

First Grade: New Beginnings



The first-grade year is one filled with transition and new beginnings. Literacy and numeracy skills learned in first grade are foundational to a student's future academic success. Among the many achievements realized during this year, becoming a stronger reader is perhaps the greatest and most rewarding for the student. Learning to communicate through writing is also an essential skill developed in the first grade. Writing Workshop is an approach that enables students to develop into creative writers and confidently put their ideas into words. In Science, students will observe through hands-on investigations the world God created on purpose for a purpose. In Social Studies students learn about being good citizens of their community, state, country, and world. The student will begin to practice positive study habits in first grade, grasp basic mathematical concepts, and—most importantly—come to understand more fully the love our Heavenly Father has for us, his children.



The program of instruction in first-grade classes at Brentwood Christian School includes a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities and studies. Teachers enrich curriculum for each area of study based on the school's philosophy and goals while aligning with Texas Essential Skills and Knowledge. Studies and activities in each class are based upon the following guidelines:

BIBLE - Part of our mission statement at BCS is to "lead students to love God". In order for students to love God, they must first know Him and his Word. EL3/4 through 12th-grade students explore God's word in Bible class by hearing and studying the Bible stories of both the Old and New Testaments and participating in discussions and activities where they can apply the lessons learned through those stories in order to lead lives of Christian service and leadership. Memory work, including learning the names of the books of the Old and New Testaments, the Lord's Prayer, and learning scripture verses is assigned weekly. We use these scriptures in our interactions with students as we guide them to become the people God intended. Our goal is to teach students to hide God's word in their hearts to use in their everyday lives.

Text currently in use: *Day by Day Kid's Bible*, Karyn Henley. Students hear the word of God read daily, followed by discussion and activities.

CHAPEL – Held weekly with EL3/4 through 5th grade in attendance; about once every four to six weeks an all-community chapel assembly is held, and secondary students pair up with elementary students for the service. Chapel services have messages that focus on Christian living and biblical truths. Each chapel service includes fellowship, singing, and prayer. Most chapel services conclude with the principal's announcements or recognitions.

LANGUAGE ARTS – Includes reading, spelling, English, and writing. A phonetic approach is used to introduce basic sounds, giving a firm background in fundamental decoding skills. The curriculum applies vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, and basic grammar and usage in writing processes such as proofreading and editing. Writing Workshop is one way we develop our writing skills each day.

Texts currently in use: *Abeka Phonics, Reading, Language, and Spelling* program and selected trade books. Students continue to master phonics fundamentals while developing their comprehension skills through the systematic use of library and classroom books. We enrich and reinforce using IXL language practice on iPads.

MATHEMATICS – Includes classification, measurement, geometry, place value, number relationships, counting patterns, money, time, and addition and subtraction. We use manipulatives extensively to enhance our understanding of mathematical concepts. Lessons are presented in small groups to accommodate those

needing help with basic skills while also challenging and providing enrichment to those who are ready for higher-level concepts.

Text currently in use: *Big Ideas Math: Modeling Real Life*, Cengage. Students practice concepts taught in the classroom. We also use skill-specific IXL practice to enrich each lesson we teach.

SCIENCE – Emphasizes the relationship of science to everyday life. We explore the wonders of God's creation in topics from life to physical sciences. We examine topics such as the life cycle of frogs, fish, spiders, plants, rocks, soil, air, solids, and liquids. Students are introduced to the scientific method, with an emphasis on experience and involvement in scientific processes. Each unit is designed for students to actively investigate and journal their observations in small groups.

Text currently in use: Full Option Science System, Texas edition by Delta Education.

SOCIAL STUDIES – We learn about our state, our country, and our world while teaching students respect for our country and a sense of being a good citizen. We begin each day reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. We want the children to begin to appreciate the freedoms we have in our country as laid out by the framers of our Constitution. Other countries are studied and appreciated for how they enrich our culture.

Text currently in use: *Making Our Way*, Savvas myWorld.

SPANISH - Taught by a Spanish teacher once a week. Spanish class incorporates singing, movement, and games to provide an opportunity to learn basic vocabulary and develop a positive attitude toward language learning. Students will sing children's worship music in Spanish and participate in activities in Spanish based on Bible stories that many of the students are already familiar with in English. The teacher uses repetition and visuals to maximize learning potential. Through this class, students will appreciate that God loves all people and can be worshiped in different languages while learning basic vocabulary and songs!

ART – Taught in a rotation each week with music class and integrated into the other core curriculum on a regular basis. This class uses a variety of media including crayons, markers, tempera, finger paints, watercolors, and pastels. Art aids in the development of small motor skills with activities such as drawing, coloring, cutting, and pasting and encourages the use of imagination. Students will also explore the paintings and techniques of famous artists and employ themes and methods from these artists in their own products in the regular classroom.

MUSIC – Taught by a trained music teacher in a rotation each week with art class. Music emphasizes singing and movement and basic ukulele instruction. This study introduces early music concepts such as rhythm and beat, pitch, volume, and tempo. Music is reinforced by the classroom teacher, especially in devotional activities. This class also combines musical training with performance opportunities in the annual Christmas and Grandparents' Day programs.

Text currently in use: *Spotlight on Music*, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. Students are introduced to music selections and music terminology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Taught by physical education teachers daily during a thirty-minute class taking place in the gym and on outdoor fields. This class includes conditioning exercises, physical games and activities, and athletic skills.

COMPUTER LAB – Students in first grade will have varying degrees of comfort with technology applications. 21st-century skills will be taught and reinforced by a trained computer teacher as students work on projects in weekly classes. Students will learn about computer hardware, applications, and components. They will learn to identify computer accessories like printers and hard drives and begin to understand how these function. They will use software interfaces, choose the correct applications for different types of tasks, and how to use built-in help tools. During the fourth quarter, students will be introduced to basic coding/programming concepts such as sequencing, loops, and events, and problem-solving using Blockly.
Text currently in use: *Easy Tech*, Learning.com. Students will learn to communicate, construct, evaluate, collaborate, and create using technology.

LIBRARY – Students have a daily opportunity to visit the library to check out books for independent reading. They have a regularly scheduled story time and check-out time each week with the librarian.

FIELD TRIPS – Taken in connection with and to enhance classroom studies. Destinations include the Evergreen Christmas Tree Farm, a fishing trip to E. Metropolitan Park, and the Cameron Park Zoo in Waco.

RECESS – A thirty-minute daily play time on the outside playground. Both first-grade classes enjoy this time to play and socialize together.

SOCIALIZATION – Under the watchful guidance and with the encouragement of the teacher, social skills are practiced at recess and during daily activities. Problem-solving strategies in the context of Christian values are modeled and practiced. Students are taught how to have a growth mindset and use strategies to learn to regulate their emotions/feelings.

HOMEWORK – Assigned regularly including reading fluency practice, spelling mastery, math computation, and Bible memory work. No homework is sent home on Wednesday nights or over the weekend. See Handbook for time guidelines for each grade.