Common Development Characteristics of Students in Sixth Grade

Sixth graders often...
• show vast appetite for food and physical activity
• experience difficulty with decisions
• talk impulsively before thinking
• prefer new tasks and experience to reflection or revision of previous work
• establish and modify rules, develop hypotheses
• initiate own activity
• enjoy conversations with adults and peers

In the Vancouver Public Schools, students are assessed on their progress toward meeting the Common Core State Standards for literacy and math as well as state content standards in social studies, science, the arts, and PE/Health. Teachers provide clearly articulated and appropriate expectations for their students that are aligned with these standards and that are appropriate for each course. A wide variety of quality assessments are used to reflect student proficiency, including classroom-based assessments throughout each trimester.

There are many opportunities for schools to communicate about student learning throughout the school year. Conferences are held during the year to allow parents, students and educators to share information and set goals for the remainder of the school year. At the end of each trimester, report cards are sent home which communicate students’ progress in each of their courses as they work toward meeting learning standards.
MATHEMATICS

In Grade 6, instructional time focuses on the development of the following mathematical practices and content:

Mathematical Practices
1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Ratios and Proportional Relationships
• Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.

The Number System
• Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions.
• Compute fluently with multi-digit numbers and find common factors and multiples.
• Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.

Expressions and Equations
• Apply and extend previous understandings of arithmetic to algebraic expressions.
• Reason about and solve one-variable equations and inequalities.
• Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.

Geometry
• Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

Statistics and Probability
• Develop understanding of statistical variability.
• Summarize and describe distributions.

SCIENCE

Through making observations and planning investigations, students build their understanding of science. The topic of study in 6th grade is earth science.
• Understands and applies earth science concepts, content and principles.
• Applies scientific skills and procedures.
• Participates in inquiry and scientific design.

HEALTH

Students develop the concepts and skills necessary for a safe, active and healthy life. By the end of middle school, the student will:
• Identify positive and negative consequences of behavior choices.
• Understand the physical maturation process.
• Understand the relationship between nutrition and health.
• Identify community health resources.

FITNESS

In physical education classes, students will:
• Participate in a variety of individual and team fitness activities.
• Understand the components of physical fitness.
• Create and monitor a personal fitness plan to meet appropriate fitness standards.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The 6th grade students will:
• Study the geography, history, civics, and economics of the ancient world from pre-history to 600 A.D.
• Compare and contrast elements of culture - society, government, economy, technology, arts, ideas and beliefs in:
  ~ River Civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Africa
  ~ Greece, Rome and China

LITERACY

Sixth grade students will develop literacy through integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening experiences. They will learn critical reading skills and increase academic and content area vocabulary through these experiences. They will give evidence of their learning through their writing and through collaborative participation in conversations.

Reading
• Read literary text for approximately 45% of their school day and read informational text for 55% of their day in classes such as science and social studies.
• Read to understand what the text says as well as “reading between the lines” to make logical inferences.
• Use evidence from the text to support discussions about the text and claims about the text in writing.
• Summarize the text without personal opinions or judgments.
• Analyze the text to see how individuals, events, and ideas are developed and interact within the text.
• Compare multiple texts on the same topic and analyze similarities and differences between the texts.
• Be aware of choices authors makes around the words, structure and features of the text.
• Find the claim an author makes in a text and evidence to support it.
• Demonstrate literacy with electronic texts and visual mediums.
• Read texts at appropriately challenging levels proficiently and with help as needed for texts at the high end of complexity by the end of the year.

Writing
• Write to persuade or argue a point, to explain information, and to narrate experiences.
• Participate in multiple short research projects as well as more extended research projects to gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility of each source and quote or paraphrase the data while avoiding plagiarism.
• Practice revising and editing writing and use technology to produce and publish writing.
• Use appropriate academic vocabulary in writing and demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
Common Development Characteristics of Students in Seventh and Eighth Grade

Seventh and eighth graders often...

- enjoy high physical energy
- set realistic goals in the short-term
- have feelings that are easily hurt
- display humor highlighted by growth of sarcasm
- show high interest in current events, politics, social justice, pop culture, materialism
- learn well in cooperative groups
- respond well to academic variety and challenge

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING FOR GRADES 6-8

In the Vancouver Public Schools, students are assessed on their progress toward meeting the Common Core State Standards for literacy and math as well as state content standards in social studies, science, the arts, and PE/Health. Teachers provide clearly articulated and appropriate expectations for their students that are aligned with these standards and that are appropriate for each course. A wide variety of quality assessments are used to reflect student proficiency, including classroom-based assessments throughout each trimester.

REPORTING PRACTICES FOR GRADES 6-8

There are many opportunities for schools to communicate about student learning throughout the school year. Conferences are held during the year to allow parents, students and educators to share information and set goals for the remainder of the school year. At the end of each trimester, report cards are sent home which communicate students’ progress in each of their courses as they work toward meeting learning standards.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

In the visual arts, music, and dance students acquire knowledge and skills to create, perform and respond in the arts.

By the end of middle school, visual art students will:
- Use and apply visual art elements: line, value, color, shape/form and texture.
- Identify and use the principles of organization: composition, rhythm/repetition and balance.
- Apply creative process and presentation skills.
- Demonstrate knowledge of art history.
- Explain how art communicates ideas and emotions.

By the end of middle school, choral and/or instrumental music students will:
- Read and write musical notation using whole through sixteenth notes and rests in treble and bass clef.
- Recognize, explain and apply musical form.
- Understand and apply use of staccato/legato and accent.
- Perform with expression individually or in ensemble.
- Use listening skills to correct personal tone, pitch, rhythm and volume.
- Apply proper audience and performance skills.

OTHER ELECTIVES

Seventh and eighth grade students will also have the opportunity to participate in electives such as world languages, technology, AVID, Leadership, and yearbook/journalism.

The Mission of Vancouver Public Schools

Excellence in Education

In partnership with home and community, Vancouver Public Schools provides an innovative learning environment that engages and empowers each student to develop the knowledge and essential skills to become a competent, responsible, and compassionate citizen.

A Guide to GRADES 7 and 8

Curriculum and Instruction

Common Development Characteristics of Students in Seventh and Eighth Grade

Seventh and eighth graders often...

- enjoy high physical energy
- set realistic goals in the short-term
- have feelings that are easily hurt
- display humor highlighted by growth of sarcasm
- show high interest in current events, politics, social justice, pop culture, materialism
- learn well in cooperative groups
- respond well to academic variety and challenge
LITERACY
Seventh and eighth grade students will continue to develop literacy through integrated reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences. They will learn critical reading skills and increase academic and content area vocabulary through these experiences. They will give evidence of their learning through their writing and through collaborative participation in conversations. By the end of 8th grade, they will be able to read complex texts at their grade level independently and write in the persuasive/argumentative style, the expository style, and the narrative style.

Reading - by the end of 8th grade:
• Build on the reading skills developed in 6th grade and evolve to a level of critical reading to prepare for high school.
• Read literary texts during 45% of their reading day and informational texts for 55% of their reading day.
• Critical reading including skills such as analyzing how an author develops a main idea in a text and makes connections between individuals, ideas, or events.
• Analyze how words set a tone in a piece of writing, and how the structure of paragraphs and sentences play a role in refining a concept.
• Determine an author’s point of view and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
• Determine the author’s claim, evidence to support the claim, and decide whether the author’s reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.
• Read texts at the top range of complexity grade band independently.

Writing - by the end of 8th grade:
• Respond to text-based questions in short as well as more extended responses.
• Develop research skills with short and more extended research projects.
• Engage in a cycle that includes reading, discussing what has been read with others, and writing about what they have read and discussed.
• Through content studies, integrate these literacy skills in ways that will prepare for high school level work.

MATHEMATICS
In Grades 7 and 8, instructional time focuses on the development of the following mathematical practices and content:

Mathematical Practices
1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Grade 7 Critical Areas
• developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships
• developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations
• solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume
• drawing inferences about populations based on samples

Grade 8 Critical Areas
• formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations
• grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships
• analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

SCIENCE
Through making observations and planning investigations, students build their understanding of science. The topic of study in 7th grade is life science and in 8th grade it is physical science. During these courses, students will:
• Understand and apply life science and physical science concepts, content, and principles
• Apply scientific skills and procedures
• Participate in inquiry and scientific design

HEALTH
Students develop the concepts and skills necessary for a safe, active and healthy life. By the end of middle school, the student will:
• Identify positive and negative consequences of behavior choices
• Understand the physical maturation process
• Understand the relationship between nutrition and health
• Identify community health resources

FITNESS
In physical education classes, students will:
• Participate in a variety of individual and team fitness activities
• Understand the components of physical fitness
• Create and monitor a personal fitness plan to meet appropriate fitness standards

SOCIAL STUDIES
Through units of study, students will build knowledge and skills in history, geography, economics, and civics with the goal of developing responsible citizenship.

Grade 7 Content
• Washington State History/World Affairs

Grade 8 Content
• United States from development to 1900