

READINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Enrichment and Gifted Program

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Readington Township Schools
Enrichment and Gifted Program
Kindergarten – Grade 8

I. Philosophy

The Readington Township School District is committed to an educational program that develops critical thinkers and independent, lifelong learners. Each individual possesses a variety of intelligences, as well as a unique learning style, temperament, and pattern of growth and development. Students of all ages need to learn at their instructional level with pace and depth of content matching and challenging their abilities. The Readington Township School District recognizes the unique value, needs, talents, abilities and intelligences of the individual student and thereby provides enriching and challenging experiences for all students.

To implement this philosophy, we provide a Gifted & Talented Program and enrichment opportunities for students.

The Readington Township School District views students, staff, parents, and community members as partners. Each member of the partnership shares responsibility to ensure access to learning opportunities so that each student's potential may be maximized.

Enrichment Opportunities

As the Readington Township School District recognizes the unique needs, interests, talents, abilities and intelligences of each individual student, it will provide an enrichment program that enhances and extends classroom experiences for all students.

Enrichment will

- Operate as an integral part of the entire educational program.
- Provide diverse activities and assignments that extend learning beyond the regular classroom and address particular interests/talents.
- Foster a safe learning environment with clear expectations and accepting attitudes that encourage risk-taking and exploration.
- Encourage individual confidence and responsibility.
- Use current research and technical resources to design opportunities that enhance learning.

Gifted and Talented

The Readington Township School District has adopted the New Jersey State Department of Education's definition of giftedness as a guide for developing programs. Recognizing that a small portion of students are atypical, exceptional learners who require specialized learning experiences, the Readington Township Schools will provide opportunities to appropriately

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address the needs of these students. Gifted and talented children are those whose learning characteristics and educational needs require qualitatively differentiated educational experiences and services.

The basic purpose of a gifted education program is to assist gifted students in becoming self-directed learners who achieve excellence and reach their greatest potential. Therefore, the Readington Township program for gifted students should broaden and improve learning experiences while fostering the individual socio-affective needs of each student. This is achieved through the development of decision-making, problem solving, creativity, collaboration, critical and divergent thinking skills.

The Readington Township **Gifted & Talented** program will

- Utilize multiple criteria to identify truly exceptional/gifted students.
- Offer classroom teacher training in how to differentiate for gifted students.
- Engage small groups of students in intensive learning experiences that supplement classroom instruction and their unique learner needs.
- Support student responsibility, accountability, and eagerness for learning.
- Engage students in higher-order and critical thinking.
- Provide opportunities for leadership and self-directed learning.
- Engage students in shared inquiry.
- Enhance students' social, communication and presentation skills.
- Provide multiple opportunities for collaboration.
- Provide opportunities for in-depth investigations.

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II. Enrichment

Readington Township Public Schools' Enrichment centers on the needs of all students. The program includes carefully selected experiences that are purposefully developed to be motivational and to expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, topics, ideas, concepts, issues and/or events. Classroom teachers provide enrichment experiences as part of the regular educational program. Additionally, enrichment teachers provide extended, interest-based offerings outside the regular classroom setting.

At the developmentally appropriate level, these enrichment extensions provide opportunities for students to

- Develop general cognitive skills such as creative problem solving, critical thinking and decision making.
- Develop and practice a variety of metacognitive skills, such as note taking; interviewing; classifying, archiving or analyzing data; drawing conclusions; etc.
- Develop advanced research skills.
- Develop written, oral and visual communication and presentation skills.

The enrichment program for the **Kindergarten – Grade 3** students may include the following:

- “Kids’ Pages”
- Writing Contests
- Science Fair
- Sunshine Math
- Challenge Math Packets
- Maker Space
- Independent Research Projects

The enrichment program for **Grades 4-5** students may include the following:

- Invention Convention
- Scripps *Express Times* Spelling Bee
- Science Olympiad
- Destination Imagination

The schoolwide program for **Grades 6-8** may include the following:

- National Geography Bee

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- Scripps Express Times Spelling Bee
- Movie-Makers
- School Buzz News Video
- Radiant Wonder Literary Magazine
- Debates
- Future Cities Engineering
- Model UN/Youth and Government
- Photography: Humans of RMS
- Video Game Design
- Creative Problem Solving
- Improvisational Theater
- National History Day
- Young Playwrights
- Talent Show
- Word Histories
- Linguistics Olympiad

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III. Gifted and Talented

New Jersey State Department of Education Gifted and Talented Requirements

On June 1, 2005 the State Board of Education readopted with amendments [N.J.A.C. 6A: 8, Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement](#), which includes more specific requirements for gifted and talented programs.

The regulations define gifted and talented students as:

Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Key Points

- All public schools must have a board-approved gifted and talented program.
- Students are to be compared with their peers in the local school district.
- District boards of education shall make provisions for an ongoing K-12 identification process for gifted and talented students that includes multiple measures, including but not limited to, achievement test scores, grades, student performance or products, intelligence testing, parent, student and/or teacher recommendation, and other appropriate measures.
- The regulations do not establish state-level criteria for giftedness (such as an IQ score or grade point average). Specific tests are not required to be used to identify gifted and talented students.
- Local school districts should ensure that the identification methodology used is developmentally appropriate, non-discriminatory, and related to the programs and services offered (e.g., use math achievement to identify students for a math program).
- N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-3.1(a)5 ii requires local district boards of education to provide appropriate K-12 educational services for gifted and talented students. Therefore, the identification process and appropriate educational challenges must begin in kindergarten.
- The rules require district boards of education to develop appropriate curricular and instructional modifications for gifted students. Programs must address appropriate content, process, products, and learning environment.
- District boards of education shall take into consideration the *PreK-Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards of the National Association for Gifted Children* (NAGC) in developing programs for gifted and talented students. The NAGC standards establish

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requisite and exemplary gifted program standards and can be accessed at [NAGC Standard](#).

- Each curriculum framework developed by the department provides general as well as content-specific information on gifted education (e.g., terminology, examples of appropriate practices). The frameworks can be accessed at <http://www.nj.gov/education/archive/frameworks/> or at <http://www.nj.gov/education/aps/cccs>.
- Local school districts will continue to be monitored as part of the regular school district evaluation process. Board-approved policies and procedures must be made available.

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Identification of Candidates for the Gifted and Talented Program

The K-8 Gifted and Talented programs in Readington Township Schools are needs-based. These programs are intended for those students who exhibit intellectual and/or academic abilities requiring additional and appropriate educational challenges and opportunities to meet those needs. The criteria for admission to the Gifted & Talented Program include a variety of data points, which may vary depending on a student's grade level. A combination of standardized test scores, student work samples, classroom grades, and teacher input are considered when determining eligibility.

Chronology of Required Documentation

1. Throughout the year, teachers should collect and archive all exceptional student work samples as possible supporting evidence for recommendations to the G&T program.
2. In March, parents and faculty members are invited to recommend individuals to be nominated for the G&T program. Parents may initiate the referral process by completing and submitting a Parent Nomination form.
3. After a nomination is received, G&T teachers will collect data regarding students' intellect, academic enthusiasm and creativity.
4. In the spring, students nominated will be invited to take a district selected assessment instrument. Additional pieces of information may be collected.
5. G&T teachers will establish a district committee, will meet to discuss each nominee and will decide on eligibility using the criteria described below.
6. Parents and teachers will be notified of each student's eligibility.

Modification Procedures

Each student identified for inclusion in the Gifted and Talented program will be reviewed on an ongoing basis for the continuing appropriateness of his/her gifted program through review of student performance.

The student may be withdrawn from the program through a decision of the committee after conferencing with the gifted teacher, classroom teacher, guidance counselor, parent, and, where appropriate, the student.

Program Overview

Kindergarten-Grade 1: Students will receive a pull-out program which will provide opportunities for an in-depth exploration of language arts and/or mathematics.

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Grades 2-5: Students will receive a thematic pull-out program on a regular basis. Within themes, all students will have an opportunity to 1) conduct guided and independent research; 2) work collaboratively with peers; 3) solve challenging problems; 4) prepare and present to an audience; and 5) explore and debate essential questions.

Grades 6&7: students will take part in a Quest Language Arts class with multi-disciplinary themed experiences

Grade 8: Students will participate in a conference/mentor based program called the Passion Project in which they explore personally relevant topics.

The program for identified academically gifted students is viewed as part of the individual student's total educational experience. Basic program assumptions include the following:

- The classroom teacher will incorporate differentiated lessons for the academically talented and implement those strategies into the total program.
- Additional specialized programs and activities for identified students will take place outside the classroom to further challenge these students.

The program focuses on both process and content and is designed to enhance the academic, personal and social development of the student as well.

Program Components

As per the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, the classroom teacher will differentiate instruction to address the needs of the gifted student in the regular classroom.

The gifted teacher may provide for the differentiated needs of gifted and talented students in small groups by

- a. Presenting content material that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems.
- b. Integrating multiple disciplines and essential questions into the study area.
- c. Allowing for in-depth learning of a topic selected by the student within thematic units.
- d. Developing the student's independent and self-directed study and research skills.
- e. Integrating higher level thinking skills into the curriculum.
- f. Focusing on open-ended tasks and solving challenging problems.
- g. Providing opportunities for collaboration during different aspects of the learning process.

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- h. Providing opportunities to present to authentic audiences.
- i. Encouraging self-reflection and evaluation.

The following thematic curricula will serve as a planning guide for GT teachers. Because student groups vary with regard to interest and motivation, teachers need to be flexible in providing for their needs.

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Gifted and Talented Units of Instruction

	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>
Unit	1	1
THEME	Where did all the bees go?	Growth Mindset
Essential Question(s)	Are bees important to our lives? Why are bees disappearing? What can I do to help?	Does mindset matter? What makes a growth mindset? Can you change your mindset, and should you?
Unit Overview	<p>Children will play the role of scientists to investigate the role of bees in our ecosystem. Children will learn about the role bees play in pollination, and honey production. Through news casts and media reports, children will learn about the declining bee population.</p> <p>The students will then work collaboratively to investigate possible reasons for the decline, along with potential implications to humans. Based on their deductions, children will develop a plan to help boost bee populations in our area. Ideas may include designing a pollinator garden, planting species that are attractive to bees, or creating informative materials such as poster, fliers, blogs, or letters to inform the community of how they can help bee numbers to recover. Non-fiction reading, opinion and explanatory writing, and presentation</p>	<p>Students will participate in a self awareness exercise to determine their current mindset. Through multimedia presentations, students will learn the meaning of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Students will investigate the key indicators of each mindset, and reflect upon themselves. Students will compare and contrast their observations of mindset and discuss its impact on their learning.</p> <p>Students will work collaboratively to determine key strategies used by people with a growth mindset. They will then deduce whether or not it is possible to develop a growth mindset. Students will choose one aspect of their mindset that they would like to change, and determine a plan to achieve their goal. Students will work collaboratively to create a classroom proclamation and display outlining their goals and strategies.</p> <p>As a keystone project, students will work</p>

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	skills will be infused throughout the unit.	collaboratively to create lesson to teach other third graders about mindset. Children will reflect on the most important facts and how they think classmates will learn best. They will then work collaboratively to create a mini lesson in the format of their choosing (possibly creating multimedia presentation, a game, rap song, or an art project). Children will teach students in their homeroom class about the importance of growth mindset and how to develop it. Students will work with their teacher to create a rubric with which to evaluate their product.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through student created projects. Student work will be evaluated by teacher developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts learned through discussion, plan development, proclamation, and display. Student work will be evaluated by teacher/student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.
Links	Bee overview Why are bees beneficial? Pollination Why are bees disappearing? What happens to us if bees disappear? Honeybee Conservancy	Mindset Matter Quiz Cartoon - Perseverance and Problem solving Power of Yet Growth Mindset
Unit	2	2

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THEME	Mensa's Roller Coaster Mania	The Four C's of Education
Essential Question(s)	<p>What does science have to do with roller coasters?</p> <p>How does the track design alter the ride?</p>	<p>Why are creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration important?</p> <p>How can I own my learning?</p> <p>Am I teaching the robot or is the robot teaching me?</p>
Unit Overview	<p>Students will explore the role of science in the design of roller coasters. Students will learn the fundamental physics behind roller coaster design including gravity, forces, and forms of energy. Students will use an interactive roller coaster design simulator to explore problems associated with roller coaster design, including length of track, height of hills, tightness of turns, and critical speed. Students will keep an engineers journal detailing the problems they encountered and the strategies they used to solve. Students will then apply what they have learned to complete Mensa's Roller Coaster Mania challenge. Students will be given criteria for the challenge, access to all required materials, and will work collaboratively to create a successful design. On completion of the project, students will complete their journal with a detailed reflection of their design, its success in the challenge, and what changes they would make to improve it if they were to repeat the challenge.</p>	<p>Students will explore the importance of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration in the classroom. Using the MakerSpace concept, students will be presented with a variety of tasks or challenges that they must complete. Challenges will range from simplistic concepts such as building a bridge, to more complex concepts such as coding a robot to complete a given task. Concepts of basic construction, engineering principles, electrical circuitry, and coding will be infused throughout the unit. As a keystone project, students will work collaboratively to develop a series of projects all based around a central theme (eg nursery rhymes, flight, transportation, superheroes, etc). Students will decide on a problem to be solved, deliberate on materials that should be made available to solve it, and develop directions that should be provided. Students will create kits with all necessary materials and guidelines to follow in solving their problem. Students will work with their teacher to create a rubric with which to guide their progress. Completed student</p>

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		<p>projects will be used as part of schoolwide enrichment activities on National MakerSpace day.</p> <p>Student projects will be evaluated by teacher and/or student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.</p>
Assessment	<p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts learned through the creation of their own roller coaster. Students will document their findings in a journal. Student work will be evaluated by teacher/student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts learned through a project of their choice. Student work will be evaluated by teacher/student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.</p>
Links	<p>How do roller coasters work?</p> <p>Creating a roller coaster - interactive</p> <p>Mensa's Roller Coaster Mania</p>	
Unit	3	3
THEME	In the Author's Shoes	Values and Morals in Storytelling
Essential Question(s)	<p>How can I incorporate the characteristics from Van Allsburg's work into my own writing?</p> <p>Why is it important to analyze literature?</p>	<p>What characteristics of fables are important in effective storytelling?</p> <p>What role does symbolism play in traditional literature?</p> <p>How can literature be used to preserve the values and morals of cultures?</p>

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Unit Overview	Children will compare and contrast texts by Chris Van Allsburg. (Texts are written at the 5th grade level). They will identify the most important motifs and characteristics that define Van Allsburg's work. They will discuss and analyze the characters and message of each story. Next, the children will dissect the stories and then apply the same techniques used in these books to create a game and story in the tradition of Jumanji and Zathura. Additionally, students will have opportunities to respond to some of Van Allsburg's other work, by analyzing and evaluating the story, and extending the theme by writing a sequel, an alternative ending, or book review.	Students will compare a myriad of fables from various cultures. They will learn the characteristics of a fable and choose one to perform. Children will delve into the concept of personification, and analyze the symbolic meaning and characteristics inherent in traditional fables. They will evaluate the morals and reflect on their meaning. Students will apply what they have learned by writing and publishing their own fable and share it with the group. The group will critique each other's work using criteria that they have developed during the theme.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the creation of a game and story in the tradition of Jumanji and Zathura. Student work will be evaluated by teacher developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned by writing and publishing their own fable. Student work will be evaluated by teacher and/or student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.
Unit	4	4
THEME	Continents and Cultures	Ancient Civilizations And Modern Culture
Essential Question(s)	What are the foundations of any culture that make it prosperous?	What elements of Ancient Egyptian culture do we recognize in our own

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	Why is it important to understand other cultures and their symbols?	society? How do artifacts tell us about ancient civilizations? What artifacts from our culture will tell our story? How can I identify and compare characteristics that define a culture?
Unit Overview	Children will investigate continents and cultures. They will make inquiries into languages, traditions, and symbolic buildings around the world and compare them to our own. Students will learn key elements of digital citizenship through a collaborative project to research information about a symbolic building in the US. Children will apply this working knowledge of the world in a project of their choosing. For example, a student may choose to study a group of indigenous people and write a story from a child of that culture's point of view. Another student may compare and contrast a symbol in one culture (i.e., the Eiffel Tower) to an important symbol in our culture, such as the Statue of Liberty. A student may choose to learn some simple phrases of another language and teach them to the rest of the class. As a culminating project, students will connect and share information about their famous building with other students around the world through the learn Famous Building Project (link below)	Students will study early civilizations in comparison with modern civilizations. Students will learn how archaeologists use artifacts to theorize about ancient civilizations. They will then apply this knowledge to surmise artifacts from our culture that may be important in telling the story of our civilization in the future. Students will use the Magic Treehouse "Ancient Egypt" study guide to explore components of culture. They will then compare these to another culture of their choosing. They will create a multimedia presentation describing a culture that they have designed and created based on what they have discovered throughout the unit.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through a student created project of	Students will demonstrate understanding by completing a future archeologists journal. The journal will detail artifacts

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	their choosing. Student work will be evaluated by teacher developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.	from our civilization and possible interpretations as to what they tell about our culture. Students will also demonstrate mastery of the concepts learned by creating a multimedia presentation describing a culture that they have created. Student presentation will be evaluated by teacher and/or student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.
Links	Learn - Famous Buildings Around the World	
Unit	5	5
THEME	Self Exploration	Exploring Ourselves as Learners- Individualized Research Project
Essential Question(s)	How do I define myself? Why do I need to focus in on detail in order to see the “big picture”? What are some strengths that I can contribute to a team?	Why is it important to understand myself and my learning style? What are some ways I can learn and communicate about a topic that I am interested in? How does self reflection make my work more meaningful? Why is digital citizenship important?
Unit Overview	Children will explore themselves and learn about each other while building vocabulary and literary skills. Students will evaluate their strengths and areas of improvement and set goals for themselves for the year. They will learn to focus in on specific details in order to see the “big	Students will participate in teambuilding activities, and self awareness exercises. They will investigate their learning modalities, interests, strengths, and areas in need of improvement. Students will learn research skills and formulate a research question to explore based on their own personal interest or

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	<p>picture”. They will also compare and contrast their individual skills and define themselves in different aspects. They will then analyze their potential contribution to our “team” and to our community.</p>	<p>passion. Children will then design a project that they will be responsible for and apply what they have learned about the research process and their chosen topic. They will work with their teacher to create a rubric with which to guide their progress, and evaluate their product. Students may choose to do a research paper, a newscast, a magazine article, web page, or any form of multimedia presentation. Students will learn strategies for effective public speaking. Concepts of digital citizenship will be infused throughout the unit. Students will then reflect on their learning process and achievement and set goals for themselves for the future.</p>
Assessment	<p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through student created projects. Student work will be evaluated by teacher developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of concepts learned through a research project of their choice. Student work will be evaluated by teacher/student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.</p>
Unit	6	6
THEME	Scientific Discoveries	Cooperation and Social Change
Essential Question(s)	<p>How can we learn about history from mother nature?</p> <p>What is the process for collecting, recording and evaluating scientific data?</p> <p>How can I apply scientific ideas in a creative way?</p>	<p>What can world citizens do to improve the conditions of humanity and society?</p> <p>Can one person really make a difference in the world?</p> <p>Why is it important to work collaboratively to achieve a common goal?</p>

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Unit Overview	Students will explore trees and seeds. They will read the Secret Life of Trees and discover how to “read the rings” of a tree. They will apply this knowledge to analyze a sample of a tree of their own. They will learn to make scientific observations as they examine various fruits and vegetables. They will record, compare/contrast and synthesize their scientific findings. Next, students will design a seed packet for an imaginary plant that they have created. Children will include all the information necessary and instructions on how to successfully grow their plant. They will create an ad to market their “new discovery” to the public which will identify who this new plant will benefit and how it will impact the community.	Students will be investigating slavery, Harriet Tubman, The Underground Railroad. Through research, webquests, interactive simulations, star mapping, and musical interpretations, the children will explore the significance of cooperation amongst slaves and abolitionists. Students will work collaboratively to create a “Freedom Quilt”, a map disguised within a quilt using secret symbols that the students will research. Throughout the unit, students will make journal entries reflecting on the ideas of leadership, cooperation, and social change through written responses.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through a series of student created projects (seed packet design, advertisement, written explanation of scientific observations, etc). Student work will be evaluated by teacher developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through a series of student created projects (star maps, illustration of lyrics of song, journal entries, etc.) and the creation of a “Freedom Quilt”. Student work will be evaluated by teacher and/or student developed rubric, student self reflection, and peer critiquing. Feedback will be given through a student teacher conference.

	<u>Grade 4</u>	<u>Grade 5</u>
Unit	1	1

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Theme	Literature: Mystery and Detection	Literature: Mystery and Detection
Essential Question(s)	<p>What role do mysteries as a genre play in literature throughout history?</p> <p>How do mysteries compare to other literary genres?</p>	<p>What role do mysteries as a genre play in literature throughout history?</p> <p>Do mysteries that have occurred throughout history share similarities?</p>
Unit Overview	Mysteries are an appropriate unit of study for gifted students as they involve a variety of higher level thinking skills such as deductive and divergent thinking. Students will study the history and elements of mysteries as well as read a variety as well known mysteries written by Edgar Allan Poe and other authors.	The study of mysteries will continue with students reading the novel <u>Chasing Vermeer</u> . This literature study will engage students in math and history connections as well as researching real life mysteries that have occurred throughout history.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the design of their own mystery using a creative technique. Student work will be evaluated through a teacher developed rubric, peer and self assessment.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through investigating a real life mystery that has occurred and presenting that mystery to an audience in an original and creative way. Student work will be evaluated through a teacher developed rubric and teacher conferencing.

Unit	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Theme	Discovery: Architectural styles in our community	Discovery: Bridging the gap
Essential Question(s)	<p>What are the various architecture styles found in our community?</p> <p>What is the historical significance of these buildings?</p>	<p>What purpose have bridges served throughout history?</p> <p>What are the characteristics of bridges and bridge construction that make them efficient?</p>
Unit Overview	Readington Township is a community rich in architectural design and historical significance. Students will conduct an architectural and historical study of structures in their community. A county architect and historian will mentor students throughout their investigation. Students will take a field	Bridges have been a fundamental technology used around the world for decades. The physics involved with bridge construction are fundamental properties that keep bridges strong and usable for many years. In this unit, students will explore various concepts about bridges. A basic understanding of bridge history will be

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	trip into the community to explore these structures and construct replicas and a photographic essay of their experience.	examined, and students will research famous U.S. bridges. Students will construct models of bridges to gain an understanding of bridge construction.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the construction of an authentic architectural building found in their community. Students will present their building to an audience. Students will be evaluated through teacher, peer and mentor feedback.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the construction of a bridge whose strength will be tested in a bridge breaking activity. Student work will be evaluated by teacher observation and student self assessment.

Unit	3	3
Theme	Creativity: the amazing Rube Goldberg	Creativity: Analyzing political cartoons
Essential Question(s)	How can looking at things from varied perspectives generate ideas? How can simple physics concepts be applied to create a working model of a “contraption?”	What role do political cartoons play in our society? How does a political cartoonist use creativity to relay meaning to his audience?
Unit Overview	A study of Rube Goldberg and his work will require students to identify cause and effect within a sequence of visual events and utilize creative thinking and concepts in physics to design a contraption.	Political cartoons or satires have provided a visual means by which individuals can express their opinions. They have been used throughout history to engage readers in discussions about an event, issue or individual. This unit will require students to use critical thinking skills to analyze old and new political cartoons. They will unlock the language of the cartoonist by deciphering the symbols and icons used in political cartoons. They will research cartoons and use creative thinking skills to develop original political cartoons.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the creation of an original Rube Goldberg. Student work will be evaluated by a teacher developed rubric along with peer and self assessment.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned through the creation of a political cartoon which demonstrates the use of symbols and icons used in political cartooning. Student work will be evaluated by a teacher developed rubric and student assessment.

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Unit	4	4
Theme	Technology: Using robotics	Technology: Using robotics
Essential Question(s)	How can technology be used to solve a simple problem? What are the advantages to having several solutions to a problem?	How can technology be used to solve a simple problem? What are the advantages to having several solutions to a problem?
Unit Overview	Robotics takes a highly technological approach to creative problem solving, through the design and development of Lego models which will be operated through computer programming. Students will gain new knowledge in the area of computer programming, utilize communication skills, and strengthen team building.	Robotics takes a highly technological approach to creative problem solving, through the design and development of Lego models which will be operated through computer programming. Students will gain new knowledge in the area of computer programming, utilize communication skills, and strengthen team building.
Assessment	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned by creating a computer program that will enable their robot to complete a simple task. Student work will be evaluated through a teacher developed rubric.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts learned by creating a computer program that will enable their robot to complete a series of tasks. Student work will be evaluated through a teacher developed rubric.

	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>
Unit	1	1
THEME	Culture and Behavior	Identity and Change
Essential Question(s)	What kinds of characteristics do different cultures and time periods have? Where am I a local, and how does that affect me? How do authors create worlds based on the elements of culture?	Am I the same person I used to be? Will I always be the same person I am now? How do philosophers use metaphors to explain their vision?

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Unit Overview	Students explore different cultures' sense of time, space, boundaries and values. They communicate with students in other countries about daily life in order to see how much we have in common, and where the differences lie. Students then listen to a TED Talk about identity being based on relationships, rituals and restrictions, and consider how that works in their own lives, and character's lives. Finally, they develop a culture for their own story.	Students explore different philosopher's views on the human capacity to change. They consider various definitions of identity and how these definitions affect the answers to key questions. They also consider how societies developed based on the belief of whether people can or cannot change.
Assessment	Students will develop the blueprint for an invented world. They will explain how different elements of culture play a role in their society.	Students will debate the Theseus's Ship allegory using specific examples. They will then create another image for stating their case about identity and change. Throughout the process, they will keep a journal of their findings.
Links	TED Talk World Wise Schools	90 second philosophy Metaphysics Plutarch's Lives Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau
Unit	2	2
THEME	The Future is Now	Moral Dilemmas
Essential Question(s)	What does it mean to be living in a Science Fictional World? How do I envision the childhood of my great grand-children?	How can I decide what the "right" course of action is? How have leaders handled moral dilemmas in history?
Unit Overview	Students explore past visions for the year 2000 and analyze where authors and screenwriters were on target, and	Students explore the Heinz Dilemma, various Train Dilemmas, and Quandaries posed in a futuristic society. They formulate a system for

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	where they missed the mark. They compare different editions of picture books written in different years to see how technology has altered our lives, and then they imagine how it will be in the future.	making choices in moral dilemmas and then compare their system to what happened in various historical and legal events.
Assessment	Students write a futuristic persuasive letter.	Students write a reflective essay about a time they faced a moral dilemma and how they made a decision to handle it.
Links	Richard Scarry How They Envisioned the Future What the Future Will Look Like	Heinz's Dilemma The Trolley Problem Quandary Game
Unit	3	3
THEME	Mission: Moon, Mars, and Me	A World of Service
Essential Question(s)	Who won the Space Race? How do people come together to solve problems? How will I “defy gravity” in my life?	What does Service mean? How does the act of volunteering help the volunteer?
Unit Overview	Students explore the NASA badges to see how astronauts represented their missions and came together with a purpose. They create their own problem-solving badge to represent a team. Then, they look at key events in the Space Race and after the Space Race, and take part in a debate about it. Students give a presentation about how they are similar to an innovator who went beyond expectations.	Students explore different branches of service, and then meet with veterans to explore how service has affected their world views. Students interview family members about volunteer experiences and analyze the results. Students also debate community service requirements at public schools.
Assessment	Students take part in a Space Race	Students create a multimedia presentation

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	debate and give a presentation about it.	about the veterans and an infographic about their own acts of kindness.
Links	The Space Race Mission Patches	NJ Armed Forces Heritage Museum Piktograph
Unit	4	4
THEME	Linguistics	The Little Prince
Essential Question(s)	<p>How are languages and math connected?</p> <p>How are languages connected with one another?</p> <p>How can I use inference and prior knowledge to understand terms in other languages.</p>	<p>What is essential to me?</p> <p>What parts of my childhood do I want to keep with me?</p> <p>To what extent can a movie have the impact of a book?</p>
Unit Overview	Students look at headlines of newspapers from around the world, in multiple languages, and try to learn what they can from their existing knowledge of English and their second language. Students explore different language family trees and take part in linguistic code breaking activities. In particular, they decipher a fairytale with many Indo European words. Students explore patterns in language and compare these patterns with mathematical algorithms.	Students explore extended metaphors and allegorical writing through their shared journey with The Little Prince. They discuss the power of creativity, the perils of too much or too little imagination, and the benefits of different “gifted” character traits. Students also explore the context of the author’s life when he wrote the book, with World War II in the background. A thorough analysis of different media representations of this book is made, including a discussion of why screenwriters chose to add or omit certain segments. Students then discuss what they would want to add or omit in their adult rendering of their own childhood.
Assessment	Students use past Linguistics Olympiad challenges to show their understanding of the linguistics	Students write their own Little Prince Guide to Life, choosing key quotes from the book and linking them to a real-life scenario.

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	decoding process.	
Links	NACLO LangFam	Scientific American
Unit	5	5
THEME	A Novel Process	Questioning for Community
Essential Question(s)	How can I use my imagination and writing skills to develop a novel? What can I learn about myself when I am faced with organizational and time challenges?	What kinds of questions lead to better answers? How does research lead to asking better questions? How have community members' life experiences affected their world views?
Unit Overview	Students design characters, setting, conflict, and multiple story arcs. They explore different techniques for combating writer's block and for expanding a story. They also develop editing and peer critiquing skills.	Students discuss what makes a successful question. They explore key events and trends of the past decades and develop an oral history interview for meeting with an older community member.
Assessment	Students will take part in the Youth Writers' Project part of NaNoWriMo. They will each choose a specific element of their writing to be assessed, and teachers will also choose an individually-targeted student goal.	Students write a Self Reflection about the oral history, and also write a letter to the interviewee about what they have learned.
Links	Young Writers' Nanowrimo	Oral History Decades of Change Web Generation
Unit	6	6

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THEME	Making a Stand	Poetics of Philosophy
Essential Question(s)	What is important to me? How can I express my beliefs with strong imagery or analogies?	What is important to me? How can I express my beliefs with strong imagery or analogies?
Unit Overview	Students explore 21st century issues and research young people who are making a stand in history. They see how PSAs work and practice video-making skills. Then, they plan out a storyboard for a PSA and actually create it.	Students discuss what they have learned after speaking to veterans and community members, after reading books from multiple viewpoints and after spending a year of exploring philosophy. They come up with key questions and have small group discussions to develop imagery that answers the questions. Students also explore how poets have taken on key philosophical questions with imagery and other poetic techniques.
Assessment	Students will create a Public Service Announcement video to communicate about a personally impactful issue.	Students will create a philosophy book with poems, quotes and personal connections to at least eight student-chosen philosophical questions.
Links	Kidsbridge	Letters to Poets

GRADE 8

The eighth grade Quest program is a conference/ mentor based program called the Passion Project.

Students choose a class cluster (“World”) to join, from the following:

World of Ideas	(Sociology, Psychology, History)
World of Arts	(Writing, Music, Art)
World of Action	(Volunteering, Outreach)
World of Wonder	(Science, Engineering, Math)
Dabbler	(Mix)

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Over the course of the year, students meet regularly with the Quest teacher to plan, carryout, evaluate and present their project.

Discussions of time management, career preparation, organization, and extension activities are part of this program, as well.

In the spring, students present their Passion Projects to their peers, younger Quest students, and family members.

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