

# OVERVIEW OF GRADES 4 TO 6

The expectations for Grades 4 to 6 focus on the development of students' knowledge and skills in the arts and their ability to use the arts to understand, explore, and communicate feelings and ideas from and about their multicultural, multimedia environment.

Junior students' knowledge in the arts comes from their life experiences and prior knowledge and from the foundational arts knowledge and skills acquired in the primary school years. The expectations in the junior years build upon this foundation. Because the base of arts knowledge, experience, and skills varies from student to student, it is important for instruction to be differentiated to meet the needs of individuals and small groups of students.

Arts instruction in the junior years is designed to engage students in meaningful interactions with a wide variety of forms and disciplines in the arts. Junior students learn to identify and explore multiple perspectives, question the messages in works of dance, drama, music, and visual art, and consider the issues raised in them, including issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice. They analyse the structure and elements of a variety of art forms, explore a range of interpretations, and communicate their own ideas and opinions for a variety of purposes and audiences. Junior students develop their ability to monitor their own learning and select appropriate strategies to help them make sense of and create increasingly complex and/or challenging works for personally and socially relevant purposes. They reflect on and talk about the strategies that have helped them construct and communicate meaning and identify steps they can take to improve.

In all four disciplines, teachers should explicitly teach and model the use of the knowledge, skills, and strategies most relevant to the particular strand. Explicit teaching and modelling help students to identify the skills and strategies they need in order to become proficient creators and interpreters of dance, drama, music, and visual art works and move towards achievement of the expectations. Modelled, shared, and guided learning experiences provide the instructional support junior students need to communicate increasingly complex ideas and information using a greater variety of forms.

Appropriate instructional media are central to students' development of the knowledge, skills, and strategies embedded in the expectations across the arts strands. Subject matter that is designed to support and challenge students at their individual level of development in the arts will enhance the benefits of appropriately scaffolded instruction. It is important to ensure that students are able to choose from a wide range of topics and activities that are engaging and relevant to their personal experiences and interests. As well, all imagery,

music, texts, and themes chosen for instruction should invite inquiry and promote antidiscrimination education. Junior students should have access to culturally diverse examples that allow them to explore more complex topics or issues and more subtle or abstract themes related to fairness, equity, and social justice. Oral forms such as dramatic presentations, oral reports, think-alouds, commentaries, speeches, monologues, and song lyrics; concrete forms such as artefacts, garments, and props; print forms such as posters, images, digital and print photographs, stories, biographies, graphic novels, poetry, myths, and legends; and media forms as movie trailers, graphic designs for various products, newspaper or magazine articles, video games, comic books, flyers, websites, and e-mails provide a variety of sources to motivate and engage diverse groups of students.

## Dance

In Grades 4 to 6, students further develop their movement vocabulary in response to a variety of stimuli, select appropriate forms, and manipulate dance elements such as relationship, time, and energy. They also experiment with various techniques to create different effects for different audiences and begin to use choreographic forms to guide and shape their choreography. Teacher- and student-led movement exercises such as body storming, mirroring, flocking, and verb chains may be used to build and shape movement vocabulary. In Grade 4, students begin to explore narrative form. In Grade 5, they focus on the use of the call-and-response form, while students in Grade 6 begin to use guided improvisation as a starting point for choreography. Junior students should be able to identify and analyse the effect of combining various elements of dance in their own and others' dance pieces.

## Drama

Students in Grades 4 to 6 continue to focus on role play as the foundational component of learning in drama. Process drama, small-group improvisations, partner role play, independent writing in role, and interpretation of simple scripts allow students to develop their ability to maintain focus and sustain belief while they are in role. Students also learn to enhance their roles and build belief in the fictional context of the drama by using the elements of relationship, time and place, tension, focus, and emphasis in their work. Opportunities to explore personally relevant themes, curricular topics, and current issues help to build interest for the junior learner. Students are encouraged to use the creative and critical analysis processes to make personal connections to the drama material they encounter, the performances they attend, and the drama experiences they share in the classroom setting. Teaching, modelling, and reinforcement of effective group skills continue to be important, as the students are expected to work collaboratively, both in and out of role. In groups, the students generate questions, pose and solve problems, inquire into meaning, and represent their understandings using a range of forms, techniques, and conventions.

Students continue to use the drama forms and conventions of the primary grades with growing understanding and greater competence. They also expand the range of forms and conventions to include more movement/dance connections, storytelling, prepared improvisation and short scenes, day in the life, inner/outer circle, and corridor of voices. In Grades 4 and 5, students select appropriate symbols, manipulate story elements, and experiment with various techniques to create different effects for different audiences. In Grade 6, they use research skills to expand their understanding of different kinds of

problems and to help them find solutions. Their sense of audience continues to develop through their viewing of professional theatre productions, and through sharing their own work in classroom and/or more formal settings.

## Music

Students in Grades 4 to 6 focus on developing the ability to read music notation and on applying their knowledge of the elements of music through performing (singing, moving, playing instruments), creating, and listening. In Grade 4, students begin to read standard notation in the treble clef and sing or play music in two parts. They continue to create simple rhythms and melodies as accompaniments and to discover how music is organized. In Grade 5, students sing and/or play from standard music notation and other forms of notation, learn to use key signatures, and create compositions in a variety of forms using notational software. They explore the key influences affecting music in our past and present cultures. In Grade 6, students explore further aspects of standard notation, create and perform a variety of compositions, and continue to think critically about the music that they hear and perform. Students in Grades 4 to 6 are also expected to develop individual goals and to work in both large and small groups to solve musical problems. By the end of Grade 6 they should be able to provide constructive feedback regarding their own and others' efforts.

## Visual Arts

In Grades 4 to 6, students apply the elements of design to communicate for a variety of purposes and on a variety of themes. The focus of visual arts in these grades is to help students extend their exploration of relationships and personal experience in their own world. Students use a broader range of subject matter and media (tools, materials, processes, and techniques) to produce works of art. They grow more sophisticated in depicting movement, spatial relationships, and emotions. Students at this age display increased manual dexterity; however, their skills may not keep pace with their desire for increasingly elaborate work. This may lead to self-consciousness and insecurity about their artistic ability. The teacher's role at this stage is to provide a positive working environment, facilitate the growth of technical skills and observational skills, and help students recognize that mistakes can be turned into creative opportunities.

Students use their knowledge of the elements and principles of design to solve artistic problems and analyse works of art. They generate and develop visual ideas in response to a variety of motivations, using imagination, observation, and a study of artists' works, and incorporate into their art ideas gained from sources such as independent reading.

Students explore and describe how different media influence the communication and interpretation of ideas in their own and others' work. They look beyond the surface meaning of art works and observe not only what is present but what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate an artist's intent. They also analyse and describe how art-making processes and procedures clarify meaning and intentions in their own and others' work and observe how artists tell stories and create mood in their work. Students use their growing analytical and evaluative skills to investigate the purpose(s) and significance of objects, images, and art works in past and present cultures and to examine the contexts in which they were or are made, viewed, and valued.