



Theme



Themes & Content

We get through 4 fabulous Themes in a 2 year cycle. No child repeats the same curriculum, EVER.

Students hone and apply the skill sets and types of thinking that historians, scientists, writers and engineers do.



One Year

	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Science</i>
Living with Tension	Government structures - democracy, representative republics, the Supreme Court and separation of powers, the legislative process	Paleobiology Earth Science (geosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere) Engineering
Being Human	Philosophy (ancient to modern), World Religions (Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, sometimes Hinduism), the Holocaust	Biology Paleontology Engineering

Another Year

	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Science</i>
Material World	World history through trade - ancient, medieval, colonial/early modern age - economics	Chemistry Engineering
Revolution!	Oppression and resistance (ancient to medieval to early modern to present day), emphasis on American Revolution. World history through revolutions technological, political, social, scientific	Anatomy and Physiology Engineering

Essential Skills

Students moving into the Herons/Egrets should anticipate:

- **Higher academic expectations, a larger volume of work, and tighter deadlines.** Students are shown professional-level examples and asked to reach for the highest quality level work they can produce.
- **Students are true partners in their own learning.** Students will be expected to participate in all of their ILP and semester-end conferences, and will frequently be asked to self-assess before a teacher meets with them to discuss their work.

Students will rely on skills such as:

- **Word processing skills.** These skills will be essential for note taking, essay writing and communicating learning.
- **Organization skills.** Students will further develop and refine methods to keep track of their possessions as well as assignments and meeting deadlines.

Essential Skills

Students moving into the Herons/Egrets will rely on:

- ***Communication and Collaboration.*** Herons/Egrets will have plenty of opportunities to be self-directed in their learning, however, communicating and collaborating effectively are essential real world skills and are paramount for growing the thinking of the entire community of learners.
- ***Curiosity and intrinsic motivation to learn.*** Though the scope and sequence of the curriculum has clearly identified learning targets, Herons/Egrets will be given ample opportunities for voice and choice within the Themes ranging from topics to projects to products. Come with an open mind and a willingness to learn and grow.

Essential Skills

Students moving into the Herons/Egrets will rely on:

- ***An ability to be a self-directed learner.*** There is a higher expectation of executive functioning in middle school; students will be expected to take greater responsibility for their own learning while limiting distractions to their peers. Furthermore, students will be expected to use technology appropriately and as a tool for their assigned learning.
- ***A willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes.*** Making mistakes is a natural way of learning. Heron culture provides a welcoming, safe place to explore, take chances and try new things.
- ***Embracing cognitive struggle.*** The Zone of Proximal Development is that sweet spot for growth when the learning is not too easy, but challenging enough to grow one's thinking. Students should be prepared to advocate for help when truly needed, but only after putting forth the effort and thinking for problem solving on their own.

How Themes Prepare Students

Students practice all types of assessment - traditional as well as more progressive:

- discrete fact memorization
- primary document analysis
- timed essays
- application of learning through novel contexts
- creating products that showcase student learning
- designing and carrying out investigations
- reading comprehension and analysis through quizzes, artistic creations, class discussions, etc.

How Themes Prepare Students

Skills - research skills - particularly honed through history study:

- how to corroborate facts
- what an authoritative source looks like
- close reading and summarization
- synthesis of multiple sources in multiple types of media

Teachers offer training in executive function as needed - virtual and/or hard copy assignment trackers, back planning, etc.

How Themes Prepare Students

Skills particularly honed through science:

- asking questions
- developing and using models
- planning and carrying out investigations
- mathematics and computational thinking
- obtaining, evaluating and communicating information
- analyzing and interpreting data
- constructing explanations
- engaging in argument from evidence

Navigation

