

## Grade 1 Pedagogical Overview

In the first three grades of the Waldorf School, education is regarded as a formative activity. As a child enters the grade school, therefore, there is less emphasis placed on what the children consciously retain and more emphasis how that content impacts them. Waldorf schools believe that early education lays the foundation not only for the child's future schoolwork, but for her/his bodily growth, physical health, and moral maturity as well. Thus, a concern for the future of every child, in the fullest sense, lies at the basis of our work in Grade 1.

First Grade is the commencement of formal schooling marked by the child's awakening capacities of memory and thinking. Throughout this year, the academic tasks of reading, writing and arithmetic are embedded in the rich world of fairy tales from around the world. The archetypal pictures found within these tales engage the child's imagination and provide a rich context from which all aspects of the curriculum can be drawn. Through stories, alliterative poems, and songs, the children are introduced to the letters of the alphabet. They learn how sounds are joined to make words, and they begin to write simple sentences.

Throughout this year, all skills are reinforced with practice involving rhythmical movement, recitation and music. Bookwork is illustrated with pictures that reinforce the concepts being developed. Each lesson aims to incorporate a three-fold structure, which fosters the development of the children's feelings, thinking abilities, and will forces.

In Grade 1, students are introduced to the numbers 1-12 through drawing and story. They learn to count from 1-100 through rhythmical movement and become acquainted with skip-counting through clapping and circle games. Children are introduced to the four basic mathematical operations through a story format. These operations are practiced through the use of manipulatives and word problems. Mental arithmetic encourages students to develop confidence and creativity when working with numbers.

Form Drawing, or Dynamic Drawing, is a vital part of the Grade 1 experience. This subject might be seen as the skeletal structure of the first grade curriculum, without which the other subjects could neither have structure nor consequential movement. Straight and curved lines are introduced as well as running forms. Form Drawing encourages children to find their orientation in space, harmonize the relationship of the eye to the hand, and prepare them for writing and reading. This activity also helps to develop flexibility of thinking.

In addition to all the new things being learned during this year, Grade One is the year when the rhythm of working together as a class is first established. First grade students are eager to learn together and take their place within the larger whole. As new habits are formed, a foundation is being laid for healthy social interaction. Through the teacher's authority and presence, a sense of reverence, respect, and wonder permeates the mood in the classroom.

### Language Arts:

- Fairy tales from around the world
- Capital letters
- Beginning phonics instruction
- Alliterative verses and tongue twisters
- Word families

- Writing simple sentences

### Mathematics:

- Counting to 100
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Roman numerals

- Number riddles
- Patterns

- Watercolor Painting and Drawing
- Modeling with beeswax and/or clay

**Nature Studies:**

- Seasonal stories, songs, and poems
- Nature walks

**Artistic Work:**

- Form Drawing

**Specialty Subjects:**

- Eurythmy
- Games
- Handwork
- Music
- Spanish

## English and Language Arts

In Grade 1, students are introduced to capital letters, simple phonics, and the writing of sentences. This is done through a "language experience" approach to reading and writing. The beginning of such lessons starts with the telling of a story, generally, a fairy tale. After hearing the story, the students may retell the story verbally, act it out, or learn a poem or alliterative verse related to the lesson. Lastly, the abstract concept (a letter or writing of a sentence) is derived from the artistic rendering of the story. During the course of the year, students learn to write simple words and sentences by copying written texts from the chalkboard into their Main Lesson books. Thus, the first reading that the students do is from their own Main Lesson books. Although some children may learn to read during grade one, we do not expect students to read until they are ready. For many students, this may happen during the second or third grade year.

### Writing

Grade One is the first formal introduction to writing. Prior to learning the letters of the alphabet, students participate in a form drawing block where they walk, gesture and draw two basic forms, the straight line and the curve. Letters and sounds are first introduced through imaginative pictures and alliterative verses. During the course of the year, students learn to write simple words and sentences by copying written texts from the chalkboard into their main lesson books.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Walk and gesture straight lines, curves, and basic running forms
- Draw straight lines, curves, and patterns similar to those of teacher
- Organize ideas for simple sentences
- Copy sentences from board accurately and neatly
- Correctly form and recognize uppercase letters
- Write using a left to right, top to bottom progression
- Write own name
- Hold pencils and crayons with proper grip
- Sit upright with feet on the floor when writing
- Create a space between each written word in a sentence
- Complete all work as instructed by teacher
- Create borders, margins, and titles to accompany each text
- Demonstrate phonetically appropriate spelling in both independent writing and teacher-dictated short sentences. Student
- Show emerging memory and retention of basic spelling rules.

## Reading

In Grade One, teachers support the development of reading skills by using a rich array of verses, fairy tales and folk stories from around the world. Many of these verses and stories are memorized and dramatized by the students. In the early grades, reading is taught through writing, and most texts are drawn from the stories and poems the students learn in class. Although some children may read fluently during grade one, we do not expect students to read until they are ready. For many students, this may happen during the second or third grade year.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how print is organized and read
- Understand concept of reading from left to right, top to bottom
- Match spoken words with print
- Read familiar sentences written in main lesson books
- Identify upper case letter names, shapes, and sounds
- Identify common sight words
- Identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words
- Clap syllables in words and sentences
- Recognize rhyming words
- Blend sounds into words
- Sound out some words using decoding strategies

## Speaking and Listening

Waldorf students participate in daily recitation of poems, tongue twisters, and songs. Grade One students are expected to participate fully in these activities by speaking with the group and joining in when gestures or movements are performed. Towards the end of the year, the class performs a play derived from a fairy tale or nature story, which includes choral speaking and singing.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Show enthusiasm and attentive behavior when listening to stories
- Remember details from a story and participate in retell
- Talk to others about stories and participate in discussions
- Create drawings and paintings related to a story
- Dramatize stories through acting and puppetry
- Use correct pronunciation
- Speak clearly and audibly
- Use an increasingly broad vocabulary in conversation
- Participate in choral speaking and movement
- Show respect when others are speaking
- Raise hand and wait for a turn to speak
- Express ideas orally in complete sentences
- Follow simple instructions without needing individual attention
- Recite short poems, tongue twisters, rhymes, songs and stories with repeated patterns, in unison with the class

## Mathematics

In the first grade, Mathematics is taught through movement, drama, art, and storytelling. The qualitative aspects of numbers one through twelve are introduced through number patterns in nature, such as one sun, two hands, four seasons, etc. Students work with numbers 1-30 using manipulatives and movement to strengthen number sense. Rhythmical work with clapping, stomping, and songs enliven the children's experience of numbers, counting, and number patterns. Throughout the year the concept of number as a whole consisting of many parts is emphasized. For example, 5 is explored as  $4+1$ ,  $2+3$ ,  $1+1+1+1+1$ . The four mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication) are introduced through enlivened stories, imaginative pictures, movement, and manipulative practice.

### Number Sense

Math is taught through movement, drama, music, art, and storytelling. This multi-sensory approach enlivens the subject and instills in the students a joyful approach to basic arithmetic. The qualitative aspects of whole numbers one through twelve are introduced, using simple stories and visual imaginations. Throughout this year we emphasize the concept of number as a whole consisting of many parts (example:  $12=7+5$  or  $12=2+10$ , etc.)

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Count from 1-100
- Read and write written numbers 1-30
- Order numbers to 30
- Compare numbers to show greater than, less than, and equal to 30
- Skip count number families 2,3,5, and 10 to the 12th multiple
- Regroup objects to show different representations of the same sum

### Computation

Students work with numbers from 1-100, using manipulatives and movement to build a strong number sense. The four operations (addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication) are introduced through story and dramatization, with emphasis on the relationship between these operations and how to move from one to another. Rhythmic movement strengthens the memory and fosters enthusiasm for number patterns.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Write and solve simple written arithmetic problems in horizontal form
- Use addition and subtraction math facts to 12
- Show relationship between all four processes by acting out number stories with real objects
- Create visual representations to accurately represent number stories
- Solve problems with all four processes (and numbers up to 12), using manipulatives

## Form Drawing, Patterns, and Spatial Orientation

Math instruction in Grade One is presented through stories and rhythmic games. Teaching often begins by looking at number patterns from nature. Rhythmic movement exercises strengthen the memory forces and activate the will.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Identify right from left
- Participate in movement activities without bumping into others
- Echo simple rhythms by clapping, stepping, or speaking in unison with the group
- Recognize and extend patterns rhythmically, symbolically, or numerically
- Demonstrate either right or left dominance in hand, foot, ear, and eye
- Complete simple form drawing exercises involving straight and curved lines, on paper and through movement
- Recognize and draw basic geometric forms (circle, square, triangle, and rectangle)

## **Social Studies and Science**

In the early grades, the social studies and science curriculum lays a rich foundation for the more explicit history and science instruction provided in the middle and upper grades.

### Social Studies

The universal theme of Grade 1 is wholeness. All activities emphasize the wholeness of the group and cooperation of its members. The foundation for social studies (which includes subjects such as history, geography, anthropology, and sociology) is established in Grade One through folk stories and fairytales from around the world. Through these stories, the students develop an appreciation for the many cultures, climates, and landscapes of our planet. Work with these topics continues to deepen as the children progress through the grades, with the intention of strengthening capacities for empathy, courage, and strong moral judgment as the children grow.

### Science and Nature Studies

In Grade One, students develop awareness and appreciation for the natural world through seasonal stories, poems, and songs. These imaginative stories explore natural laws in an accurate but pictorial way. Particular themes might include: the journey of a raindrop; metamorphosis of a caterpillar to butterfly or seed to flower; animal studies, etc. Students also explore weather patterns and observe the effects of the changing seasons on the natural world.

Annual festivals mark the changing seasons and bring appreciation for the world around us. Through artistic activities and explorative outside play, students are able to engage in creative experiences with the elements, including wind, sand, water, and soil. These hands-on, practical experiences are the building blocks for future study of zoology, botany, physics, chemistry, and earth sciences in the years to come.

At the completion of Grade One, students should be able to:

- Give many examples of the elements of weather.
- Describe aspects of nature in each season of the year.

- Describe their observations on nature walks.
- Retell imaginative tales that describe the sun, moon, and stars.
- Participate fully in reciting poems and singing about nature.
- Demonstrate a growing appreciation for the unique qualities of the mineral, plant, and animal kingdom.
- Demonstrate a growing awareness of seasonal effects on human, plant and animal life.
- Describe basic geographical terminology such as mountains, islands, volcanoes, rivers, streams, etc.
- Demonstrate a growing awareness of composting and recycling methods