

7th Graders--eleven year olds

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

In the classroom

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

7th Graders--twelve year olds

Physical

- High energy, much rest needed
- Growth spurt; signs of puberty
- Food important, especially mid-morning in school
- Physical education & sports valued

Social

- Adult personality begins to emerge
- More reasonable, tolerant than at 11
- Enthusiastic, uninhibited, will initiate own activity
- Empathetic
- Self-aware, insightful, appears secure
- Can set realistic goals in the short-term
- Peers more important than teachers

Language

- Double meanings, wordplay, jokes of intellectual interest, sarcasm emerges
- Enjoys conversation with adults & peers
- Peer 'vocabulary' (slang) important

Cognitive

- Increased ability to abstract in intellectual pursuits
- May show emerging ability in skill or content area
- Can & will see both sides to an argument
- High interest in current events, politics, social justice, also pop culture, materialism
- Research & study skills advance with increase of organizational discipline

In the classroom

Vision & Fine Motor Ability

- Increased fine motor ability, patience for practice, self-confidence, all skills more pleasurable

- Sustains reading for long period; visual concentration better; more computer time
- Handwork still popular; interest in more complicated visual-motor tasks (carpentry, clothes design, etc)

Gross motor Ability

- Team sports satisfying for many; also individual work in dance, drama, martial arts, gymnastics
- Begin the idea of training, regular exercise to improve physical ability
- Enjoy teaching young children physical skills

Cognitive Growth

- Current events, civics, history highly motivating when tied to clear relevant issues of student
- More interest & depth in drama, debate, performance; rehearsal & revision understood
- Lengthy, long term homework, assignments become more reasonable, but problem over week-ends; planning & organization of assignments improves
- Can help peers with subject matter; allow time for peer conferencing, partner projects, lab partners
- Both playful and serious—love class games, but can have serious discussion a moment later
- Isolated subject matter, distinct class periods fragment learning; pursue joint teaching projects

Social Behavior

- Leadership qualities abound—provide opportunities for cross-age tutoring, jobs at school, community service, hosting visitors, child-care
- Teachers should listen; respond to suggestions for changes in routines as realistic.
- Provide ceremonies, rituals, rewards at benchmarks in year; give part in planning
- Provide access to other adults to help with issues of drugs, alcohol, sex, AIDS, violence, family issues
- Making money (home/neighborhood) important

Curriculum

Reading

- Trilogies & Book series a favorite, Trade books
- Current events reading-newspaper, magazines.
- Reading scientific information; charts & graphs
- History, sports, science fiction popular topics
- Fiction about current events/social justice
- Able to recognize & discuss aspects of fiction
- Research reports from readings/ many sources
Library skills taught; atlas, card catalog, etc.

Writing

- Writing—Revision easier, peer conferences effective, biographies/autobiographical writing; world concern, racism, poverty, environmental issues; enjoy class or school newspaper; writing related to reading program—diaries, fantasies, myths, etc.
- 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

- Politics, current events; fund raising, basic economics & statistics; experimentation, computer simulations, microscope world

Mathematics

- Pre-algebra, extensive use of unknowns
- Using math in science
- Extensive computation in decimals, fractions, percents
- Instruction in geometric problem solving