

## Grade 2 Curriculum Summary

*(The text that follows is adapted from the websites of member schools of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and the San Francisco Waldorf School.)*

In second grade children, an awareness of opposites begins to unfold. If a circle of children with everyone facing the center is the metaphorical picture of togetherness in a healthy first grade, the image of the second grade is the circle with children becoming increasingly aware of what goes on around them.

In **language arts**, the fairy tales of first grade gradually give way to stories of heroes and saints from many cultures--people who strive to overcome inner and outer obstacles, who aspire to and accomplish the loftiest deeds. In contrast, the polarities within us are well depicted for second graders through animal fables. The second graders explore the landscape of personality traits: the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly. Traditional fables hold a rich source of wisdom about human nature and the world. There, human traits are exaggerated in the brave lion, the timorous mouse, the pokey turtle, the clever fox, and so on. The children can see themselves and their classmates through the antics of the animal kingdom and learn valuable lessons about life.

Nature stories from home surroundings, multi-cultural folk tales, and riddles are also included in the language arts. As in first grade, poetry continues to play an important role in the class, both orally recited and in writing. All-class recitation, tongue twisters and other speech exercises, and work on plays written in verse, lead to choral recitation by smaller groups. Students participate in individual retelling of stories told in class as well as the recounting of personal experiences. Students strive for clear speech at appropriate volume levels.

During the second grade much attention is given to the development of writing skills. The children's first reading experience comes through reading what they themselves have written in their main lesson books. This may be a short verse that helps them review a letter sound, or perhaps a simple retelling of one of the fables they have heard. In this way the children experience the way written language actually developed over the course of human history.

Lower case printing and cursive handwriting are presented in second grade if they have not already been introduced in first grade. The teacher leads the class in guided writing whenever possible, according to the children's growing ability to sound out and recognize words. Children also copy passages from the board and express their own thoughts and recollections in writing, all the while paying attention to well-formed and spaced script.

From the stories, songs, and verses studied during the year, introductory spelling and grammar lessons and games are imaginatively presented. In addition, the children participate in daily phonics work and expand their sight recognition of high-frequency words.

**Mathematics.** The imaginative, personifying quality that still lives strongly in the 7/8 year old is used to fully develop inspiring pictures of the operations involved in the four processes in arithmetic, using strong visual and narrative elements,. The students are taught to differentiate between the processes and know

when to use each one as well as to be able to work simple problems of each type in their heads and on paper.

The concepts and mechanics of written addition and subtraction are introduced through the use of manipulatives, imaginative pictures, and carrying and regrouping activities. In their written work in mathematics, orderliness is developed. The neat columnar writing of problems is stressed. Previous work is reviewed and practiced. The ability to write dictated and read written numbers 1-100 is firmly established before the students move on to place value. Counting by various multiples is mastered before moving on to written multiplication and division. In second grade, rhythmic counting is transformed into the times tables (2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 10s). Word problems will continue as students write simple algorithms. Students solve written, oral story, and mental math problems using math concepts.

Rhythmic and patterning work increase in sophistication, emphasizing the aesthetic and dynamic quality of the number line through arranging number families in various ways. Students are encouraged to consciously see order and beauty in number patterns. Visualizations of the counting patterns are introduced—employing string boards, grouping geometric forms in space, etc. Movement exercises can be built around number work, from group exercises to simple computation games, and can include moving in geometric forms.

All basic academic skills continue to develop at a rapid pace. Laying the ground for future science blocks, the students continue their experiential exploration of the world of nature through observation and stories.

As with the first grade, the entire curriculum is integrated to present the world as a whole, not as disjointed and disconnected pieces. In **the arts**, all students continue watercolor painting and their exploration of the moods of the colors, beeswax modeling and crayon drawing, as well as form drawing with vertical and horizontal midline mirror forms given for each child. **The handwork curriculum** works on knitting and embroidery, leading to the creation later of their own hats, among various other projects. String games, hand-clapping games, and counting knitted rows also support this work. **Foreign language** lessons continue to take inspiration from main lesson blocks of study. Students begin to speak individually and conversationally through games and activities that are filled with new descriptive language. Puppet shows from rich folk tales also continue.

**Musical instruction** continues as in first grade and includes singing as well as pentatonic recorder. **Eurythmy** movement describes stories and forms, with a strong emphasis on inner listening and inner visualization of images and forms. The movement now includes, but is not limited to, geometrical forms, Curves of Cassini, expansion/contraction with music, little dances with piano/forte dynamics and stories of animals. Activities with copper rods help the children gently center themselves. **Games and movement classes** focus on imaginative games encouraging teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, and individual successes, with opportunities to improve coordination and balance through obstacle courses and gymnastic activities. A **class play** tied to the curriculum is shared with class families, and local **field trips** deepen students' learning experiences.

## Grade 2 Curriculum Components

- **Math:** Continue with four operations of arithmetic; story problems; counting by 2, 3, 4, and 5; beginning multiplication tables
- **Language Arts:** Elements of grammar (naming, describing words); beginning cursive; animal fables and legends from around the world; decoding and sight word recognition; building fluency through regular practice (oral and silent reading); comprehension through story recall
- **Science:** Gardening and nature studies; weather; day and night
- **History & Social Studies:** Multicultural stories; lives of inspiring people who affected history
- **Handwork:** Knitting patterns of knit and purl (pattern recognition and perpetuation, concentration, fine motor skill development)
- **Foreign Language:** Continuing the foreign language with songs, plays, poetry, games, and simple conversations
- **Visual & Performing Arts:** Form drawing; painting; beeswax modeling; singing; pentatonic flute, drama
- **Movement/Physical Education/Games:** Eurythmy; circle games; imaginative games; fine and gross motor activities; activities with props (balls, hoops, etc.) and exploration of the dynamics of objects