



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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PARENT CURRICULUM GUIDE



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GRADE

8



How to Use the Parent Curriculum Guide:

This guide gives you the tools you need to support your child at home. In this booklet, you'll find strategies based on the DCPS curriculum to help your child meet his or her learning goals. You'll have a better understanding of what your child is learning in school and how you can further learning at home.

What You Can Do:

You play a very important role in your child's academic performance. Here are some things you can do to support learning at home:

- ▶ Let your child know that education is the foundation for success.
- ▶ Know what your child is expected to learn in the 8th grade.
- ▶ Help your child set high short-term and long-term academic goals.
- ▶ Provide a designated time and location to complete homework.
- ▶ Talk to your child about what is happening in school and constantly monitor progress.
- ▶ Advocate for your child.
- ▶ Share your child's strengths with your child's teacher.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher:

When speaking with your child's teacher about academic progress, here are a few questions you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ What are the learning goals? Can you show me examples of student work that meets the learning goals?
- ▶ May I see an example of my child's work? How does it or doesn't it meet these learning goals?
- ▶ Is my child at or above grade level, what extra support is available? What can I do at home?
- ▶ What classroom routines do you have that should also be used at home?
- ▶ What kinds of questions could I ask my child on a daily basis about your class?

Talking to Your Child:

Good conversations help our children see that we are interested in their lives. Here are a few conversation starters you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ Tell me about the best part of your day.
- ▶ What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- ▶ Can you show me something you learned today?
- ▶ What books are you reading in school? Describe your favorite character? Why do you like that character?
- ▶ What do you think you should do more of at school? What do you think you should do less of? Why?

WHAT MY EIGHTH GRADER IS LEARNING

|  | ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  | MATH  | SCIENCE  | SOCIAL STUDIES  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p>FALL</p>  | <p>Students will understand that despite there being shared notions of success in America, multiple, and at times conflicting, definitions of the American Dream exist.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>During this unit, students become critical readers of texts they encounter. During the unit, students will read historical fiction and non-fiction to explore historical accounts from multiple voices and perspectives. They will discover that critical readers recognize that a single text presents just one portrayal of a topic or event and one writer's perspective of the subject matter.</p>  | <p>Students will work with radicals and integer exponents. Students will understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Students will understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Students will use models to understand congruence and similarity and understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.</p>  | <p>Students use chemical reactions to describe the law of conservation of mass.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Students investigate how thermal energy is released or absorbed in chemical reactions.</p>  | <p>How are societies built? Students explore the differing motivations and beliefs of Native Americans, Africans, and European, and how they contributed to the cooperation and conflicts that existed between the groups.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>When is revolt justified? Students summarize the American revolution, and analyze the war's impact around the world.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>What does a government owe its people? Students identify early American democratic principles as stated in the founding documents and construct arguments on the limitations and consequences of the compromises made to create a new government.</p>  |
| <p>WINTER</p>  | <p>Students will analyze the tension between conformity and individuality. Students will examine how and why individualism is or is not desirable through literary examples. Student will present evidence-based writing that focuses on crafting stories that describe a choice to take the road less traveled.</p>  | <p>Students will define, evaluate, and compare functions and use functions to model relationships between quantities.</p>  | <p>Students examine how thermal energy transfer in a system can be minimized or maximized.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Students investigate the various ways that forces impact motion in our daily lives.</p>  | <p>When should a president be impeached? Students compare actions of past presidents to current events making a claim for when presidents should be impeached.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Did the Constitution create the best government possible? Students discuss early American democracy and summarize the founding documents and principles of the United States.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Does progress help everyone? Students explore how technological, ideological, and economic progress led to the expanding of the country, as well as the effects of westward expansion.</p>  |
| <p>SPRING</p>  | <p>Students will explore the concept of community and how the life experiences of individuals connect to form a community. Students will investigate ways to enact positive change in their communities.</p>  | <p>Students will know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.</p>  | <p>Students explore the different types of waves used in technology and communication applications.</p>  | <p>What is our moral obligation in times of great crisis? Students examine how reformers chose to act for social justice and the impacts of different types of action.</p> <p>•••</p> <p>Are we still fighting the Civil War? Students explore the nature of the Civil War and its aftermath, and how racism, segregation, and discrimination has persisted despite Reconstruction.</p>  |

ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE WITH MY EIGHTH GRADER



Read together everyday for 20 minutes.

FALL



Analyze the lyrics of the national anthem with your child and visit the section of the Smithsonian's website dedicated to the history of the anthem. Answer the questions at the end to receive a special reward! Visit bit.ly/1rZmmlU.



Ask your child to identify congruent and similar figures in different logos and signs.



Buy a pack of pH test strips and test the pH of various chemicals around your home, such as tap water, soda, detergent, etc. Create a pH poster with your child and include representative items that are considered acids, bases, and neutral based on the items you tested around the home.

Take your child on a tour of your local fire station to learn more about their jobs, especially about the clothing they wear that protects them from extreme heat from fires. Set up a tour. Visit: bit.ly/DCPSFEMS.



Visit the National Museum of the American Indian and check out the exhibit "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations" bit.ly/DCPSNative. What were the outcomes of these treaties for the groups involved?

Listen to the *Hamilton* soundtrack (clean versions available) to reinforce the themes in this unit.

Visit the National Archives to see the actual Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights (free, see bit.ly/DCPSArchives for more info).



Keep a journal recording how much time you spend reading each day! List your favorite characters from each story and identify a place in the story where the character shows a quality that you admire.

Consider taking your child to the Kennedy Center to see a play of your choosing. After the play, discuss the central idea or theme of the play with your child. Go to bit.ly/DCPSKC for a listing of free shows.



WINTER



Consider exploring one of the many DC exhibits that explore marginalized societies and discuss ways to act as allies.

Consider asking your child if they feel pressure to "fit in." Ask them to develop a comparison chart about the benefits of being an individual vs. conforming. Discuss the chart with your child. Remember to be supportive and model active listening.



Watch these videos on proofs for the Pythagorean Theorem: bit.ly/DCPSKahn and bit.ly/DCPSKahn2

Discuss with your child a car's efficiency in terms of miles per gallons of gas. Ask questions such as "if a car typically gets 20 mpg, and you put in 10 gallons of gas, how far will you be able to travel?" (200 miles)



Build a roller coaster using items from the home (such as toy cars, marbles, and styrofoam tubing). See who can build the longest roller coaster that uses gravity to "power" the motion from the start of the coaster to the finish.

Help your child engineer a container that will protect an egg from a high drop. Use materials around the house to design, test, and build the best structure. Loser has to clean up afterwards!



Practice debate skills at home by putting one of the president's on trial: you be the judge and have your child advocate for or against impeachment.

The We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution Simulated Congressional Hearings City-wide Competition is this month! Help your child practice giving their four-minute testimony at home.

Discuss the wide-ranging impact that new technology can have by using examples from your (or your child's) life time, such as the internet or smart phones. What new problems did this technology create?



SPRING



Select two authors whose work has a social or political message. Read or watch one of their speeches and discuss with your child how they use persuasion to convey their message.



Take your child to the International Spy Museum to learn more about how spies used - and still use - different technologies to secretly pass top secret messages without detection. Note: this museum is free to DCPS students!



Have your child practice their "Patriotism and Protest" poem or song and help them prepare for the Patriotism and Protest event. If you are able, invite friends and family to attend the event.

The SAGE post-test takes place in June! Encourage your child to do their best!



Visit the NBC Learn with your child to view the Cheeseburger Chemistry videos and learn about interactions of matter. Check out the videos to learn the connection between chemistry and cooking: bit.ly/DCPSChem

Ask your child to think about whether taller people have larger feet. Have them collect data on at least 10 people and see if any patterns of association arise.

