

Experiencing
the future, today.



Middle School Program Guide



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The American International School of Zagreb

The American International School of Zagreb is a mission and vision-driven school. We are a professional learning community where our success is achieved through collaboration and interdependence; we work together as a community to achieve the best results possible for our students. The AISZ Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for our journey to enhanced success, confident in our purpose of nurturing each child's growth and learning.

OUR MISSION

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.

We believe in all of our students and that the futures our students have before them are filled with remarkable opportunities. Learning at American International School of Zagreb prepares capable and empathetic students with the skills competency and character to be equipped for an ever-changing and dynamic future where the large majority of employment opportunities have yet to be invented. We believe that the attributes of a successful international citizen are empathy, the making of ethical choices, a service-minded attitude to others, a concern for our environment and resources, a commitment to integrity and the personal resilience to learn from disappointments and failures.

OUR VISION

Experiencing the future, today.

The American International School of Zagreb offers an academically rigorous international curriculum from Early Childhood to Grade 12. Our PreKindergarten and Kindergarten program is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, Grades 1 to 10 are anchored in the framework of the Common Ground Collaborative, and Grades 11 and 12 consistently achieve above world-average results in the International Baccalaureate Diploma. We offer an accredited, coherent, balanced, and personally engaging learning environment based on current research and best practice. Our learning engagements are future-oriented, focused on acquiring the interdisciplinary skills and character dispositions necessary for a successful future in the age of innovation. We look to what is to come and ground our actions on the belief that learning is for now as well as the future. We also believe that balance and fun should always be present.

OUR LEARNING PRINCIPLES

We subscribe to the Common Ground Collaborative principles:

- We can all learn and have a right to do so.
- Learning is a personal and social, as well as an emotional and cognitive activity.
- Learning environments have a significant impact on our learning.
- Transfer of learning happens best in rich and relevant contexts.
- Common learning cultures need to construct common meaning through a common learning language.

As part of this growing professional network we feel it is necessary to define learning first and as such believe learning is a process that leads to a sustained and demonstrable consolidation or extension of conceptual understanding, competencies, and character. (CGC)



AISZ STUDENT IMPACT INITIATIVES

Attention to the culture of the school is necessary to facilitate the implementation of any strategic technical change. The nature of this culture can be conceptualized as having three significant Strategic Student Impact Goals.

- Every student will become an expert in his or her learning.
- Every student is known, advocated for, and supported.
- Every student personalizes learning and pursues dreams.

Through a continuous commitment to improvement, and the effective use of data, we can monitor the progress of our work and therefore measure our own culture, its effect, and the success of our Strategic Plan.

AISZ KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Key Strategic Initiatives outline steps to advance our school toward its future-focused, inclusive, student-centered destiny.

- A school community united around our Mission and Vision and more connected to the local and global community.
- Create learning opportunities indicative of a concept school for the future.
- Facilitate each students' growth through personal, self-directed, authentic learning.
- Become a place that provides opportunities for emotional, physical, and psychological balance.

To achieve these initiatives, we realize that our school systems must be optimized and reflect the best of professional practice. We also need to increase the flexible utilization of space, time and technology.

AISZ Learning Ecosystem

In the AISZ Learning Ecosystem, each of the three rings around the vision we hold for our students can rotate in either direction allowing the Eight Human Commonalities to be approached through any subject discipline and within any of the three or more cultural domains of **Expertise**, **Extraordinary Care**, and **The Imagined**.





Learning in the Middle School

A Message from the Upper School Principal

Walking through the airport in Geneva several years ago, a large, colorful ad caught my attention. It featured what looked like a middle school aged girl standing next to a race car, holding a helmet, a big smile on her face. In bold, cursive font were the words “Talent n’as pas d’ age.” (Talent doesn’t have an age). I wrote the quote down immediately and it has stuck with me ever since.

Middle school is anything but “the middle.” It’s not high school light. It’s actually the peak creativity years, the time when the foundations of inquiry and curiosity formed in lower school blossom into bold interdisciplinary thinking, conceptual and abstract expression, and a honing of skills in written and verbal expression.

Middle schoolers embrace the imagined, the “what ifs” and the adventures of risk (within reason of course). They often throw caution to the wind, blurt out their latest ideas, and find excitement in the newness of learning. Middle school is a time of exploration and developing of talents, the essential bridge between the evolution of personal identity, habits of learning, and the design of a strong foundation that will serve them well in adulthood. We acknowledge this by building into the space of the school day opportunities to reflect, collaborate, be outdoors, perform, ideate, and explore, whether it be through electives, interdisciplinary work, student council and service learning initiatives, or simply the time and opportunity to think.

I have always believed that genius lies in making the complex simple. It’s why we pay lots of money to watch pianists, athletes, and stage actors. This is the peak of the human condition, to be able to distill something really difficult into a tangible experience. This is what we are aspiring to do in AISZ middle school, to make the complex simple and to develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.

Stephen Dexter, Jr.
AISZ Upper School Principal



Learning Assets

As an inquiry-based school, we aspire to develop learning assets as described by Kath Murdoch

We are researchers. We can formulate questions and locate and use a wide range of sources and techniques to investigate problems, interests and issues. We think critically about the information we gather and we are careful to acknowledge our sources.

We are thinkers. We can think logically, creatively and reflectively. We think about how we use our thinking and have different strategies for making our thinking visible to others. We remain open-minded and know that our thinking changes as we learn.

We are collaborators. We can work with others on shared goals, questions and challenges. We know how to be a constructive part of a team, to use different roles for different tasks and to actively listen to and respect other people's views. We understand how our behavior affects others.

We are self-managers. We can learn independently and can make wise decisions about our learning. We know ourselves as learners and can set and work towards personal goals. We know we can continually improve as learners.

We are communicators. We can communicate ideas confidently in different ways and for different purposes. We listen thoughtfully to what others communicate to us. We can adapt our communication style to different contexts.



Transition Programming and Support

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise

International schools are unique because they represent more than the sum of their parts. With 39 nationalities, AISZ approaches the learning journey of each child with the understanding that one size does not fit all, and that cultural, linguistic, and prior learning experiences are important attributes to the development of each person. Our programs, supports, and choices not only reinforce this principle, but our highly trained staff ensure that it is understood.

Each child comes to us with her or his own particular strengths, personalities and passions. We see each of them as a 'story of possibility' filled with promise. We build on that promise, working together to develop them into highly educated learning experts. As we map their learning journeys, we show them exceptional care, making sure that every student is known, challenged and supported. By personalizing their learning, we work towards realizing the futures our children imagine for themselves. We believe that each one of those futures can be truly extraordinary.

Advisory / Homeroom / Community Block

The AISZ Advisory program is put in place to support the social, emotional, and academic well-being of all our students. All students are part of an advisory group that meets daily in their homeroom. Each class has a homeroom advisor with the goal being that each student is known, advocated for, and supported by multiple layers of adults in the school. The advisory program serves to keep students connected and informed as well as a forum for pastoral care check-ins and skills-based lessons. Every five days, students participate in a Community Block which is dedicated to skills-based lessons and pastoral care check-ins with students. Each month there is a different focus (e.g. organizational skills, digital citizenship, mental health). Lessons are put together by the school counselor based on standards from the International School Counselling Association.

Student Support

As collaborative professionals, the AISZ Student Support Team (SST) works closely with students and families. The SST comprises:

- Learning Support
- English as an Additional/Academic Language
- Social and Emotional Counselling

Caring for the academic, emotional, moral and physical learning needs is complex. For this reason, we are firmly committed to a collaborative and holistic team approach to problem identification and the design of interventions that will enhance student learning.

The SST successfully serves a managed number of students representing a range of learning differences, from mild and moderate to exceptionally able learning profiles. Support is based on a tiered, Response to Intervention (RTI), approach through push-in or pull-out, small group or individualized support. The SST monitors progress using classroom and standardized data points.

For each student receiving support, an intervention plan is developed. At times, a referral for a full educational evaluation may be made.

Students with identified learning needs may be referred to take the Learning Strategies course in place of an elective. The course is adapted from the SMARTS Curriculum, which builds skills in the areas of organization and prioritization, goal setting, self-checking and monitoring, cognitive flexibility, and understanding of and advocating for themselves as learners.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

AISZ recognizes technology as a dynamic tool for learning that optimizes productivity, connectivity, collaboration and creativity. All students get either an AISZ owned Chromebook or bring their own laptop (BYOD). Information technology and media literacy are fully integrated into our curriculum and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom walls. The program empowers its users through the responsible use of technology and digital citizenship.

Athletics and After School Activities

Balance is essential to our lives, so diverse learning environments and a comprehensive program of after-school activities enhance our total school experience. Participating in our after school and sports activities is strongly encouraged as it promotes a healthy lifestyle and also builds friendships.

The middle school years are one of exploration and experimentation with activities that can become positive lifelong habits. AISZ strives to offer a robust range of activities from athletics (both competitive and intramural) and CEESA clubs to a multitude of after school activities.

Athletics for MS include soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball and cross-country running. Weekly practices and local friendly competitions throughout the season allow for our athletes to get a taste of team play and grow as athletes.

CEESA Club offerings include Knowledge Bowl, Math Counts, Speech & Debate, and Model United Nations. They allow our students to experience new avenues in which to direct their interests. CEESA clubs may experience international competitions throughout our region.

A wide-range of After School Activities are sponsored by faculty and outside providers. Pursuits such as chess, art, yearbook, gardening, wall climbing, horseback riding, taekwondo and even public speaking allow students to stretch their interests. Each semester these offerings change, allowing students to have exposure to many different activities.

Unity Trips and Treks

A place that provides psychological balance and emotional and physical wellness. The middle school Unity Trips and Treks program extends student learning beyond experiences gained at school. The primary goal is for students to build positive relationships, trust, and cooperation with their peers and teachers by facing unique challenges and experiences.

The Unity Trips, designed with our Outward Bound partners and external providers, are age appropriate overnight trips designed to build unity with each grade level, transition new students to our community, and orient students with the beautiful coastline and landscape of Croatia. The trips vary in length and purpose, from teambuilding and outdoor leadership skills, to thematic challenges such as the 'hero's journey,' as described in the Outward Bound experiential learning curriculum.

Library and Media Center

The AISZ Library and Media Center's mission is to help members of our learning community:

- Develop and foster the love for reading, life-long learning, and creativity
- Be effective, ethical, and critical users of information
- Personalize learning and pursue their dreams
- Further develop their skills and character

The AISZ Libraries are not only an educational and cultural environment that supports learning but also a fun place where the love for reading and learning happens. Both our libraries are designed with an open concept in mind and placed at the center of learning. This means the libraries have no doors, or walls and are surrounded by classrooms or gardens.

The library program at AISZ strives to be actively engaged in connecting with students and teachers to further our established curriculum as well as to extend our program of literary appreciation, information/research skills, and digital citizenship. AISZ uses the AASL (American Association of School Librarians) Standards, as well as the Common Sense Education and their award-winning K-12 Digital Citizenship Curriculum.

Service Learning

Service learning is embedded in the AISZ mission statement. We want our students to become successful international citizens who know what is going on in our world and our community and use their time and talents to help others. AISZ believes that the attributes of a successful international citizen are empathy, the making of ethical choices, a service-minded attitude to others, a concern for our environment and resources, a commitment to integrity and the personal resilience to learn from disappointments and failures.

The Service Learning program has been designed to ensure that each student is involved in new and meaningful experiences serving our community. Service learning gives students an opportunity to learn from hands-on experiences and develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, decision making, collaboration and communication. It also gives our students an opportunity to build positive relationships with community members, develop a deeper understanding of themselves, as well as empathy and respect for others.

The AISZ Service Learning Program uses Cathryn Berger Kaye's 5 Stages of Service Learning (Investigation, Preparation, Action, Reflection, Demonstration) as a framework for program delivery.

Middle School Sample Schedule

The Middle School timetable is designed around the following:

- A ten day fixed schedule with a combination of 84 and 42 minute classes.
- Foundational Courses: 4x84 min and 1x42 minute classes over ten days
- Electives and Explorations: 2x84 and 3x42min over ten days
- Study hall once in the 10 day rotation
- Advisory period every day for ten minutes and every Friday in the morning for 42 minutes as a community building and special activity time.
- A 'consultancy' period after homeroom advisory for focused student learning.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
8:00 - 8:42	Math				Community Block					Community Block
8:42 - 9:24	Design Thinking	English	Science	English	Study Hall	I&S	Math	Croatian	Science	Croatian
9:24 - 9:34	Advisory									
9:34 - 10:11	Consultation									
10:01 - 10:11	Mid-morning break									
10:11-10:53	Science	Croatian	Math	Croatian	PE/ Health	Croatian	PE/ Health	Design Thinking	PE/ Health	English
10:53-11:35					Science					
11:40-12:22	PE/ Health	I&S	Design Thinking	I&S	French	Music	Science	I&S	Math	Music
12:22-13:04	Lunch									
13:04-13:51	PE/ Health	I&S	French	I&S	French	Design Thinking	Science	English	Math	Design Thinking
13:51-14:33	French	Music	PE/ Health	Music	Math		French		French	
14:33-15:15						English		Music		I&S

*This schedule is for illustrative purposes only.
Your child's class schedule may differ.

Grade 6 Course Overview

Grade Six is the time in a student's learning journey that discrete subjects are introduced with a criterion-based marking system, a standards-based curriculum, and an inquiry framework. The learner assets are embedded in each subject and students experience a number of exploratory courses in addition to the foundation classes such as language & literature, science, individuals & societies, and mathematics.

GRADE 6 FOUNDATION COURSES

English Language and Literature 6

The Grade Six English Language and Literature utilizes AERO Common Core English Language Arts standards to focus on linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills in order to develop interdisciplinary understanding. Reading and writing are intentionally woven together into interdisciplinary units that focus on the further development of organizational skills and stamina in reading and writing a variety of texts.

Students are immersed in the world of creative writing and exposed to a variety of ways in which to express themselves. Through thematic units, students are exposed to various literary genres in order to develop comprehension, interpretation, and application. Inquiry is an integral part of language learning and aims to support students' understanding by providing opportunities for voice and choice within independent and collaborative investigations.

Mathematics 6

In Mathematics 6, students follow the accelerated pathway based on Open-Up resources aligned to the common core standards. Students will build both their procedural and conceptual fluency when working with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, as well as negative numbers. They will develop analytical thinking and communication skills as they learn how to select and use a variety of strategies to solve problems and share their mathematical thinking. Students will investigate ratio concepts and use ratios to solve problems. Students construct geometric figures, examine proportional relationships, and use these to solve real-world problems. They will be empowered to successfully apply these mathematical skills in a variety of contexts with perseverance and confidence. Units related to measurement, and data will be studied, focusing on students applying their knowledge to real-life situations, considering different ways of displaying information, and limitations on processes.



Individuals and Societies 6

Grade 6 Individuals and Societies has been designed to help students develop an understanding of the world that we live in and gain insight into how modern society has developed, adding context and perspective to a range of issues.

This course consists of five units of inquiry, ranging from globalization, mapping, civilizations, settlements, belief systems, and the issues surrounding the development of societies. Towards the end of each unit, students have the opportunity to carry out an investigation of their choice, developing their own research question and line of inquiry. They will be asked to develop inquiry-based questions and consider key and related concepts to the topics studied.

Throughout the year, students study physical geography (study of natural features on the surface of the earth) and human geography (how and why people have spread across the Earth). This hands-on, project based course requires students to think critically, work collaboratively, research thoroughly, and master geography skills through units such as, “Where do we live?” and “What factors contribute to developing societies?”

Science 6

Science 6 emphasizes a practical approach to science centered around inquiry and problem solving. While exploring the various branches of science, students will develop the skills to solve problems like scientists and engineers do in the field using hands-on practices. STEAM and literacy skills are woven into each unit.

The Grade Six integrated science course is built on AERO Next Generation Science concepts. The overarching themes include explaining and describing phenomena, using models or representations, and describing changes of energy and matter in a system. The major units include Organisms and their Interactions, Earth’s Place in the Universe, Ecosystems, Earth’s Resources, and Weather.

Physical and Health Education (PHE) 6

In PHE 6, students participate and advance their skills in a variety of team and individual sports: athletics, ice skating, biking, wall climbing, etc. Team sports, teamwork, and collaboration are the primary focus. Students practice responsible behavior and sportsmanship as they apply proper rules to team sports such as basketball, handball, and European football.

The Health curriculum in Grade Six covers factors that contribute to healthy development and living skills. Students learn to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions related to their personal health and well-being. Students understand the health effects related to substance use, addictions, and related behaviors as well as making healthy nutritional choices. In human growth and development, students will be able to identify major parts of the reproductive system and their relationship to puberty.

Visual Arts 6

In this semester-long course, students will build a foundation of skills through exploring a variety of three-dimensional media. They will strengthen their understanding of the creative process and become familiar with the Elements and Principles of Art & Design. Students will also learn how to discuss works of art using appropriate vocabulary, and begin to express themselves through their work. Art history, art appreciation, and art criticism are integrated into lessons, as are the four artistic practices of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting.

The units within this course are focused on masks and mythology. The finalized artwork created this semester will demonstrate the technical skills studied and convey a clear artistic and conceptual intention.

Music 6

In this semester-long course, students will focus on developing the ability to improvise, read music notation, and apply their knowledge of the elements of music through performing, creating, and listening. Students explore further aspects of standard notation, create and perform a variety of compositions, and continue to think critically about the music they hear and perform.

Students are expected to develop individual goals and work in both large and small ensembles to develop their musicianship. By the end of Grade Six, they will be able to provide constructive feedback regarding their own and others' efforts.

World Languages 6

Students select either French or German as their World Language. The World Language Acquisition program follows a spiral/sequential curriculum which leads to the development of communicative proficiency. The program is divided into phases (levels). As students progress through the phases they are expected to develop the competencies to communicate appropriately and effectively in an increasing range of social, cultural and academic situations, and for an increasing variety of audiences and purposes.

Linguistic and cultural contents follow the AERO standards as well as recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference.

- **French/German Phase 1**

Students identify and recognize meaning and communicate in a limited range of everyday situations. They use basic vocabulary, understand, produce and respond to simple short texts and interact in simple and rehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 2**

Students recognize and understand meaning and communicate in a limited range of familiar situations. They use basic language, understand, produce and respond to simple texts and interact in simple rehearsed and some unrehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 3**

Students understand meaning and communicate in familiar and some unfamiliar situations, using appropriate register in a limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately, understand, produce and respond to a limited range of texts and interact in rehearsed and unrehearsed exchanges.

Multilingual and Multicultural Studies

AISZ values all languages and cultures of our multicultural and multilingual student body. Our aim is to support students' developing fluency and academic language skills in multiple languages. As they start middle school students are re-focused toward thinking about their identity. They expand and deepen their knowledge of their own and their peers' languages and cultures through one of the proposed courses:

Croatian Language and Literature 6

The Grade Six Croatian Language and Literature course focuses on linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills. It is intended for students who are native speakers of Croatian and have been previously studying Croatian language and literature in the academic setting.

The course is based on the Grade Six AERO Common Core English Language Arts Standards. The chosen Power Standards develop skills in six domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. In the domain of reading, students study a variety of text types of both literature and informational text with a focus on three genres: detective, fantasy, and realistic fiction. In the domain of writing, students build their writing and editing skills to produce descriptive text.

Independent Home Language Studies 6

As AISZ aims to support our students' developing academic language skills in multiple languages, students in Upper School may choose to study their home language with an independent tutor or an online study program. Applications to study in this program are coordinated through the school. The application and independent study contract is reviewed for final approval. This plan outlines the focus of study, the learner expectations, and outcomes. Students who choose to study an independent language have time allotted during the Home Language block.

Languages and Cultures 6

During this course students explore their linguistic and cultural identity through a series of inquiry-based units. They learn and compare elements and features of different cultures and languages, including Croatian as the host country language and their Home Language.

Through pair and group work, students reinforce their communication and social skills. Through projects, students focus on their native culture and language, as well as different aspects of other languages and cultures. Students also develop their research, organizational, and presentational skills. This class will help learners gain self-confidence while exploring the linguistic and cultural identity of their family and of our community.

GRADE 6 EXPLORATIONS

In addition to the core curriculum, Grade Six students are offered a variety of exploratory classes to enrich their academic experiences. During these semester-long courses, students will have the opportunity to explore and discover new interests and passions.

Drama 6

Grade Six drama exploration is an introduction to the acting and theatrical process with an emphasis on collaboration and presenting to a live audience. Students learn to utilize basic actor's tools through the exploration of creating a character, using their body and voice in interesting ways, and demonstrating effective stage movement. They learn to develop their own material through the use of improvisation, as well as scripted material.

Design Thinking 6

The exploratory course introduces students to the design cycle and how it can help them address real-world issues and problems. Through a number of short challenges and projects, students will learn the process of inquiry and how to analyze products. We will cover some brainstorming strategies that will help them develop their ideas and turn them into concrete products, while also learning a variety of digital and hands-on tools and processes. Students will also discover how to test and evaluate the success of their products and suggest areas for growth. For the culminating project, students will apply their understanding of the design cycle to create an original product from wood, while also learning how to use basic hand and power tools. This course is designed to build skills and confidence through the realization of ideas into physical objects, and the dispositions developed in this course will help students in future classes and in life in general.

GRADE 6 COURSE SELECTION

World Language 6 Course Selection

- French
- German

Home Language 6 Course Selection

- Croatian Language & Literature
- Independent Home Language Study
- Languages and Cultures





Grade 7 Course Overview

Grade Seven continues the learning journey of each student by introducing choice into the explorations program (electives), building on literacy in each subject connecting to the learner assets and criteria, and ensuring that students develop more complex thinking and communication skills as they prepare for the second half of the middle school experience.

GRADE 7 FOUNDATION COURSES

English Language and Literature 7

The Grade Seven Language and Literature course focuses on linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills in order to develop interdisciplinary understanding. Based on the AERO Common Core, students develop skills in 6 domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting. Grade Seven students solidify their writing skills and utilize them to communicate on a more complex level. Reading and writing are taught in unison as the students transform their writing skills from opinion and creative writing to more analytical and reflective writing. Over the course of the year, students build up to writing an in-depth compare and contrast essay.

Throughout the year, students read a diverse range of texts with either a genre focus such as myths and legends, science fiction, or fantasy or a concept focus such as conflict or survival. Students have many opportunities to explore their own lines of questioning as they consider authorial choices and techniques. Students also read books of their own choosing and write creatively.

Mathematics 7

In Mathematics 7, students follow the accelerated pathway based on Open-Up resources aligned to the common core standards. Students build on their number skills by exploring algebra. They are introduced to variables, expressions, equations, and inequalities, using these to solve a variety of problems and look at different representations including tables, graphs, and equations. They investigate linear relationships, focusing on mathematical communication and justification skills. They apply their understanding of algebra and linear equations to recognize patterns, describe relationships and generalize patterns to determine a rule. Students will explore similarity, scale, and slope while performing rigid transformations of geometric figures. Students will be introduced to exponents, scientific notation, Pythagorean theorem, and irrational numbers. Students continually develop their communication and reasoning skills.

Individuals and Societies 7

Grade 7 Individuals and Societies has been designed to help students develop an understanding of the world that we live in and gain insight into how modern society has developed, adding context and perspective to a range of issues.

This course consists of four units of inquiry, ranging from globalization, natural environments, exploration, and sustainability. Towards the end of each unit, students have the opportunity to carry out an investigation of their choice, developing their own research question and line of inquiry. They will be asked to develop inquiry-based questions and consider key and related concepts to the topics studied.

Students will study the time period from early humans and the rise of civilization through ancient Rome. Lessons are designed to teach critical thinking, cooperative learning, research proficiency, essay writing, and the acquisition of geography skills. From the magnificent pyramids of Giza to the rise of democracy in ancient Greece, students will discover the secrets of these ancient cultures that continue to influence the modern world.

Science 7

Grade Seven science utilizes the AERO Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and expands on their previous exploration of the physical sciences from Grade Six to include phenomena from the branches of Life and Earth & Space sciences. Students develop their understanding of science in a practical way using real-world science and engineering practices, and scientific processes. STEAM and literacy skills are woven into each unit.

Students practice constructing explanations about scientific phenomena in a meaningful way to communicate effectively about science. Within the exploration of the core concepts, the emphasis is on the flow of energy and matter in natural systems in the world. In Science 7, major units of study are Earth's Place in the Universe, Organisms and their Interaction, Ecosystems, and Evolution.

Physical and Health Education (PHE) 7

In PHE 7, students practice teamwork to achieve a common goal. The focus is on the development and application of movement, skill combinations, and knowledge of individual and team activities. Students practice responsible behavior and sportsmanship, as they follow rules and apply procedures. The Grade Seven program offers students a more complete experience in the sports of basketball, handball, ice/field hockey, and volleyball.

The health curriculum in Grade Seven aims at understanding the key concepts of healthy living and healthy eating, personal safety and injury prevention, and growth. Students develop and demonstrate making healthy choices and reasoned decisions related to their personal health and well-being. Building on the Grade Six curriculum, students will understand the linkages between mental illness and problematic substance use. Students learn to find and identify resources that can provide support for concerns related to healthy living, substance abuse, and healthy sexuality. Students in Grade Seven build on their knowledge of growth and development by understanding the reproductive systems as related to Fertilization.

Visual Arts 7

In this semester-long course, students will build a foundation of skills in two-dimensional media. They will strengthen their understanding of the creative process and gain a deeper knowledge of the Elements and Principles of Art & Design. Students will also learn how to discuss works of art using appropriate vocabulary, and improve their ability to express themselves through their work. Art history, art appreciation, and art criticism are integrated into lessons, as are the four artistic practices of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting.

Building upon knowledge gained in Grade 6 on value and line, the semester focuses on understanding the relationship between color and value, through the lens of cubism and other movements in history. The work will demonstrate the technical skills studied, while conveying a clear artistic intention.

Music 7

The acquisition of musical knowledge and skills is cumulative and sequential and is based on the learning from earlier grades. In Grade 7, students consolidate their prior music learning by focusing on three areas:

- Ensemble work through Orff (xylophones and djembe) and singing
- Reading and writing music through playing and ear training
- Musical Passion Projects where students can explore their own interests

In this course, students not only analyze the role of music in their own lives, but apply their knowledge of music, reflect on their strengths, and determine the next step when creating and interpreting music. Students develop the ability to evaluate and give constructive feedback on their own and others' musical efforts. Each student is exposed to several musical instruments and has experience with at least one instrument within the class ensemble. The aim is to build confidence in musicianship, learn stage and audience etiquette, and collaborate and expand one's musical horizons in order to develop a life-long appreciation for the arts.





Grade 7 World Languages

Students take either in French or German as their World Language. The world language acquisition program follows a spiral/sequential curriculum which leads to the development of communicative proficiency. Grade Seven and Eight students are grouped together and divided into phases. Students usually need between one and three years to progress from phase to phase.

As students progress through the phases they are expected to develop the competencies to communicate appropriately and effectively in an increasing range of social, cultural and academic situations, and for an increasing variety of audiences and purposes.

Units of study change from year to year. Linguistic and cultural contents follow the AERO standards as well as recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference.

- **French/German Phase 1**

Students identify and recognize meaning and communicate in a limited range of everyday situations. They use basic vocabulary, understand, produce and respond to simple short texts and interact in simple and rehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 2**

Students recognize and understand meaning and communicate in a limited range of familiar situations. They use basic language, understand, produce and respond to simple texts and interact in simple rehearsed and some unrehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 3**

Students understand meaning and communicate in familiar and some unfamiliar situations, using appropriate register in a limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately, understand, produce and respond to a limited range of texts and interact in rehearsed and unrehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 4**

Students construct and interpret meaning and communicate in familiar and unfamiliar situations, using appropriate register in a range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately, understand, produce and respond to a range of texts, and engage actively with a range of audiences.

Multilingual and Multicultural Studies

AISZ values all languages and cultures of our multicultural and multilingual student body. Our aim is to support students' developing fluency and academic language skills in multiple languages. Students expand and deepen their knowledge of their own and their peers' languages and cultures through one of the proposed courses:

Croatian Language and Literature 7

The Grade Seven Croatian Language and Literature course is an inquiry - based course that focuses on linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills in order to develop interdisciplinary understanding. Based on the Grade Seven AERO Common Core English Language Arts Standards, the chosen 10 Croatian Power Standards develop skills in six domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. In the domain of reading, students study a variety of text types (fiction and nonfiction) focusing on the four concepts: relationships, communication, perspective, and communication. In the domain of writing, students build their writing skills to produce a compare and contrast text. Throughout the year, students are continuously improving their strategies that facilitate the five learner assets: researcher, thinker, collaborator, self-manager, and communicator.

Independent Home Language Studies 7

As AISZ aims to support our students' developing academic language skills in multiple languages, students in Upper School may choose to study their Home Language with an independent tutor or on-line study program. Applications to study in this program are coordinated through the Home Language Coordinator. The application and independent study contract is reviewed for final approval. The independent study plan outlines the focus of study, the learner expectations, and outcomes. Students who choose to study an independent language have time allotted during the Home Language block.

Service Learning 7

Service learning in Grade Seven is an extension of the service learning concepts embedded in the Individuals and Societies course. The time dedicated to these projects will enable students to practice the principles of service learning and to think globally and act locally in the environs of AISZ.



GRADE 7 ELECTIVES

Grade Seven students are offered a variety of elective classes beyond the core curriculum to enrich their academic experiences. During these semester-long courses, students have many opportunities to explore and discover new interests and passions. Elective classes are combined with Grade Eight students. Each student will choose one elective per semester. Not all elective courses are offered each semester.

Drama 7/8

Join us for Drama for Grades Seven and Eight, where you'll learn the art of acting and theatre production. You'll learn how to use your voice, body, and expressions to create new worlds and characters, through a scripted performance. You will also learn technical aspects of theatre such as lighting, set, and costume design. From the acting basics to blocking and design, you'll develop the skills needed to deliver a convincing performance to an audience. Our focus on these skills will help you become a creative problem solver and engaging performer. By the end of the course, you'll have a newfound appreciation for storytelling and a set of skills that will stay with you for life. Discover the magic of theatre and unlock your inner performer with Drama for Grades Seven and Eight!

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Wood Design 7/8

The elective course expands on students' existing knowledge and understanding of the design cycle. Using a variety of short challenges and wood-based products, students work through the stages of the design cycle. They will inquire and analyze existing products to help them brainstorm and develop their ideas. They will learn how to use a variety of different materials and tools, both hand and power, safely and efficiently. Finally, students will evaluate the success of their work and suggest areas for improvement. This course is designed to reinforce design thinking processes, reinforce personal global responsibility, and teach resilience through trial and error testing methods.



GRADE 7 COURSE SELECTION

World Language 7 Course Selection

- French
- German

Home Language 7 Course Selection

- Croatian Language & Literature
- Independent Home Language Study
- Service Learning

Elective 7 Course Selection:

Choose two electives (one per semester):

- Drama
- Wood Design
- Outdoor Education

Choose two electives (one per semester):

- Drama
- Outdoor Education



Grade 8 Course Overview

Grade Eight is the culminating year of the middle school experience. Whether students are new or returning to AISZ, the eighth grade is a critical time to strengthen and support the learning attributes needed for a successful transition to high school. From languages and electives to foundation coursework, Grade Eight emphasizes complex thinking and communication skills, research skill development, literacy across disciplines, and an opportunity to explore a wide variety of elective subjects.

GRADE 8 FOUNDATION COURSES

English Language and Literature 8

The Grade Eight Language and Literature course focuses on linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills in order to develop interdisciplinary understanding. Based on the AERO Common Core Standards students develop skills in six domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and presenting. Reading and writing units are intertwined allowing Grade Eight students' language skills to begin shifting towards a more academic vocabulary and register which is reflective of an analytical literary focus.

Students read a diverse range of texts from different cultures and voices, which develop a deeper understanding of themes and motifs in classic and contemporary literature. An exploration of figurative language through fiction, poetry, and Shakespeare ensures students are ready to build on these topics in high school. In writing and speaking, students learn rhetorical techniques with which they develop an argumentative voice. Through thematic units, students prepare to write longer, more cohesive persuasive and analytical essays.

Mathematics 8

Mathematics 8 is written to align with the first of three courses in the integrated pathway from Open-up Resources based on the Common Core State Standards. The primary focus of the course is to formalize and extend the mathematics that students learned in the middle grades, including working with linear and exponential functions, solving systems of equations and inequalities, using rigid transformations to explain geometric relationships, and analyzing data. Throughout the year students will create and engage in mathematical learning experiences based on reasoning and sense-making, building perseverance and problem-solving skills, and rich in mathematical discourse.



Individuals and Societies 8

Grade 8 Individuals and Societies has been designed to help students develop an understanding of the world that we live in and gain insight into how modern society has developed, adding context and perspective to a range of issues.

This course consists of four units of inquiry, ranging from governments, technology, population, and culture. Towards the end of each unit students have the opportunity to carry out an investigation of their choice, developing their own research question and line of inquiry. They will be asked to develop inquiry-based questions and consider key and related concepts to the topics studied.

Students analyze history through CGC lenses:

- **CGC2)** Groups can exploit control of key resources, information, and cultural norms to gain and maintain power over other groups.
- **CGC3)** Membership in particular groups shapes our perspectives on others and on the world in general.
- **CGC4)** Groups establish structures of power and status to decide who gets what, when, where, and how, and these are shaped by historical and economic circumstances. Lessons are designed to teach critical thinking, collaboration, research proficiency, essay writing, and the acquisition of geography skills. From the decline of feudalism to revolutions in exploration and thought, students will discover rich connections to the past. Learners will also identify and explain a source's point of view, purpose, historical situation, and/or audience.

Science 8

In Grade Eight science, students develop an understanding of core ideas in the earth and space sciences based on the AERO NGSS Standards: Earth's Place in the Universe; Earth's Systems; Earth and Human Activity. Performance expectations allow learners to explain phenomena central to the Earth and space sciences and blend the core ideas with scientific and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts.

Students demonstrate scientific understanding by developing, understanding, and designing models; planning and conducting investigations; analyzing and interpreting data using mathematical and computational thinking; and constructing explanations. Students also describe and explain the transfer of energy and the cycling of matter within natural and designed systems.

Physical and Health Education (PHE) 8

In PHE 8, students continue to advance their teamwork skills. They continue to develop and apply their movement skill combinations and knowledge of individual and team sports. Students practice good sportsmanship and follow rules and safety regulations. Building on the Grade Seven standard of Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, students identify situations that could lead to injury or death, demonstrate the ability to assess situations for potential dangers, and analyze the impact of violent behaviors.

Students identify the five components of health-related fitness (muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, cardiorespiratory endurance, and body composition) and explain the connections between fitness and overall physical and mental health. In the Growth and Development unit, students identify the aspects of healthy sexuality and identify local support groups for related issues. Students understand abstinence and apply living skills in making informed decisions related to sexual activities.

Visual Arts 8

In this semester-long course, students will build a foundation of skills in two-dimensional media. They will strengthen their understanding of the creative process and gain a deeper knowledge of the Elements and Principles of Art & Design. Students will also learn how to discuss works of art using appropriate vocabulary, and improve their ability to express themselves through their work. Art History, art appreciation, and art criticism are integrated into lessons, as are the four artistic practices of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting.

The semester focuses on abstraction while diving into Islamic art and the relationship between Mathematics and Art. The work will demonstrate the technical skills studied while conveying a clear artistic intention.

Music 8

The acquisition of musical knowledge and skills is cumulative and sequential and is based on the learning from earlier grades. In Grade Eight, students consolidate their prior music learning by focusing on four areas:

- Ensemble work through Orff (xylophones) and singing
- Reading and writing music through playing and ear training
- Creating and improvising music
- Musical Passion Projects where students can explore their own interests.

In this course, students not only analyze the role of music in their own lives, but apply their knowledge of music, reflect on their strengths, and determine the next step when creating and interpreting music. Students develop the ability to evaluate and give constructive feedback on their own and others' musical efforts. Each student is exposed to several musical instruments and has experience with at least one instrument within the class ensemble. The aim is to build confidence in musicianship, learn stage and audience etiquette, and collaborate and expand one's musical horizons in order to develop a life-long appreciation for the arts.



Grade 8 World Languages

Students take either in French or German as their World Language. The world language acquisition program follows a spiral/sequential curriculum which leads to the development of communicative proficiency. Grade Seven and Eight students are grouped together and divided into phases. Students usually need between one and three years to progress from phase to phase.

As students progress through the phases they are expected to develop the competencies to communicate appropriately and effectively in an increasing range of social, cultural and academic situations, and for an increasing variety of audiences and purposes.

Units of study change from year to year. Linguistic and cultural contents follow the AERO standards as well as recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference.

- **French/German Phase 1**

Students identify and recognize meaning and communicate in a limited range of everyday situations. They use basic vocabulary, understand, produce and respond to simple short texts and interact in simple and rehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 2**

Students recognize and understand meaning and communicate in a limited range of familiar situations. They use basic language, understand, produce and respond to simple texts and interact in simple rehearsed and some unrehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 3**

Students understand meaning and communicate in familiar and some unfamiliar situations, using appropriate register in a limited range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately, understand, produce and respond to a limited range of texts and interact in rehearsed and unrehearsed exchanges.

- **French/German Phase 4**

Students construct and interpret meaning and communicate in familiar and unfamiliar situations, using appropriate register in a range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately, understand, produce and respond to a range of texts and engage actively with a range of audiences.

- **French/German Phase 5**

Students construct and analyze meaning and communicate in social and some academic situations, using appropriate register in a range of interpersonal and cultural contexts. They use language accurately and effectively, understand, produce and respond to a range of texts and engage actively with a range of audiences.



Multilingual and Multicultural Studies

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Croatian Language and Literature 8

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Independent Home Language Studies 8

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Global Perspectives 8

Global Perspectives stretches across traditional subject boundaries. Students develop the ability to think critically about a range of global issues from multiple points of view. Inspired by the Common Ground Collaborative Human Commonalities (being responsible producers and consumers, communicating effectively, and living balanced lives) students learn about transport systems, legal systems, and digital citizenship. Through inquiry units, students practice transferable skills/learning assets (collaboration, self-management, research, communication, and critical thinking).

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GRADE 8 COURSE SELECTION

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- French
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Elective 8 Course Selection:

Choose two electives (one per semester):

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- Wood Design
- Outdoor Education

Choose two electives (one per semester):

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- Outdoor Education



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