



# 1st Grade Block Rotations

<b>Form Drawing I</b>	September 8-18
<b>Language Arts (Letters/Sounds)</b>	September 21-October 28
<b>Mathematics (Quality of Numbers)</b>	November 2-20
<b>Language Arts (Writing and Reading)</b>	November 30-December 18
<b>Mathematics (Quantity of Numbers)</b>	January 4-22
<b>Language Arts (Word Families/Phonics)</b>	January 25-February 11
<b>Form Drawing II</b>	February 16-March 2
<b>Mathematics (Four Operations)</b>	March 7-25
<b>Class Play</b>	April 11-29
<b>Language Arts (Writing and Reading)</b>	May 2-20
<b>Year End Review</b>	May 23-June 8

## Block Descriptions for First Grade:

### Form Drawing I and II

In some respects, Form Drawing is the most important subject that your child will study this year, for it provides a good foundation for the letter recognition that is so central to reading, as well as numerical/spatial relationships that are so essential in arithmetic. On the very first day of school, our class will be presented with the polarity of these two kinds of lines, and throughout the year they will see the infinite variety of forms that can be created out of these simple elements.

Form Drawing awakens several capacities in the first grader:

- Concentration: this elusive quality flourishes in Form Drawing. The forms we draw can't be done well unless each child is focused and quiet.
- Eye/hand coordination: the "model" drawing on the board must be copied onto the child's paper, and, as the year goes on, most children learn to trust their eye's guidance. This ability to trust in one's own capacities helps instill confidence that in turn shows itself in other subjects.
- Understanding the relationship of the part to the whole: the harmonious nature of the form drawings we will do helps both the scattered child, who is drawn too far into the "whole," and the overly-contracted child, who lives too strongly in the "parts."
- Understanding forms that relate to numbers: the simple "geometrical drawings" the children encounter will help with numerical relationships and a whole range of geometrical concepts.
- Neatness and balance: a Form Drawing can't be beautiful unless it is placed in just the right way on the paper.



## Mathematics

We will approach the crucial first year of arithmetic from a number of perspectives:

- The Qualities of Numbers: The consciousness of the young child still experiences numbers as "qualities" at least as much as he or she understands them as "quantities". We will hear stories in which numbers up to seven figure importantly to set the stage for the increasingly quantifiable experience of larger numbers that constitute arithmetic.
- Counting: The combination of rhythmical regularity and ceaseless change is very harmonizing. We will become familiar with the succession of number from 1 to 100-forwards and backwards.
- Times Tables: Once the children are comfortable with counting, it is a small but important step to count with strong rhythms. This year we will work with twos, threes, fives, and tens and use recitation, song, movement, form drawings, string games and mental math to help us out.
- Numbers are Signifiers: Working with numbers as units and using a number to describe "how many" is a powerfully awakening experience. Our hands will be filled with shells, nuts, and blocks to help us visualize quantities.
- The Four Operations: Gnomes will visit our classroom through story and song to introduce the connection between adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.

## Language Arts

A first grader's mind is ready for the use of rich language and vivid pictures to bring reading and writing to life, therefore our blocks will be filled with letter stories from the Enchanted Forest and our main lesson books will be overflowing with characters we meet along the way. We will also learn songs, tongue twisters, write in journals, solve riddles and create our own story books to bring words to life.

## Science/Social Studies

First graders are going to jump into Science and Social Studies with both feet as we continue our "Friday Hike Days" from kindergarten. Our hikes will take us into towns, down trails and to the tops of mountains exploring natural resources, communities, seasons and cycles, conservation and preservation...the possibilities are endless. These are the first steps of cultivating eco-literate, compassionate, self reliant thinkers, prepared to solve the challenges of our world.

## Class play-

Children in the 1st grade are in the age of imitation. They do not yet have a strong desire to make a distinction between themselves and the world. Thus, the first grade play is really more about the whole class participating in rhythmical repetition rather than several individual performances as seen in the older grades. The classroom play will pull together our sense of classroom community, oral language skills and create something equal to or greater than the sum of all the parts.



## Special Subjects for 1st Grade:

### Handwork

Recent neurological research leads us to confirm that mobility and dexterity in the fine motor muscles, especially in the hand, may stimulate cellular development in the brain, and so strengthen the physical foundation of thinking. We will knitting, weave, mold and sew projects using wood, fabric, wool, and beeswax that will continue to lay the foundation of linking together lines of thought to strengthen writing, reading and mathematics.

### Spanish

Maestra Julia will immerse our classroom with the Spanish language two times a week. She will teach us numbers, colors, names of clothing, food, parts of the classroom, seasons, etc. through games, numbers, mime, songs and poems. Foreign language is not only important as an academic exercise but opens up the door for understanding and communicating with others, teaches us to respect cultural differences and broadens our horizons.

### Games

Our weekly rhythm will incorporate finger games, chasing, co-operative throwing, jumping and skipping games. These practices will encourage fairness, balance, dexterity, spatial awareness and grace within the students also strengthening fine and gross motor skills and our classroom community.