

Important Information Regarding Our HVCS Library Curriculum

- The majority of what used to fall under library curriculum in the past now falls under technology. If you research library curriculum you will notice a big change, just in the last 5-10 years. For example: It is no longer an effective use of a student's time to learn how to use a hard copy set of encyclopedias for research. We do cover them when we introduce reference materials, but we do not spend weeks on this as was done in the past. We cover the use of online encyclopedias in our technology classes. In the same way, card catalogs are a thing of the past, and learning to use our library software to locate a book requires much less instructional time. We cover the card catalog as part of the library's history. Our library curriculum will continue to evolve with advancements in technology, such as e-books and virtual libraries. It is more and more common to see school libraries become "Media Centers" where library skills and computer skills are combined into one. Most comprehensive library curriculums you find online are for use in a media center.
- At HVCS we feel that our library classes are best used as a way to help students discover a love of reading and as a way to reinforce what is being taught within our outstanding academic reading classes. For this reason, reading teachers often set the parameters of the student book selection starting in first grade. The library sets the limits as far as the number of books on loan, duration of loan period, overdue fines assessed, etc. However, the library relies heavily on input from our teachers to help students achieve their reading goals. This means students may be limited strictly to AR books, certain reading levels, certain authors, biographies, etc. based on a teacher's request. Traditionally, students will be limited to AR books until they reach their reading goal for the quarter. Then they may be allowed to choose any books of their choice for the remainder of the quarter.
- A large part of library curriculum for all schools involves "Library Appreciation". This is simply teaching children all the wonderful things a good library has to offer. We want our students to love reading and to always be excited about an opportunity to visit our library. For this reason, in addition to building strong reading skills we want to give students the chance to explore and discover a wide variety of authors, illustrators, genres, and reading levels. Many of our students begin gravitating towards a specific section of the library as early as K5. It may be animals, sports, fairy tales, and so on. Some students use their entire library time trying to decide on a book, and some students know what they want within the first five minutes. Being able to make an independent choice, especially in the younger grades, is very exciting for our students and we use this as a way to create an experiential learning environment for them. A student's teacher may guide them towards certain books to help them become strong readers, but whenever possible we offer students the chance to make their own choices (even if it is too big, too long, or the same book checked out repeatedly).

- We have some students who will ask to see many, many, many books before making a decision. Often times, these are the same children who still end up bringing home the same cat or princess books week after week. It isn't because they haven't been offered a hundred other choices 😊. Please understand that if your child continues to check out the same book/books repeatedly it is because they are passionate about the subject matter, despite being strongly encouraged to check out something new.
- We do teach the Dewey Decimal System to all of our students, but our approach is based on what is age appropriate for each grade level. For that reason, we have worked very hard and invested money in creative ways to label our shelves and books to help children learn their way around our library while learning the Dewey classification numbers a little better each school year. Nonfiction books have been labeled with classification stickers such as dogs, sports, science, art, etc. The shelves are also labeled with Dewey numbers, pictures, and subjects. This will help the children to associate visual images with the different Dewey classifications. For example, if a child is looking for a book about dogs, they will most likely notice the dog stickers on the spine first. Then they will start to connect this to the word "Dogs" labeled on the shelf. This will also relate to the 636 classification number written on the same shelf. This will help them connect all the dots for a better (and more visual) understanding of the Dewey Decimal System. This has taken quite a lot of time to implement, and it is still a work in progress. However, this is a much better way to help our young children learn the Dewey System rather than expecting them to learn it through memory work and worksheets. It is an investment, but we feel that it is a very beneficial and lasting one for your children.
- When children ask for help finding a book we use this as a teachable moment. It becomes something we do together. If it requires a catalog search we pull it up together so the students learn how to use the right keywords for the desired results. Once the search results come back we take the list and search together as an opportunity to reinforce library skills and to make sure the student understands how to find the book's location on the shelf. This is one of the many advantages to having such small class sizes. We are able to give students lots of individual help and attention. This is also a great opportunity to suggest other types of books they might enjoy similar to what they are searching for. Students may begin searching more independently in upper grades, but until reading and writing skills become stronger it is not age appropriate to expect a five or six year old to type in subjects such as "Tyrannosaurus Rex" and search independently.