

# LAYERS OF LEARNING

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR I

#### **Ancient History**

Ancient history is an overview of the history of civilization, beginning with the first settled civilizations through the fall of ancient Rome. It includes learning about the ingredients of civilizations as well as delving into specific ancient peoples and how they advanced and interacted. Just a few of the peoples explored are the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Chinese, Japanese, Persians, Celts, Phoenicians, and Romans. Authentic research, primary sources and living books, meaningful discussions, videos, and hands-on projects create authentic learning about the ancient peoples of the world.

#### **People & Planet**

Geography concepts and continent studies are the focus of People & Planet. Maps, globes, and basic geography concepts are introduced, and in addition, entire overviews of each of the continents and the oceans are taught. In addition, lots of geography concepts are taught along the way, including landforms, natural disasters, climates, biomes, natural resources, and more. Hands-on craft projects, reading, videos, and writing assignments teach all about the geography of the planet.

#### **Earth & Space**

Earth & Space is a combination geology and astronomy course. It begins by introducing the basics of science and experimentation using the scientific method. There are units on the structure of the earth, plate tectonics, rocks, fossils, seasons and climate, and weather. In addition, there is an astronomy component that includes the universe, the solar system, and space exploration. This is a hands-on, experiment-based science course in which kids are expected to do experiment write-ups and explore scientific concepts through experiments and demonstrations.

#### **Art Beginnings**

Art Beginnings starts with an overview of what art is and how it's all around us. Each of the elements and principles of art are applied throughout the course. In addition, many of the units correspond with the Ancient History units and cover ancient art from around the world. Cave paintings, Egyptian art, Greek art, Roman art, and other ancient art around the world are included. The art emphasis is a synthesis of art analysis, historical context, and creative hands-on, artistic projects.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR 2

#### **Middle Ages History**

Middle Ages History covers medieval history. Its main emphasis is on the history of medieval life and kingdoms in Europe, beginning with the Byzantine Empire and continuing through the Renaissance. It covers feudalism, the Crusades, Vikings, Anglo Saxons, Charlemagne, and the Wars of the Roses. There are also non-European-focused units including medieval China and other Asian kingdoms, African kingdoms, American peoples, and Pacific peoples.

#### **Mapping Our World**

Mapping Our World dives into country studies from regions in Eurasia, the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific Islands. Mapping skills and geography concepts like time zones, the coordinate grid system, and navigation will be applied to specific country studies throughout the curriculum. Each country study includes a mapping and a cultural component, all explored through making maps, hands-on projects, and presentations. There are over thirty-five countries studied in all.

#### **Biology**

Layers of Learning Biology includes units on living things and the science of life, including cells, genetics, and classification. Plants and animals are also explored in depth. Ecology, biological communities, and conservation are presented as well. Finally, several units cover the human body, with a focus on each body system, as well as a health course. This is a combination reading, research, and application class that utilizes hands-on experiments as well as investigations using a microscope.

#### **Middle Ages Arts**

This course corresponds with the Middle Ages History units and covers medieval and Renaissance art. It comprises each of the major movements and peoples of the time including Byzantine, Gothic, Celtic, and Romanesque styles. There are several non-European units as well that include Mesoamerican art, Asian arts, and arts from the Pacific Islands. There is also a literature focus, including King Arthur Tales, medieval plays, poetry, and The Canterbury Tales. The Renaissance comprises the final two units of the year. The course includes both art appreciation and analysis as well as creative projects.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR 3

#### **Colonial World History**

This course covers the Colonial Period of world history, beginning with the Age of Exploration and up through the Enlightenment. The Protestant Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and colonialism are all covered. The latter portion of the course goes into the European settlement of North and South America, including conquistadors, slavery, and colonization. In addition, India and China, and Japan during this period are also explored. Students are expected to read living books and primary sources and are assigned engaging writing assignments, discussions, and hands-on projects.

#### **World Cultures**

World Cultures is comprised of country studies from all over the globe as viewed through a cultural lens. Families, mores and manners, world religions, languages, myths, ceremonies, and more cultural elements are examined. Over thirty countries are covered in this course. Each of the six settled continents are represented. Each country study includes a mapping, cultural, historical, and personal component, but the primary geographical focus of this course is culture and the role it plays in our world.

#### **Chemistry**

This chemistry course uses real experiments and chemicals to learn all about the Periodic Table of the Elements, matter, bonding, and reactions. In addition, solutions, gases, acids, and bases are explored in depth. Hands-on experiments teach concepts like reversible reactions, compounds, oxidation, and reduction in meaningful, understandable ways. A Science Notebook is kept to track learning and take notes on each experiment.

#### **Colonial Period Arts**

Colonial Period Arts looks at how the world of art unfolded during the colonial era as new exploration and colonization opened up new trade and communication across the globe. It comprises each of the major movements and people of this period. Baroque, Rococo, Reformation art, and Neoclassicism are all included. The course also includes music components such as Baroque, Classical, and folk music. The program focuses on creativity as well as an examination of how historical events directly impact the art that is produced.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### YEAR 4

*\*In Year 4, families can choose between a Modern World History focus or an American History focus. In addition, they can choose between People & Place, a global geography focus, or the U.S. States, an examination of the U.S.A.'s geography.*

#### **Modern World History**

Modern World History begins with the Industrial Revolution and culminates in the current events of today. It includes revolutions around the world, both World Wars, the United Nations, the Cold War Era, communism, and human rights. There are historical overviews of Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.

#### **American History**

American History is an in-depth look at the colonization and founding of the United States of America. It includes units on the thirteen colonies, the American Revolution, and the expansion of the nation over time. The Civil War and settling of the West, the railroads, the World Wars, and the Great Depression are also covered. It culminates with the information age and terrorism.

#### **People & Place**

The focus of this geography course is how people interact with the places they live, work, and visit. Concepts like population, cities, industry, agriculture, wealth and poverty, migration, and war are all explored in depth. In addition, there are units covering both governments as well as economics. The capstone is a home country study.

#### **U.S. States**

The geography of the United States is explored in detail in Layers of Learning U.S. States. This geography course comprises regional and individual state studies of all 50 states as well as U.S. territories. Along the way, the culture, landmarks, food, traditions, and notable people are also examined.

#### **Physics**

Physics is an examination of physical science principles. It includes forces, motion, gravity, energy, fluids, and thermodynamics. Electricity, magnetism, and light are all explored as well. Students will keep a science notebook and keep records of their experiments and learning as they explore the physics topics they observe. They will also

present their findings and engage in demonstrations that teach physical science principles.

### **Modern Arts**

This course covers modern art, artists, and movements. Major art movements from all over the world are examined, including Romantic art, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Abstract art, and Modern art. There is also an examination of how technology has changed the world of art. The units and the artwork presented dovetail with the modern historical period as well, so recent world events are featured that impacted the world of art. This course includes creative art projects as well as art analysis of famous works of art.

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## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

### **Writer's Workshop**

Writer's Workshop is the language arts component of Layers of Learning. It teaches kids through authentic writing experiences that break down the writing process into small chunks that can help foster creativity and teach important writing skills. Over the course, kids master the writing process, the six traits of writing, and other tools to help them become strong writers through a variety of lessons and exercises. Graded monthly writing projects are scored using rubrics that challenge writers to show the skills they've mastered. A variety of writing genres are explored including narrations, stories, reports and essays, letters, poetry, and persuasive writing. Lessons teach grammar, writing skills, spelling, and vocabulary. In addition to the units, every history, geography, science, and arts course of Layers of Learning has literature and writing suggestions and assignments. Each of these courses is built to dovetail with Writer's Workshop to make reading and writing an integral part of learning within every subject.