



PRIMARY SCHOOL (K-2)

Reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic are the foundation upon which the tower of learning is built, and they are given the highest priority in K-2. The basic skills, work habits, and attitudes formed in the primary years are of critical importance.

Phonics and Reading

Phonics is the system of letter-sound association taught to children for the purposes of learning to read and spell. Phonics is most effective when taught systematically, thoroughly, intensively, and in a logical and time-tested sequence.

Our primary resource for phonics instruction in kindergarten is the Memoria Press *First Start Reading*, a program which teaches correct pencil grip, manuscript form, consonant and short vowel sounds, three-letter word formation, consonant blends and long vowels/silent e. Common words which do not fit into any word family are introduced after students learn to blend three-letter words. *First Start Reading* teaches students to read in kindergarten using stories with a high percentage of phonetic words.

Phonics and spelling continue in 1st and 2nd grades using the *Traditional Spelling* program. In 1st grade students continue to develop reading comprehension with whole books, which captivate and motivate children and are preferred over basal readers. Teachers monitor student reading skills through daily oral reading. First graders read children's classics such as *Little Bear*, *Caps For Sale*, *The Story About Ping*, and *Billy and Blaze*. Second graders read *The Courage of Sarah Noble*, *Little House in the Big Woods*, and *Animal Folktales*. Spelling, penmanship, composition, and vocabulary lessons for each book are provided by the Memoria Press study guides.

A rich language experience, provided both at home and in school, is an important factor in reading success. Students memorize poems and Scripture and enjoy children's classics read by teachers during read-aloud time.

Spelling and Printing

Students develop the visual memory for accurate spelling by a systematic study of phonics, word families, and spelling rules taught in *Traditional Spelling*, and by a lifetime of seeing, reading, and writing words correctly. It is very important to reduce opportunities for children to write or see misspelled words; young students who are allowed to spell creatively or phonetically have a confused visual memory that is difficult to overcome.

Copybook is an exercise consisting of copying sayings, maxims, Scripture, and poetry in the student's best handwriting. Copybook is an important step in developing good penmanship, punctuation, and spelling. Habits of good penmanship are instilled early and required at every grade level by every teacher. The discipline of neat and legible handwriting is an aid to spelling and instills the value of accurate, careful work - an important academic skill that carries over into every aspect of learning. In the 1st and 2nd grades students continue to practice manuscript while also beginning cursive script with Memoria Press' *New American Cursive* program.

At Highlands Latin School, our teachers work to help students form and maintain a proper pencil grip. Correct pencil grip reduces hand fatigue and as a consequence, also reduces resistance to written work in general.

Arithmetic

Number formation, counting, time, calendar, measurements, and money are the skills students continue to build along with mastery of addition and subtraction facts through 18. In 2nd grade, the students also begin multiplication with the 1x, 2x, 5x, and 10x facts. Students learn number sense by skip-counting, games, and drills, all of which make math time enjoyable and help students achieve immediate recall of math facts - the primary goal in K-2.

Geography, History, and Science

Our Read-Aloud Program consists of one set of books for each grade in K-2, one book for each week. These books provide a rich language experience for students, as each book is read aloud every day the class meets and is accompanied by oral questions and discussion.

Students learn new and interesting words and delight in rhyme and word play. They learn about holidays, history, geography, science, and more. The read-aloud books are beautiful in both art and language.

K-2 students study globes and maps to learn continents, oceans, major countries, and basic geography terms. Second graders are introduced to states and capitals. In science, students learn about seasons, weather, and nature.

Christian Studies, Music, and Art

In Christian Studies students read or listen to Bible stories and memorize Scripture verses and prayers. Students draw and color every day in their composition books, illustrating copybook verses, poems, and composition lessons.

K-2 students have weekly music instruction. Students learn the basic elements of music, including ear training and note reading. In music appreciation, a well-known composer and piece of music are introduced weekly.

In art appreciation, an artist and art masterwork are introduced weekly to primary students.

Physical Education

Students have Physical Education twice a week. P.E. provides 30 minutes of exercise as well as opportunities to play childhood games. Our K-2 P.E. instructor works to develop basic motor and motion skills, such as running, skipping, running backwards, and flexibility, as well as sportsmanship and team play. On days when students do not have P.E., they have recess outside or, in inclement weather, in the gym.