



San Marcos Academy
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW
Middle School (Grade 6)

Plutarch once said, *“The very spring and root of honesty and virtue lie in good education.”* Although education in itself does not guarantee moral virtue, the ancient wisdom codified in the historic Christian faith provides the fertile soil. We aim to pass this wisdom on to our students.

Middle school students are expected to perform the following:

Middle school students are aware of basic attitudes and essential skills necessary to function in the learning community. These become functional students by prescribed standards and structure. They increasingly exhibit what is the good, beautiful, and true. These students internalize the "Golden Rule," and increasingly accept personal responsibility, and an expanding sense of morality. They aspire to the highest ethical standards, living to the glory of God and serving the betterment of others.

Middle school students will be able to recognize self-governing behavior and quality work. They will demonstrate developmental progress of striving for excellence in essential academic and interests. The students will increasingly desire to produce quality work.

Middle school students are increasingly literate. They can read and comprehend varied and challenging texts. They can gather and effectively use new knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences and justify conclusions. They are able to recognize poor grammar, write grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compose accurate essays within and across disciplines. These have a growing vocabulary. They are able to communicate with varied cultures and groups. They are able to use technology and media toward this end.

Middle school students will conform behaviors to prescribed learning goals, regularly practice essential organizational skills, recognize quality work and compare it to their own performance, perform directed study habits, function within the academic support system, understand and practice essential study skills, recognize and minimize at-risk attitudes and behaviors.

Middle school students gather and effectively use new knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences and justify conclusions. These students utilize, evaluate, and refine the use of multiple strategies to solve a variety of types of problems. They generate new and creative ideas by taking considered risks in a variety of contexts. They are able to show a rudimentary ability to expand and integrate their knowledge into varied environments. They are able to demonstrate higher taxonomies that integrate their knowledge across the curriculum.

Middle school students will be able to recognize and imitate appropriate behavior in the classroom and dorms. They will normally exhibit basic social skills, such as; coping, conflict resolution, communication, obedience to rules, etc. These students are sensitive to cultural differences. They cultivate and maintain a functional social network. They are learning to treat others with respect. In middle school, students rudimentarily communicate with other cultures and groups. They recognize how to communicate as to resolve conflict and persuade others. These properly use words in context, with age appropriate vocabulary. They are able to use basic technology and media to communicate to others.

What does this look like at San Marcos Academy?

- Our sixth grade students should be able to recognize and begin to engage in the “Great Conversation”, because of their examination of Western art, history, literature, theology, and philosophy. Rather than relying solely on anthologies that skim the surface of thousands of events, SMA uses the most significant primary sources, thoughtfully treated with depth, to develop each student’s competency.
- In sixth grade, students become well versed in grammar and composition, regularly composing essays in

all language-based classes. Grammatical errors should be recognized and corrected. Written assignments should contain sound sentence structure, and sufficient vocabulary to convey increasingly logical thought patterns.

- Math and science courses require students to solve-problems, calculate using linear reasoning, and express their understanding of difficult concepts with words as well as through successful calculation and experiment. Periodic measures are taken to ensure the student has mastered the foundational material in mathematics. Focus in the middle school is on competence in the scientific method, comprehension, and proper use of scientific terminology, and conducting lab procedures safely.
- An aim of middle school classes is to prepare students to self-manage with adequate reinforcement. As such, structure is lessened once sound study habits have been formed. Students who continue to show immaturity or lack of ability to self-manage are given ample reinforcement by the consistent and clear communication with parents and/or staff that will provide support for the student.

These expectations are accomplished within the context of the following courses of study:

English and Reading 6 – The English Language Arts and Reading are organized into the following strands: Reading, where students read and understand a wide variety of literary and informational texts; Writing, where students compose a variety of written texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail; Research, where students are expected to know how to locate a range of relevant sources and evaluate, synthesize, and present ideas and information; Listening and Speaking, where students listen and respond to the ideas of others while contributing their own ideas in conversations and in groups; and Oral and Written Conventions, where students learn how to use the oral and written conventions of the English language in speaking and writing. In sixth grade, students will engage in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen their reading, writing, and oral language skills. Students will read and write on a daily basis.

Social Studies 6 (Geography) –In Grade 6, students study people, places, and societies of the contemporary world. Societies for study are from the following regions of the world: Europe, Russia and the Eurasian republics, North America, Central America and the Caribbean, South America, Southwest Asia-North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and the Pacific realm. Students describe the influence of individuals and groups on historical and contemporary events in those societies and identify the locations and geographic characteristics of various societies. Students identify different ways of organizing economic and governmental systems. The concepts of limited and unlimited government are introduced, and students describe the nature of citizenship in various societies. Students compare institutions common to all societies such as government, education, and religious institutions. Students explain how the level of technology affects the development of the various societies and identify different points of view about events. The concept of frame of reference is introduced as an influence on an individual's point of view.

Science 6 – The grade 6 science course is interdisciplinary with a content focus on physical science. As students learn science skills, they study topics such as properties of matter, energy transformations, energy resources, and density. Topics include safe practices, science process skills, matter, energy, force, motion, energy, Earth, space, organisms, and environments. This study of science establishes the foundation for success in high school science by providing exposure to science and the natural world through scientific inquiry, writing scientific explanations using claim, evidence and reasoning from a curriculum based on instructional time for conducting laboratory and field investigations.

Math 6 – At this level, honors math students will take the Pre-algebra (H), while others take the final course in mathematics. Those who have struggled in mathematics may be required to enroll into a Math Lab. To be successful in these classes, students need to be able to memorize formulas or concepts and apply them to the right problems, think in causal relationships, process information with both written and auditory stimulus, and exhibit an earnest desire to spend whatever time is necessary to ensure they have a mastery of the basic skills.

Physical Education 6 – All sixth grade students must take a Physical Education course in middle school. The Phys Ed course is designed to coincide with the development of the middle school sports program. Students are expected to suit out every day, and work with the coaches, who will be teaching them healthy lifestyles, and training them in various sports.

Prep Band 6 – All sixth grade students will participate in the SMA prep band program. Students will learn music theory and be able to translate theory into instrumentation. Students will work with the band director to choose an instrument that fits both physically and within the skill level of the student.

Introduction to Foreign Language – All sixth grade students will receive the first part of an introduction to a foreign language. The first part of the introduction is intended to give the students a foundation for future language development and high school credit. Students will choose between French or Latin.

What is the typical schedule of an SMA sixth grade student?

The SMA Promotion Plan –

Fall	Spring
Geography 6	Geography 6
English 6	English 6
Reading 6	Reading 6
Math 6	Math 6
Physical Science 6	Physical Science 6
Physical Education 6	Physical Education 6
Prep Band 6	Prep Band 6
Introduction to Foreign Language	Introduction to Foreign Language

To what can sixth grade students look forward at San Marcos Academy?

- The sixth grade class learns leadership by watching effective leaders in the eighth grade practicing it in Academy programs, including JROTC, band, and athletic teams.
- Sixth grade students can attend middle school social gatherings and dances.
- Sixth grade students are learning the skills needed to get ready for high school.
- Qualified students can compete in statewide PSIA Academic and Art competition.

What must I do to prepare for my sixth grade year?

- Do everything you can to become proficient in reading, writing, and calculating math. DO NOT rush to take upper level courses until you have demonstrated an ease in your performance at the foundation level.
- Decide on what organizations you would like to join.
- Read those novels, literary and historical works that will be required for your core courses.
- Add some intellectually enriching activities to your summer plans, visit some museums, take a trip to a historical site, join a book club, *et al.*
- Spend the summer trying to be better connected to your church or faith community. Therefore, you can come back to school strong in spirit, mind, and body.
- Decide on a schedule that will provide you with an academic foundation that will carry the weight of more difficult courses you will take throughout your high school career.
- Identify those areas that need to be improved, and attend workshops at area services. For example, take a reading course, writing, or math enrichment.