



# GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

Volume 96 Number: II

"Cultivating Success in Every Child"

Friday, September 21, 2018



## Thoughts for the Week

By **Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster**



In keeping with last night's Curriculum Night's presentations, I thought that it would be useful for our families to learn more about the whole school curriculum over a series of articles, probing into the design of our major academic departments. This is the first of these articles.

All of our thinking about curriculum centers on creating a course of study that extends throughout the grades so that there is a progression and a sequence that not only makes sense but also leads to some culminating goals. Each course, each subject, and each line of inquiry needs to be connected to that which has come before it and to that which follows it, so that the skills, information, and process is layered to create a unified application of the educational process.

My plan is to begin with the English/Language Arts curriculum and examine what each level contains and how that leads to the steady and focused development of the student's intellectual growth. In our school, our language acquisition program begins with the Nursery school. There, our two-year-olds begin to learn alphabet letter recognition. This is the first step in the language learning process and lays the foundation for all language learning throughout the student's career at Garden. The teachers regularly read to the children, which is another way of connecting sound to sense and eventually establishes the foundations of reading acquisition. Letter recognition is linked to letter sounds, a process that is reinforced through the use of the smart board, songs, poems, movement, and art projects.

Following the Nursery, the Pre-kindergarten and the Kindergarten reinforce letter recognition and also move into the construction of words. The putting together of individual letters into simple words and to the continuing process of the teacher's reading to the class. As a child moves further through the PreK and K programs, there is a greater transition from the letter to the work to the sentence. At this age, the curriculum allows for children at different levels of language acquisition. However, by the end of the Kindergarten Program, we anticipate that children will be able to do beginning reading on their own as well as begin the process of writing letters, words etc. Together this forms the basis for the work that they will do in the early elementary grades which advances these skills even further.

As children move through the first, second and third grade cluster, their reading, writing and interpreting skills move on to another level. In writing, children develop their skills from writing a sentence to a paragraph to a full-length composition. This progress in their writing connects directly with their developing reading skills. Reading in these grades is further differentiated by the use of reading groups and is supported by our Reading Specialist which allows for more individual attention and engagement with the books by each



student. Using a three-year series called *The Treasure Series*, the students move from story to story, learning about storytelling, character, plot, and characterization. The reading skills are reinforced by further work with phonics, which completes a more global learning experience for the children. In addition to reading skills, the children begin to learn how to discuss a book and decode not only the language but the behavioral implications of the story. This is the beginning of interpretation, which grows in importance as the students begin to develop difference layers of cognitive skills, eventually leading them from concrete thinking to abstract/conceptual thinking. Paralleling this work in reading is the writing program that guides students through the world of handwriting, spelling, grammar, journal, and letter writing and descriptive and expository writing. Our language arts program brings these three areas, reading, writing and interpretative thinking, together over the three years in this cluster.

Throughout the next cluster of grades four, five and six, the reading and writing process takes students through an experience of appropriate age-level literature. For examples, the fourth graders will read *The Year of the Book*, the fifth grade will read *The Sign of the Beaver* and the sixth grade *The Egypt Game*. These books expose the students to literature that embodies historical, fictional, and real life situations. Books like this raise questions about how people treat each other, how history unfolded, how to think about our world and ourselves, and much more. Here, students learn to make the connections between fiction and reality, and how fiction can represent, explore, and create insights into the human condition. The process of critical thinking, textual analysis and thinking in writing plays a major role in this three-year cluster. Coupled with this level of reading and interpretation is the writing program which takes students from paragraph writing, free writing to the writing of essays. All of the writing involves thinking, interpreting, analyzing and self-reflection.

The scope and sequence between the Lower Division and the Upper Division is never more evident than in the transition from sixth to seventh grade. Here, all of the skills, reading, writing and critical thinking, that have been built in the Lower Division empower the student to a more independent language arts experience. The reading now moves to some American and English literature classics, including Shakespeare. Students now read such works as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Separate Peace*, *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*. This exposure to the historical language and poetic form of Shakespeare creates a more complex experience of language that exposes students to literature whose complexity is appropriate for their age.

Progressing further, the High School English program will have students reading Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, Bronte, major American, British and European dramatists, both contemporary and traditional works and works that represent a global perspective. Here, our students explore the nature of literary criticism, of literary analysis, and of literary research. Part of this is through the grade-level curriculum in the seventh through tenth grades, which involves reading major writers and then using student writing to explore those literary works in detail, through analysis and critical thinking.

Students in eleventh and twelfth grades choose electives that can broaden and deepen their experience of literature. Such electives as film making, New York City Literature, American Identity, Literature and Psychology, Women in Literature and Advanced Placement Literature create opportunities for student to conduct in-depth studies in a particular area of interest. These literary experiences are accompanied by in-depth writing assignments in which our students have a chance to probe into a literary work, explore the



consequences and implications of the literary imagination, and to reflect on their own experience as readers of complex texts. The practice of critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation form the basis for much of the writing done in the Upper Division.

The overall goals of the Garden English/Language Arts program is to produce student readers, writers, thinkers, and interpreters of language and literature. At Garden School, as it states in the school's Mission Statement, we "affirm the primacy of learning". So, the goal of the program is create inspired and empowered life-long readers, thinkers and writers. We recognize how important language and literature are to the human experience and how important (vital, perhaps) it is to lead a life that is reflective, analytical, and intellectual.

#### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

- Saturday/Sunday, September 23, 24: Garden School at Makers Faire at New York Hall of Science
- Monday, September 24: Photo Day for Lower Division
- Tuesday, September 25: Photo Day for Upper Division
- Wednesday, October 3 – Friday, October 5: Camp Herrlich for Grades 5 & 6 [www.campherrlich.org/](http://www.campherrlich.org/)
- Monday, October 8: School Closed for Columbus Day

#### ***Enrollment and Communications - Did You Know...?***

By [Jim Gaines](#), Director of Outreach and Upper Division Admissions

#### ***Garden Referral Program - Strengthen our Community, and Save Money!***

Our weekly Open Houses are a great opportunity for current Garden families to take advantage of Garden's Referral Program and to refer new families to attend the Open House and consider enrolling at Garden. Remember, **for every NEW full-time Garden student that enrolls** and the family pays the tuition due in full and that indicates you are the referring family, **the referring family will receive \$1,000 tuition credit**. For **each additional new student that enrolls, the referring family will receive a \$1,500 tuition credit** once the new family has paid the tuition in full. Using a referral card, available in the school office, allows us to keep track of your participation in a new family's enrollment. You can also choose to send an email with the information on the card directly to Jim Gaines, Director of Outreach, at [jgaines@gardenschool.org](mailto:jgaines@gardenschool.org). With your permission, we will follow up with the prospective family.

#### ***Garden "Community" Site Improves Communication***

Garden parents use the Garden School website to access everyday information. The trouble is, it *costs Garden School every time you use Google to find us and it can take a while to load and it is so many clicks to find what you want!*

We have a simple solution, [the Garden Community Site](#)! On this site, you have your teacher pages, faculty and admin contacts, calendar, dining room menus, sports game schedules, and much more right at your fingertips! Click on or visit the link **ON YOUR PHONE** to check it out and save the link icon to your phone homepage. Visit <http://www.gardenschool.org/community/> and quickly access all the info you need! Save time and money!



## Curriculum Night 2018, September 20th

It was great to see so many of our students represented at Curriculum Night 2018! Thank you for being so engaged partners in your child's education!  
And, thank you Upper Division students for your terrific help last night!





## Garden School Music Conservatory

We have spaces available in Garden School's Music Conservatory!

The Music Conservatory is an ideal way for your child to discover an instrument of choice that suits his or her own unique talents. Professional musicians provide individual instruction for students in Garden School's upper and lower divisions.

### Instrument Choices:

- Private Piano, Guitar and Voice instruction for K and up—30-minute lessons, 25 weeks at \$550.
- Other private instruction for grades 3 and up—45-minute lessons, 25 weeks at \$625.

Each lesson involves music technique, sheet music reading, and learning and practicing songs. At-home practice is necessary.

Please note that it is the responsibility of each student to attend his or her scheduled lesson. Missed lessons cannot be made up.

In the event of a teacher's absence, parents and students will be notified and an experienced substitute will fill in for the lesson. Any class that cannot be scheduled in this way will be added to the end of the lesson period.

All Conservatory students are invited to perform in the Annual Spring Music Recital at the end of the school year!

Please contact [Ms. Kim](#) for more information





# Join us at the World Maker Faire

**September 22rd and 23th at the New York Hall of Science  
THIS WEEKEND!**

The Garden School Amateur Radio Club is a proud participant in the New York World Maker Faire, the Greatest Show (and Tell) on Earth—a family-friendly showcase of invention, creativity and resourcefulness, and a celebration of the Maker Movement.

Maker Faire is a gathering of fascinating, curious people who enjoy learning and who love sharing what they can do. From engineers to artists to scientists to crafters, Maker Faire is a venue for these “makers” to show hobbies, experiments, projects. Glimpse the future and get inspired!

This year we work with the Hall of Science ARC who will be doing a presentation on “WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, AMATEUR RADIO IS READY.” Their project will display communications with a GO Box, a fully contained and portable amateur radio station. It will use amateur radio frequencies to transmit and receive digital communications.



The Garden School ARC and we will be working with them on their project “Soldering Morse Code Keys and LED Candles and Tape Measure Yagi’s.” We will work with their students and the public to show them how to solder and make electronics.

**WORLD  
Maker Faire  
NEW YORK**

*Get Your  
TICKETS  
Today!*

**SEPT 22+23  
NEW YORK HALL OF SCIENCE**



## **Pre-K For All - Creative Arts**

**By:** [Karina Mendoza](#) (PKFA Teacher)

As we end our unit this month, students learned about the letters of their names. They learned that the first letter of their name is a capital letter and the rest are lower case letters. Students also practiced writing their names with their favorite color.

The class also read different books such as My First book of Tagalog Words by Liana Romulo and Chicka Chika Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr and John Archambault. As students reviewed the books read in class this unit, they were asked if they could recognize the letters during story time.



## **Early Childhood - World Languages, Mandarin**

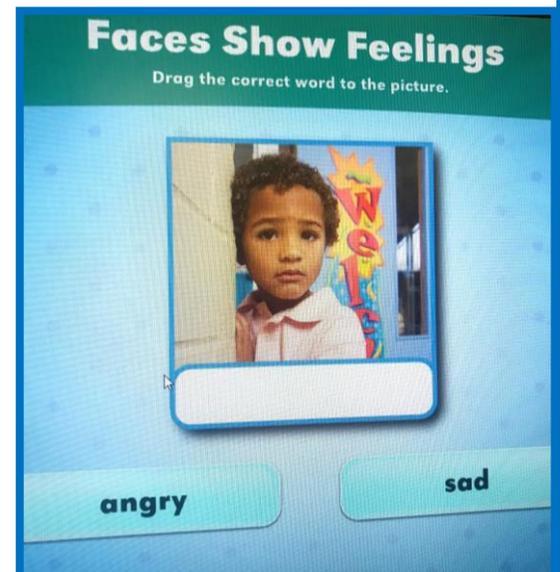
**By:** [Jie \(Kelly\) Yang](#), (Mandarin Teacher)

We're off to a wonderful start as the students are now well settled and adjusting to the everyday routines of school. The early childhood students will first gain the ability to recognize and respond to classroom instructions in Mandarin. Students will then learn to recognize and use common courtesy expressions. Students will initially react to picture cards, use a whole body physical response, and sing songs to demonstrate their comprehension of the new concepts. Later, students will respond between themselves to these classroom instructions and courtesy expressions. This unit will reinforce simultaneously the general rules and manners of the classroom. Finally, cultural norms will be emphasized that reflect patterns of thinking and behavior that are distinctly representative of the communities in which the target language is used (e.g., stand up tall and straight when answering teacher's questions).

## **Grade 1 Social Studies**

**By:** [Kristen Ahlfeld](#) (First Grade Teacher)

The first graders are settling into their new surroundings. They are excited to to be able to use the pool, the art room and have greater independence. Our social studies theme has been focusing on identifying and analyzing school rules, as well as practicing good listening skills. Identifying expectations will help the children to improve personal behavior in school and social settings. Respecting others and using kind words is also a goal for our students. Our Scholastic Weekly Reader has reinforced these social and emotional standards. The students have been practicing reading different facial expressions on the smart board to identify different feelings and emotions. As they learn to to identify emotions, we then discuss how to help someone that may be feeling angry , scared, sad or frustrated. In the words of R.J. Palacio the author of the book "Wonder," we encourage the children to "choose kind." We look forward to a great year!



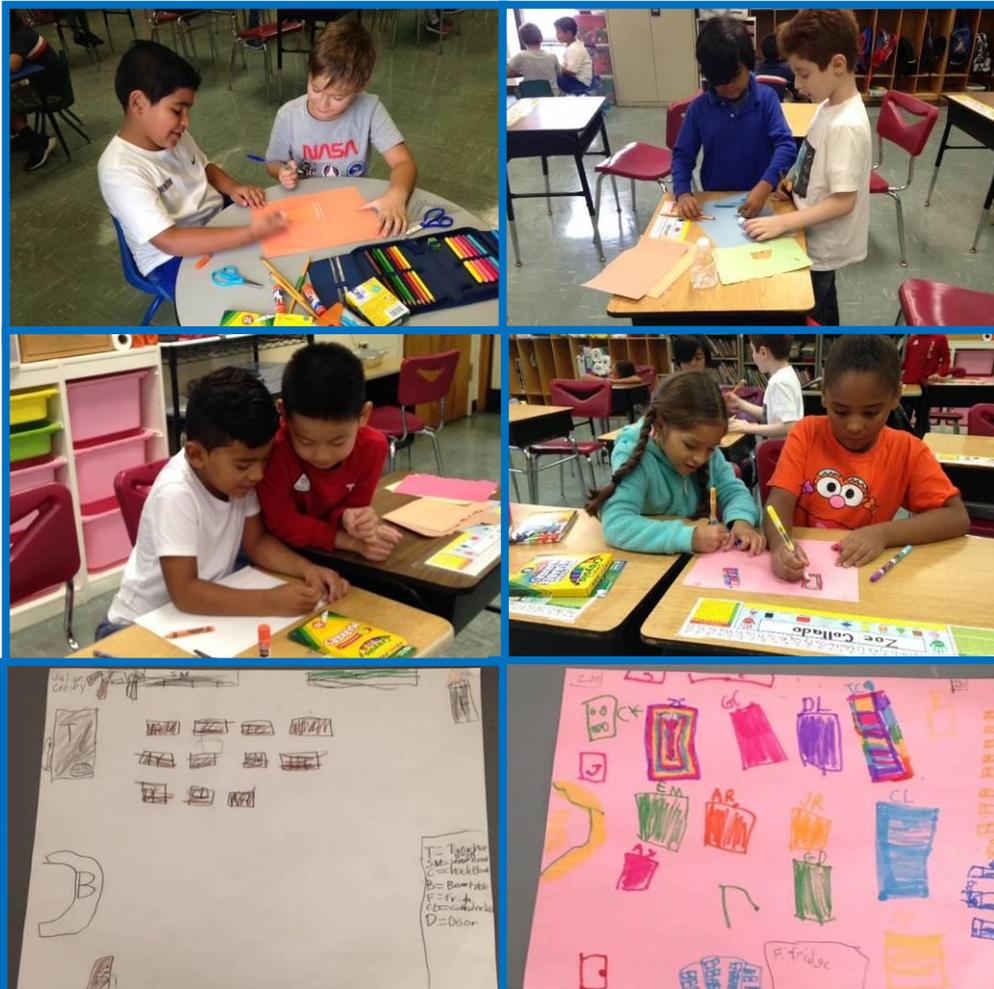


## Grade 2 Social Studies

By: [Paula James](#) (First Grade Teacher)

The second grade students are off to an exciting start to the school year. In social studies, we have been discussing what it means to be part of a school community. We are talking about being citizens of our classroom and Garden School. We discussed ideas about kindness and respect, and that students have a responsibility to be kind and respectful to each other both at school and in the community. Our class is creating an Acts of Kindness box, where students will have the opportunity to write a note about something kind that someone did for them or someone else, and put it in the box. At the end of the week we will share all the wonderful kind things the students have done at school.

We are also working on map skills and learning about following directions to get to a location. Students have begun to work with simple maps that include legends, and we are discussing how the images can help guide us to our destination. Even with all the technology around us, children still need to build spatial reasoning skills, and be able to see and understand spaces in their minds. The children worked together to create maps of the classroom. Their next task was to write directions to get somewhere in the room, and have someone figure out where they were being directed to. The students enjoyed the challenge of using their classroom maps and making their way to their destination.





## Grade 3 Social Studies

By: [Rachel Vidal](#) (First Grade Teacher)

The third graders have jumped into social studies with gusto! We are beginning the year discussing “Our Community” and the different types of communities. We’ve also talked about what makes a community a good community and what each of us can do to make our community a nice place to be. The children have made many connections between what we’ve been reading to their own lives. The third graders will begin a collaborative project where each child brings a few things from their own community (restaurant menus, extracurricular activity brochure, museum pamphlets, etc.). Together they will create a collage of items from their neighborhoods. This will demonstrate the richness of where they live. We will compare what each neighborhood has in common and what is unique to their neighborhood. The project creates an opportunity for the children to express their pride in where they live and show-off all the wonderful things in their community.



## Grades 4 - 6 Physical Education

By: [Michelle Ferreira](#) (Physical Education Teacher)

In Physical Education class, we have started our first unit, which is soccer. We always start the class with either playing a warm up game like *Everyone's It* or doing 4 laps around the gym so that their heart and blood is pumping. Afterwards, we do some stretching for about 6 to 8 minutes, focusing on upper body and then lower body stretches, some yoga, and then we go into our main activity.



The first two weeks we focus on drills like dribbling, passing, playing defense and shooting. They drill on their own and with a partner. The reason we focus on each of the drills in detail is so they can better understand the skill, ask any questions they might have, and also practice it so that they can apply it in a game situation. After the drills are done we will play some fun games like *Monkey in the Middle*, *Steal the Bacon*, *Soccer Tennis* and *Three Score* before we go into the tournaments.

I look forward to this unit and seeing how the students develop their skills and then apply them in the tournament rounds. Also, we have been using the pool on the days that the weather permits us to go. The students love it so much!



## **Grades 7 and 8 - Fine Arts - Art**

**By:** [Chris Zelles](#) (Art Teacher)

September is Hispanic Heritage month and to commemorate this the 7th and 8th graders are making Mexican Tin Art. Students were taught the history of Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) and then designed their own skulls. Using their drawing as a template they then transferred their drawings onto ArtEmboss Aluminum Sheets. Next, they take the back end of paint brushes and emboss the skulls making some images stick out and push other parts in, which gives project depth. Lastly the students will put a light layer of black paint onto their projects and wipe of the areas that protrude the most, giving the piece a more three dimensional look. The students are having a blast with the project and the work that they have done so far has been terrific. Here is an example of a work in progress.



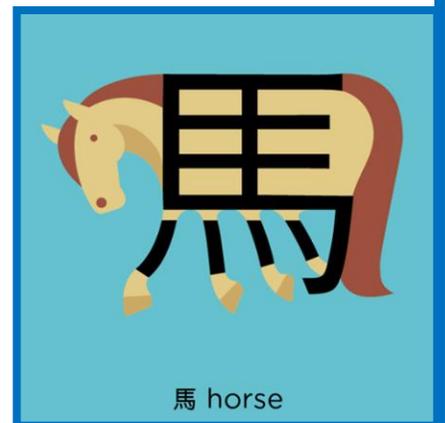
## **Grades 7 and 8 - Fine Arts - Music**

**By:** [Tom Heineman](#) (Art Teacher)

How we break down and analyze Popular music and Rock and Roll is the current focus in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade music class. The ideas that they've been absorbing thus far concern the music's structure, but they will also focus on aspects of its sound, volume, time, and pitch-related traits. An understanding of the concepts will help the students become deeper and more perceptive listeners, to know *what* to listen for in a piece of music, to distinguish between and reflect upon specific aspects of what they're hearing, and to be able to speak and write about the music in an intelligent manner. This will also guide them when they reflect upon the evolution of Rock and Roll during its 60-plus-year history.



To both gain a new perspective and a greater understanding of Japanese musical traditions, 8<sup>th</sup> Graders have explored a small fraction of the country's rich culture in music class. They were given a historical overview of the nation's past and some insight into the culture through the written language. Students had the opportunity to write over a dozen characters in the Japanese language (which are representational symbols that originated in China) and, in several cases, were shown their evolution. Students were able to recognize some of the characters as they still resemble the things they symbolize. I look forward to the students' eye-opening experience in the future when they are handed a set of lyrics in Japanese and realize that they know the meaning of several of the characters.





## **Grades 9 - English**

**By:** [Christopher Vallario](#) (English Teacher)

Ninth graders are introduced to texts that will help them better analyze and think more critically, especially on how they fit or do not.

Scholarly articles are important because they give a strong foundation for research components like [James Paul Gee's "What Is Literacy?"](#) For the last few weeks, we are uncovering academic terminologies such as primary and secondary discourses, learning and acquisition, and identity kits. From there the students are applying these terms to their experiences, and they are gaining a deeper awareness of themselves. Currently, through their memories and discourses, they are drafting their literacy narratives, which traces their early learning experiences to their present. Writing is a process, which means they write multiple drafts; three times a week, we meet for in-class writing. In addition, we are reading and analyzing Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*.

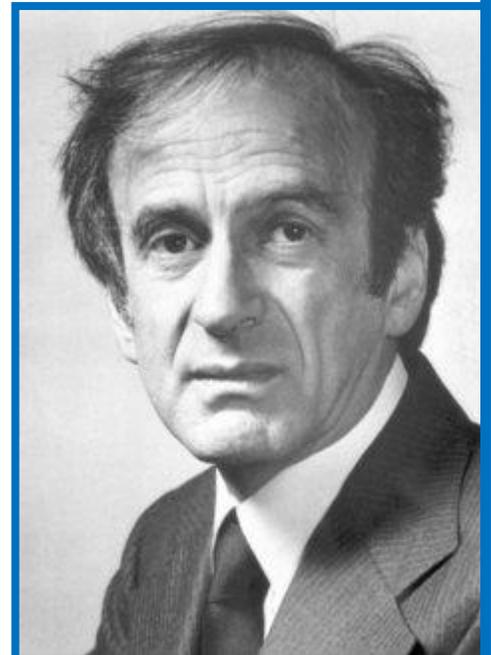
## **Grades 10 - English**

**By:** [Amira Booth Soifer](#) (English Teacher)

The tenth grade is off to a great and engrossing start to the 2018-2019 school year. We are currently delving into "Night," one of the books assigned for summer reading, a riveting and challenging memoir about the Holocaust from the perspective of Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor.

As a class, we have gone over the background history of WWII and the ensuing decades and how the history led to events that occurred before and during the Holocaust.

We have since begun examining the memoir in depth, discussing such elements and questions as why people find comfort in the status quo and what the difference between knowing and truly believing are and how they affect individuals and communities as a whole. The tenth grade is an incredibly inquisitive class and I look forward to hearing them share more of their great ideas (as well as putting these ideas into writing) as we continue in the school year.

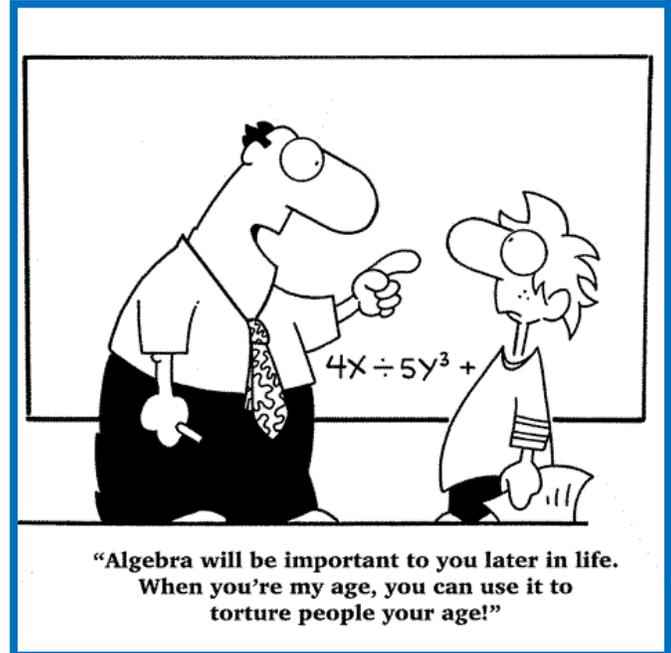




## **Grades 11 - Math**

**By:** [Sonia Ambarsom](#) (Math Teacher)

Pre-calculus is a course that includes algebra and trigonometry at a level which is designed to prepare students for the study of calculus. Schools often distinguish between algebra and trigonometry as two separate parts of the coursework. In order to be prepared for calculus, a student needs not only technical skill but also a clear understanding of concepts. A student also needs to gain an appreciation for the power and utility of mathematics and modeling the real world. Towards that end, the eleventh graders are beginning the course with a comprehensive review of the aforementioned concepts and skills learned in coursework from the previous year, so as to better understand the concepts to come in the year ahead.



## **Grades 11 and 12 - Math**

**By:** [Lauren Little](#) (Math Teacher)

### **Grade 11 Pre-Calculus Honors**

The first couple of weeks of school we have been working on functions. Not only will a good understanding of functions be necessary throughout the year in this class, but also next year when the students move on to AP calculus. We have covered evaluating functions, graphing functions, and analyzing graphs of functions. In the next week we will finish up studying functions in general and move on to polynomial and rational functions.

### **Grade 12 Pre-Calculus**

Throughout the past couple of weeks we have been reviewing some algebra concepts that are essential to the study of pre-calculus. We have been working on exponents, radicals, and algebraic expressions. Next, we will cover equations, inequalities, and lines before moving on to functions.

### **Grade 12 AP Calculus**

The school year is off to a great start! The students have been working hard learning the first big concept in calculus, limits. We have already covered the material in the first chapter and the students have their first test this week. Starting next week the students will begin to study derivatives, which can be used to find the slope of a function at any point. It is also the second major topic in calculus.



Congratulations to our Girls Volleyball Team for their win against Dwight School this week!

Click below for Garden School Fall Sports Schedules:

[Varsity Girls Volleyball](#)

[Varsity Boys Soccer](#)

[Middle School Soccer](#)

