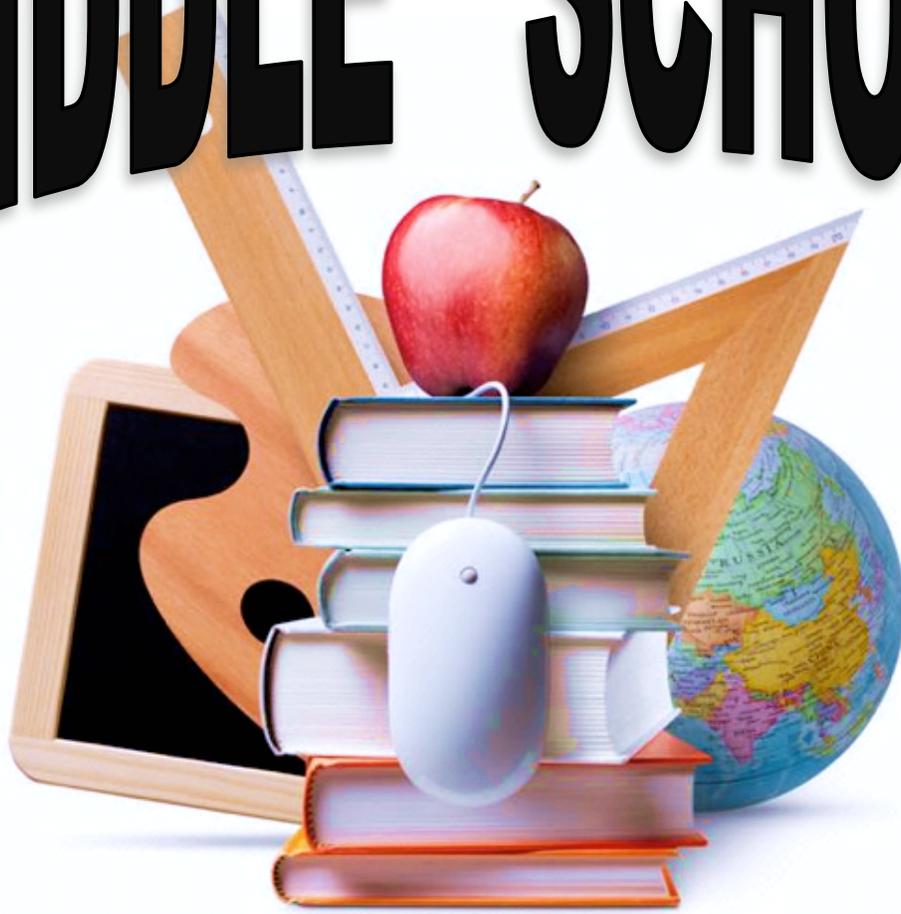


DOWNEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Educational Services

MIDDLE SCHOOL



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS <> GRADE 6

REQUIRED COURSES

English

Combined Studies (English) is a required yearlong course at grade 6. Students enroll in Combined Studies for two periods each day. These courses consist of one class period emphasizing reading and one class period emphasizing language arts. Reading and language arts study will be in the areas of developmental reading, spelling, oral communication, composition, and language grammar and usage. Research and study skills will include investigating and utilizing resource and reference materials, reading for information, summarizing, and note taking.

Social Studies

Social Studies is a required semester course in grade 6. Students in grade 6 expand their understanding of history by studying the people and events that ushered in the dawn of the western and non-western ancient civilizations. Geography is integrated throughout this course.

Science

Science is a required semester course in grade 6. This course presents the basic aspects of earth science. The content areas include: geology, astronomy, meteorology, oceanography, and the interactions of man and the environment. Science process skills and science-related career exploration are integrated in this course.

Mathematics

Mathematics is a required yearlong course in grade 6. This course will emphasize the development of written and oral communication skills in mathematics. The study of computation in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals is an integral component of this course. Emphasis will also be placed on the development of skills necessary for pre-algebra, problem-solving, number relationship, number systems, number theory, measurement and geometry.

Physical Education

Physical Education is a required yearlong course for students in grade 6. Students in grade 6 will develop a variety of physical education objectives including accuracy and speed; focus on targets; eye-hand, eye-foot, and other forms of coordination. Knowledge and application of lifetime fitness as well as personal conditioning will be introduced. The instructional emphasis is working cooperatively to achieve a common goal.

GRADE 6

REQUIRED EXPLORATORY COURSES

Students must enroll in the following four required elective courses in grade 6.

Art Design

This exploratory course is one of the required exploratory courses for grade 6 students. Exploratory Art Design provides a survey of various art media, emphasizing the design and fabrication of basic art projects. Students will be given experiences to assist them in understanding color and its application. Assignments may include materials such as pencil, chalk, ink, paper, paint, fibers, printmaking, and carving.

Computer Keyboarding

This exploratory course is one of the required exploratory courses for grade 6 students. The emphasis of instruction in Computer Keyboarding is to acquaint students with basic keyboarding and relate its function as a means of interacting with the computer. Instruction will utilize hands-on computer activities. Upon completion of this course, students will use the correct keyboard (typewriter) terminology and type with continuity, using proper keyboard finger placement.

Geography

This exploratory course is one of the required exploratory courses for grade 6 students. The emphasis of instruction is to acquaint students with the geographic areas of the world -- continents and oceans, major landmarks, meridians and parallels, time zones, major rivers and bodies of water, and the vocabulary of geography. The course will also present the study of the Roman Civilization from a geographical perspective.

Music

This exploratory course is one of the required exploratory courses for grade 6 students. Exploratory Music provides students a variety of musical activities that includes reading, listening, performing, and analyzing music. Upon completion of the course, students will possess a stronger background in basic music skills. Students will be encouraged to continue their study of music, both choral and instrumental, in the following years of their schooling.

GRADE 6

REQUIRED EXPLORATORY COURSES FOR SELECTED STUDENTS

Grade 6 students scoring below CST proficiency in language arts/reading or mathematics must enroll in the appropriate course listed below. Exploratory (grade 6) course options are available to students achieving at or above CST Proficiency in the areas of language arts/reading and mathematics. Based upon the results of CST and counselor recommendation, students scoring below CST proficiency in language arts/reading or will be required to enroll in prescriptive intervention courses in reading and mathematics.

Academic Support: English Language Arts (ELA)

The reading intervention course at grade 6 focuses upon the skills required to bring students up to grade level proficiency in reading. Students may enroll in this course from six weeks to a semester, with an early exit determined by demonstration of an increased ability in reading on a California Standards Test (CST) - aligned assessment.

Academic Support: Math

The math intervention course at grade 6 focuses upon the skills required to bring students up to grade level proficiency in mathematics. Students may enroll in this course from six weeks to a semester, with an early exit determined by demonstration of an increased ability in mathematics on a California Standards Test (CST) - aligned assessment.

GRADE 6

OTHER EXPLORATORY COURSES

*Students may select to enroll in **two elective courses** from the following list.*

Drama/Speech

Exploratory Drama/Speech provides students a variety of activities that include public speaking and dramatic interpretation. Students will experience different types of theatre and learn to apply the proper speaking skills for oral communication. Students will leave this course understanding the importance of effective communication skills and gain self-confidence. Students will be encouraged to continue their study of speech and drama in the following years of their schooling.

Home Economics

This course explores various areas of life skills such as home and kitchen safety, kitchen equipment, food preparation, the Food Guide Pyramid, person care and grooming, etiquette, and self-esteem.

Industrial Technology

Exploratory Technology is an introductory course that acquaints students with technology through hands-on experiences while reinforcing the academic core curriculum. A modular learning system is utilized in which students work in pairs, using a set of self-directed instructions that guide them through the weekly learning activity module. The activities focus on the following areas: biotechnology; communication; construction; machine and tool safety; materials processing; and power - energy - transportation.

Study Skills

This course in study skills for sixth graders will offer instruction in the following key areas: self-esteem, time management and organization, note taking and effective listening, textbook study, study for tests, and test-taking techniques.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS <> GRADES 7 - 8

REQUIRED COURSES

English

Grades 7 and 8

English is a required yearlong course in grades 7 and 8. These courses emphasize instruction in composition, grammar, and reading, and build upon the skills the student has acquired. The courses cover written language usage and structure, spelling, vocabulary development, library and research skills, and creative writing.

Social Studies

Social Studies is a required yearlong course in grades 7 and 8.

Grade 7

In grade 7, social studies examines the social, cultural, and technological changes during the period A.D. 500 - 1789. Areas of study include the fall of Rome, growth of Islam, African states, and civilizations of the Americas, China, Japan, Europe, and Medieval societies.

Grade 8

In grade 8, students review the major ideas, issues, and events preceding the founding of the United States. This course focuses upon the ideas, issues, and events from the framing of the Constitution to World War I, with an emphasis on America's role in the war.

Science

Science is a required yearlong course in grades 7 and 8.

Grade 7

The science course at grade 7 focuses upon life science. Instruction covers cells, energy, the body systems (such as respiratory, circulatory, nervous, etc.), and the cycles and interaction of living organisms. The matters of substance abuse, male and female reproductive systems, and sexually transmitted diseases are included in the human body units of this course.

Grade 8

In grade 8, the science course emphasizes the study of physical science. Instruction includes the scientific process, metric and customary systems of measure, laws of motion, energy, machines, chemistry, density and buoyancy, and the solar system. Graphing, analyzing data, and critical thinking are integrated throughout the course.

REQUIRED COURSES <> GRADES 7 & 8 (cont.)

Mathematics

Students must enroll in a mathematics course in grades 7 and 8.

Grade 7

Pre-Algebra

As a transitional course from General Math to Algebra I, Pre-Algebra 7 provides students the necessary foundation for Algebra I. Emphasis is placed upon the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) and the use of exponents with positive and negative numbers and variables. Students apply mathematics to solve problems in a variety of situations, including solving elementary equations. Students use the Pythagorean Theorem and various volume and surface area formulas.

Grade 8

In grade 8, students enroll in **one** of the following math courses, based upon teacher and/or counselor recommendation, course grade from Pre-Algebra 7, and/or test scores:

(1) Algebra I

In Algebra I, students learn to reason symbolically, and the complexity and types of equations and problems they are equipped to solve increase dramatically as a consequence. The key content of Algebra I involves understanding, writing, solving, and graphing linear and quadratic equations, including systems of two linear equations and two unknowns. Quadratic functions will be solved by graphing, factoring, completing the square, or by applying the quadratic formula. Students will also solve problems using monomial and polynomial expressions, employing a variety of algebra techniques. Emphasis will be placed on preparing students for success in Geometry and Algebra II courses.

(2) Algebra Readiness

Algebra Readiness is designed to facilitate student mastery of essential prerequisite algebra skills and concepts. This course focuses upon nine topics (*16 Math Content Standards*), identified in California's Mathematics Framework, as necessary for success in Algebra I. The topics are primarily pre-algebra standards and several algebra standards which include, but are not limited to: Operations on Whole Numbers and Rational Numbers; Symbolic Notation; Equations and Functions; the Coordinate Plane; and, Graphing Proportional Relationships. This course will provide support for students using a variety of instructional strategies, including teachers providing various ways to explain and develop concepts. Upon completion of Algebra Readiness, students may enroll in Algebra I.

Physical Education

Grades 7 and 8

The physical education class continues to develop the whole child through activities designed to meet their physical, emotional, social, and developmental needs. Emphasis is placed on individual skills, interests, and abilities. Students are required to wear prescribed attire for P.E.

GRADES 7 - 8 LANGUAGE ARTS REQUIRED SEMESTER ELECTIVE

Students are required to enroll in at least one language arts semester course in grades 7 and 8. These courses are designed to complement and extend the course of study presented in the yearlong English classes.

Academic Support: English Language Arts (ELA)

Selected students reading below grade level will be required to enroll in this course.

This course is designed for students who are not achieving the grade level expectancies for their English class and require additional reading/language arts instruction. In this course, students' deficiencies will be identified, and intensive whole class as well as individualized instruction will focus on these areas.

American Literature

This course provides a survey of selected major works in American literature. Short stories, poetry, and novels provide the background for class study of important literary terms and discussion of various writing styles.

Creative Writing

In this course, students use a variety of written forms including poetry, short story, drama, and essay. Emphasis is placed on using language as a creative tool to express attitudes, emotions, impressions, and reactions with originality and imagination.

Drama/Speech

This course combines elements of drama and speech. It includes role-playing, character interpretation, simple stagecraft, and participation in a production. It also presents instruction in speech planning, presentation of various forms such as persuasive, informative, and memorized speeches, and competition. Choral readings, oral interpretation, and pantomimes are also part of this course.

Journalism

Students in this course perform the basic techniques of newswriting. Topics include interviewing, editorials, copy reading, headline writing, feature stories, sports reporting, reviews, and advertising. This course also provides students develop the ability to make evaluations of news media.

Study Skills

This course in study skills offers instruction in the following key areas: time management and organizational skills, note taking and effective listening, textbook study, studying for tests, test-taking techniques, using reference materials and accessing resources, and affective skill development for adolescents.

World Literature

Selected contemporary and traditional works in poetry, drama, and novels will be used to acquaint students with literature by international authors. Emphasis is placed on literary terms and writing styles through class discussion and the student's written expression.

GRADES 7 – 8 OTHER SEMESTER ELECTIVES

*Students may select from the following elective courses in grades 7 and 8.
Note that some courses may have prerequisites.*

Academic Support: Math

Selected students performing below grade level in math will be required to enroll in this course.

Math Support is designed for students who are not achieving the math grade level expectancies and require additional mathematics instruction. In this class, students' deficiencies will be identified, and intensive whole class as well as individualized instruction will focus on these areas.

Adventures in Science

This elective course for *students earning an "A" or "B" in their current science course* presents science topics which extend beyond the traditional required middle school science curriculum. Topics of study are presented in an integrated manner combining subjects such as mathematics and art with science. The instructional approach will be activity-based.

Art Design

Students are given the opportunity to further explore various art media. The emphasis is on helping the student interpret and communicate the world through art. Appreciation for art, both past and present, is encouraged. Areas covered may include both two- and three-dimensional design, color and its application, combined techniques, perspective, and free-hand drawing.

Band: Beginning and Advanced --- or Jazz Band

All band classes are yearlong courses. Students reading at or above grade-level level and demonstrating proficiency on the CST in may have the required Language Arts elective waived with counselor approval.

Beginning Band is an introductory course for students wishing to learn to play wind or percussion instruments. Students receive instruction in the fundamental of music reading, intonation, and interpretation.

Advanced Band offers more advanced training in performing on a band instrument using music that is technically more advanced. Students perform individually, in ensembles, and in concert.

Jazz Band is an advanced performance course designed to familiarize the student with traditional jazz styles including big band jazz, be-bop, Dixieland, fusion, and jazz-rock. Students perform using current jazz-playing techniques.

GRADES 7 – 8

Other Electives (continued)

Basic Ceramics

The major emphasis of this course is the exploration of ceramic design and construction. The course also introduces a historical background of ceramics through a variety of studio experiences.

Chorus --- or Jazz Chorus

Chorus is a yearlong course. Students reading at or above grade-level and demonstrating proficiency on the CST in language arts/reading may have the required Language Arts elective waived with counselor approval.

Chorus is a non-selective group organized for both boys and girls. Emphasis is on developing skills in singing. Students learn the fundamentals of proper posture, breath control, tone production, and interpersonal skills needed for ensemble singing.

Jazz Chorus is a performance group, devoted to the study and performance of music from a wide spectrum of styles. The music repertoire is of high quality and is chosen to represent a wide range of contemporary and historical jazz periods and styles. The chorus performs at school concerts, various assemblies and rallies, festivals, and at least one competition. Students must audition with teacher to enroll in this course.

Computer Literacy

Students successfully completing this course will have a functional knowledge of computers and their effects on society. Course content includes the capabilities and limitations of the computer, computer applications, problem solving, basic terminology, programming, and word processing.

Cross Age (Grade 8 only)

Students wishing to enroll in this course must have teacher and/or counselor approval.

As cross-age tutors, students provide individual tutoring within the classroom setting. Students also perform other related duties assigned by the supervising teacher. The areas for Cross-Age tutoring are Computers, Sewing/Needlecrafts, Technology Education, Photography, and assisting English language learners.

Foods/Life Skills

Foods/Life Skills presents a survey of the following: personal and family relationships, understanding and caring for young children, making consumer decisions, creating one's personal image, making nutritional choices, and preparing a variety of foods. Reading, writing, and basic math skills are integrated throughout the course.

Library Service

Students enrolled in this course must have counselor approval and a record of good attendance as prerequisites. Students in this course assist the school librarian in all phases of library science that are required to maintain a school library. Some of the activities include processing books, helping students to use the patron (card) catalog and assisting students conducting research.

GRADES 7 – 8

Other Electives (continued)

Manual Communication

This course is offered to students who are interested in learning American Sign Language communication. The course will include a basic introduction to deafness, a brief introduction to the way the ear functions, and a study of the language of sign and finger spelling. *Because of the availability of the staff from the SELACO program for hearing-impaired students at Sussman Middle School, this course is only offered at Sussman Middle School.*

Office Service (Grade 8 only)

Office Service students perform general office procedures, such as receptionist, answering the telephone, filing, delivering messages. In this course, the value of a pleasant appearance and good work habits will be emphasized. *Students enrolled in this course must have prior approval from the individual school office and school counselor as well as a record of good attendance.*

Photography (Traditional)

In working with 35mm cameras, enlargers, film-developing equipment, and other related materials, students learn the fundamentals of photography. Also included in this course are the following units covering: camera-handling basics, determining proper exposure setting, producing quality black and white enlargements, processing black and white film, analyzing composition and creativity, and career opportunities in the photography industry.

Sewing / Needlecrafts

Sewing / Needlecrafts emphasizes the student as a consumer in exploring various aspects of clothing, such as the purchase and care of sewing-related materials, understanding and using patterns, and operating sewing machines and other equipment safely. The student will develop an awareness on how one's personal clothing needs may be met through individual projects. Reading, writing, and math skills are integrated throughout the course.

Spanish Language Conversation

This elective course is designed for students wishing to develop the ability to communicate in Spanish and to engage in cultural awareness activities. Using the communicative approach, emphasis is placed upon helping students comprehend and react appropriately to oral messages in Spanish. This course also provides information that is designed to enrich student understanding and appreciation of the entire Spanish-speaking world. *Students enrolled in this course should not be native speakers of Spanish.*

GRADES 7 – 8

Other Electives *(continued)*

Technology Education

This elective course introduces students to technology through hand-on experiences while reinforcing the academic core subjects. Using modular instruction, students explore topics such as biotechnology, telecommunications, construction, robotics, and computer-assisted drawing. Modules are self-directed and encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students have access to the latest computer and multimedia technologies. Occupational and educational career opportunities are also presented.

A.V.I.D.

A.V.I.D. (Advancement via Individual Determination) is an academic program based upon writing as a tool of learning, use of the inquiry method, and collaborative learning. Its three main components are: academic instruction, tutorial support, and motivational activities. The focus of the course is to prepare under-achieving students for college eligibility. *Students are required to complete two hours of homework every night and enroll in challenging middle school courses.*