



Thomas Jefferson Middle School

February Curriculum - Grade 8

Learning together to understand and improve ourselves, our futures, and our world.



Student Services Updates

During Academic Planning for next year, students are inquiring about opportunities for 9th grade and beyond. This Spring, Ms. Black will hold classroom meetings to help students build their 9-12 High School Plan using Naviance. Please contact Ms. Black if you have any questions about this important process.



Click the link below for contact information and office hours for our school counselors, psychologist and social worker along with important announcements:

[TJMS Student Services Newsbites](#)

Gifted Information Update

It is gifted identification season in APS. Teachers and parents can refer students for gifted services through April 16th. If you would like more information about the referral process, please see this [FAQ](#). The referral form is available on our [website](#). All referrals and questions should be directed to Megan Detweiler megan.detweiler@apsva.us. It should be noted that if your child has been previously identified as gifted, they have been receiving differentiated instruction through the cluster model. No further action is needed from parents.

Student Engagement - At Home Conversations

As parents we are constantly asking our children, "What did you learn today?" The answer we get from middle schoolers is probably "nothing," or, if we're lucky, one or two words - The Constitution, graphs, electricity. To engage your child in conversation, try asking them the positive, negative and interesting aspects of what they are learning. What is positive about electricity? What is negative about electricity? Is there anything interesting that stands out to you on this topic? This strategy works with all subjects and guides our children in exploring that one word answer with more depth and ownership.

Arts

The video for our Combined APS Middle School Bands "Seven Nation Army" performance premiered on March 5 for Music in Our Schools Month and was featured during the School Board Meeting on March 18. [The video can be viewed using this link](#). 8th grade band students are taking turns leading warm-ups, learning the Concert D-flat Major scale, and learning how to play "Blinding Lights" and "The Mandalorian."

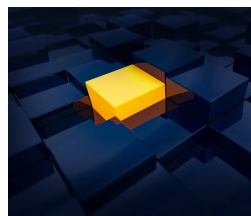
In Orchestra, students are playing scales in a variety of rhythms, solo pieces of their choice and orchestra repertoire. We are preparing two new orchestra pieces with Canvas and SmartMusic for a virtual spring concert. We are learning lots of musical vocabulary and how to plan ahead before we play to ensure success. Students are playing solo and ensemble pieces, a variety of scales, advanced bow technique, sound production and reading skills. Students are encouraged to use musical vocabulary to reflect on and improve their playing in their IB MYP Process Journals.

In Chorus, students have submitted their recordings for the South Arlington Choral Pyramid Project. We are starting new music for the spring and focusing on music literacy.

In Drama, students finished their 1st unit with a performance of an original poem. We will now begin our study of Radio Dramas. We will rehearse and perform a Radio Drama. Look out for the recording!

Arts and Design

In Robotics, students are exploring the components and functions of electronics. Students will build both virtual and physical circuits using multiple components and then evaluate those circuits by calculating voltage, current, and resistance.



In Technology Education, students are working on board drafting. This traditional technique allows us to invent and innovate using the design process later in the semester. We will explore drafting each letter neatly and cleanly on a blueprint and work on orthographic, 3 view and isometric drawings.

In Computer Applications and the Internet, students are working on "Internet Scavenger Hunts": where the students will use clues given to them to find various answers around the internet. They will work on search skills, putting technical terms into their own words, and manipulating multimedia layouts.

In Life Management, students will explore the many ways technology has changed our food system, including 3D food printing, and food waste reduction apps. Our Nutrition unit wraps up with a project to design and make a healthy meal at home for the family: Tik Tok Tortillas!

In Arts, we have just finished up our Matchbox Art unit. Students made or found a small box and decorated the inside, outside and added contents to fit a chosen theme. They worked in small groups to give each other feedback. Next up: Drawing.

Individuals and Societies (Social Studies)

In World Geography, students are learning that individuals orient and identify themselves with their neighborhood, community, city, state, country, or world by using varied perspectives.

Students' understanding will be demonstrated by participating in the completion of many different region based activities. Our current unit of study covers the Sub-Saharan Africa Region. Students will locate and analyze physical, economic, and cultural characteristics of the Sub-Saharan Africa Region and will learn the past and present trends in human migration and cultural interactions as they are influenced by social, economic, political, and environmental factors. In class, we are engaged in learning activities like the Regional HyperDoc, Regional Mapping Lab, Mapping Activities and so much more! Additionally, students will be spending time on developing their essay submissions for our Localized Shared Writing Assessment, which will take the familiar form of a Document Based Question (DBQ). Students will engage in this assessment using skills and content knowledge that they have gained during the school year in World Geography and apply gained knowledge to this assessment. The World Geography part of the assessment will then be used to assist in the writing of a full five paragraph essay in their Language Arts class; thereby completing the DBQ process.

Language Acquisition (World Languages)

In French 2 class, students are learning to communicate in the past tense. We have been exploring famous individuals in Benin.

Latin II students are learning about the Roman province of Britain, and the lives of enslaved people there. They have started research projects on a topic of their choice. We are also learning to use infinitives in Latin.

I Spanish 2 classes, students are learning about food from Latin America and Spain. They are also able to read short stories in the past tense and write simple sentences in the past tense.



Language and Literature



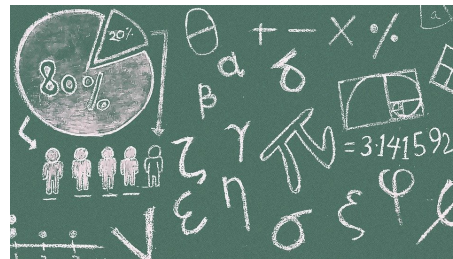
In English, students are learning that people migrate for a variety of reasons, and communication about these journeys enhances our understanding of others. Students will be exploring fiction texts to better

understand the push and pull forces that cause families to move from place to place.

Students are engaging in novel study which will culminate in a creative representation of the novel's themes in photography, art, or music. Students will also be working toward an interdisciplinary writing piece with World Geography.

Math

Pre-Algebra 8: Students are working on completing linear equations and graphing lines on the coordinate plane.

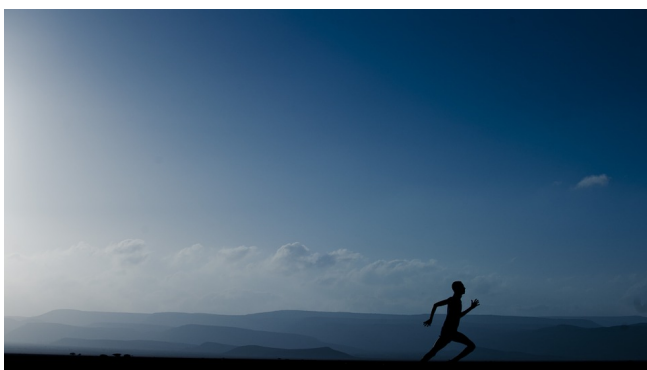


Algebra & Intensified Algebra: Students are working on Linear Inequalities and Systems of Inequalities. Next students will be working on radicals.

Int Geometry: Students will work on right triangles and trigonometry.

Physical and Health Education

In physical education, students are working on fitness plans and workout routines focusing on the different health related components of fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance and flexibility. Nutrition will be the next health unit on the Health Physical Education rotation. Mr. Curran's, and Ms. Patterson's class will be starting a nutrition health unit after Spring break. The other 8th grade HPE teachers will still be in Physical Education



Sciences

Students are learning,

- How are electricity and magnetism related?
- How are voltage, current, and resistance related?
- How can the strength of an electromagnet be changed?
- How has the discovery of electromagnetism changed the world?
- How much electricity do you use in the course of a day? For what purposes?

Students' understanding will be demonstrated by completing the summative assessment centered around The Clean Energy initiatives not only in Arlington but also in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Students will be completing research into alternative energy resources and taking a position for or against the initiative. Student products for this assessment will include letters, posters, brochures, or public service announcements. This assessment will be completed the week of April 5th. The next unit will be Waves in which students will explore many aspects of various types of waves.

From the Library:

Students voted throughout March in our **2021 Battle of the Books**. The Championship Match between *Black brother, black brother* and *When stars are scattered* is March 26. Students learned in TA about all 16 books in our March Madness--all books are available in print and as ebook/audiobook. Check them out through [our Destiny Discover collection!](#)

- Read our weekly Library Buzz Newsletter in Canvas! Here's the link to our [March 22, 2021, issue](#).
- If you have any questions please send Ms. J Miller, Ms. Wall, or Ms. Rosegrant a Canvas message or email us!
- TAB Club met virtually in March with the authors of *Suffragist* *playbook* and *Twins*!

Return to School information:

- All students will continue to search and put holds on books through Destiny Discover. Library staff will deliver books to students' classes or have books available for pickup throughout the day for distance learners.
- Next TAB Club meeting: Monday, April 5th during lunches.

Community Project Update and Academic Integrity



The Community Project is now entering the Taking Action and Reflecting phases. No one should worry if they are behind, it is not due until June 10. We want all students to be engaged in investigating a community they care about. We want students planning to take action to help a community through research, advocacy, or direct participation. Then students will take action to help the community and reflect upon the actions they took. The final step will be making a presentation on Flipgrid about their project of no more than 5 minutes. [All of the lessons can be found here](#). Any student wanting help can contact Mr. Malinosky or Ms. J. Miller through Canvas or email kip.malinosky@apsva.us.

Also, we have an updated Academic Integrity policy in which we describe how we want all students and staff to be principled learners. We have added a rights and responsibilities section for staff, students, families. [Learn more about it here](#).