



## Curriculum Guide

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# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

## **Objective**

At Altus Academy, we strive to provide a personalized, rigorous, liberal arts elementary school education with a focus on character development. We believe that education, in all its forms, is principally the development of the person to search for the tendency to the truth. Our objective is to provide all our students with the knowledge, character formation to direct them toward this truth.

## **Approach**

Our approach in providing a well-rounded liberal arts education is to provide our students with a broad grasp of knowledge in literature, art, history, and the sciences. We believe that knowledge drives literacy, and therefore to increase student achievement we must focus on providing a content-rich education. We can accomplish this by focusing our instruction in the following areas:

- American & Modern Studies
- Classical Studies
- Christian Studies
- Integral Human Development
- Geography
- Classical Literature
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Earth Science
- Mathematics
- Latin

## **Specials**

Special classes are designed to teach our students soft skills such as teamwork, leadership skills, creative thinking, and decision-making. Our *Specials* are intended to be fun and interactive classes for our students. These classes include:

- Chess
  - Art
  - Robotics
  - Theatre
  - CAD 101 — Introduction to Computer Aided Design
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# SOCIAL STUDIES

## American & Modern Studies

In American/Modern Studies students study American history, civics, geography, and literature as well as world geography and non-Western cultures. This program is designed to give students mastery over very concrete and useful information about the United States and the world, and to build each year on previous year's works.

Students trace and study maps, draw freehand maps, and by the end of the curriculum are able to draw political and physical maps of both hemispheres from memory. Students also read a variety of books to supplement their knowledge of the U.S. and the world.

Grade 1/2 — Stories of Great Americans for little Americans

Grade 3 — Third Grade American History Reading Set & Discussion Questions

Grade 4/5 — Fourth Grade American History Reading Set & Discussion Questions  
States & Capitals

Grade 6 — Geography II: Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Oceania, & the Americas

Grade 7 — The Story of the Thirteen Colonies & the Great Republic

The Story of the World Vol. 4: The Modern Age

Famous Men of Modern Times Set

200 Questions About American History

Grade 8 — Geography III: Exploring and Mapping the World

## Classical Studies

In Classical Studies, students study Greek mythology and Greek and Roman history and literature, gradually deepening their knowledge and understanding. This long grounding prepares students to read the classics of Greek, Roman, and English literature, and to study and understand the modern world.

Grade 6 — Famous Men of the Middle Ages

The Book of the Middle Ages

Grade 8 — Famous Men of Greece

The Book of Ancient Greeks

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# SCIENCE

## Overview

In science, students will engage in relevant, real-world problems where they investigate scientific phenomena, engage in collaboration and discussion, and develop models or explanations in order to arrive at solutions. In each unit, students take on the role of a scientist or engineer to investigate a real-world problem. These problems provide relevant contexts through which students investigate phenomena. Students will also be engaging in the practice of argumentation. Students will focus on important aspects of argumentation in an intentional sequence.

## Elementary Science

Grade 1/2 — Animal and Plant Defenses/ Light and Sound/ Spinning Earth

Grade 3 — Balancing Forces/ Inheritance and Traits/ Environments and Survival/ Weather and Climate

Grade 4/5 — Energy Conversions/ Vision & Light/ Earth's Features/ Waves Energy, and Information

## Life Science

Grade 6 — Microbiome/ Metabolism / Traits & Reproduction / Populations & Resources / Matter & Energy in Ecosystem

## Earth and Space Science

Grade 7 — Geology on Mars / Plate Motion / Rock Transformation / Earth, Moon, and Sun / Ocean, Atmosphere, and Climate / Weather Patterns / Earth's Changing Climate

## Physical Science

Grade 8 — Harnessing Human Energy / Force and Motion / Magnetic Fields / Thermal Energy / Phase Change / Chemical Reactions / Light Waves

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*Curriculum Resources: Amplify Science*

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# MATHEMATICS

## Overview

*Ready Mathematics* prepares students for mastery of the rigorous standards through a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural skills, fluency, and application. *Ready*'s clear, thoughtful pedagogy and research-based instructional model supports a rich classroom environment in which mathematical reasoning, mathematical discourse, and a range of mathematical practices thrive.

## Approach

*Ready Mathematics* uses real-world problem solving as instruction to develop deep conceptual understanding. *Ready* presents multiple representations to make connections and show the conceptual meaning behind procedural fluency. It also connects new problems to prior knowledge, demonstrates multiple approaches, and provides multiple access points to learning. *Ready* strengthens students' ability to use critical thinking and complex reasoning through questions that focus on higher depth of knowledge levels.

Grade 1/2 — Grade 1-2 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

Grade 3 — Grade 3 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

Grade 4/5 — Grade 4 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

Grade 6 — Grade 6 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

Grade 7 — Grade 7 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

Grade 8 — Grade 8 Instruction / Practice & Problem Solving

*Curriculum Resources: Ready Mathematics*

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# CORE KNOWLEDGE LANGUAGE ARTS

## Overview

Using a fundamentally different approach to language arts, *Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)* sequences deep content knowledge with research-based foundational skills.

## Approach

*Amplify CKLA* is a unique core curriculum for PreK–5 ELA, combining rich, diverse content knowledge in history, science, literature, and the arts with systematic, research-based foundational skills instruction. *Amplify*'s more intentional approach to background knowledge allows students to build a robust knowledge base for accessing and unpacking complex texts, so real comprehension can happen.

## Program Structure

*Amplify CKLA* is designed around the following principles:

- Explicit foundational skills and language instruction
- Maximizing vocabulary acquisition through contextualized, content-based, and constant exposure
- Building background knowledge for strong comprehension
- Fostering “wonderful conversationalists”
- Building analysis and expression in reading and writing

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*Curriculum Resources: Amplify CKLA*

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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

## Overview

*Amplify ELA* is a blended curriculum designed specifically for grades 6–8. With *Amplify ELA*, students learn to tackle any complex text and make observations, grapple with interesting ideas, and find relevance for themselves. Students are engaged through dynamic texts, lively classroom discussions, and meaningful digital experiences. *Amplify ELA* inspires students to read more deeply, write more vividly, and think more critically.

## Approach

With text always at the center, students are encouraged to make meaning for themselves. They develop ideas and opinions on real-world, relevant texts, instead of focusing on right or wrong answers. Multiple entry points and differentiated supports allow every student, regardless of fluency or ability level, to engage deeply with the same complex texts and rigorous curriculum.

## Program Structure

Each grade includes six units centered on literary or informational texts, delivered in several forms of media. Lessons follow a structure that is grounded in regular routines but flexible enough to allow for a variety of learning experiences. Students will cover the following topics:

### Grade 6

Dahl & Narrative / Mysteries & Investigation / The Greeks / Summer of the Mariposas  
The Titanic Collection / The Chocolate Collection / Beginner Story Writing Unit / Grammar Unit

### Grade 7

Red Scarf Girl / Character & Conflict / Brain Science / Poetry & Poe  
Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet / The Gold Rush Collection / Intermediate Story Writing / Grammar Unit

### Grade 8

Dahl, World War II & Narrative / The Holocaust & The 1936 Olympics / Liberty & Equality / Grammar Unit  
The Frida & Diego Collection / Science & Science Fiction / The Space Race Collection / Advanced Story Writing

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*Curriculum Resources: Amplify ELA*

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# INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## Overview

In this program, students will understand their reason for being and their true nature. They will also foster lifelong personal development in their Intellectual, Academic, Moral, Physical and Spiritual lives in order to effectively know and serve God and others. Students will be able to answer questions such as: Who am I? Why am I here? What is a good life?

The guiding principles for the development and implementation of the Integral Human Development (IHD) curriculum are found in Christian Doctrine and the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, applicable to all people. Each student is encouraged to develop a relationship with God that will inform his / her efforts to discern their vocation in life, their path to serve God and others. IHD also provides the opportunity and structure to identify, discuss and respond to issues and events that occur in society and in each student's life.

## Approach

Students will learn Christian Doctrine and the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the concept of the natural law, the ten commandments, the beatitudes and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as well as the basic principles of Catholic Social Doctrine, applicable to all people: personalist principle; principle of the common good; principle of the universal destination of goods; principle of subsidiarity; principle of participation; principle of solidarity and the core values of truth, freedom, justice and love.

Students will set weekly written goals, based on the practice of various virtues at school and at home that support the 5 behavioral expectations of Altus Academy and help build their character and our culture of character. The students will evaluate themselves for how well they practiced the virtue and the effort they put forward. Students will study, discuss, reflect report on stories from literature, poetry, videos and bible passages that exemplify the types of virtue and character traits and struggles in which we want to engage

## Resources

- *Alive to the World* (Character Development Series)
  - *Baltimore Catechism*
  - *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*
  - *Bible*
  - *Virtus Protecting God's Children*
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## LATIN

### Overview

Latin develops the mind of the young student as no other subject can. The study of Latin is the core of a classical education. Memorizing the Latin Grammar is a great challenge and thrill for students. The mastery of the grammar greatly enhances English language skills and builds the kind of confidence that comes only from great achievement. There is no substitute for the mental development provided by the study of the Latin Grammar.

Our Latin program is unique in that our students achieve mastery of the Latin Grammar before high school – a practice which was the norm prior to the twentieth century, but is rare today. Most of the classroom materials used to teach the Latin Grammar – *Prima Latina*, *Latina Christiana*, *Lingua Angelica*, and the Latin Forms Series – have been developed by Cheryl Lowe and *Memoria Press*.

### Approach

Our Latin curriculum follows a traditional scope and sequence and is consistent with the grammar, logic, and rhetoric stages of the trivium.

- First year, middle school Latin, emphasizes the memorization of the Latin Grammar by the time-tested method of oral recitation and form drills.
- Second year, middle school Latin focus on the study of syntax and translation using the classic *Henle I* and *II* texts.

## CHESS

### Overview

Learning how to play chess helps to develop critical thinking skills, enhances mental prowess and dramatically improves the ability to think rationally. Our Chess program is designed to teach chess in a step-by-step process. The combination of workbook and manual creates a school like situation. All lessons are structured and contain clear goals. Our program covers everything from how the pieces move to important endgame strategies. Our students also compete in citywide chess tournaments

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