



8th Grade

CURRICULUM GUIDE



Fashion Show
Interdisciplinary project combining art, creativity, design, sewing, sport, dance, choreography and music.

MISSION STATEMENT

The French American Academy strives to provide the highest educational standards with a bilingual, comprehensive curriculum in a safe and creative environment. We foster an atmosphere that promotes critical thinking, curiosity, enthusiasm and a strong work ethic. In addition, we encourage the physical, social and emotional development of our students in a nurturing, multicultural setting. Finally, we cultivate diversity and inclusion as well as individual talents. We aspire to see our students become well-rounded, lifelong learners, who are respectful, confident, positive, open-minded, and globally literate.

"Education is not the learning of facts but the training of mind to think".

Albert Einstein

At the French American Academy, we combine the best of both worlds. French and American curricula complement each other bringing efficiency and meaning to the students. It is not the French curriculum next to the American, but an effective blend taking strengths from both systems while respecting the specifics of each program.

Our bilingual curriculum is not a translation of one curriculum into the other language, nor a repetition of concepts in both languages, but a well-thought out didactics. What we learn in one language can be useful or applied to the other language. This is where bilingualism lies: "better learners, better speakers, better thinkers".

Students are not learning only through one lens but through at least two points of view. Combined curricula will give students opportunities to explore and identify similarities and differences, allowing them to forge their theories and connections.

HUMANITIES

The Humanities are the stories, ideas, words and images that help us make sense of our lives and the world around us. We accomplish this by studying and sharing our ideas on literature, history, philosophy and the Arts.

In both French and English, students will develop written communication, reading comprehension, sharing of ideas, critical thinking and collaboration.

In French, students will deepen their linguistics competencies, which will allow them to fully understand literature. They will consistently apply the rules of spelling, grammar, and vocabulary.

In English, students will develop stamina for reading and writing. They will be able to produce high level pieces of writing across different genres.

In both languages, the students will use Readers and Writer's Workshop strategies to become independent writers. They will take part in book conversation with each other and engage in meaningful discussions about characters, stories, and novels.

Students will participate in comparative grammar classes where they can build bridges between the two languages.

The Humanities curriculum at the FAA is based on some simple beliefs: literacy matters, independence matters, collaboration matters, and there is a value in the process as well as in the product. All we know of ourselves is learned through story and our humanities class is designed to better know who we are, where we fit in the world and the world larger beyond ourselves.

8th Grade Reading Units

- Effective habits of readers
- Graphic Novel
- Epistolary novel
- Historical fiction
- Memoir
- Poetry
- Plays / Theatre
- Short story / Realistic short story
- Literary analysis

8th Grade Writing Units

- Responding to literature
- Letter Writing
- Nonfiction writing
- Essay prompt writing
- High School applications
- Literary Essay
- Media / Journalism

In red are the units taught bilingually.

Examples of literature studied in French & English

(not exhaustive, may vary from year to year)

- Letter of Mme de Sévigné
- Alfred de Musset, Emile Zola, Montesquieu
- Les misérables de Victor Hugo
- Le journal d'Anne Frank
- Cyrano de Bergerac d'Edmond Rostand
- Poetry of 19th and 20th century
- Realistic short stories of Guy de Maupassant
- Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History by Art Spiegelman
- To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- My Name is Not Friday by Jon Walter
- Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln
- The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
- Our Town by Thornton Wilder
- The Most Dangerous Game by Richard Connell

8th Grade Unit in History / Geography

- Slavery
- The Civil War, causes, battles, and outcomes
- Reconstruction
- Civil rights study
- Current events
- XVIIIe century : trades, expansions and revolutions
- Industrial Revolutions and Colonialism in XIXe
- Voting Rights and the place of women in the XIXe century
- World Urbanization
- Transnational Human Mobilities
- Globalization's impact on territories

MATH

Knowing the inner workings of numbers, number operations, other fundamental mathematical concepts is key to success. Solving problems, learning to apply different strategies, reasoning in many ways are the focus of our approach.

Working in two languages and comparing different strategies to problems is the richness of our curriculum. Algebra is at the heart of the Middle School program while gaining from the French geometry approach as well. Building a community of confident mathematicians is at the center of the math class. It focuses on the process used to arrive at the answer, not the answer itself. It is through the process of figuring out the answer that the student constructs meaning for him or herself, and concepts are internalized.

8th Grade Units

- **Algebraic factors and multiples**
- **Decimals operations**
- **Algebra basics**
- **Ratio, proportions and conversions**
- **Algebraic expressions (with a focus on geometric situations)**
- **Geometry Unit**
- **French Geometry: representations of functions, linear functions and introduction to Trigonometry**
- **Pythagorean Theorem**
- **Algebra multi step word problems and equations**
- **Project on data and statistics**

Through our partnership with *Math in the City* we have implemented the following approach described as follows: "The rich, open investigations we've developed allow children to engage in mathematizing in a variety of ways. We honor children's initial attempts at mathematizing, at the same time supporting and challenging children to ensure that important big ideas and strategies are being developed progressively. Our approach should not be confused with what is commonly called "developmentally appropriate practice," where teachers assess every child, ascribe a stage, and then match tasks to each child. Our approach emphasizes emergence. Learning, real learning, is messy; it is not linear. We conceive of learning as a developmental journey along a landscape of learning. This landscape is composed of landmarks in three domains: **strategies, big ideas, and models.**"

Topics covered in 8th Grade

- Evolution
- Microorganisms
- Endocrine System
- Thermal Energy
- Wave Energy - Sound & Light
- Oceanography
- Soil and land resources
- Properties of Elements/
Organization of Periodic Table
- Technical Objects

Science

The FAA Middle School students will study, each year, topics from the three branches of science, physical, life and earth. There is one specific area of science that stems from the French curriculum, the study of technical objects which includes researching, designing and building a technical object responding to a need.

In all sciences classes, students follow the scientific method of asking questions, making hypothesis, designing experiments, collecting data and drawing conclusions. Lab and hands-on experiences are at the heart of each topic. The students are in an environment promoting inquiry, creative thinking, and collaboration to bring out the scientist in them.

WORLD LANGUAGE

Open-mindedness and curiosity are at the core of the FAA experience with more than 30 nationalities represented among the students.

In 6th grade students start a 3rd language, Spanish.

Our goal is that each student achieve a level of proficiency A1 or A2 of the European Common Framework at the end of 8th grade, with the official diploma of DELE.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Middle School, students enter teenage years and will encounter important physical and emotional changes that will affect them and their social life. Health and physical education will help them develop references and goals for a balanced and healthy life, build a positive self-esteem, and respect for others.

THE WORLD OF THE ARTS

Arts education takes a distinct place in the FAA curriculum. By exploring visual and sound creation and understanding the role of arts in the history of mankind, students make connections between social, cultural, technological, scientific and artistic developments. The teaching of music and visual arts is based on an international exploration of works of all ages.

In addition, the students will be part of a yearly interdisciplinary performing arts projects. According to their will and aptitudes, students can be actors, dancers, singers, musicians, cameramen, sound engineers, make-up artists, hairdressers, costume designers, directors, photographers, stagehands, decorators, scriptwriters...

A life-time experience to make Middle School unforgettable!

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Giving back matters. At the FAA, we think that students benefit greatly - both academically and emotionally - from volunteering their time. When students get involved in community service, they not only help others, but also learn about themselves. They get to interact with people who have vastly different backgrounds, they learn patience and empathy. They expand their worldview and practice real-world skills like leadership, problem solving, collaboration, time management and communication, that will help them succeed in high schools and beyond. They realize how their actions can have a positive impact. They become engaged and responsible citizens.

ADVISORY / HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

The FAA values a personal approach and each Middle School student is assigned to a faculty advisor. Each advisor acts as the student advocate and liaison between home and school for academic and non academic matters.

In 8th grade, advisors will focus on high school applications and guide the students in:

- Essay Writing
- Portfolios Preparation
- Test Prep Skills - The FAA gives the PSAT in the Fall of 8th Grade
- Interview

Advisors are monitoring the well-being of each student in this process that can be overwhelming.

Jersey City Campus
209 Third Street
Jersey City, NJ 07302
201-338-8320, ext. 202

www.faacademy.org

Admissions
Cathy Joly
201-724-1544
cjoly@faacademy.org