

# VCMS Course Descriptions 2022-2023

*Updated 11.28.22*

## **Art**

Department Chairperson: [Kathryn Foti](#)

- Grade 6 Art
- Grade 7 Art

Art courses provide to students activities that foster creative expression, communication through artistic endeavor, and appreciation of culture and heritage. Activities may include those that enable students to refine their technique, increase their artistic vocabulary, express themselves and their world view, make connections to other content areas, develop their own aesthetic and strengthen their critical abilities. Although typically involving the visual arts (drawing, painting, sculpture, crafts), these courses may also include other forms of art, for example, dance, music and theater.

## **Computers**

- Computer Skills: Grade 6

Students acquire knowledge of and experience in the proper and efficient use of previously written software packages. These courses explore a wide range of applications, including (but not limited to) word-processing, spreadsheet, graphics and database programs, and they may also cover the use of electronic mail and desktop publishing. Students also explore STEAM concepts in computer class.

## **English Language Arts**

Department Chairperson: [David Mossey](#)

Students in grades 6 through 8 read a balance of literature and informational texts, both full-length and shorter works, including; stories, drama, poetry, fiction, and biographies, autobiographies, books and articles about science, art, history, social studies, and information displayed in charts, graphs, or maps, in both print and digital sources.

Texts include discipline specific material (both full-length and excerpts) written for a variety of audiences. Examples include texts written for students, such as textbooks and trade books, as well as those written for the public, including blogs/websites, books, films, and magazine and newspaper articles.

[VCMS Summer Reading Suggestions](#)

## Health

### Grade 6

Health and Fitness courses cover topics such as nutrition, stress management, substance abuse prevention, disease prevention, first aid, and so on with the intention of conveying lifelong wellness habits.

### Grade 8

Health and Life Management courses focus on health topics such as the evaluation of consumer information and advertising and personal health topics such as nutrition, stress management, drug/alcohol abuse prevention, disease prevention, and first aid. Course objectives include helping students develop decision making, communications, interpersonal and coping skills and strategies.

## Family and Consumer Science

Department Chairperson: [Melissa Toromanides](#)

Home and Career Skills is a New York State mandated course taught in the discipline of Family and Consumer Sciences. It is a course designed to prepare students to meet their present and future responsibilities as family and community members, consumers, home managers, and wage earners. The goal is to educate students to think constructively, make sound decisions, solve problems, and manage resources.

## Library

- Library Skills: Grade 6

In Library Skills students will work on effectively navigating the library. They will focus on topics such as correct citation of sources, evaluation of the reliability of sources and online safety including being a good digital citizen. They will study about the various book genres, practice sustained reading and presentation skills.

## Math

Department Chairperson: [Kristinna Crowe](#)

In Grade 6, instructional time focuses on five areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; (4) deepening understanding of area, surface area and volume; and (5) developing understanding of simple probabilities and statistical thinking.

In Grade 7, instructional time focuses on three areas: (1) developing an understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing an understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; and (3) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

In Grade 8, instructional time focuses on three areas: (1) 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; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

## Music

Department Chairperson: [Micheal Gonzales](#)

Middle School provides many opportunities for students to develop musical skill and understanding. Students may elect to participate in one or several of our performing ensembles. In addition, 6th and 7th graders have the opportunity to focus on music theory and history in our general music courses.

- Grade 6: Required to complete one quarter of general music. The guidance office will automatically schedule students for one period of general music, which will meet every other day for ten weeks. 6th Graders may also elect to participate in Band, Chorus, or both.
- Grade 7: Required to complete one full year music credit. Students may fulfill this requirement by participating in Band, Chorus, or both, if their schedule permits. Students who do not participate in a performing ensemble will complete 7th grade general music. Each of these courses meets every other day for the entire school year.
- Grade 8: May elect to participate in Band, Chorus, or both, if their schedule permits; however, there is no 8th grade music requirement.

## Physical Education

Department Chairperson: [Jonathan Walsh](#)

Physical Education courses typically involve the acquisition of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for sport, a physically active lifestyle and social development through physical activity. Activities include those that increase strength, endurance and flexibility; reinforce safe technique; teach the rules and conventions of games and sports; and explore the relationship between physical activity and health.

## **Science:**

Department Chairperson: [Melanie Monda](#)

Science courses include subject matter from several strands of science, including earth/space sciences, physical sciences, and life or environmental sciences, and may organize material around thematic units. Specific content depends upon state standards for grades 6 through 8. All 8th grade students take the NYS Science Assessment in May and June. In May, students take the Performance Assessment portion of the State Exam. During June, students take the Written portion. Students will be provided with a review book to help prepare for the exam.

## **Social Studies**

Department Chairperson: [Tim Faulkner](#)

Social Studies courses provide a greater understanding of social studies disciplines, including history, geography, civics and government, and economics. These courses often focus on history, culture, and government of various specific world societies in grade 6 and in American society in grades 7 and 8.

## **Technology**

Department Chairperson: [John VanFradenburgh](#)

Technological courses expose students to the communication, transportation, energy, production, biotechnology, and integrated technology systems and processes that affect their lives. The study of these processes enables students to better understand

technological systems and their applications and uses from wood chips to computer chips. The requirement for Technology education is satisfied in the 7th grade year.

## Viking Academy

Valley Central Middle School's Viking Academy is designed to provide an alternative educational experience for 8th grade students who have had difficulty in the traditional middle school setting. The Viking Academy is a curriculum STEAM-based program. Therefore, students who attend the Viking Academy will be required to complete the same core curriculum as students enrolled in the main middle school campus via project-based learning.

## World Languages

Department Chairperson: [Kelly Napoleon](#)

NYS Middle School Requirements for World Languages are satisfied in the eighth grade year. Students have a choice to study Spanish or French. World Languages courses emphasize the language arts skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) necessary to communicate in a foreign language. Grammar and syntax, vocabulary, and applicable accents typically are studied so that students have the knowledge and ability to express themselves and understand others. Students usually explore the customs, history and art forms of the people whose language is being studied.

## Elective Offerings

Electives are offered to our Grade 7 and Grade 8 students to encourage them to use all available time in the schedule in classes rather than in study hall.

## Grade 7

**Books Alive!**

Students will read and analyze young adult novels, short stories, and play scripts to compare the transition of the written word to film and to live theatrical performances. Students will explore the connections between visual media and the literary concepts of theme, characterization, voice, structure, and style. Students will develop analytical skills and critical thinking skills with text adaptation to stage and screen. Students will be expected to read, write, discuss and create a multimedia presentation. Examples of possible texts to include would be: The Wizard of Oz, Orphan Annie, The Hunger Games, Harry Potter, Hamilton, Tuck Everlasting, Cancelling Christmas, and Percy Jackson.

### **Literary Villains**

This course focuses on the guiding question of “What is a villain?”. Students will explore those archetype characters with the diabolical plans that interfere with the journey of the story’s hero. Students will look at fairy tales, children’s books, historical villains, films, and young adult literature and explore the perspective of the antagonist. A depth study of character development, character traits, dialogue, and vocabulary will be explored to aid in the development of the student’s own short story or multimedia presentation focused around a villain of their own creation.

### **Esports**

Students will work collaboratively to practice and prepare much like traditional sports teams. They will complete daily drills, communication activities, and strategic gameplay. When prepared, the team will compete in available games (Rocket League, Super Smash Bros, Minecraft, MarioKart, and Chess) against other middle school teams around the country. Participating in these team activities will foster interest in the gaming industry, develop better social and behavioral skills, develop sportsmanship, improve school performance, and prepare them for a more advanced elective curriculum at the HS level.

### **Reading Research**

Reading Research is an introduction to nonfiction writing and reading class. Students will learn to write a formal argument paper complete with evidence, proper citation, and MLA formatting. They will present a complete thesis statement based on one of

the assigned books for the class and complete independent research to back up their claims. Additionally, students will work on smaller research projects that connect to the work they are doing in their ELA classes. Don't worry – there is also a lot of fun: solving mysteries and debating – all things that require evidence and making one's case!

## Grade 8

### **Comics and Graphic Novels**

Pictures lead to stories and graphic novels and comics are a great way to experience these stories – both new and well-loved. Students will read and analyze a variety of comics and graphic novels that have created new and original stories while others have transformed existing literature into a new way for students to appreciate. Students will analyze the importance of plot and dialogue in the genre and how it relates to telling the story. Students will develop original storylines and imagery for their own comics and graphic novels by focusing on writing, character development, plot structure, and relatability on various themes and topics. As the course progresses, students will craft their own collection of comics and/or graphic stories. They may even choose to adapt their favorite children's book into their own version of a graphic novel and/or comic book.

### **Who Done It????**

Students will explore the elements of the mystery/suspense genre. Working with classic and contemporary texts/movies/tv programs, students will identify the many elements that get a reader or viewer on the edge of their seat and eager to solve the crime. Through the use of classic mystery writing formulas like that of Agatha Christie and the use of suspenseful elements, students will create their own mystery or detective story and give voice to the victims and suspects, while including the “red herring”.

### **Music Technology**



Students will examine the process of contemporary music creation, including the history and development of technology as a means of musical expression. Through composition and recording projects, students will be introduced to the tools utilized by musicians in the field. This course could potentially function as a prerequisite to any high school course offerings in the Music Technology pathway.

### **Esports**

Students will work collaboratively to practice and prepare much like traditional sports teams. They will complete daily drills, communication activities, and strategic gameplay. When prepared, the team will compete in available games (Rocket League, Super Smash Bros, Minecraft, MarioKart, and Chess) against other middle school teams around the country. Participating in these team activities will foster interest in the gaming industry, develop better social and behavioral skills, develop sportsmanship, improve school performance, and prepare them for a more advanced elective curriculum at the HS level.

### **Sketching your way through Art:**

Sketching is a great way to improve your creative skills and start thinking in different ways. "Sketching your way through Art" is a ten-week exploratory art class designed to help improve students' basic art skills through the use of drawing by designing artworks using a variety of media and techniques. Students will look closely at various artworks to help practice their language and art description skills. This class will further develop students' creativity, self-expression, and also aid in recognizing and using the art elements (line, shape, color, value, form, texture, and space).

### **Mural Arts Elective:**

Student artists will explore how murals represent a community's identity and hopes for the future. As part of this ten-week course, students will engage collaboratively and conceptually, as they further develop necessary painting and drawing skills for large-scale art in middle school. Students will brainstorm ideas, make sketches and practice painting in small groups to design and create murals that will be semi or permanently painted at the middle school. By working collaboratively as a community of artists, students will develop the skills needed to become professional artists.

## **Advanced Courses**

Valley Central School District offers advanced classes in the following subjects: English (7-12), Social Studies (7-12), Science (7-10), and Math (7-10). Accelerated classes in the areas of Math, Science, Foreign Language and Art are offered in Middle School and have the potential to result in High School credits.