade Latin**, students build language skills acquired in fifth grade. Students explore the fundamentals of learning an inflected language by building and using a common vocabulary of language terms. Sixth-grade students learn how to identify Latin words by parts of speech, the fundamentals of declining nouns and conjugating verbs, how to translate and compose basic sentences and stories, and more. Students also explore the myths, culture and history of ancient Greece and Rome.

### SPANISH

**Sixth-grade Spanish** builds on students' prior knowledge of the language while placing an emphasis on listening comprehension and short utterances. Vocabulary includes days of week, months, numbers, greeting, feelings, colors, body parts, classroom vocabulary, school subjects, question words, adjectives and high-frequency vocabulary for storytelling. Grammar lessons include noun-adjective agreement, subject pronouns, definite and indefinite articles and stem-changing verbs.

## Wellness

Students participate in **physical education** twice a week, utilizing Baker's indoor and outdoor athletic space. These classes are designed to encourage, engage and elevate student's fitness and love of movement.

In **Health**, once a week, students participate in a skill-based, comprehensive health curriculum developed in conjunction with Project School Wellness and RMC health. The course focuses on positively influencing a student's decision making process as well as the conditions that influence their health.

Students participate in fitness and skill development **aquatic classes** in a 60-foot pool. These classes are appropriately paced and differentiated for each student to encourage their advancement in swimming and enjoyment for water based activities. Water safety skills are also taught and reviewed throughout their Baker swimming experience.

## Arts Core

As part of Baker's Middle School curriculum, students have choice-based options for classes in the visual and performing arts and technology. Students may choose to take courses in music, drama, visual arts, dance and technology. These courses are designed to allow students to study an interest in-depth. Arts Core offerings include **band, improv, makerspace, dance, art, choir, yearbook, the art of storytelling, choreography, and songwriting**.

# Seventh Grade

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## Mathematics

In **Foundations of Algebra**, seventh-graders continue to reinforce their understanding of key concepts they learned in Math 6 while learning new skills and strategies. Students in Foundations of Algebra are challenged to think algebraically, look for patterns, and derive rules that can be used to simplify and solve problems.

**Algebra 7** is a fast-paced course that challenges students to engage deeply with fundamental algebraic concepts and applications. Students in Algebra 7 are tasked with making connections between algebraic functions and their graphical representations, using variables to represent unknown quantities and applying their understanding of mathematics to solve increasingly complex and abstract problems.

## Science

**Seventh-grade science** continues to build on their knowledge of living organisms with a study of how heredity and the variation and inheritance traits function in all living organisms. They then move onto study earth and space science concepts, including earth's systems, earth and human activity and earth's place in the universe. Students conduct various labs throughout the year, including a lab on Punnett squares and a genetic variation simulation using different types of pasta to illustrate heredity.

## Social Studies

Students begin the first year of a **two-year social studies course** in sixth grade. The course focuses on global studies. Rooted in the 10 Themes of Social Studies, as laid out by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), students discover, discuss and explore the following themes during two years of classes, including people, places and environments; individual development and identity; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology and society; culture; time, continuity, and change; individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; and global connections. The coursework and content is related to current events, allowing the students to integrate these themes to real life situations, such as Model United Nations and Amnesty's International's Write for Rights campaign.

## Language Arts

During the first semester of **seventh-grade language arts**, students read two novels — “Ghost Boys” and “Piecing Me Together.” The novels center on the theme of how young people of color find their voices, become activists, and join with allies to create change. As students read their first two novels, they focus on developing our reading comprehension and creative writing skills. In the second semester, students practice connecting literature to its historical context in preparation for **eighth-grade Humanities**. Students read “Animal Farm” and the memoir “Red Scarf Girl.” Students learn the historical context behind these books and focus on developing their analytical writing skills.

## World Languages

### LATIN

Building on the foundations developed in the sixth grade, **seventh-grade Latin** continues to hone students’ language skills with an expanded understanding of morphology and syntax, while expanding their working vocabulary. By the end of the course, students are proficient at conjugating verbs in both the present and imperfect tenses and with declining nouns and adjectives. Students also read texts in English and Latin.

### SPANISH

**Seventh-grade Spanish** places an emphasis on listening comprehension, as well as longer spoken and written utterances. Vocabulary includes common conjunctions, expressions and rejoinders, adjectives of description, weather expressions and seasons, foods, prepositions of place, and a variety of high frequency vocabulary for storytelling. Grammar includes noun-adjective agreement, subject pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, stem-changing verbs and of the present progressive form.

## Wellness

Students participate in **physical education** twice a week, utilizing Baker’s indoor and outdoor athletic space. These classes are designed to encourage, engage and elevate student’s fitness and love of movement.

In **Health**, once a week, students participate in a skill-based, comprehensive health curriculum developed in conjunction with Project School Wellness and RMC health. The course focuses on positively influencing a student’s decision making process as well as the conditions that influence their health.

Students participate in fitness and skill development **aquatic classes** in a 60-foot pool. These classes are appropriately paced and differentiated for each student to encourage their advancement in swimming and enjoyment for water based activities. Water safety skills are also taught and reviewed throughout their Baker swimming experience.

## Arts Core

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# Eighth Grade

## Mathematics

**Algebra 8** builds on student experiences in Foundations of Algebra by revisiting linear relationships and exploring more advanced algebraic concepts, including simultaneous equations and nonlinear functions. A focus on foundational procedures is paired with an inquiry-based approach to problem-solving. Students are encouraged to apply their understanding of course concepts to real-world scenarios in order to make meaningful connections between skills and applications, and continue to refine their ability to communicate using the language of mathematics.

**Geometry 8** is a fast paced, accelerated course designed to prepare students for advanced high school mathematics. Students will practice the habits of successful mathematicians as they are challenged to apply their knowledge from algebra to solve increasingly complex problems, apply logical reasoning to the study of algebraic and geometric proofs, and explore foundational concepts of trigonometry.

## Science

In **eighth-grade science**, students study chemistry the first half of the academic year and physics the second half. Throughout the year, eighth-graders design labs and prototypes, test their hypotheses and use their results to cement the foundational concepts of chemistry and physics. Students apply their design and research skills to larger projects, including forensic crime scene analysis and simple machine design. A highlight of the year is the Annual Boat Regatta. Students test their knowledge of physics by creating boats using duct tape and cardboard and sailing them across the school swimming pool.

## Social Studies & Language Arts

The team-taught Humanities class, a cross-curricular course combining social studies and language arts, explores themes of power and resistance across time and around the globe. After being introduced to the concepts of power and resistance, students gain a deep understanding of the American founding and Constitution, with a focus on its racial implications. Students move chronologically to study U.S. immigration from a variety of racial and ethnic perspectives in advance of an extensive unit on World War II, including the study of the internment of Japanese American citizens and the Holocaust. During the second semester, students explore the U.S. Civil Rights and South African liberation movements.



## World Languages

### LATIN

In **eighth-grade Latin**, students explore the classical world through the lens of Latin. By the end of the three-year journey, students will have gained an understanding of how to conjugate and translate six tenses (present, imperfect, perfect, future, pluperfect, and future perfect) in the active voice, and they will have also acquired a thorough understanding of how to decline and nouns and adjectives through the six major cases of all five declensions.

### SPANISH

**Eighth-grade Spanish** builds on prior knowledge in Spanish while placing an emphasis on listening comprehension and longer spoken and written responses and exchanges. Vocabulary includes common conjunctions, expressions and rejoinders, adjectives of description, foods, clothing, sports, family members, prepositional phrases and high-frequency vocabulary for storytelling. Grammar is modeled in context through comprehensible input strategies. Grammar includes an introduction and review of noun-adjective agreement, subject pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, stem-changing verbs, all forms of regular and some irregular verbs, to describe situations and present progressive form. Students are introduced to the simple future tense and expressing likes and dislikes.

## Wellness

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