LEXINGTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL
LIBRARY CURRICULUM

“The mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information; students are empowered to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information.”

(American Association of School Librarians)

The LMS Library’s collection and resources are carefully selected to support classroom needs as well as student interests in both fiction and nonfiction. Careful attention is given to the specifics of the Montessori curriculum and to ensure the collection includes diversity in topics, authors, and characters.

The Library program is designed to support the academic work in the classrooms and build a foundation of information literacy skills. Library and information skills are introduced and practiced in conjunction with classroom assignments as much as possible. Library objectives include instruction in library skills to support classroom projects as well as develop students’ information literacy in general. Throughout their LMS experience, students become familiar with a variety of informational materials (print and online) and develop skills to use them independently within the classroom curriculum.

Library Program

Toddlers & Children’s House (CH)
Toddlers come to the library with their teachers for weekly storytime. Read-alouds, songs, and fingerplays develop language and early literacy skills. Toddlers learn expectations for library behavior, such as entering quietly, finding their seat in the circle, following directions, and treating books gently. In circle, toddlers experience a variety of stories and songs and build connections between books and their own world. After circle, Toddlers select books to enjoy alone or with teachers or friends and developing positive associations with books and reading.

CH First Years and Middles come every week with their teachers to storytime in the library. Read-alouds and songs support the development of literacy skills and storytime themes explore ideas such as family, humor, seasons, food, growth, animals and nature. The librarian selects stories with diverse characters, authors, and experiences throughout the year. After circle, students choose picture books and nonfiction books to look at alone or with teachers and friends. Regular experience exploring the library supports growing independence and confidence in the library while deepening positive associations with books and reading. Children begin to develop their sense of their individual identities as readers and their reading preferences.

CH Kindergartners come to the library without their teacher for longer weekly library lessons. They have a circle with a read-aloud and a lesson on topics and themes such as fiction vs. nonfiction, award-winning titles, rhyming, or favorite authors. Lessons emphasize making personal connections with literature and students are given follow-up drawing work to explore their ideas and connections. Students choose two books to take home every week and are introduced to a variety of books,

including picture books, early readers, and early chapter books, as well as nonfiction to meet their interests. Throughout the year, the Librarian tailors the selection of themes and stories based on observation of student interest and response.

**Lower Elementary (LE)**
In Lower Elementary Library, students are introduced to a variety of literature and continue to develop and expand their reading interests. They begin to build skills in locating and using information for learning and research. Library lessons for LE First Years and Middles focus on exploring texts for meaning and connection with both fiction and nonfiction books. Library lessons for LE Elders primarily focus on developing and solidifying the information literacy skills needed for the culminating “Country Research” project in the classroom, including the use of encyclopedias, map skills, nonfiction text features, as well as practice in navigating Google Drive and other Google Suite skills.

**Upper Elementary (UE)**
In Upper Elementary Library, students use librarian booktalks\(^2\) and peer recommendations to explore titles, authors, and genres, deepening their knowledge of themselves as readers. Information literacy lessons focus on locating, evaluating, and using information from a variety of sources with an emphasis on online resources including research databases. Library lessons are designed to support specific curriculum projects, such as the UE Middles Ancient Civilization research and the UE Seniors year-long culminating Senior Project research. The Librarian assists the Director of Faculty and Curriculum Development in teaching the Senior Project lessons.

**Middle School (MS)**
MS students come to library as needed for reading material and information and the Librarian offers weekly booktalk lunches for the MS, each centered on a theme or genre. Students are required to attend at least one per month, though some students come almost every week.

While there is no formal MS Library program beyond the booktalks, students are encouraged to consult the Librarian as needed for assistance in their research assignments. Additionally, the MS teachers collaborate with the Librarian in designing research projects and may ask the Librarian to come present research tools such as online research databases.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES\(^3\)**

1. Identify and select materials from a variety of sources for personal enjoyment and life-long learning skills
2. Determine what kinds of information is available and what information is needed for specific purposes
3. Access and evaluate information effectively and efficiently
4. Synthesize and use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group
5. Exhibit respect and responsibility for information sources and consideration for other users

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\(^2\) Brief, informal presentation of a book to inspire another reader to try it

\(^3\) Adapted from the American Library Association’s Standards for Library Information and Technology and Massachusetts School Library Association’s Recommended Standards for PreK – Grade 12 Information Literacy Skills
Learning Objectives And Activity Examples Include:

TODDLERS

1. Identify and select materials from a variety of sources for personal enjoyment and life-long learning skills
   
   Activity Example A toddler sits in her own space, carefully paging through a book of colors and naming them to herself, another “reads” Brown Bear, Brown Bear from memory to the librarian, prompted by her hand gestures, and a group of four sit on and around their teacher as she reads their books to them.

   Activity Example After hearing the book Snowballs (Ehlert) and a book about weather, and learning the fingerplay “Two little snowflakes,” a toddler says, “I love to play in the snow! We made a snowman!” The group discusses snow and winter activities.

5. Exhibit respect and responsibility for information sources and consideration for other users
   
   Activity Example When it’s time to clean up, a toddler carefully gathers board books from the floor and places them neatly in the basket, saying “All done! I help clean up!”

   Activity Example After circle time, a toddler waits in his seat, listening intently for his name to be called to come choose a book from the toddler book basket.

CHILDREN’S HOUSE

1. Identify and select materials from a variety of sources for personal enjoyment and life-long learning skills
   
   Activity Example A dinosaur-loving First Year goes immediately to the section of dinosaur books looking for his favorite, the T-Rex.

   Activity Example Every week a Middle brings a different sports book to the Librarian to read and loves to discuss which teams are “ours.”

   Activity Example A Kindergartner asks the Librarian for books about Egypt, “because I’m very, very interested in Egypt!”

   Activity Example A Kindergartner browses through the Early Reader shelf, looking for “One that look interesting and I can read by myself…”

2. Determine what kinds of information is available and what information is needed for specific purposes
   
   Activity Example Students listen to stories and nonfiction picture books about events that occur in their classroom or immediate environment, such as the fall Ocean World presentation of tide pool creatures or the life cycle of a butterfly.

   Activity Example After comparing Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs (Barrett) and a nonfiction
book about the weather, Kindergartners learn to sort and identify fiction and nonfiction titles.

3. Access and evaluate information effectively and efficiently

**Activity Example** Children become familiar with the CH nonfiction collection, organized by topic and labelled with picture labels.

**Activity Example** Kindergartners are shown books about planets and the solar system, and they select one representing the planet they will portray in the *Planet Play*.

4. Synthesize and use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group

**Activity Example** Kindergartners use books about planets to gather facts as part of the solar system study unit in the classroom, culminating in the *Planet Play*.

5. Exhibit respect and responsibility for information sources and consideration for other users

**Activity Example** After a lesson on book care, a First Year reminds his friend, “Turn the pages by the corners.”

**Activity Example** A Middle reads aloud a favorite book to his peers as they cluster on the window seat.

**Activity Example** Before lining up at the door to leave, students use alphabet and picture labels on the book spines to return books to the proper shelves, ready for the next reader.

**LOWER ELEMENTARY**

1. Identify and select materials from a variety of sources for personal enjoyment and life-long learning skills

**Activity Example** LE students become familiar with the larger collection, and learn where to find their favorite series, authors, and nonfiction topics.

**Activity Example** After hearing the Librarian's booktalk on *The Notebook of Doom* series, a First Year selects two to borrow.

**Activity Example** A Middle asks for books on World Religions, because “I want to learn more about all kinds of religion!”

2. Determine what kinds of information is available and what information is needed for specific purposes

**Activity Example** After a Library lesson on nonfiction text features, Middles choose books about animals to complete their Animal Research assignments in the classroom. They browse through the books and compare the table of contents to the list of questions they need to answer, to determine which books will be useful for the assignment.

**Activity Example** Elders explore print and online encyclopedias and discuss which they prefer and
why.

3. Access and evaluate information effectively and efficiently

**Activity Example** Elders work with a variety of maps to build their skills in decoding symbols, recognizing features, and locating information in preparation for their Country Research, a capstone project in Lower Elementary.

4. Synthesize and use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group

**Activity Example** First Years listen to nonfiction books about amazing wild animals, and then record with words and pictures which animal interested them.

**Activity Example** Middles explore books about spiders, extracting interesting facts to record in an organizer and share with the group.

**Activity Example** The student who asked for books on World Religions (see above) presents what he's learned to his class – inspiring other students to come to the library for books to learn more.

**Activity Example** Elders explore Google Earth and practice their search skills to complete an online scavenger hunt of geography questions.

5. Exhibit respect and responsibility for information sources and consideration for other users

**Activity Example** A First Year brings a book to the Librarian, “I noticed this ripped page, it needs fixing!”

**Activity Example** A Middle asks, "Can I put that encyclopedia away? I know where it goes."

**Activity Example** Elders use nonfiction books to identify nonfiction text features – and carefully cite their source (the title of the book used).

**Activity Example** In completing their online scavenger hunt, Elders also practice navigating folders and shared documents in Google Drive. When one student accidentally deletes others' documents, the group discusses how that can happen and how to handle shared resources online.

**UPPER ELEMENTARY**

1. Identify and select materials from a variety of sources for personal enjoyment and life-long learning skills

**Activity Example** After listening to weekly booktalks from the Librarian for several weeks, Seniors ask if they can also present booktalks to their peers, to share books they love.

**Activity Example** Following a lesson on writing book reviews in the library's online catalog, a Middle decides to review several books a week for a couple weeks.

**Activity Example** In preparation for the annual Science Expo, students use the catalog to search
for books on their topics, including mushrooms, the jungle, animal cells, and the skeletal system.

2. Determine what kinds of information is available and what information is needed for specific purposes

   Activity Example Lowers complete an online Fact Hunt, building their ability to recognize the ways information is organized on various websites.

   Activity Example Middles browse through the nonfiction shelves, becoming familiar with the resources for their Ancient Civilizations study.

   Activity Example Seniors are introduced to library databases made available through the LMS Library’s membership in the Massachusetts Library Consortium and identify which ones may be useful for their year-long Senior Project (a capstone research project, culminating in a paper and oral presentation).

3. Access and evaluate information effectively and efficiently

   Activity Example Lowers learn to navigate the nonfiction section of the library, organized with the Dewey Decimal system, and practice locating books based on their DD call number. Lowers practice identifying which search engines yielded the most useful results and what criteria they might use to choose a site for information.

   Activity Example Middles are presented with a website that promotes healthy eating and evaluate it for usefulness – and then discuss how their evaluation might change when they discover that the site is published by the Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion Board.

4. Synthesize and use information effectively, individually or as a member of a group

   Activity Example Middles bring their Ancient Civilizations notecards to the library for a lesson on sorting and organizing their notes in preparation for writing. After sorting, color-coding, and paper-clipping her cards, one student observes, "There! Now I have everything I need, ready to go!"

   Activity Example A Senior is confused when two sources give different information about their research topic, so the group advises him on how he could verify and cross-check using a third source or learning more about the authors of his sources.

5. Exhibit respect and responsibility for information sources and consideration for other users

   Activity Example Two Middles come to the Library for books about Ancient China; skimming through the table of contents one points out, "Hey! This is what you need for your section on houses and homes... Do you see anything in your book on defense?"

   Activity Example Seniors discuss the importance of citing their sources (including image sources) and learn to use an online citation generator to create MLA formatted bibliographies for their research papers.