

Arts Education at King Open

At King Open, arts experiences are integrated into the project-based curriculum at every grade level. *Below is a summary of the types of arts experiences students typically have.*

Music

K-5th grade: a 45-minute music class taught by a specialist once a week

3rd and 4th grade: learn to read music and play the recorder

5th grade: an additional (second) 45-minute music class each week, in which students begin to learn to play an instrument

Visual Arts

1-5th grade: a 45-minute art class taught by a specialist once a week

Highlights of Arts-Related Events

School-wide: A visit from a noted author/illustrator; Arts Festival

1st and 2nd grade: Visit to the American Repertory Theater

3rd and 4th grade: Visit to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

5th grade: Putting on a play in which each student has a speaking role

Kindergarten

Kindergartners sing, act out stories, recite poems, draw and write in story journals, learn rhythm and movement games, and practice public speaking. They work with clay. They do simple crafts related to book-making and illustration. In March, kindergartners have an art show in their shared hallway. In music, they do more singing, rhythm and movement games, and listen to music. Physical Education classes also include some creative movement and dance.

Examples of art as part of an academic unit: Kindergartners draw in their science journals with an emphasis on what they actually see during their "Nature in the City" curriculum (in alternate years they do the "Butterfly Life Cycle Project" or the "Earth Worm Study"). For this project they use recycled materials for collages and model making. The children use tempera paints to make mural-sized illustrations of what they are learning.

First and Second Grades

In these grades students continue drawing, painting and color mixing. In art class students produce self-portraits on paper, then on clay tiles, and, finally, as paper maché sculptures. They continue to learn songs and poetry and to read aloud. Music classes include singing, rhythm games, movement, use of percussion instruments, learning dances and music from around the world, and the study of musical stories, such as "Peter and the Wolf". With the school Librarian they write and recite poetry, and create thank you cards for authors.

Example of art as part of an academic unit: Students sculpt neighborhood people using clay and plasticine as part of the "Community Social Studies Curriculum". They draw houses and build with blocks as part of this study. They paint portraits of school personnel and famous figures who made a difference in our world community.

Third and Fourth Grades

Students in these grades continue drawing and painting, making murals, and working in paper maché. They learn about tessellation and perspective, make high- and low-relief clay sculptures, explore architecture, and cast plaster glyphs. In art class they explore illuminated manuscripts and study the work of Michelangelo and DaVinci (including his inventions). Students design dragons, create comic books about their dragons, and make large scale sculptures of their designs. They also design money, and make Native American style pottery and crafts, and Colonial tea sets. They also do performances as historical figures in which they sign, dance, act, or play an instrument. Music classes at this level include learning music notation and simple harmonies.

Example of art as part of an academic unit: Students create model villages (Native American, Colonial and present day) on a "river table" as part of their "Charles River Study." Students create murals, draw illustrations and design book covers for this curriculum. During the many history and science field trips relating to this study, students draw to document what they see. Each student chooses a colonial craft to learn, such as candle making, weaving, sewing, cooking or making weather vanes.

Fifth Grade

In this grade, students continue to draw, paint, make models, and do craft projects, including making mobiles and stage props. They produce a play in which every student performs. The plays range from student-written works to Shakespeare. Students practice public speaking at reenactments of the Constitutional Congress and make oral presentations of research projects, for which they create a visual aid. They design and build paper homes as part of the math curriculum and create artistic interpretations of Native American folktales. Students also join other city 5th graders in (in physical education class) ballroom dancing. In art class, they study map design, printmaking and prehistoric art, tools and materials. In music class, they sing, learn rounds, study harmony and learn more advanced musical notation.

Example of art as part of an academic unit: *Each class performs a play for friends and family on the King Open stage. The play is usually a Shakespeare play or one written by the students. The class creates some suggestive set pieces, costumes, and props..*