

## Homework

We are sensitive to the first grade child's need to engage in non-structured play and after school activities organized by families. We limit homework to nightly reading and some special projects first semester, and then second semester, as students' work habits and maturity levels' develop, and in preparation for 2nd grade, homework is assigned twice a week along with nightly reading. Parents are asked to sign reading logs nightly.

## Approaches to Learning

Respect, responsibility and community are our core Lower School values. Teachers, counselors and administrators work throughout the year to teach, model and reinforce values. Our goal is to guide our students to develop positive social interactions and approaches to learning that will continue to grow throughout our their school careers. Each quarter, students receive a formal report card detailing their learning progress on specific skills being taught that quarter. As well, we report on the following areas we call 'Approaches to Learning:'

- Demonstrates self confidence
- Shows interest and curiosity as a learner
- Solves problems in a positive manner
- Interacts appropriately with peers
- Respects the rights and property of others
- Takes responsibility for actions
- Follows directions
- Adjusts smoothly to transitions
- Uses time constructively
- Stays on task until completed
- Organizes work neatly and carefully
- Listens attentively
- Participates in classroom activities
- Works independently
- Works cooperatively

This year, the Lower School will continue to embrace an approach that we began two years ago called 'Tribes.' Tribes emphasizes living in community, understanding others and personal responsibility. The five TRIBES agreements are: Mutual Respect, Attentive Listening, Appreciation, No Put Downs and Participation.

## Parent Involvement

You are our valued partners in educating your child. We welcome your involvement in our school and classrooms. Please watch for opportunities for volunteering at school and supporting your child's learning at home.

## Welcome to our Lower School!

We are a dynamic and caring learning community committed to effective and innovative teaching methods, a meaningful and well rounded curriculum, and supportive relationships between teachers, students and parents.

Our educational program is advanced by a highly qualified and dedicated professional staff comprised of homeroom, Portuguese, 'Specials,' Remedial and ESL teachers, as well as counselors and a psychologist.

We are delighted that you are a part of our community. We look forward to a wonderful year ahead and thank you in advance for all that you will do to support your child's learning experience with us.

Warm regards,

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Lower School Principal  
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WELCOME  
TO BARRA  
FIRST GRADE!  
ESCOLA AMERICANA  
2008-2009



This pamphlet briefly highlights the essential skills, knowledge, concepts and thematic units that will be taught to students in first grade this year. We hope it will help you anticipate, support and celebrate your child's learning experience.

## English Language Learning

First grade is an exciting year for our students. Students are immersed in a literacy rich learning environment of hands-on and individualized instruction purposefully designed to teach strategies for reading comprehension, word attack skills, and writing development. Oral speaking and listening skills are developed in multiple ways throughout the school year.

By the end of first grade students will:

- Read for meaning and understanding
- Participate in sustained silent reading and teacher read alouds.
- Identify, summarize and predict main events, ideas and sequence of story events after reading a text
- Decode diagraphs (eg sh, tch, ch) and clusters (eg bl, str)
- Write telling and exclamatory sentences with proper punctuation
- Apply taught letter patterns and high frequency words
- Write own story with nouns, verbs, and adjectives, beginning, middle and end
- Responds to stories, events and taught themes in writing
- Demonstrate proper letter size and slant of all upper and lower case D'Nealian (manuscript) letter formation
- Orally expresses ideas and opinions in class discussions

## Portuguese - Língua Portuguesa

A nossa meta é proporcionar aos alunos instrumentos necessários à utilização da língua portuguesa e levá-los à reflexão de seu uso. As atividades freqüentes são: leituras; pesquisas; produção e apresentação de textos e projetos; dramatizações; jogos e situações que permitam o uso de diferentes modalidades da língua.

## Portuguese for Foreigners

The main goal of our program is to help newcomers feel comfortable with their peers and environment. We focus on developing oral skills through games, role-playing, dramatization, puppets, and songs. Children also develop reading and writing skills, emphasizing correct pronunciation and intonation.

## Math

Here again, students are actively involved in their learning through our hands-on program "Everyday Math". Concepts of sense and meaning, patterns and relationships, and order and predictability are explored in multiple ways. Critical thinking and problem solving strategies are integrated into lessons and units of study.

By the end of first grade students will:

- Read, order and write numbers up to 100+
- Find equivalent names for numbers
- Count and exchange money
- Count and group objects by 2, 5 and 10
- Tell time to the hour, half and quarter hour
- Measure using rulers and balances
- Find missing addends
- Recognize and name flat and solid shapes
- Add and subtract two digit numbers (without regrouping)
- Solve story problems using mathematical equations
- Use number lines and number grids to count and solve problems

## Science and Social Studies

By the end of Lower School, both our Science and Social Studies programs endeavor to generate students who are curious, capable, critical, global, and proactive thinkers. Units explore specific themes through activity based learning and integrate with our Language Arts curriculum.

Key Thematic Units in first grade include the following:

- My Community and Me: individual characteristics, friends, extended family and jobs/community helpers are explored
- The Earth We Share: landforms, environment, Animal Habitats and Classification and How we take care of our world
- Changes: The Changing Earth (erosion), Underground (rocks and soil), and weather are explored
- People and Celebrations: Past and present cultures and communities, Native American groups and their differences; Comparing Brazilian Indians to Native Americans; Folklore and Folktales.

## 'SPECIALS' in First Grade

### Music

First grade students learn many songs throughout the year such as Canons and Ostinatos. They learn to read and write notes. As well they learn to play beat and 'bordun' techniques on the Orff Instruments, and beginning songs on recorders. Parents and students alike love our biannual music presentations.

### Visual Arts

Teachers integrate the arts into thematic units. As well, our students love their weekly art class where they are exposed to the world of art and artists, techniques and materials. Geometric and organic shapes, primary colors, collage, sculpture and painting are amongst many other mediums explored.

### Physical Education

We explore basic and advanced movement forms, adventure learning, body awareness, rhythmic activities and locomotor skills throughout the year.

### Library / Media Center

In addition to literacy-rich classroom learning, during weekly Library class, 1st graders are exposed to quality children's literature from Fairy and Folktales to contemporary authors and illustrators from around the world through a variety of media; picture books, chapter books, DVDs, puppet shows, and storytellers bring print to life. Students are encouraged to self select items to read and enjoy at home each week.

### Technology

Technology is used as a tool for enhancing learning and teaching. Software is used in the classroom to support teaching of specific skills, concepts and thematic units.