



**MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES
2026.27**

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear SDJA Students and Families,

We are pleased to share with you the Middle School Program of Studies for the upcoming 2026- 2027 school year. This document is designed to inform students and families about the diverse curricular offerings available in the upper school and to assist in choosing the most engaging and appropriate academic program for the upcoming school year. Additionally, we have included valuable information about the School's academic program and policies.

We encourage you to read the program information carefully and discuss potential course options as a family. Additionally, students are urged to read this material and to dialogue with teachers, department chairs, and the upper school leadership team as they ponder their future academic program.

A balanced, engaging academic program that embraces diverse interests and promotes a genuine love of learning is vital for long-term student well-being. While we encourage challenge, we caution students against overloading their schedule with too many advanced courses while engaging in extra-curricular activities, and trying to maintain personal health and social relationships.

When considering your academic goals and program, please be sure to keep the communications pathways open with family, and your upper school academic team.

Go Lions!



Zvi
ZVI WEISS
Head of School

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INTRODUCTION

The SDJA Program of Studies document is intended to be a guide for parents and students to prepare for next school year. Please read the program information carefully and discuss potential course options, as a family.

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MISSION

SDJA empowers each student to learn for life, guided by Jewish values, and rooted in strength of community.

ACCREDITATION

San Diego Jewish Academy (“SDJA”) is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). In 2021, SDJA received a seven-year accreditation status, the highest awarded by WASC/CAIS.

VALUES OF AN SDJA EDUCATION

AVODAH עבודה

Prayer and other ritual mitzvot that connects us with our spirituality and God.

TORAH תורה

Study, in the broadest sense of the word, that reflects Jewish values, history, and beliefs, which are considered the foundation of all learning.

KLAL YISRAEL כלל ישראל

Connectedness to one another, our family, and the Jewish people of Israel.

TZEDAKAH צדקה

Acts of kindness and righteousness towards our fellow human beings and supporting those in need.

ISRAEL ישראל

The strong belief that Israel is both a homeland and State for the Jewish people.

MENSCHLICHKEIT מענטשלעכקייט

Acting in a fair and just manner and being compassionate towards other people.



COURSE RELATED POLICIES

COURSE REGISTRATION

In the weeks leading up to the course registration period, there will be dedicated time during Excel and specific grade level academic sessions for students to dialogue with teachers, department chairpersons and administrators. The schedule for the advisory aspect of course registration is communicated via email and placed in the SDJA Happenings newsletter.

Course load required for SDJA Middle School Students:

All middle school students are enrolled in English, History, Math, Science, Jewish Studies, Hebrew, Excel, and Team Sports / PE.

GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93.00 to 100.00	B-	80.00 to 82.99	D+	67.00 to 69.99
A-	90.00 to 92.99	C+	77.00 to 79.99	D	63.00 to 66.99
B+	87.00 to 89.99	C	73.00 to 76.99	D-	60.00 to 62.99
B	83.00 to 86.99	C-	70.00 to 72.99	F	00.00 to 59.99

HOMEWORK

The intent of homework in middle school is for our students to grow as independent learners who are reflective and inspired to delve deeper into the content of their academic program. By independently completing work outside of class, SDJA students further explore and enhance specific concepts and skills, reinforce the lessons taught in class, and prepare for upcoming class time and assignments.

In middle school, the amount of work outside of class varies with the academic program of each student. We believe student learning is supported by the interaction between the student, the teacher, and the parent/guardian. Therefore, it is highly recommended that parents/guardians and students communicate regularly with teachers in order to best support the learning process. Homework is posted on Canvas, our online Learning Management System (LMS).

GRADES & TRANSCRIPTS

Students' grades are continually viewable via Canvas. Transcripts are sent home twice per year: at the end of Semester 1 in January and at the end of Semester 2 in June. Transcripts are also available by request. Semester grades given in January and June are used to compute a student's grade point average and become part of the student's academic record.

CONFERENCES

An important aspect of our middle school program are our middle school academic conferences. Conferences will take place for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. During the school year, there are many opportunities for you to engage with your child and our middle school faculty on your child's academic experiences in the middle school:

- In the fall, you will have an opportunity to have academic conferences with each of your child's teachers to learn more about their content acquisition, skills development, and engagement in class. These conferences are held via Google Meet or in person.
- In the new year, your child will plan, write and edit a reflective piece of writing, where they will share their sources of pride in their academic progress, describe areas for improvement, and design a goal-setting action plan for the second semester.
- In the second semester, following your child's reflective writing exercise, you will have another

opportunity to have academic conferences with each of your child's teachers to learn about their progress in content acquisition, skills development, and engagement in class. These conferences are held via Google Meet, or in person.

- Parents/guardians can request a conference at any time during the school year when they have a particular matter to discuss with the teacher, Department Chair, Dean, or the Head of Upper School.

FINAL EXAM MAKE UP POLICY (8TH GRADE ONLY)

There are two make-up periods for final exams. The schedule for make-up exams will be coordinated by the Dean of Academics. It is the responsibility of the student to take the missed final exam during this period. If the exam is not taken during the make-up period, the final semester grade will be determined by averaging an "F" (0%) for that final exam.

ABSENCES AND MISSING COURSEWORK

Class attendance and participation are significant components of the learning process. The Maimonides Upper School at SDJA is a classroom and campus-centric educational program, which requires our students to be present - both physically and mentally. Coming to school well-rested, properly nourished, prepared for course-work, and with a positive desire to be an active learner and engaged member of the school community, are the ingredients for flourishing.

SUBMITTING LATE WORK

When a student is absent from class for any reason or does not turn in assigned work on the due date, it is the responsibility of the student to initiate a conversation with their teacher about completing missed coursework. If a student has been absent, this conversation should occur on the first day back to campus regardless of whether the course meets that day. Late work will be accepted and graded based on the guideline designed by the teacher.

In middle school, it is expected that students are actively engaged in their academic program. Being aware of, planning for, completion of and delivery to the teacher of all coursework (e.g., homework, tests and projects) is the responsibility of the student. The learning management system, Canvas, and meeting with teachers during Pod are two important resources that students can use to help them succeed in this aspect of their learning.

TESTS MISSED DUE TO ABSENCE

Make-up tests will be administered to upper school students in the testing center during Pod. Makeup tests take precedence over co-curricular programs; e.g., athletic practices and contests.

Full Day Absence: When a student misses sitting for a test due to being absent from school for an entire day, the student will have the same number of calendar days as they were absent to make up a test. For example, if a student misses a test on a Monday due to a full day absence and is back in school on Tuesday, the test will be administered on Tuesday regardless if it is an "A" or "B" day. If the test is not made up within this timeframe, the grade earned may be lowered by 10%. Students who neglect to make up the test within three (3) days will also meet with the Dean of Academics, along with their parents/guardians, to discuss the student's engagement with their academic program. In the event that a student returns to school after an absence and is scheduled to sit for multiple tests on the same day, a schedule will be designed so all assessments can be tended to in a reasonable and healthy manner.

Partial Day Absence: If a student misses only the period a test is being administered, the test must be made up before the end of that same school day. If the test is not made up within this timeframe, the grade earned will be lowered by 10%. Students who neglect to make up the test within three (3) days will also meet with the Dean of Academics, along with their parents/guardians, to discuss the student's engagement with their academic program.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) PLATFORMS POLICY

OVERVIEW

The parameters for when and how students can use generative AI platforms will be determined and communicated by the teacher (both in the assignment directions posted in Canvas, and verbally during class).

If students are permitted to use generative AI platforms, students must provide a citation for the source of information they collected. Referenced material in student work products must be cited in MLA format like any other source at SDJA, including the prompt used in the generative AI platform, e.g. (ChatGPT, prompt used, date).

Students' use of generative AI platforms without permission from the teacher and or without citing appropriately is a violation of SDJA's academic integrity policy.



ATHLETICS & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The San Diego Jewish Academy Athletic Department provides students the opportunities to learn and embody life lessons through participation in interscholastic sports. We support our students, coaches and teachers in creating experiences that will help to develop character traits such as commitment, a growth mindset and teamwork.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

With specific regard to the physical education program in the middle school our vision at SDJA is to provide students with the education and tools to live an active healthy lifestyle. This includes but is not limited to classroom instruction on nutrition, strength and conditioning activities in the weight room as well as the teaching of both traditional and non-traditional physical education games.

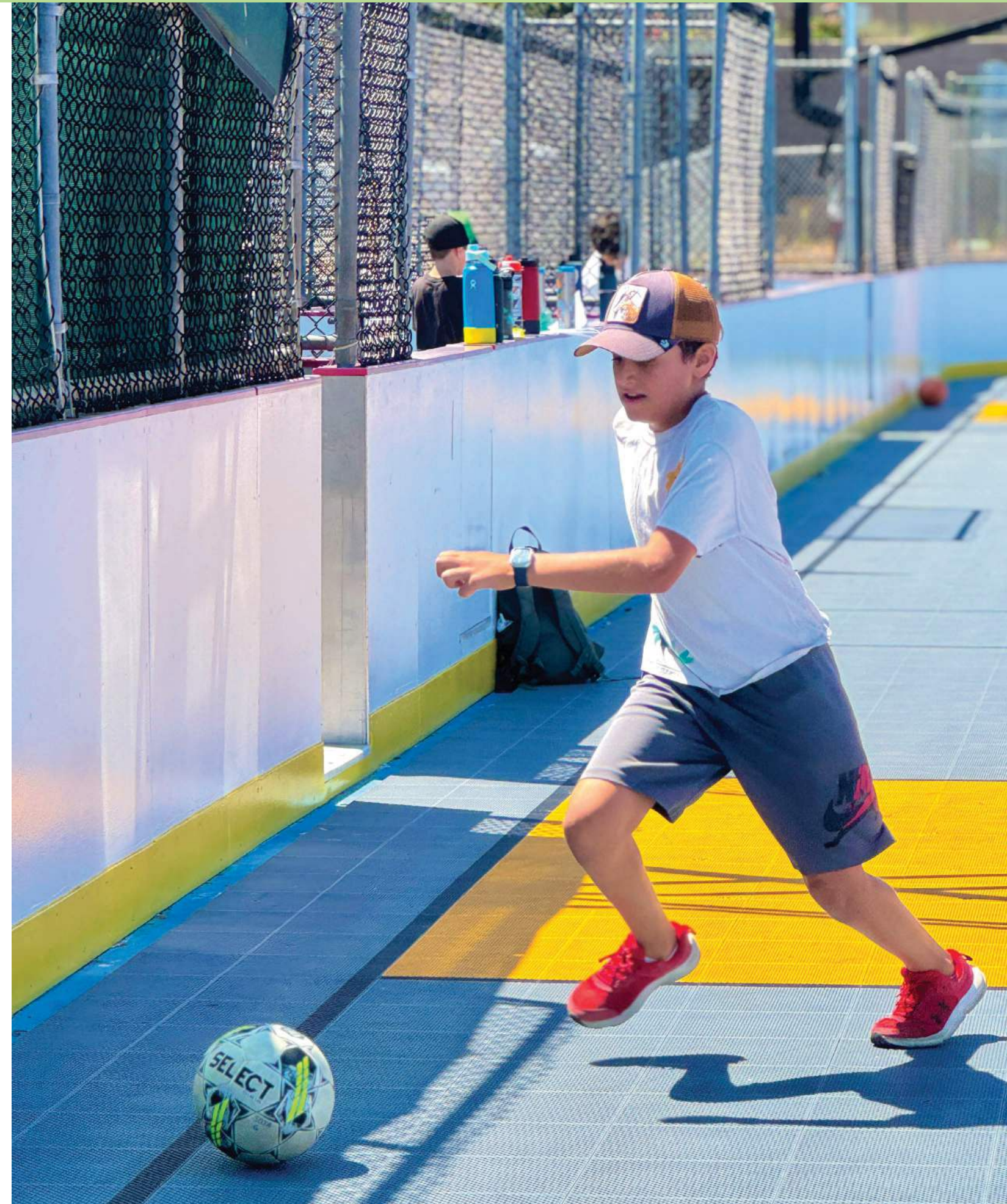
INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS

Fall	Winter	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volleyball• Flag Football-Coed• Boys & Girls Cross Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boys Basketball• Girls Soccer• Boys Soccer• Sideline Cheer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-Ed Tennis• Girls Basketball• Baseball• Boys & Girls Track & Field

INDEPENDENT STUDY PE (ISPE)

We recognize that some students pursue athletics and other competitive activities at a high competitive level and to accommodate and support those students, SDJA offers ISPE as a way to earn athletic credit. The ISPE program at SDJA is designed with two goals in mind:

1. To provide exceptionally gifted athletes who compete at a high regional or national level an opportunity to earn SDJA athletic credit while pursuing their sport off campus.
2. To provide students who are pursuing an in-depth study of an athletic or competitive dance discipline not offered as part of the SDJA curriculum an opportunity to earn athletic credit.





OVERVIEW

In the upper school, we believe in providing our students with multiple opportunities to learn, grow, and experience education in a challenging, yet nurturing environment. We understand that middle school is a dynamic time of physical, social, and intellectual growth, and our Excel program is specifically designed to support our students during this development. All middle school students are enrolled in an Excel period, which meets within our A/B day schedule. During this time block, students engage in the following activities.

ACADEMIC SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The Excel period is a structured time designed to, among other things, sharpen academic habits and foster effective executive functioning skills. During this block, students engage in the following:

- **Independent Reading:** All middle school students begin the Excel period with independent reading. Research shows that consistent reading significantly improves critical reading, writing, and thinking skills across all disciplines.
- **Individualized Skill Building (IXL):** Students utilize the IXL online platform for personalized practice in Math and English. This platform utilizes adaptive technology to identify specific areas of improvement and provides tailored exercises to strengthen each student's proficiency.
- **Canvas Check-in and Academic Management:**
 - **6th and 7th Grade:** Students learn to navigate Canvas, manage their assignments, and plan their time effectively. This session includes academic work, teacher check-ins, and social skill-building activities, followed by enrichment opportunities once work is completed.
 - **8th Grade:** Students use this "pod period" to check Canvas, complete homework, and meet with teachers for targeted support.
- **Foundational Skills**
 - Each month focuses on a specific skill of the month. Throughout the year, students will learn, practice, and develop: time management, reading comprehension, organization, focus and self-discipline, communication, teamwork and collaboration, critical thinking, and active learning strategies.

ENRICHMENT AND COUNSELING

Throughout the year, the Excel period also serves as a space for social and academic counseling, and programming on emergent topics. Facilitated by guest speakers, Academic Deans, and our Upper School Counselor, sessions include:

- **Digital Citizenship:** Cyber safety and professional communication (writing appropriate school emails, navigating Google Drive, and using Canvas).
- **Health and Wellness:** Social-emotional workshops on interpersonal skills, stress management, and healthy relationships.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM & COURSE OFFERINGS

MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVE COURSE PROGRAM: QUARTERLY ROTATION INFORMATION

We will utilize a quarter system for our middle school electives, with 4 rotations in the school year. We offer students an opportunity to practice a new skill, follow an engaging interest and explore a new subject area. Students will have the opportunity to rank their elective preferences before each elective rotation.

Some of the elective opportunities we offer are Visual Art, Poetry, Make It, Robotics, Rocketry, Speech & Debate, Music, Stages, Sports Leadership, and more!

ELECTIVE REGISTRATION

Students will have the opportunity to register for elective courses prior to each rotation. The academic department will facilitate the elective course registration process. Prior to each rotation, each middle school student will receive an email from the academic department with instructions, the link for Elective Course Registration, and the Middle School Elective Program of Studies. Elective course registration for the first rotation of the 2026-27 school year will take place the week before school begins. Students will be notified of their first rotation elective class the day before school begins, and will attend their elective on our first day of school!



VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

In the Visual and Performing Arts classroom, we focus on developing creativity through engagement, trial and error, practice, and expression in the form of presentation and performance. The purpose of the Visual and Performing Arts Department is to provide a safe and nurturing environment of artistic skill development, practice, creativity, and performance for developing artists and to give all students the opportunity to expand their awareness and appreciation of the arts.

ART

In the middle school art elective rotations, students experience a hands-on opportunity to learn new techniques or build new skills through creative practice. Each rotation offers an opportunity to explore a new medium. Examples of classes offered include ceramics- handbuilding, visual art, digital art or other topics based on student interest.

BEGINNING MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC

This active and engaging course is designed for students who want to learn to play the flute, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, bass, guitar, or drums. More experienced instrumental students who would like to mentor and lead groups within this class are also encouraged to enroll. Areas of focus will include the learning of standard musical notation related to the repertoire, participation in historical/cultural lessons related to music, and group performance skills. Students taking this class are expected to have a regular practice routine and participate in an end of year concert. The school has a limited number of instruments for students to use; students are encouraged to rent or supply their own instruments.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED MUSIC

This course is designed for music students who have some prior experience playing an instrument and reading music. Students practice and develop skills on a stringed, wind, guitar, or percussion instrument through the study and performance of songs designed to improve group dynamics. Students also read music notation relevant to the applied literature, listen to/analyze/describe music, learn the historical and cultural attributes of music relevant to the course, and critically examine selections of music from various genres. We will also have opportunities to perform in small concerts or school events! Prerequisite: Participation in at least 2 music rotations in the past (this year, or past years) or a demonstrated ability in the fundamentals of music and a basic level of playing on an instrument.

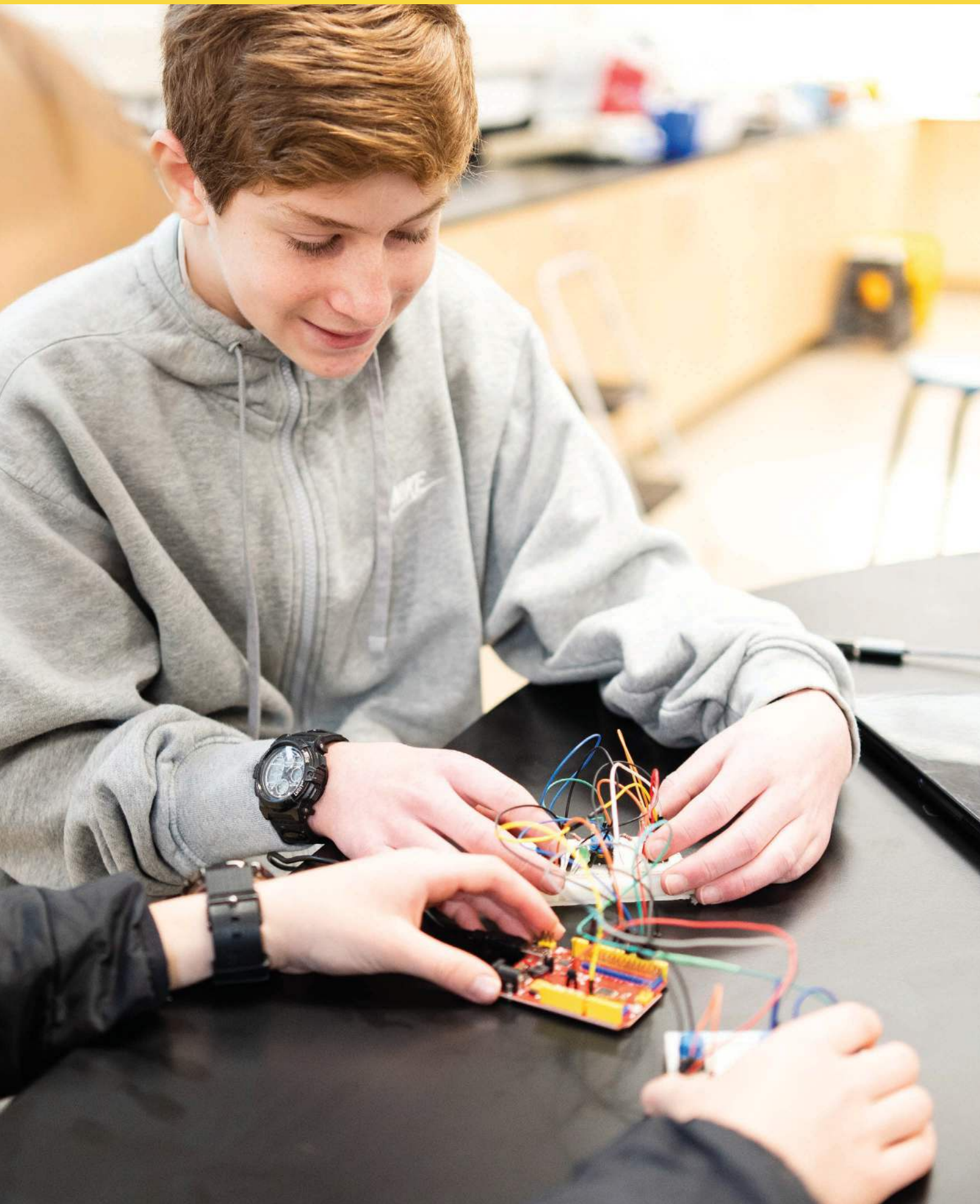
STAGES

This course will provide middle school students an opportunity to study the art of theater - including theater history, acting, production techniques and technical design through improvisation, stage movement, voice/diction, and creating a character. The course will be taught in 4 separate rotations that each address a different aspect of the theater:

1. Production Prep (different show each year)
2. Production (some students will be two rotations, some only the second)
3. Technical Theatre (Sound/Lights)
4. Wild Card (Different selection each year)

Each class also includes theater games, storytelling and FUN. No experience required, all skill levels are welcome and encouraged to enroll in this course. There will be opportunities to be on stage or behind the scenes with a performance for school and community. This is a space for creative thinkers to explore, share and grow together.





IET PHILOSOPHY

The IET program develops curious students who can adapt to a rapidly changing society through deepening the awareness of personal identities and strengths and constructing a culture of empowering opportunities and challenges.

EXAMPLES OF IET ELECTIVES

ROBOTICS FOR ROOKIES

Do you like making things move? Do you enjoy designing things that haven't been created before? Do you like working on a team and sharing ideas? Then this is the class for you! In this robotics elective, no previous experience is necessary! All you need is your imagination and excitement. Students who take this class will learn how to design, build and code robots for land and water. You will learn technology skills like coding, website building and video making. You will also learn engineering skills like soldering, water-proofing, circuitry, drilling and more! Are you ready to start building?

DESIGN THINKING

Empathize, define, ideate, prototype, test, iterate and implement! These are the basic fundamentals of design thinking and they can be applied to all types of problems. We will spend time looking at challenges or problems that occur in everyday life and then use a host of tools to address them. This course is for anyone interested in problem solving, prototyping, engineering and creativity! Activities may include anything from trying to design a more inclusive city landscape to building a functional rocket and many other problems we would like to solve.

ROCKETRY & TECHNOLOGY

In this elective class, we will spend most of our time designing, building, and launching rockets! In between builds we will tap into our creativity by observing and studying new technologies. How does our environment influence our engineering ideas? What is the human race currently working on that can inspire us and our designs? By observing and following emerging technology, we will be inspired and find innovative ideas to incorporate into our builds!



OVERVIEW

We study English because we believe in the power of language to explore and express what it means to be human, both individually and collectively. In our English classes at SDJA, we aim to develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that empower students to communicate with clarity, confidence, and purpose, both in writing and in speech. Through the study of literature and language, students learn to articulate who they are, and, by deepening their comprehension of the traditions of literary expression, better comprehend their responsibilities in the world. English classes encourage students to engage deeply with texts and ideas, fostering an informed, thoughtful perspective that equips them to navigate an ever-changing world with insight and integrity. In the words of historian Barbara Tuchman, “Books are carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. Books are humanity in print.”

ENGLISH 6

The literature we study will be a vehicle by which sixth graders expand their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Sixth graders no longer read primarily for plot; they now want to know what motivates the characters, which emotions they are experiencing and why. As they relate these discoveries to their own feelings, literature becomes a vehicle for personal growth. Regarding grammar instruction in SDJA's middle school English classes, each year students' understanding will deepen as skills are built upon previous knowledge of sentence construction and parts of speech. Our goal is to build grammar muscle through explicit instruction, looping, practice and assessment. Students will be held accountable to implement these learned skills in their writing.

Students will spend a segment of each class period on independent reading. Research into the effects of technology on reading habits has revealed that despite their obsession with screen time, teenagers enjoy reading, and they will read if they are given the time and opportunity to do so. We will provide this time and opportunity, because independent reading not only creates better readers, but also better thinkers and writers. The learning that occurs when students are fully engaged in reading takes place at a deep instinctive level, and students internalize sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation conventions. Students will do both assigned and independent choice fiction and non-fiction reading during this time. Scaffolded teacher-led read-alouds will give students opportunities to be trained in reading skills they can then transfer to their own independent reading.

Novels for reading and study may include such titles as Alan Gratz's *Refugee*; Sharon Creech's *Walk Two Moons*; and William Kamkwamba's *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*.

ENGLISH 7

This is a course where students will read, write, think, listen and speak both creatively and analytically. Literature will provide entry points for authentic response, vocabulary growth, evidence-based analysis, and will serve as mentor text wherein students will look closely at text structures and craft that they can emulate in their own writing. The theme of personal perspective is a thread that will stretch throughout the year as we continue to ask, “How do we see?” Students will write various personal narratives and grow their compositions with writer's moves learned in class. We'll focus on schema building, characterization, point of view, flashbacks, conflict, character archetypes, recurring topics, and theme, investigating how the characters in our readings perceive the world and how that perception changes as they confront new experiences brought on by adolescence. Through our reading of realistic fiction, historical fiction, and dystopian fiction, we'll employ various reading strategies to deepen comprehension, examine truths—universal and contextual— and connect how conflicts, change, and experiences shape our perception of the world.

Novels for reading and study may include such titles as S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*; Morris Gleitzman's *Once*; and Lois Lowry's *The Giver*.

ENGLISH 8

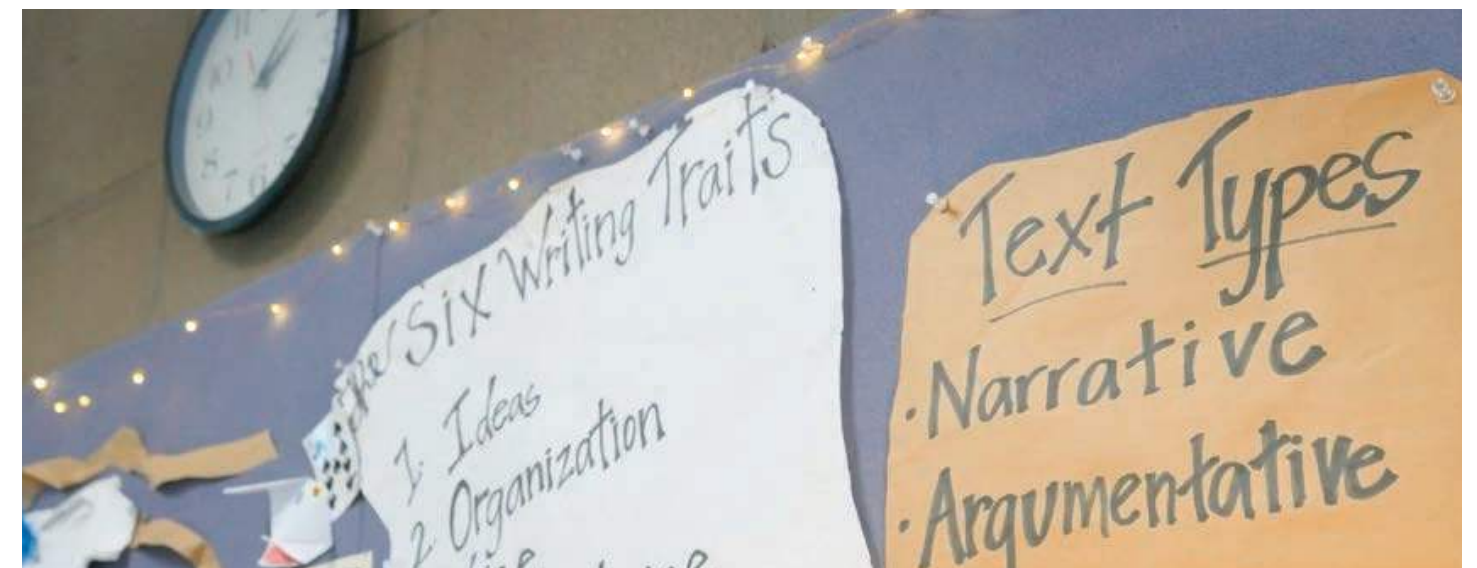
This is a course where students will read various genres, write, think, listen and speak both creatively and analytically, equipping them with the writing and reading skills needed for high school. Building on comprehension tools from seventh grade, students will read literature from multiple genres: fiction, drama, graphic novel, poetry and non-fiction. These will provide entry points for vocabulary growth, authentic response to reading, and evidence-based analysis, and will often serve as mentor texts wherein students will look closely at text structures and craft that they can emulate in their own writing as they navigate the writing process. To prepare them for the demands of high school writing, students will write various thesis-driven essays, outlining and employing different strategies for how to frame them. The theme of identity is a thread that will stretch throughout the year as we continue to ask, “How do we become?” We'll build on our work with literary devices from seventh grade and further delve into symbolism, irony, setting, recurring topics, theme and how the characters in our readings are shaped by the multiple roles and worlds they straddle, the power dynamics that empower and constrain them, and the choices they must make in order to grow and actualize.

Novels for reading and study may include such titles as Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*; Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Play*; and *To Kill a Mockingbird: A Graphic Novel* by Harper Lee and Fred Fordham.

HUMANITIES HONORS 8

This extracurricular honors program for eighth grade students consists of a series of five seminars held on Sundays throughout the school year, designed to create a vigorous exchange of ideas centered on the ultimate humanities question: “How are we to live?” To prepare for each seminar, students will read and research the given topic using a pre-seminar assignment from the respective faculty member(s). Students will use the writing process to reflect on the topic discussed. The reflective writing will require critical thinking, multiple drafts, and polished, final pieces due to respective faculty after each seminar by the posted due date. Seminar work will incorporate challenging nonfiction and fiction; writing; listening; speaking; and visiting local museums, theaters, and events. Registration for this honors program will take place in September, 2026. By the end of the first month of school, all eighth grade students will receive an invitation to participate in an initial honors meeting. At this meeting, students will learn about the program's policies and expectations, as well as a calendar of seminar dates, topics and instructors.

Past seminars have covered such topics as how to study primary historical documents; The Maltese Falcon; the California Grizzly Bear; Memory and Nostalgia, Psychogeography; Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Travel Writing; Thomas More's Utopia; American elections; Shakespeare in the digital age; and many more.



ELECTIVE COURSES (EXAMPLES)

CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY PLUNGE

Are you a poet? Maybe you are, and you just don't know it! In this class, blooming poets will plunge into poetry that tickle the imagination and harken personal experience. We'll explore how poets use words and structure to best convey their message while experimenting with different kinds of inspiration, from experiential opportunities like nature walks to found poetry to slam poetry while also writing under the influence of powerful poetry. The goal is to play with words and write poetry that helps us find our voice in this wide world. No experience with poetry necessary and, if you've taken poetry before, new adventures will await you. Members of this writing community will keep a poet's notebook, provide feedback to fellow poets, have ample opportunities to share writing, and create a personal anthology of poetry.

FIBER ARTS: STITCHES AND STORIES

Ever wanted to crochet a scarf? Or, maybe you've felt the urge to embroider an emu while sitting in a circle, sharing life stories. In this course, you'll start with embroidery, learning some of the basic stitches by creating a stitch sampler. Once you've got the hang of the basic stitches, you'll create your own, self-selected embroidery project. After a lap of embroidery, we'll set our sights on crochet where you'll learn three basic stitches that will allow you to crochet in rows (think scarf or laptop cover) or rounds (beanies or crochet flowers), depending on the project you choose to create. You'll be asked throughout this course to find projects within your skill set that you want to pursue, learning from some online experts while receiving help from the teacher in the room. In the inbetween, we'll build a community, stitching while engaging in the oral tradition of storytelling. Participants will receive basic supplies that include: a few embroidery essentials, crochet hooks, and some inexpensive yarn. No experience necessary, but patience and a tolerance for imperfection are required, as it takes time to learn these lifelong skills. NOTE: Extra purchase of materials will be required for those who want special supplies (thicker yarn for blanket making, perhaps, or a set of crochet hooks to have at home). Luckily, the fiber arts can be an inexpensive hobby. A few supplies go a long way.

CRAFT AND DRAFT

Grab your glue, scissors, and creativity and get ready to craft and write. In this course, students will learn a variety of collaging techniques, from remove and replace to jumbles to surrealism. With a heavy emphasis on collage, we'll dig through old magazines and books creating a glue book showcasing various skills that show intentional composition. Side projects will include artist trading cards and tear collage. While there will be guided instruction, students will have time to experiment and explore, working independently to create collages that are meaningful and keepsake-worthy. There will be ample time for sharing, experimentation, collaging, and creative exploration.

ART & CREATIVE WRITING: EXPLORING IDENTITY THROUGH ART AND WRITING

This is an art and writing class. It offers a unique and immersive learning experience that delves into the multifaceted realm of identity. This interactive course encourages participants to blend the expressive mediums of art and writing so as to investigate and express various dimensions of self-identity. Throughout the course students will engage in creative activities including collage-making, drawing, poetry composition, and creative writing exercises. These artistic practices will serve as a means of introspection and self-expression, allowing students to explore and convey their identity in diverse and imaginative ways.

SPEECH AND DEBATE

This introductory speech and debate course exposes students to various types of speeches and argumentation styles in an engaging clear and concise manner. Students will craft and present prepared and impromptu speeches. They will learn and utilize specific debate techniques to create effective and persuasive class presentations, demonstrations, and group discussions. Working together, students will develop the skills to succinctly and effectively speak to their audience, ensuring that their thoughts are eloquently presented in a style that grabs the attention of their audience.

CURRENT EVENTS

This course will expose students to local, national and global issues. Various media outlets will be used to cull events including internet, television news and the newspaper. Classroom discussion will be the cornerstone of how we internalize and make sense of current events. The goal is for students to have a heightened awareness of the issues that drive the news and the issues that are most relevant to their lives.

FILM STUDIES

On average, the typical American spends more than two hours a day watching television. So what, we might ask, makes movies and television programs so engaging and addicting? Since humanity's earliest beginnings, the art of storytelling has captivated imaginations with literary devices still used in film and television programs today. In this class, we will explore the fundamentals of filmmaking, such as (but not limited to) theme, tone, conflict, symbol, and foreshadowing to unlock the success and meaning behind cinema's most famous films. On a deeper level, we will use the analytical skills we learn about filmmaking to explore cinema's broader questions about society, life, and culture. At the close of this class, students will be able to confidently apply their skills to recognize, analyze, describe, and enjoy film as an art and entertainment form. They will also be able to critically examine different types of cinematic media so that they are better informed about the information they consume on a daily basis.



JEWISH STUDIES DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

The Jewish Studies department strives to make Torah accessible for all learners, to inspire connections to Jewish values, history, and beliefs and to promote lifelong learning. Pluralism is one of the core values of San Diego Jewish Academy, and this value is reflected in the upper school Jewish Studies curriculum in a number of ways. First, the instruction in our classes is descriptive rather than prescriptive; we teach a wide range of rituals and beliefs, giving students a sense of the rich and varied choices that modern Judaism offers. Second, all upper school Judaic Studies texts are studied in English translation; although we lament the loss of the authenticity of the original languages, we prioritize the text's accessibility to all our students regardless of their comfort levels in Hebrew and Aramaic. Finally, we employ the broadest possible applications of traditional terms such as spirituality, God, and text, with the understanding that 21st century Jewish teenagers relate to these concepts in a myriad of ways.

The SDJA Jewish Studies classroom is rarely quiet. We engage in thoughtful discussions and close textual analysis. We frequently utilize a havruta model, in which the text serves as the third partner in the learning triangle. We believe deeply that the question is more important than the answer, and that making modern meaning out of age-old ideas is a cherished opportunity rather than an arduous task.

Our students come from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds, and we take pride in fostering each student's intellectual and emotional Jewish development. Judaic Studies students engage in learning through a variety of methods, including journaling, discussion, debates, and projects that bring traditional ideas into modern-day relevance. We actively encourage critical thinking, reflection, close textual reading, and other skills that serve them well in all disciplines.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

The middle school Judaic Studies curriculum is based on the power of story. Students study the Torah in 6th grade, the Prophets and Writings in 7th grade, and Jewish History in 8th grade. Thus, they enter high school with a broad understanding of the narrative history of the Jewish people. This narrative consists of far more than dates, names, and places: it traces the development of our people, our values, and our traditions from the creation of the world through the modern era. By the end of 8th grade, our students have the ability to reflect on five thousand years of Jewish tradition, to see themselves as a continuation of that tradition, and to appreciate the timelessness of this narrative and its relevance to the learners' own lives.



REQUIRED MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

6TH GRADE: STUDY OF TORAH

The Torah comprises the Five Books of Moses and represents the core of Jewish values, ethics, narratives, and beliefs. It tells the story of our beginnings as a family and how we evolved into a nation with a 'constitution' and a connection to G-d and the Land of Israel. Our 6th graders will review the Weekly Torah Portions, with which they are already familiar, but now they will examine the text with traditional commentaries. They will hone their critical thinking skills as they examine the narratives of biblical events as well as the messages behind them. We will examine the text of the Torah through three different, overlapping lenses: P'shat (literal or simple meaning), D'rash (commentaries and rabbinic interpretations), and personal Midrash (giving the students a vehicle to apply their own understandings and world views to the text). We will focus on who we are as a people, what is our ancestral connection to the land of Israel, how we view the universe, how we relate and interact with others, and how events shaped us. As students of Torah, they will be asked to engage in the Jewish exhortation: hafoch ba v'hafoch ba, kulei ba - turn the Torah over and over for everything is in it.

7TH GRADE: THE TANAKH AND ITS TEACHINGS

This course continues the students' two-year study of the Tanakh, the Jewish Bible. As we focus on Nevi'im (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings), we will explore what Tanakh can teach us about how the Israelites came to be the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, which values and beliefs are core to this part of the Jewish story, and how these texts influence our understanding of what it means to be Jewish today. Students will explore key Biblical events, themes, and characters; analyze and interpret Biblical text (using an English translation); connect these texts to the modern Jewish world; and empathize with the characters' experiences in these stories and link these characters' experiences to their own personal experiences and that of their peers. Students will also continue honing their chavruta skills—learning what it means to be a full partner of their peers and the subject text.

8TH GRADE: SURVEY OF JEWISH HISTORY

In eighth grade Jewish history, our study of the Jewish story picks up where the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) ends and continues through the 21st century. This class is designed to increase students' historical literacy and their ability to make meaning from historical events and the telling of those events. In the Passover Haggadah we read, "In every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally came out of Egypt." Although this directive is typically applied to the Mosaic period alone, we will also apply this idea to the entirety of Jewish history. Just as we were slaves in Egypt, we were also prophets in exile, rabbis in Yavneh, ge'onim in Babylonia, philosophers in Sepharad, interpreters in Ashkenaz, maskilim in Europe, chalutzim in Israel, etc. In order to make this claim, the claim that the Jewish story is not just the Jews' story but our story or even my story, we will study, analyze, and interpret its components, their importance, and their relevance. We will explore primary and secondary source texts, compare and contrast different historical eras with each other and with the modern Jewish world, including the creation of the state Israel and modern Israel, and make connections between our own lives and the lives of Jews throughout the ages.

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

Our math department strives to create a positive and nurturing environment where students are comfortable with the learning process where making mistakes, taking risks, communicating ideas and working collaboratively are encouraged. A strong emphasis is placed on the conceptual understanding of mathematics so students can explain why the math makes sense. Meaningful real-world applications are consistently incorporated to develop creative problem solving skills as well as an appreciation of math and its relationship to other disciplines.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH COURSE PATHWAYS

Pathway 1: Essential Mathematics → Pre-Algebra → Fundamentals of Algebra, Algebra I*

Pathway 2: Essential Mathematics → Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I* or Algebra I Honors*

Pathway 3: Pre-Algebra → Fundamentals of Algebra → Algebra I*

Pathway 4: Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I* → Geometry* or Geometry Honors*

Pathway 5: Pre-Algebra Honors → Algebra I Honors* → Geometry* or Geometry Honors*

* Indicates a high school level course.

ESSENTIAL MATHEMATICS

This math course builds on the foundational skills established in the SDJA Lower School. It utilizes a Singapore approach which focuses on problem solving while offering a balanced emphasis on conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Students use concrete and pictorial representations to solve multi-step and nonroutine problems. Topics in this course include the number line and positive and negative numbers; fractions; ratios; rates; percent; introduction to algebra: expressions, equations and inequalities; the coordinate plane; area and surface area; circumference; volume; and statistics. Students develop note-taking skills with guided practice in their interactive notebook and study-skills through the completion of consistent homework assignments that expect them to apply their daily learning and take ownership of their math progress.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of 5th grade mathematics

HONORS

Students placed into the honors section engage with more complex, abstract applications of the Singapore method, moving rapidly toward independent mastery of sophisticated mathematical reasoning. The curriculum is enriched with challenging applications and word problems that require students to synthesize multiple concepts simultaneously. Beyond standard procedural fluency, learners are expected to articulate their mathematical thinking through algebraic processes.

Students will be placed in Honors Essential Mathematics based on a combination of factors:

- Current Course Performance
- Learning Characteristics
- Current Teacher Recommendation
- MAP Testing Scores

Prerequisite: Departmental approval

Note: When both a middle school preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects.

PRE-ALGEBRA

This course utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Unit topics include the number system; ratios and proportional relationship; expressions, equations, and inequalities; modeling geometric figures; circumference; area; volume; statistics; and probability.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Essential Mathematics

PRE-ALGEBRA HONORS

This preparatory algebra course utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook and additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. This course moves at a more advanced pace compared to Pre-Algebra as topics from both Pre-Algebra and Fundamentals of Algebra are studied. Unit topics include the number system; ratios and proportional relationships; expressions, equations and inequalities; geometry; statistics; probability; real numbers, exponents, and scientific notation; linear relationships and equations; transformational geometry; measurement geometry; the Pythagorean Theorem and the distance formula.

Prerequisite: Essential Mathematics with a grade of 95% or higher both semesters and departmental approval

Note: When both a middle school preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ALGEBRA

This course utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Unit topics include real numbers, exponents, and scientific notation; proportional and nonproportional relationships and functions; solving equations and systems of equations; transformational geometry; measurement geometry; volume; and statistics. Students are introduced to the basic functions of the TI-84 graphing calculator, which is required for this course.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Pre-Algebra



ALGEBRA I*

This course provides the basic building blocks necessary for all higher level mathematics courses. It utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Algebra I is the first course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. The course starts with algebraic expressions and introduces function notation and linear functions. It continues with absolute value functions, systems of equations, systems of inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, operations with radicals and radical functions, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, and an introduction to operations with rational functions. Students will be held responsible for understanding how every topic in the course can be organized into six fundamental elements of mathematical development: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, equations, and graphing. Students will be introduced to the numerical, algebraic, and graphical approach of analyzing equations and problem solving. Students will be instructed on how to use the TI-84 platform to further solidify key concepts. Students will be shown efficient approaches to problems and student collaboration will be emphasized. Students are expected to consider multiple approaches to each problem.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Pre-Algebra Honors; or Pre-Algebra with a grade of 95% or higher both semesters and recommended summer work and departmental approval

ALGEBRA I HONORS*

This course provides the basic building blocks necessary for all higher level mathematics courses, particularly Geometry Honors and Algebra II Honors. It utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. The course emphasizes applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. Honors Algebra I is the first course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. The course starts with algebraic expressions and introduces function notation and linear functions. It continues with absolute value functions, systems of equations, systems of inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, operations with radicals and radical functions, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, and an introduction to operations with rational functions. Students will be held responsible for understanding how every topic in the course can be organized into six fundamental elements of mathematical development: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, equations, and graphing. Students will be introduced to the numerical, algebraic, and graphical approach of analyzing equations and problem solving. The honors course covers topics in greater depth and moves at a faster pace. The course moves deeper into the understanding domain and range of all functions covered and requires in depth application and problem-solving skills. Students will be instructed on how to use the TI-84 platform as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving.

Prerequisites: Pre-Algebra Honors with a grade of 83% or higher both semesters and departmental approval

Note: When both a middle school preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects.

GEOMETRY*

This course utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Geometry is the second course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. Students will be shown how geometry is a language illustrated through algebra. Therefore, Algebra I concepts are reviewed throughout the entire course. Geometry develops logical reasoning and spatial intelligence. In the regular geometry course, linear algebra is primarily used and geometric proofs are usually tested by filling in the blanks of a logical argument. The course will cover the language of geometry, logical arguments, transformations, triangle relationships and congruence, quadrilaterals,

proportions and similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, area, geometric probability and volume. The course focuses on applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of conceptual understanding with procedural fluency. Students use the TI-84 graphing calculator as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving. Students learn and apply properties of geometrical objects and develop their ability to construct formal, logical arguments and proofs in geometric settings.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of Algebra I

GEOMETRY HONORS*

This course utilizes a computer based program that includes an online textbook as well as additional multimedia resources designed to enhance student learning. Geometry Honors is the second course in the integration Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II requirement for high school graduation. Students will be shown how geometry is a language illustrated through algebra. Geometry honors develops high level logical reasoning and spatial intelligence. In Geometry Honors, linear, quadratic, and rational equations are used to illustrate geometric language, and geometric proofs are demanding and students are required to prove logical arguments from start to finish. The course covers the language of geometry, logical arguments, transformations, triangle relationships and congruence, quadrilaterals, proportions and similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, area, geometric probability and volume. The honors course is proof based and focuses on applications of mathematical concepts in the real world and balances the importance of conceptual understanding with procedural fluency. Students use the TI-84 graphing calculator as a tool to enrich conceptual learning and problem solving. Students learn and apply properties of geometrical objects and develop their ability to construct formal, logical arguments and proofs in geometric settings. Second semester Algebra 1 is heavily reviewed and required for higher level problem solving in second semester Geometry.

Prerequisites: Algebra I with a grade of 95% or higher both semesters and departmental approval; or Algebra I Honors with a grade of 83% or higher both semesters and departmental approval

Note: When both a college preparatory level and an honors level of the same class are offered, the honors class is characterized by a faster pace, greater depth of content (and in some cases, includes additional content and different textbooks), more rigorous problem sets, and expectations of high quality student work on challenging problems and projects. The knowledge and skills acquired in this course, including proficiency with the material as well as comfort with the fast pace, are critical building blocks for success in future advanced math courses.

DEPARTMENT NOTE

San Diego Jewish Academy requires students entering Pre-Algebra, Pre-Algebra Honors, Fundamentals of Algebra, Algebra I, Algebra I Honors, Geometry, and Geometry Honors to complete a summer math assignment that is due on the first day of class. Students entering Essential Mathematics will have a recommended summer assignment due on the first day of class.

SDJA offers a Summer Enrichment Program for students entering these math courses. Before the school year begins in August, students can meet with a math teacher on campus or Zoom to review concepts from the summer assignment. Together, the assignment and enrichment sessions help students maintain their math skills and begin the school year with confidence. All students are encouraged to participate. Students interested should contact their math teacher for the upcoming school year.

Any student who is entering San Diego Jewish Academy from another institution and who is requesting to be part of an honors course must earn an 85% on the qualifying/diagnostic exam i.e. an honors final exam from SDJA's previous year's math course (ex: if a student is entering Algebra I Honors, the student must earn an 85% on the Pre-Algebra Honors Final exam). The student must also complete the summer assignment corresponding to the honors course into which they will be entering.

If a student completed a regular math course at SDJA, and has been recommended for an honors course by meeting the stated requirements, the student must complete the summer assignment corresponding to the honors course into which they will be entering. Additionally, the student may be required to take a diagnostic/qualifying exam before the start of the honors course.



SCIENCE DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

The mission of the science department at SDJA is to promote scientific literacy. We want our students to be curious about both the physical and living world. Classes are designed so that students focus on big ideas in science, and develop critical thinking skills, the ability to design an experiment, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and support a conclusion with scientific evidence. Through lab inquiry, scientific observation, reading scientific material, writing about science, and scientific problem solving, students come to understand science as a process for investigation and discovery.

REQUIRED COURSES

EARTH SCIENCE (SCIENCE 6)

Science 6 is an opportunity for students to experience Earth Science. The students will begin the school year growing plants in the local soil and by the end they will be exploring outer space. In between, we will be engaging with our planet in space, its weather and atmosphere, plate tectonics, erosion, and rocks and minerals. Students will experience Earth Science through investigations, field trips, labs, and role-playing activities that will teach them to think like scientists. In their first middle school science class, students will expand their skills in the lab and develop their problem solving, critical thinking, and data analysis skills. Students will work both individually and in collaboration with their classmates and will develop written and oral communication skills.

LIFE SCIENCE (SCIENCE 7)

What happens to our food after we swallow it? Why do we have the same eye color as our parents? How do scientists find cures for disease? These are just some of the questions students will explore in Life Science. This course is an inquiry based, hands on introduction to the life sciences. Students will experience life science through labs, investigations and role-playing activities that will expand their skills in the lab and develop their problem solving, critical thinking and data analysis skills. Students will work both individually and in collaboration with their classmates and will continue to improve their written and oral communication skills. Topics include how to study people, the human body, cell biology and disease, genetics, ecology, evolution and bioengineering.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE (SCIENCE 8)

In this Physical science course, students will explore concepts in physics and chemistry through hands-on, inquiry-based activities. Vehicle collisions and energy conservation will launch us into the exploration of physics concepts including forces, Newton's Laws of Motion and energy. Later in the year, students will be introduced to the elements on the periodic table and how they interact with one another to create the world around us, even the air we breathe! Discovery is encouraged in this experiential laboratory environment. This class allows students to examine scientific issues in a societal context and gives students an understanding of science and technology in order to make informed personal and community decisions. Through projects integrated into these units of study, students learn to design experiments and gather data to support or refute a scientific claim. In addition, students have the option to participate in the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair.

EXAMPLES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE ELECTIVE COURSES

PROGRAMMING ROBOTICS

Fascinated by robots? Curious about how they think? This class will help you understand how to program robots to do what we want them to do! We will start with exploring foundational programming ideas, learning how to draw and make ‘turtles’ move on our computers. Then we will explore the basics of what makes a robot, how they work and the different kinds of roles they play in our lives. Finally, we will put the pieces together to program robots to do what we want them to do. Let’s face it, robots are cool, come learn the basic process of building a simple autonomous mobile robot

FORENSICS

Step under the yellow tape and join the fascinating world of forensics, the application of science to solve crimes! In this hands-on, investigative course, students will learn about the many types of evidence, how it is gathered, how it is examined, and how to analyze what actually happened at the scene of a crime. Using skills drawn from scientific topics like biology, anatomy, chemistry and physics, students will study and analyze fingerprints, handwriting, hair and fibers, photographs, ballistics, DNA fingerprints and toxicology. All of the techniques and skills learned are drawn directly from actual crime scene investigators working in the field and in the laboratory. The final project will be the complete analysis of a crime scene using all of the skills you learned during the semester!

MAKE IT

Themes for this class include junkyard wars, boat building and using electronics to create interactive objects that can work in the real world. Make It is a class to explore your own ideas with physical materials. Designed to introduce students who love to tinker, design, build, and create, the class will explore hands-on uses of different mechanical, electrical, and digital technologies. Throughout the course, students will work alone and in teams to create objects with a variety of components. Let’s get our hands on some stuff, come up with an idea, and figure out how to make it happen!

CIRCUITRY

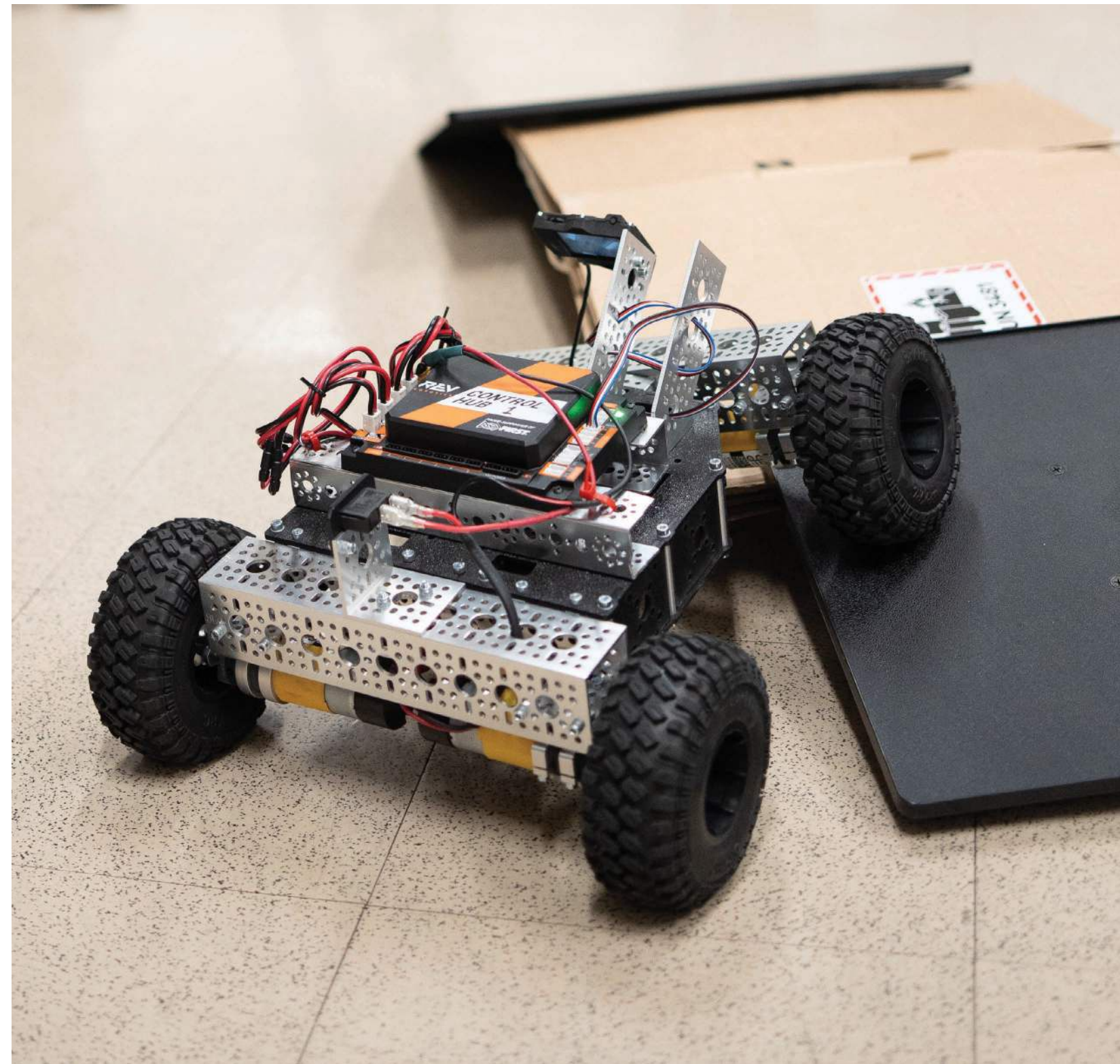
Through hands-on projects, students will explore the science of electricity and circuits. Students will acquire knowledge and skills in basic circuitry design and examine the impact of electricity on our lives. We will build an electromagnetic DC motor, magnetic levitation vehicles, and design, create and race dragster cars. In addition, we will work with low-power circuits to learn about how capacitors, diodes, resistors, sensors, and many other devices work and what they are used for. Finally, we will explore ways to generate electricity using DC motors and wind or water and how solar panels generate energy.

GOOGLE CS FIRST AND PYTHON

This middle school introductory computer science course is for students who have little to no background in computer science. This course introduces students to real-world uses of computer science and its impacts in the community, and is intended to spark a student’s interest in pursuing future computer science course offerings. Students start-out participating in theme-based activities to learn core computer science concepts through Scratch, a block-based coding tool. Themes for projects include: storytelling, fashion, social media, sports, music, art, animation, and game design. Students then move on to coding in Python, a popular object oriented, high-level programming language able to run on a wide variety of systems. The class culminates in a final project intended to showcase progress students have made. This course is recommended for students who enjoy learning by doing and work well in a self-paced learning environment that emphasizes collaboration and creativity.

DRAWING WITH CODE

In this course, students will extend the skills and concepts learned in Google CS First & Python to explore the programming language called Processing. Built on Java, but simpler, Processing is a flexible software language for learning how to code within the context of the visual arts. The first programs all start with drawing; students new to programming find it incredibly satisfying to make something appear on their screen within moments of using the software. This motivating curriculum teaches students the basics of object-oriented programming and skills that can be built upon in the high school engineering and computer science classes.



HEBREW

Ulpan Or's iHebrew Interactive Curriculum is designed to help students develop strong conversational skills in Hebrew. Using a web-based platform integrated with teacher-guided classroom instruction, the program effectively supports learners ranging from beginners to highly advanced speakers. The curriculum is built on Ulpan Or's unique RLA (Rapid Language Acquisition) approach, developed by founders Orly and Yoel Ganor.

The iHebrew™ curriculum is divided into levels aligned with ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, ensuring clear, objective benchmarks for proficiency. This alignment also provides consistency across schools and supports a smooth transition between middle school and high school Hebrew programs.

HEBREW 1

Building the Foundation of the Hebrew Language

In Hebrew 1, students begin developing essential reading and writing skills by learning both print letters and cursive script. Starting with basic vocabulary and progressing toward the Novice-Low proficiency level, students establish a strong linguistic foundation through:

- Acquiring vocabulary of words, including pronouns, numbers 0–10, colors, days of the week, infinitives, helping verbs—all connected to the core themes of the curriculum.
- Building a grammatical foundation that enables students to construct simple, meaningful sentences.
- Learning to write and read basic sentences using pronouns, helping verbs and infinitives.

This course equips learners with the essential tools they need to confidently begin their Hebrew language journey.

HEBREW 2

Advancing Through the Novice-Low Level

In Hebrew 2, students strengthen their foundational skills from Hebrew 1 and progress further into advanced Novice-Low level concepts. Their learning includes:

- Acquiring an active vocabulary of new words, including numbers 11–20, nouns, and adjectives—all connected to the core themes of the curriculum.
- Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogues related to introductions, family, notable figures and characters, adjectives, and historical topics.
- Developing grammatical proficiency, focusing on helping verbs and infinitives.
- Students learn to write and use short sentences with various pronouns, helping verbs, and infinitives, building greater confidence and fluency in communication.

Yearly Project: Hebrew 2 students prepare a daily activities log for both weekdays and weekends, incorporating all infinitives learned throughout the year.

HEBREW 3

Advancing Through the Novice-Mid Level

In Hebrew 3, students continue to expand their language skills as they progress through the Novice-Mid proficiency level. Their learning focuses on:

- Acquiring an active vocabulary of new words, including numbers 21–99, verbs in present tense, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs—all aligned with core curricular themes.
- Strengthening grammatical knowledge, focusing on Binyan Pa'al present tense.
- Mastering foundational concepts and basic dialogues related to introductions, family, notable figures and characters.
- Students practice using present-tense verbs and Binyan Pa'al forms, enhancing their ability to write and verbally express longer sentences and short paragraphs. They also use appropriate present-tense time expressions to convey ideas more clearly and fluently.

Yearly Projects: Students demonstrate their learning through a variety of projects, including creating a daily routine presentation, vocabulary-based games, conversational practice using semester vocabulary, and engaging with Hebrew songs.

HEBREW 4

Advancing Through Novice-Mid and toward Novice-High Proficiency

In Hebrew 4, students continue to strengthen their Novice-Mid skills while progressing toward Novice-High proficiency. Their learning includes:

- Learning infinitives and present-tense conjugations across multiple Binyanim, including Pa'al, Pi'el, and Hif'il.
- Developing greater oral fluency, speaking more freely in Hebrew and incorporating everyday phrases into natural conversations.
- Engaging with Israeli culture through exploration of its people, landscapes, music, and food—enhancing language learning through meaningful cultural context.

Yearly Project:

- *My House* — an art and language integration project in which students describe and present their home environment using learned vocabulary and structures.
- *My Dream Vacation* - where do you want to go? Why? With who? What will you do?

SPANISH

The Spanish program at San Diego Jewish Academy (SDJA), serving both middle and high school students, is dedicated to fostering comprehensive language proficiency across the four core domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All Spanish courses are carefully aligned with ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards, guiding students in developing competence in the “5 Cs”: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

The curriculum is structured around the innovative MAPAS framework, which integrates digital textbooks, videos, and interactive applications to support project-based learning. This approach is designed to cultivate essential academic skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, technological integration, and the practical application of language in real-world contexts.

Moreover, SDJA's Spanish program is committed to creating a supportive and immersive learning environment that actively encourages students to explore, understand, and appreciate Hispanic cultures.

SPANISH 1 (A1 LEVEL ON CEFR)

At the beginner level, students are introduced to the foundational concepts of the Spanish language, developing proficiency across four key domains: listening, reading, writing, and basic speaking. This course is designed to equip students with essential skills and knowledge in the following areas:

- Grammar Fundamentals: Mastery of definite articles, personal pronouns, and basic sentence structures.
- Conjugation: Introduction to the present tense and present progressive tense, including the conjugation of select irregular verbs.
- Cultural Knowledge: Exposure to the diverse cultures and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.
- Core Vocabulary: Development of essential vocabulary for everyday interactions, including greetings, family, time, numbers, introductions, nationalities, friends, and school subjects, as well as phrases necessary for basic conversation.
- Presentation Skills: Acquisition of specialized vocabulary to support participation in class projects and formal presentations.

This course provides a strong foundation for further Spanish language study while fostering cultural awareness and communicative confidence.

