

6th graders—eleven year olds

In the classroom

Physical

- Vast appetite for food & Physical activity & talking
- Growth spurt of early adolescence--some girls
- Constant motion; restless
- More illness; colds, flu, ear infections
- Need for more sleep
- Physical aggression not uncommon
- Fine motor capability good

Social

- Moody; sensitive
- Oppositional; tests limits
- Often does best away from home
- Impulsive; rude; unaware
- Loves to argue
- Difficulty with decisions
- Self-absorbed
- Extremes of emotion
- Inclusion/exclusion; CLIQUES, seeks to belong

Language

- Discovery of the telephone
- Impulsive – talks before thinking
- Can be cruel
- Argumentative; debater
- Appreciates humor
- Imitates adult language

Cognitive

- Prefers new tasks/experience to reflection/revision of previous work
- Able to abstract / deductive reasoning
- Can establish & modify rules; develop hypotheses
- Increased ability to de-center & see world from new perspectives
- Loves to argue

Vision & Fine Motor Ability

- Highly improved, more confident of skills, can explore delicate work (calligraphy, etc) art important to greater focus in reading, math
- May complain of headaches, only short periods of reading; music may aid concentration
- Handwork (weaving, braiding, etc.) favorite—aid concentration & emotional outlet for stress

Gross motor Ability

- Love challenge of competition; prefer team sports, improving ability to play as a team
- Individual motor skills (throwing, catching, kicking) accelerate rapidly; like to measure individual best
- “Quick time” in school day useful for physical rest, break from academics & social dynamics

Cognitive Growth

- Scientific study, mathematical problem solving, invention, debate accentuate new deductive reasoning abilities; hands on learning critical
- Focus on self, imagining adult roles makes history, biography, current events exciting
- Interest in rules makes board games, intellectual puzzles, brain teasers, tests enjoyable/productive
- Reasonable hard work challenges not defeats; need help w/time management, homework
- Learns well in cooperative groups
- Likes work that feels grown-up—research, bibliography, interviews, footnotes, math skills
- May show interest in second language, music, mechanics; time to explore these areas important
- Intellectual interest in older & very young people

Social Behavior

- Desire to test limits, rules developmental milestone, not personal attack on teacher; class meetings,

peer mediation, student councils, cross-age tutoring highly effective

- Teacher attitude, tone, sense of humor critical; keep them from taking themselves too seriously
- Inclusion/exclusion issues require changing structures to adjust social mix
- “Saving face” important; not necessary for teacher to “win” arguments; provide “time-out area”

Curriculum

Reading

- Week-long reading assignments begin, still using trade books.
- Increased use non-fiction reading on curriculum
- Biographies a favorite
- Enjoy reading to younger children, helpful for less fluent readers

Writing

- Writing—Benefit from rehearsing their writing; plot, character, style, personal interest in varied subjects w/characteristics of “adult” writing; research reports rudimentary and tied to source material; poetry/cartooning favorite; revision can be a struggle
- Spelling—Accuracy depends on child, most enjoy difficult words, dictionary skills stressed
- Writing Themes—Quite varied & individual for advanced writers; blood & gore, fantasy, science fiction, love & romance
- Handwriting—Functional for most

Thematic Units

- Games history; biography; government; community service; physical development; body systems; plant growth, measurement

Mathematics

- Complicated word problems
- Probability & statistics through real problems
- Computation for speed & accuracy
- Percentage

5th graders...ten year olds

In the classroom

Physical

- large muscle development
- Desperately need outdoor time & physical challenge
- Handwriting sloppier than at nine
- Snacks & rest periods helpful for growing bodies

Social

- Fairness issues peak & can be solved
- Quick to anger –quick to forgive
- Generally content
- Work very well in groups
- Enjoy family & peers
- Like clubs, activities, sports
- Usually truthful; developing more mature sense of right & wrong, good solving social issues

Language

- Good listeners, actively receptive
- Voracious readers
- Expressive, talkative, like to explain
- Cooperative & competitive
- Friendly, generally happy

Cognitive

- Memorization productive
- Increased ability to abstract
- Likes rules & logic
- Classification & collections of interest; likes to organize
- Able to concentrate, read for extended periods
- Good problem solvers
- Proud of academic products

Vision & Fine Motor Ability

- Able to focus, concentrate on task at hand; integrate spelling, dictation, penmanship, but may lack precision
- Enjoy tracing & copying; maps, “cartooning”
- Use of tools (compass, protractor, ruler, templates) need plenty of time to practice

Gross motor Ability

- Need a lot of physical activity, extra recess, play time or will become acting-out behavior
- Love group games, relays, group initiatives; class outings, “ropes courses,” double-dutch clubs, team sports, other organized activities

Cognitive Growth

- Highly productive with school work; usually conscientious with homework; pay close attention to form, structure, directions, organization
- Actively receptive learners; memorization key teaching strategy; love geography, World Book of Records, facts about sports & TV, spelling, math computer & electronic games; choral reading, singing, poetry, plays, popular
- Classification, serialization, exactness are strengths—collections, science & math projects productive; height of concrete organizational skills

Social Behavior

- Basically cooperative nature encourages group activity, whole class cohesion, cooperative learning; introduce & train for peer mediation, conflict resolution
- Friendship & fairness issues constantly being played out; use teams, groups, games, competition to allow practice in social interaction.
- Generally satisfied with own ability; happy & flexible; challenge to reach out to others; start

cross-age tutoring—love to teach younger children; enjoy community service projects

- Enjoy being noticed, reward for efforts; “noticing” language important teacher tool
- Quick tempers may lead to physical outbursts and tears, but usually quickly & easily solved

Reading

- Poetry captivating; love to memorize & recite; choral readings & plays favorites
- Trade books centered w/themes entice readers
- Independent reading favorite activity; allow other time without requiring book project
- High interest in comic books

Writing

- Writing—Lengthy chapter books, longer poems, first research papers, writing about famous people—light & descriptive language; humor emerges; use of dialogue deepens
- Spelling—Enjoy memorizing spelling lists & challenged positively by difficult words; ability to do well on tests & spelling no connection
- Writing Themes—Friends & more friends in many adventures; time travel, letter writing for info; note writing to friends; report writing
- Handwriting—Functionally fluent cursive or keyboarding for those having difficulty

Thematic Units

- Geography; immigration; history; how thing work; geology, land formations, weather; industry; games

Mathematics

- Multiplication tables mastered
- Decimals taught extensively
- Extensive computation with fractions
- Measurement; and computation w/maps
- Double-digit division

Curriculum