



# Manzanita Charter School

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*Founded 2000  
California Distinguished School 2005  
California Certified Charter School 2007  
2009 API score 723*

## Curriculum

The curriculum at Manzanita Charter School is structured to meet or exceed State of California Content Standards for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. These standards are set forth by the California Department of Education and are available in our school office or on the web at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). Close collaboration between staff members supports teaching across the curriculum. Teachers encourage students to develop critical thinking, interpersonal and organizational skills.

### **Language Arts**

The overall goals of the Language Arts program are to help students formulate and express their ideas effectively, and appreciate literature for its own sake. Our curriculum involves thematic learning to compliment other subject areas. Themes are based on the concerns and interests of students, as well as California Language Arts Standards.

Students learn strategies that help them both enjoy different types of reading and encourage greater comprehension. At each grade level, many forms of literature including short stories, novels, plays, poetry, and essays are studied and discussed. Cooperative learning is also encouraged.

In the 7th and 8th grades there is a weekly focus on vocabulary study, which includes Greek and Latin prefixes and roots, supporting the students' understanding of the foundation of the English language. Students write weekly essays, focusing on topics relevant to the California Standards. Writing is encouraged through journal entries, expository and creative writings, as well as research projects. A Writer's Workshop approach is utilized allowing for independence and choice with clear expectations and requirements. Through this workshop process, students learn proofreading, revising and editing skills that will allow them to publish their final work. Over time, students become more aware of style, writing mechanics, and further develop their organizational skills.

### **Mathematics**

Math classes are oriented toward the mastery of foundation skills. Assessment is integrated into instruction and focuses on what the students understand and can do, rather than on what they cannot yet do. Instruction techniques include daily puzzles to inspire higher orders of thinking skills and engaging long term projects that utilize math and thinking skills. New concepts are introduced using structured lessons. Discussion and self-sufficiency are encouraged using group learning as well as peer tutors.

In the sixth grade, students focus on computational concepts like fractions and decimals while building a deeper understanding of place value and numerical relationships. Seventh grade mathematics is an application-based curriculum where students review such computation skills as decimal operation, fraction operations, integers, exponents, and pre-algebra while learning about statistics, probability, and geometry. Student activities include learning to create and administer a

proper survey, analyze situations using probability, and design a container, as well as computing the container's volume and surface area.

In the eighth grade, students learn Algebra I, as it would normally be taught in high school. Starting in the fall with integers, students quickly learn how to manipulate algebraic expressions. Students then spend a great deal of time mastering equation solving, using art, writing, and practice to understand the concepts behind algebra. Students learn to solve problems with inequalities, absolute value, quadratics, and rational expressions. They are able to graph lines and curves and extrapolate the equation of a line from two data points. The class is both note-based and project-based with nightly homework and regular quizzes and tests.

### **Social Studies**

The overall goal of the Social Science Program is to help the students understand social systems and their own roles in society by emphasizing the development of an understanding of history rather than memorizing facts. History Workshops and thematic units are utilized when appropriate.

#### ***6th Grade: Ancient Civilizations***

In 6th grade history, students begin to appreciate the significance of geography in history. Students gain an appreciation for the everyday life of people, their relationships to the natural world, as well as the developing political, economic and social structures of their society. Students learn about the tools and technology that were used, the literature, architecture and art that were developed in the ancient world.

#### ***7th Grade: Medieval and Early Modern Times***

Students in seventh grade study the history and geography of great civilizations that were developing concurrently through the world during medieval and early modern times (500-1789 A.D.). Social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa and Asia are the content area of focus. Students are encouraged to explore and recognize that significant contributions to our modern world have come from various societies.

#### ***8th Grade: United States History***

Students in eighth grade study the ideas, issues, and events from the framing of the Constitution up to World War I. The class traces the development of American politics, society, culture and economy and learns how these elements created regional differences. Students see connections between the rise of industrialization and their lives. Current Events and Social Issues are also discussed throughout the year.

### **Science**

The overall goal of our science program is to prepare scientifically literate students who will have the ability to understand the rapidly changing world they will face as adults and the confidence and skills to act positively and influentially in it. The use of the "Scientific Method" is emphasized.

We provide experiences for hands-on learning. Students become involved in the processes of scientific inquiry and gain knowledge of concepts fundamental to modern scientific theory. It is emphasized that science is a process of exploration and revision of existing knowledge. We encourage discussion about the relationships among science, technology and society, and allow students to form their own understanding of the benefits and challenges inherent in scientific discovery. Investigation and Experimentation is part of the California Standards for all grade levels.

Following the State of California content Standards for Science, the area of focus for 6th Grade is Earth Science, for 7th Grade is Life Science and the 8th Grade focus is Physical Science.

### **Visual Arts**

The arts are seen as essential to help our students express and communicate their ideas and feelings. Our goals are to expose students to a wide variety of arts, and encourage an understanding of the communicative nature of the arts. We utilize a variety of art making activities to appeal the

interests and strengths of different students, encourage foundational skills in drawing, color and other media, encourage critical thinking through written warm-ups, discussion, and group critique. Organization and responsibility are promoted through materials management and self-tracking. Students are exposed to themes and movements in art history and given opportunities for personal expression, choice and advanced projects. The intent is to encourage growth in each student's perceptions and skills, as well as confidence in their abilities. The arts are integrated into all other areas of the curriculum as appropriate.

**Physical Education**

Students of all grade and skill levels are encouraged to develop team and individual skills in their daily physical education class. Warm-up and strengthening exercises are utilized to stress both immediate and long-term health benefits. Skill building is promoted within sports activities.