

**What a
Solomon Schechter
Seventh Grader
Should Know
and
Be Able To Do!**

Judaic Studies
Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies

דשננתם לבניד

“And you shall teach
your children...”



**SOLOMON SCHECHTER
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A Message to the Reader

This brochure lists the skills and abilities in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies that students should acquire by the end of the Seventh Grade to earn promotion to the Eighth Grade. It answers questions that everyone in the school community needs to ask, such as:

- What are students expected to know and be able to do?
- How are their achievements measured?

This document is the product of extensive work by our faculty and administration, taking into account guidelines published by the New York State Education Department, the Board of Education of the City of New York, and the unique needs of our school community. Besides detailing the curricular goals and objectives of this particular grade, this document is designed to be part of the overall K-12 curriculum of Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County/Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. Similar brochures can be obtained for other grades. If you have any questions or suggestions, please be sure to contact your child's school principal.

Mission Statement

The mission of Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County/Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island is to provide a caring and nurturing environment within which Jewish students grow educationally, culturally, socially, and spiritually; and to promote the observance of mitzvot and traditions that are the foundations of the Jewish religion.

Statement of Purpose

Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County/Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island is a co-educational private Jewish day school affiliated with the Conservative Movement. Through the efforts of a dedicated and qualified staff, the school offers rich and innovative curricula for students from Kindergarten through 12th Grade in both general and Judaic studies, and strives to help students and their families lead meaningful lives instilled with the values of American democracy, pluralism, and the love of Israel.

Judaic Studies

Hebrew Language

Grade 7 Hebrew students attend a class that is conducted in Hebrew in order to expand their aural comprehension skills. They build upon the skills developed in earlier grades and begin preparing for the Hebrew Regents exam. In the area of written expression, they learn to write letters with the correct format and more advanced vocabulary. The students write full-length compositions on a variety of topics. In the area of grammar, students review the *Pa'al* verb form, learn *Nifal* in all tenses, and are introduced to irregular verb forms (*g'zerot*). Seventh Grade students are also introduced to the possessive form (*s'michut*). Reading materials and activities are selected from a variety of textbooks to create the most meaningful experience for the students.

In addition to regular coursework, Seventh Grade Hebrew students engage in a variety of activities that are geared towards enhancing students' personal connections to Jewish religious values and experiences in addition to the Hebrew language. Many of these events focus on holiday celebrations, such as Hanukkah, Purim, Pesach, Yom haShoah, Yom haAtzmaut, and the like. Other activities include the hobby fair, a literary magazine, and Israeli current events.

The *Gesber* program is designed for students who are new to the study of Hebrew language or who will benefit from greater individual attention. These students study at a more individualized pace. Teachers adapt materials to meet the needs of the class, teaching in both Hebrew and English in order to develop aural comprehension skills and to ensure student understanding. Students engage in hands-on activities, such as art projects, role-playing, and acting, as well as engaging in activities that are centered on reading and writing.

Bible

The Bible is the source of our sense of history as a people. We study Bible as one of the basic texts to understanding our identity as a Jewish people. In the Middle School, there are goals and objectives common to all grades, as well as specific goals and skills for each grade level.

In general the goals of the Bible curriculum are to learn the source of the *mitzvot*, to develop pride in the Jewish people, to have the students recognize that we are a unique nation, to learn the importance of the unity of the people and the important role of the nation's leaders, and to encourage the students to see themselves as future leaders. We teach Jewish values and concepts through the material in the texts and the opinions the students express about them. We encourage the development of skills to enable the students to continue to learn Bible in high school and on their own. We also try to present the text as relevant to their lives so that they will desire to do so.

The Biblical texts studied in the Seventh Grade include: selected sections of the Torah - *Exodus*: chapters 17,23; *Leviticus*: chapters 19, 23; *Numbers*: chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 12; *Deuteronomy*: chapters 6,11,15 (*The Sh'ma*),16; *1 Samuel*: chapters 15- 31; *The Book of Esther*.

Seventh Grade Bible Goals and Skills

- Know the three sections of the Bible and which books are in each.
- Understand the difference between *psbat* (the plain meaning of the text), and *midrash* (Rabbinic or other explanations).
- Understand the different traditions of the way a word is written as opposed to how it is pronounced.
- Read the text and be able to explain it in the student's own words with difficult words given to them in advance.
- Read the text with proper pronunciation and emphasis after having heard it at least once.
- Be able to differentiate between narrative and legal styles of writing in the Bible. This is the first year students learn mainly law in Torah.
- Be able to explain the main events in a narrative chapter after it has been studied.
- Be able to describe the main characters and their actions and/or feelings after studying a chapter.
- Read Rashi's commentary and be able to explain why Rashi felt the need to comment.
- Compare sections within the same book (e.g., Saul's being anointed as king as compared to David).
- Introduce idea of leitmotif in a literary unit - verse, section, or chapter.
- Introduce concepts of *kedushah*, excommunication, awe, and others - often in conjunction with Rabbinics.
- Be able to prepare a chapter of Prophets, with a group, to teach to the class. This includes worksheets, an oral presentation, a skit or written notes, and graded homework. Students must be able to use sources in English and/or Hebrew.
- Begin to develop a historical sense of when things occurred and what life was like in Biblical times (e.g., no indoor plumbing).

Rabbinics

If the Bible is the source of our sense of history as a people, Rabbinic literature is the manner in which that initial inspiration has been manifested over time. We study Rabbinics to understand how our Jewish religious traditions regarding holiday celebrations and ritual observances have developed in response to perceived "gaps" and uncertainty in the Torah. The course of study includes an overview of Jewish history from the Biblical period (David, Solomon, the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian exile, Ezra and Nehemiah, the destruction of the Second Temple, and the establishment of the Academy at Yavneh).

In general, the Middle School adopts a thematic approach to the study of Rabbinics with these specific goals: to familiarize students with a wide variety of Rabbinic materials (Mishnah, Gemara, midrash, various commentaries); to have students understand the Rabbinic approach to interpreting halacha; to have students understand the Conservative Movement's philosophy concerning the historical development of halacha.

Skills

- To understand the relationship between the Written and Oral Law.
- To recognize key Rabbinic terms.
- To understand the Mishnah and Gemara with Rashi commentary.
- To follow the ideas behind Rabbinic arguments and decisions.
- To understand and give examples of the development of the halacha over time.

Seventh Grade Themes

1. Rosh haShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot
2. Tzedakah
3. Hanukkah
4. Tefillin
5. Megillah
6. Pesach
7. Modern Jewish Movements

English Language Arts

Reading

By the end of the school year, students should:

- Read and understand
 - At least 10 books.
 - At least four books about one subject, or by the same writer, or in one genre in literature. (These writings would include complete texts, specific excerpts, abridged versions, essays, and short stories.)

- Informational texts (such as reference materials, newspapers and magazines, and textbooks).
- Functional documents (documents that explain how to get things done).
- Show evidence of understanding their reading both in writing and classroom discussion.
- Skim texts to get an overview of content or locate specific information.
- Evaluate how accurately and effectively an author communicates information, opinions, and ideas.
- Compare and contrast several books, forming questions to guide further reading.
- Read a series of steps to accomplish a task (for example, complete a science experiment).
- Use computer software to enrich reading through web sites.
- Keep a daily journal responding to specific reading assignments.
- Keep a record of the year's reading, reflecting goals and accomplishments.

Writing

Student writing should go through a process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing before it is considered a finished product. By the end of the school year, students are required to produce the following types of writing:

- Informational writing, such as a news story or feature article with facts gathered from several sources. This writing should use information to express a particular point of view and should be written for a specific audience.
- A response to literature, such as an essay making connections between characters or themes from different books. This writing should express the student's thinking about how particular authors use language and should use examples from the books to support his or her ideas.
- A story, fictional or autobiographical. This writing should use a variety of strategies to create interest, such as dialogue and suspense, and should describe characters' movements and expressions.
- Creative writing that explores different genres, such as fairy tales and mysteries.
- A narrative procedure explaining how something is done. This writing should lay out clear steps that are easy to follow, and should anticipate anything that may be confusing to a reader.
- A persuasive essay that uses reasons, anecdotes, and examples to create a convincing argument.

All finished writing should have a beginning, a middle, and an end; should use correct punctuation; and should spell most words correctly.

Speaking, Listening, and Viewing

Students will participate in whole class lessons, small group meetings, and one-to-one conversations with a teacher, in order to:

- Identify information important enough for note taking.
- Respond thoughtfully to questions, using details and examples.
- Use knowledge from other subjects and personal experience to understand different points of view.
- Listen to an oral presentation and analyze what the speaker did to keep a listener interested.
- Present a monologue to the class.
- Take turns speaking, respond to each other's questions and comments, and work together to come up with group decisions and ideas.
- Share data, facts, and ideas, and back them up with sources and explanations to persuade a listener.

Students will prepare and deliver an individual presentation in which they:

- Present reports at least seven minutes long for teachers and other students, in all subject areas.
- Organize what they will say using notes or other memory aids, and give credit to their sources of information.
- Begin by stating a main idea or purpose, support it with details, examples, and reasons, and end by summarizing main points. Students will make informed judgments about television, radio, and film productions.

Grammar and Usage of the English Language

By the end of the school year, students should demonstrate correct use of:

- Grammar, including adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- Paragraph structure, including transitional words or phrases.
- Attention to minimizing words.
- All conventions of punctuation.
- Construction of an analytical essay.
- Sentence construction, including complex sentences.
- Spelling strategies for Seventh Grade content area vocabulary.

By the end of the school, year students should be able to revise work by:

- Making their writing easier to understand.
- Rearranging the sequence of words, sentences, and paragraphs.
- Adding or deleting details and explanations.
- Using dictionaries, reference books, and thesauruses to assist in editing.
- Using word processing software.

Literature

Using the literature read during the school year, students should be able to:

- Recognize how different authors write about similar themes.
- Recognize that a single piece of literature may be interpreted in different ways.
- Examine and compare how authors use particular points of view in different types of literature.
- Compare the personalities of characters, causes of events, and importance of settings in books to people, events, and places in the world around them.
- Pay attention to character development.
- Develop ideas about characters, plot, setting, theme, and dialogue with evidence from the text.
- Produce written work in at least one genre of literature (for example, short story).

Mathematics

By the end of the school year, students should understand and be able to use:

Arithmetic and Number Concepts

- Read and write numbers through trillions.
- Round off whole numbers through hundred billions.
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide positive and negative numbers.
- Understand the inverse relationships between addition and subtraction, and between multiplication and division.
- Explore the concept of perfect square numbers and their positive square root.
- Understand terminating and repeating decimals.
- Find the percent of a number.
- Convert fractions to decimals to percents.
- Apply the associative, commutative, and distributive properties, and inverse and identity element.

Geometry and Measurement Concepts

- Use geometric terms (point, line, plane, segment, and ray).
- Name and define angles and angle pairs.
- Use parallel lines to determine specific angle pairs.
- Classify triangles and quadrilaterals by angles and sides.
- Determine the formula to find area of polygons and circles, volume of rectangular prisms, cube, and cylinders, and surface area of rectangular prisms.
- Understand the difference between similarity (same shape but different size) and congruence (same shape and size).

Function and Algebra Concepts

- Use algebra to translate verbal phrases into mathematical form.
- Evaluate algebraic expressions.
- Solve an equation and check the solution set by substitution.
- Describe functions and generalize them by the use of rules and algebraic expressions.
- Explore the concept of rates (distance, time, and unit pricing).
- Find the missing term in a sequence and write the rule.
- Find the missing term in a proportion where terms can be positive or negative numbers, fractions, decimals, or percents.
- Find a number when the percent of the number is unknown.

Statistics and Probability Concepts

- Develop an understanding of statistical ideas such as mean, median, and mode, to analyze data.
- Organize data using terms such as range, interval, and frequency.
- Conduct and report on a variety of probability experiments.
- Identify sample spaces by listing all elements.
- Estimate the probability of events.
- Determine probabilities of independent and mutually exclusive events.

Mathematical Process

- Apply a variety of reasoning strategies such as working backwards, trial and error, etc.
- Apply strategies and results from simpler problems to more complex situations.
- Discriminate relevant from irrelevant information.
- Look for a general solution.
- Recognize when an estimate is appropriate.
- Express solutions clearly and logically, using appropriate mathematical terms, language, and notation.
- Understand that there is no one right way to solve a problem, but that different methods have different advantages and disadvantages.
- Create, analyze, and solve word problems in all concept areas.
- Talk about uses of mathematics and its importance of their present and future lives.

Science

The following list includes examples of Science activities, content, and skills for the Seventh Grade. Science skills are as important as content understandings, and students will be encouraged to use these skills to explore topics or themes in depth. Science instruction for students in Grades 6-8 is based on The New York State Intermediate Science Core Curriculum (Grades 5-8) and The New York City Performance Standards in Science (Middle School Level). Therefore, by the end of Grade 8, all students should have received instruction in all areas of the Intermediate Level Science Core Curriculum.

By the end of the Seventh Grade, through inquiry activities, students should:

Physical Sciences Concepts

- Understand the properties and changes of properties in matter, including state at room temperature (solid, liquid, or gas), density, solubility (ability to dissolve), conductivity (ability to conduct electricity), boiling and freezing points.
- Understand the structure of matter at the atomic level and the difference between physical changes, such as freezing water, and chemical changes, such as the burning of paper.
- Understand that matter cannot be created or destroyed. (For example, when water boils, it does not disappear; instead, it is changed into steam, which is a gas [Conservation of Matter]).
- Observe, describe, and compare the effects of forces such as gravity, electrical current, friction, and magnetism on the motion of objects.
- Observe and describe the different patterns of motion, including the concept that objects in motion tend to stay in motion unless acted upon by some external force (inertia), and for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.
- Explain and give examples of how energy, including heat, light, electrical, nuclear, mechanical, and sound energy, is transferred or transformed from one to another. For example, in an electric fan the blades turn when electrical energy is transferred to mechanical energy.
- Understand that energy cannot be created or destroyed (Conservation of Energy).

Scientific Connections and Applications

- Understand and describe examples of the importance of scientists, science, and technology and the impact that they have on our lives, such as how engineers develop safer airplanes and spacecraft.
- Develop and describe, orally and in writing, appropriate choices leading to good personal health, such as critiquing ads and commercials for unhealthy products.
- Understand big ideas and unifying concepts, including the relationship between form and function (e.g., the thickness of a piece of wire and its ability to conduct electricity); order and organization (e.g., the working of gears in a watch); change and constancy (e.g., how adding a new chemical to a solution can cause a reaction); cause and effect (e.g., how insulation can affect heat transfer).
- Understand the planning, problem-solving, and decision-making process in which the designed world is created. For example, before building a bridge, the expense and strength of different materials have to be considered.)

Scientific Thinking

- Ask appropriate questions, and use evidence and concepts learned from observations and reliable sources as well as common sense, to construct explanations for experiment results.
- Work individually and in teams using appropriate methods to describe, record, and share information and ideas, such as building a model of a molecule to explain its structure.
- Identify the variables that could affect the results of an experiment, such as how the shape of a lens affects light transmission.
- Propose and critique alternate explanations for observations, and distinguish between fact and opinion.
- Plan and evaluate an investigation in order to solve a problem.

Scientific Tools and Technologies

- Use technology and tools, such as microscopes, triple-beam balances (scales), thermometers, and computers, to observe and measure objects, organisms, and phenomena.
- Collect, analyze, and record data using mathematical concepts such as mean (average), mode (most frequent amount), and probability (the likelihood of something happening).
- Use a variety of media, such as data tables, graphs, and databases to record information.
- Recognize possible sources of bias and perspective in data, such as the perspective of a fruit growers organization on a study it has sponsored on the healthfulness of fruits.
- Acquire information from observation, experimentation, print, and nonprint sources.

Scientific Communication

- Use information gathered from experiments and other sources to explain and defend conclusions and resolve disagreements.
- Represent data and results in a variety of ways, including tables, graphs, drawings, diagrams, art work, and both technical and creative writing.
- Critique published materials as well as written and oral explanations.
- Explain a scientific concept or procedure to other students.

Scientific Investigation

- Plan and conduct at least one of these investigations: An experiment with controlled variables, such as how the type of circuit can affect the brightness of a bulb; Field work, such as studying the structure of bridges; Design, such as building simple devices such as pulleys, springs, and levers; Secondary research, such as researching the history and development of the computer. (Note: By the end of Grade 8, each student should have completed at least one of each of these four types of investigations.)

Social Studies

The Social Studies program in Grade Seven, which is based on the New York State Education Department's Social Studies Core Curriculum, focuses on United States and New York State history in chronological order from the 1500's to the present. In the Seventh Grade students study the political, geographic, economic, and social events of the United States as they relate to New York State from the 1500's to the end of the Civil War. Connections should be made to Canada and Mexico when appropriate. While exploring the themes listed below, students should demonstrate a variety of skills and strategies. These are followed by examples of tasks that Seventh Graders may be asked to do during the school year.

THEMES

The study of the United States and New York State history, geography, economy, and government from pre-1500 to 1876 includes:

- The Global Heritage of the American People Prior to 1500
- European Exploration and Colonization of the Americas
- A Nation is Created
- Experiments in Government
- Life in a New Nation
- Division and Reunion—The Civil War

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

By the end of the school year, students should understand and be able to:

Getting information

- Collect information using different types of sources such as: maps, globes, graphs, charts, newspapers, magazines, documents, historical fiction, timelines, cartoons, surveys, media, museums, interviews, diaries, posters, brochures, travel guides, the Internet, and other reference works.
- Skim texts to get an overview of content or locate specific information.
- Keep a collection of writing and project work in Social Studies.

Using information

- Interpret and analyze information in multiple ways, such as graphs, political cartoons, maps, charts, diagrams, timelines, multimedia, posters, etc.
- Make connections among various sources of information and ideas.
- Ask questions to further the understanding of topics.
- Evaluate and support the accuracy of information to be used in the formation of opinions and ideas.
- Identify and summarize information from original documents (the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, speeches, diaries, logs, etc.).
- Use knowledge from other subjects and personal experiences to form and express opinions.

Presenting Information Orally and in Written Form

- Write a composition using the process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Write an organized persuasive essay supporting a point of view.
- Use computer technology to construct tables, graphs, charts, and graphs.

Collaborative Learning

- Understand that others may have a different point of view.
- Take responsibility for completing individual and group assignments.
- Take turns speaking and responding to each other.

Identifying and Solving Problems

- Develop ideas by drawing conclusions and making predictions about historical events, characters, settings, and issues.
- Identify current political or social problems and conduct research to find solutions.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS IN GRADE SEVEN

Using a variety of skills and strategies, by the end of the school year students should:

History

- Work in collaborative groups to create a presentation, including graphic aids, showing how different cultures have influenced the history of the United States.
- Use primary and secondary sources to gather information and write an essay explaining how Europeans viewed the world prior to 1500.
- Write a persuasive essay showing how European explorers affected Native American Indians from the perspective of a Native American.
- Create a brochure of that time that describes life in a New England, Middle Atlantic, or Southern colony.
- Participate in a debate focusing on the institution of slavery.
- Write a news article concerning freeing the slaves from the point of view of a New York reporter.
- Prepare and deliver a speech on how the role of the presidency helped to shape the new nation.

Geography

- Create a multimedia presentation showing how geography affected the settlements in the Americas.
- Create a diary of a slave traveling to live in the North on the Underground Railroad.

Economics

- Use graphic aids to compare and contrast the economies of the colonies.
- Calculate the growth of the population in the United States between the years 1790-1860.
- Discuss the economic causes of the American Revolution.
- Participate in a debate focusing on Hamilton's financial plan.

Civics, Citizenship, and Government

- Find and study original documents.
- Identify the responsibilities of specific individuals in a democracy.
- Write, in small groups, specific amendments to the Constitution in their own words.
- Create a table showing how the federal government separates power into three branches.
- Interpret and summarize a political cartoon.

Interdisciplinary Study

- Understand an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Social Studies and Jewish studies (during colonial times, expansion, immigration, etc.).
- Be able to compare and contrast American and Jewish values and approaches regarding such issues as leadership, slavery, private property, etc.



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