

Curriculum Essentials: Grade One

Ancient History: 5,000 B.C.–400 A.D.

Students are introduced to the story of the ancient world in chronological order and by geographic area. Through stories, myths, pictures, and artifacts, students learn about the places, leaders, and important events or advancements of five major ancient civilizations: Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, and Ancient Rome. Materials used include *The Story of the World, Volume I: Ancient Times* by Susan Wise Bauer; *Geography From A to Z: A Picture Glossary*; *Our World: A Child's First Picture Atlas*; *E.D. Hirsch Core Knowledge*.

Topics include the following:

- Continents, oceans, maps, NSEW
- Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- The Fertile Crescent
- Farming
- City-states
- The river road
- Sumer; Ziggurat at Ur, Gilgamesh
- The Jewish people
- Cuneiform writing
- Carts and wheels
- Geography of deserts and the Mediterranean region
- Lower and Upper Egypt
- Nile River
- Hieroglyphics
- Egyptian gods, mummies, pyramids
- The Great Sphinx
- Tutankhamen, Valley of the Kings
- Geography of Ancient Greece
- Greek city-states
- Life in Athens: citizens, alphabet, cardinal virtues, Parthenon, theater, trade, Olympics
- Greek gods and goddesses
- The Trojan War
- Homer's *Odyssey*
- Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- Alexander the Great
- Geography of Ancient Rome
- Greek influence on Rome
- Roman roads, aqueducts, Colosseum
- Julius Caesar
- Early Christians

Reading & Literature

Children will listen to a wide range of literature read aloud, including poetry, rhymes, fables, folktales, ancient myths, and short classics.

Nova uses a direct instruction approach for teaching reading in 1st grade. Horizons, Reading Mastery, and selected works of literature are the programs used to meet all learners' needs and to build a strong foundation for future grades. In addition, teachers read aloud daily from a selected list of high quality literature. Reading also provides opportunities to call attention to rich imagery, introduce new vocabulary, and make connections to virtuous examples of behavior across the curriculum and content.

The following works of literature have been used in first grade reading classes:

- *Wallace and Grace* series by Heather Alexander
- *The Magic Treehouse: Mummies in the Morning* by Mary Pope Osborne
- *Ancient Greece and the Olympics: A Nonfiction Companion to Magic Treehouse* by Mary Pope Osborne
- *Nate the Great* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- selections from the *Junior Great Books* anthology

Writing

The focus of writing in first grade is on constructing correct sentences, including proper structure, capitalization, and end marks. In addition, students are introduced to and practice writing related sentences, descriptive observations, a first-person narrative, a short paragraph, and a friendly letter.

Grammar, Mechanics, Usage, Spelling, and Handwriting

The Writing Road to Reading by Romalda Spalding, *Reading Works* and *Grammar Works* by Jay Patterson. *Shurley Instructional Materials, Level 1* by Brenda Shurley

A primary goal of first grade is to produce strong readers through the act of writing. *The Writing Road to Reading* explicitly teaches 71 phonograms (sounds) “in isolation”. This means that, beginning in kindergarten, students learn these sounds without key words, without pictures, without letter names, and without capital letters, as they learn to form letters correctly and to blend sounds.

- Handwriting is taught in conjunction with reading and spelling.
- Students study spelling words in the extended Ayres List (A-J).
- The following grammar and mechanics concepts are introduced in grade one:
 - Types of sentences, attributes of a sentence
 - Punctuation marks (period, question mark, exclamation mark, comma)
 - Parts of speech: common and proper nouns; adjectives; subject and possessive pronouns; action verbs; adjectives; adverbs; conjunctions (and, if)
 - Plurals with s and es
 - Synonyms, homophones
 - Capitalization of first word, proper noun, words in a title
 - Compound words; compound sentences using “and”
 - Possessives and contractions using apostrophe

Science

Science and Technology for Children Science Kits, Carolina Biological Supply Company, 2002

Units include Measurement/Balance and Weights; Astronomy; Introduction to the Scientific Method, and Organisms (plants and animals).

Mathematics

Primary Mathematics 1A and *1B*, Singapore Mathematics

Mathematics and reading form the core of the first-grade curriculum. Mathematics is taught using Singapore Mathematics textbooks and workbooks, with a focus on the development of strong conceptual understanding, numeracy, and problem-solving strategies. Manipulatives and games are used to reinforce math concepts, basic facts, and operations.

Art

Students begin to learn and use the language of art specifically the elements of art by looking at famous works through time. Art history: Prehistoric to Roman art. Major projects: picture symbols from Mesopotamia, hieroglyphs from Egypt along with Egyptian mummies and pyramids, Greek Vases and Roman art.

Music

Share the Music Series, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill

Vocal exploration; tone, color, and inflection; high/low; long/short; fast/slow; matching pitch; steady beat; instrument families; solfege syllables; quarter and eighth notes; quarter rest; musical staff; style; form.

Physical Education Team sports; Individual and lifetime activities; Fitness exercise and assessment.