

United States Academic Pentathlon® **2024-25 Curriculum and Content Standards**

Overview

The United States Academic Pentathlon’s curriculum is an interdisciplinary curriculum in which a selected theme is integrated across five different subject areas: fine arts, literature, mathematics, science, and social science. The theme for the 2024–2025 U.S. Academic Pentathlon curriculum is *Our Changing Climate*. While in most subjects the majority of the topics relate to the overall curricular theme, some topics that cover fundamentals may also be included to encourage a thorough understanding of the subject area as a whole. The U.S. Academic Pentathlon mathematics curriculum is unrelated to the theme and focuses on standard middle school mathematics topics.

Fine Arts

U.S. Academic Pentathlon and the National Standards for Music

USAP’s curriculum allows students and teachers to address four of the nine content standards for music. The five standards that are not met all involve the performance, composition, or notation of music. U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s music curriculum is centered on musicology (as opposed to composition or performance) and is designed to be accessible to all students, including those who cannot read musical notation and those who have no formal training in musical performance.

U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s 2024–2025 music curriculum addresses aspects of the following national content standards for music:

- STANDARD 6: Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music
- STANDARD 7: Evaluating Music and Music Performances
- STANDARD 8: Understanding Relationships between Music, the Other Arts, and Disciplines outside the Arts
- STANDARD 9: Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture

U.S. Academic Pentathlon and the National Standards for Visual Arts

U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s curriculum allows students and teachers to address five of the six content standards for visual arts. The only standard not directly met by U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s curriculum (Standard 1: Understanding and Applying Media Techniques and

Processes), can easily be incorporated as a part of U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s curriculum by having students create their own works of art in addition to studying the works of others.

U.S. Academic Pentathlon’s 2024-25 art curriculum addresses aspects of the following national content standards for visual arts:

- STANDARD 2: Using Knowledge of Structures and Functions
- STANDARD 3: Choosing and Evaluating a Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas
- STANDARD 4: Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Cultures
- STANDARD 5: Reflecting Upon and Assessing the Characteristics and Merits of their Work and the Work of Others
- STANDARD 6: Making Connections between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines

Literature

United States Academic Pentathlon 2024 – 2025 Literature Resource Guide correlation with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards

Literature of Climate Change

The literary choices for the 2024 – 2025 United States Academic Pentathlon require students to work through several CCSS standards for both informational and fictional texts. Specific relevant standards are listed by sections that correlate to this year’s literature resource guide. All these standards additionally fall under the first three NCTE standards:

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers/writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Section I

Critical Reading

This section addresses and assesses numerous skills under CCSS (Please note, even though these standards are the sixth-grade standards, the same apply at grades 7 and 8):

Craft and Structure:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5
Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6
Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Section II *Melt* and the theme of “Climate Change”

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5

Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

Section III: Short Selections: Fiction

Short Stories

The short stories address the following CCSS standards:

Craft and Structure:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.10
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Poetry

All the poems in this section address the following CCSS standards:

Craft and Structure:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5
Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.10
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Section IV

Shorter Selections: Non-Fiction

Key Ideas and Details:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2
Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Craft and Structure:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the

impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5

Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

Science

Next Generation Science Standards¹: Middle School Physical Science – Disciplinary Core Ideas

MS-PS1: Matter and Its Interactions

- PS1.A: Structure and Properties of Matter

- Substances are made from different types of atoms, which combine with one another in various ways. Atoms form molecules that range in size from two to thousands of atoms.

MS-LS1: From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

- LS1.A: Structure and Function

- All living things are made up of cells, which is the smallest unit that can be said to be alive. An organism may consist of one single cell (unicellular) or many different numbers and types of cells (multicellular).

- LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms

- Animals engage in characteristic behaviors that increase the odds of reproduction.
- Plants reproduce in a variety of ways, sometimes depending on animal behavior and specialized features for reproduction.
- Genetic factors as well as local conditions affect the growth of the adult plant.

- LS1.C: Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms

- Plants, algae (including phytoplankton), and many microorganisms use the energy from light to make sugars (food) from carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and water through the process of photosynthesis, which also

releases oxygen. These sugars can be used immediately or stored for growth or later use.

- Within individual organisms, food moves through a series of chemical reactions in which it is broken down and rearranged to form new molecules, to support growth, or to release energy.

MS-LS2: Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

- LS1.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
 - Organisms, and populations of organisms, are dependent on their environmental interactions both with other living things and with nonliving factors.
 - In any ecosystem, organisms and populations with similar requirements for food, water, oxygen, or other resources may compete with each other for limited resources, access to which consequently constrains their growth and reproduction.
 - Growth of organisms and population increases are limited by access to resources.
 - Similarly, predatory interactions may reduce the number of organisms or eliminate whole populations of organisms. Mutually beneficial interactions, in contrast, may become so interdependent that each organism requires the other for survival. Although the species involved in these competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial interactions vary across ecosystems, the patterns of interactions of organisms with their environments, both living and nonliving, are shared.
- LS2.B: Cycle of Matter and Energy Transfer in Ecosystems
 - Food webs are models that demonstrate how matter and energy is transferred between producers, consumers, and decomposers as the three groups interact within an ecosystem. Transfers of matter into and out of the physical environment occur at every level. Decomposers recycle nutrients from dead plant or animal matter back to the soil in terrestrial environments or to the water in aquatic environments. The atoms that make up the organisms in an ecosystem are cycled repeatedly between the living and nonliving parts of the ecosystem.
- LS2.C: Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, and Resilience
 - Ecosystems are dynamic in nature; their characteristics can vary over time. Disruptions to any physical or biological component of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all its populations.
 - Biodiversity describes the variety of species found in Earth's terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems. The completeness or integrity of an ecosystem's biodiversity is often used as a measure of its health.
- LS4.D: Biodiversity and Humans
 - Changes in biodiversity can influence humans' resources, such as food, energy, and medicines, as well as ecosystem services that humans rely on—for example, water purification and recycling.

MS-LS3: Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits

- LS1.B: Growth and Development of Organisms
 - Organisms reproduce, either sexually or asexually, and transfer their genetic information to their offspring.
- LS3.A: Inheritance of Traits
 - Genes are located in the chromosomes of cells, with each chromosome pair containing two variants of each of many distinct genes. Each distinct gene chiefly controls the production of specific proteins, which in turn affects the traits of the individual. Changes (mutations) to genes can result in changes to proteins, which can affect the structures and functions of the organism and thereby change traits.
 - Variations of inherited traits between parent and offspring arise from genetic differences that result from the subset of chromosomes (and therefore genes) inherited.
- LS3.B: Variation of Traits
 - In sexually reproducing organisms, each parent contributes half of the genes acquired (at random) by the offspring. Individuals have two of each chromosome and hence two alleles of each gene, one acquired from each parent. These versions may be identical or may differ from each other.
 - In addition to variations that arise from sexual reproduction, genetic information can be altered because of mutations. Though rare, mutations may result in changes to the structure and function of proteins. Some changes are beneficial, others harmful, and some neutral to the organism.

MS-LS4: Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity

- LS4.A: Evidence of Common Ancestry and Diversity
 - The collection of fossils and their placement in chronological order (e.g., through the location of the sedimentary layers in which they are found or through radioactive dating) is known as the fossil record. It documents the existence, diversity, extinction, and change of many life forms throughout the history of life on Earth.
 - Anatomical similarities and differences between various organisms living today and between them and organisms in the fossil record, enable the reconstruction of evolutionary history and the inference of lines of evolutionary descent.
- LS4.B: Natural Selection
 - Natural selection leads to the predominance of certain traits in a population, and the suppression of others.
- LS4.C: Adaptation
 - Adaptation by natural selection acting over generations is one important process by which species change over time in response to changes in environmental conditions. Traits that support successful survival and reproduction in the new environment become more common; those that do not become less common. Thus, the distribution of traits in a population changes.

MS-ESS2: Earth's Systems

- ESS2.A: Earth's Materials and Systems
 - All Earth processes are the result of energy flowing and matter cycling within and among the planet's systems. This energy is derived from the sun and Earth's hot interior. The energy that flows and matter that cycles produce chemical and physical changes in Earth's materials and living organisms.
 - The planet's systems interact over scales that range from microscopic to global in size, and they operate over fractions of a second to billions of years. These interactions have shaped Earth's history and will determine its future.
- ESS2.C: The Roles of Water in Earth's Surface Processes
 - Water continually cycles among land, ocean, and atmosphere via transpiration, evaporation, condensation and crystallization, and precipitation, as well as downhill flows on land.
 - The complex patterns of the changes and the movement of water in the atmosphere, determined by winds, landforms, and ocean temperatures and currents, are major determinants of local weather patterns.
 - Global movements of water and its changes in form are propelled by sunlight and gravity.
 - Variations in density due to variations in temperature and salinity drive a global pattern of interconnected ocean currents.
- ESS2.D: Weather and Climate
 - Weather and climate are influenced by interactions involving sunlight, the ocean, the atmosphere, ice, landforms, and living things. These interactions vary with latitude, altitude, and local and regional geography, all of which can affect oceanic and atmospheric flow patterns.
 - Because these patterns are so complex, weather can only be predicted probabilistically.
 - The ocean exerts a major influence on weather and climate by absorbing energy from the sun, releasing it over time, and globally redistributing it through ocean currents.

MS-ESS3: Earth and Human Activity

- ESS3.A: Natural Resources
 - Humans depend on Earth's land, ocean, atmosphere, and biosphere for many different resources. Minerals, fresh water, and biosphere resources are limited, and many are not renewable or replaceable over human lifetimes. These resources are distributed unevenly around the planet as a result of past geologic processes.
- ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems
 - Human activities have significantly altered the biosphere, sometimes damaging or destroying natural habitats and causing the extinction of other species. But changes to Earth's environments can have different impacts (negative and positive) for different living things.

- Typically as human populations and per-capita consumption of natural resources increase, so do the negative impacts on Earth unless the activities and technologies involved are engineered otherwise.
- ESS3.D: Global Climate Change
 - Human activities, such as the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, are major factors in the current rise in Earth's mean surface temperature (global warming). Reducing the level of climate change and reducing human vulnerability to whatever climate changes do occur depend on the understanding of climate science, engineering capabilities, and other kinds of knowledge, such as understanding of human behavior and on applying that knowledge wisely in decisions and activities.

GSS Science and Engineering Practices

Practice 2: Developing and Using Models

- Develop a model to predict and/or describe phenomena.
- Develop a model to describe unobservable mechanisms.

Practice 4: Analyzing and Interpreting Data

- Analyze and interpret data to determine similarities and differences in findings.
- Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for phenomena.
- Construct and interpret graphical displays of data to identify linear and nonlinear relationships.

Practice 5: Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking

- Use mathematical representations to describe and/or support scientific conclusions and design solutions.

NGSS Understandings About the Nature of Science

Scientific Investigations Use a Variety of Methods

- Science investigations use a variety of methods and tools to make measurements and observations.
- Science depends on evaluating proposed explanations.

Scientific Knowledge is Based on Empirical Evidence

- Science knowledge is based upon logical and conceptual connections between evidence and explanations.

Scientific Knowledge is Open to Revision in Light of New Evidence

- Scientific explanations are subject to revision and improvement in light of new evidence.
- The certainty and durability of science findings varies.
- Science findings are frequently revised and/or reinterpreted based on new evidence

Science Models, Laws, Mechanisms, and Theories Explain Natural Phenomena

- Theories are explanations for observable phenomena.
- Science theories are based on a body of evidence developed over time.
- Laws are regularities or mathematical descriptions of natural phenomena.
- A hypothesis is used by scientists as an idea that may contribute important new knowledge for the evaluation of a scientific theory.

Science is a Way of Knowing

- Science knowledge is cumulative and many people, from many generations and nations, have contributed to science knowledge.

Scientific Knowledge Assumes an Order and Consistency in Natural Systems

- Science assumes that objects and events in natural systems occur in consistent patterns that are understandable through measurement and observation.
- Science carefully considers and evaluates anomalies in data and evidence.

Science is a Human Endeavor

- Men and women from different social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds work as scientists and engineers.
- Scientists and engineers are guided by habits of mind such as intellectual honesty, tolerance of ambiguity, skepticism and openness to new ideas.
- Advances in technology influence the progress of science and science has influenced advances in technology.

Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World

- Science knowledge can describe consequences of actions but is not responsible for society's decisions.

Social Science

Key Ideas and Details:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3
Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies...

Craft and Structure:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5
Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8
Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9
Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10
By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Mathematics*U.S. Academic Pentathlon[®] and the Common Core Standards for Math*

- CCSS.Math.Content.6.RP.A.1
Understand the concept of a ratio and use ratio language to describe a ratio relationship between two quantities.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.RP.A.2
Understand the concept of a unit rate a/b associated with a ratio $a:b$ with $b \neq 0$, and use rate language in the context of a ratio relationship.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.RP.A.3.c
Find a percent of a quantity as a rate per 100 (e.g., 30% of a quantity means 30/100 times the quantity); solve problems involving finding the whole, given a part and the percent.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.NS.C.5

Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.

- CCSS.Math.Content.6.NS.C.6.a
Recognize opposite signs of numbers as indicating locations on opposite sides of 0 on the number line; recognize that the opposite of the opposite of a number is the number itself, e.g., $-(-3) = 3$, and that 0 is its own opposite.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.NS.C.7.b
Write, interpret, and explain statements of order for rational numbers in real-world contexts.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.NS.C.7.c
Understand the absolute value of a rational number as its distance from 0 on the number line; interpret absolute value as magnitude for a positive or negative quantity in a real-world situation.
- CCSS.Math.Content.6.EE.B.8
Write an inequality of the form $x > c$ or $x < c$ to represent a constraint or condition in a real-world or mathematical problem. Recognize that inequalities of the form $x > c$ or $x < c$ have infinitely many solutions; represent solutions of such inequalities on number line diagrams.

GRADE 7:

- CCSS.Math.Content.7.RP.A.1
Compute unit rates associated with ratios of fractions, including ratios of lengths, areas and other quantities measured in like or different units.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.RP.A.2
Recognize and represent proportional relationships between quantities.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.1
Apply and extend previous understandings of addition and subtraction to add and subtract rational numbers; represent addition and subtraction on a horizontal or vertical number line diagram
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.1.d
Apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract rational numbers.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.2
Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division and of fractions to multiply and divide rational numbers.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.2.b
Understand that integers can be divided, provided that the divisor is not zero, and every quotient of integers (with non-zero divisor) is a rational number. If p and q are integers, then $-(p/q) = (-p)/q = p/(-q)$. Interpret quotients of rational numbers by describing real-world contexts.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.2.c
Apply properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide rational numbers.

- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.2.d
Convert a rational number to a decimal using long division; know that the decimal form of a rational number terminates in 0s or eventually repeats.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.NS.A.3
Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the four operations with rational numbers.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.SP.A.1
Understand that statistics can be used to gain information about a population by examining a sample of the population; generalizations about a population from a sample are valid only if the sample is representative of that population. Understand that random sampling tends to produce representative samples and support valid inferences.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.7.SP.A.2
Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population.
- CCSS.Math.Content.7.SP.C.5
Investigate chance processes and develop, use, and evaluate probability models.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.7.SP.C.7
Represent sample spaces for compound events using methods such as organized lists, tables and tree diagrams.

GRADE 8:

- CCSS.Math.Content.8.NS.A.1
Know that numbers that are not rational are called irrational. Understand informally that every number has a decimal expansion; for rational numbers show that the decimal expansion repeats eventually, and convert a decimal expansion which repeats eventually into a rational number.
- CCSS.Math.Content.8.NS.A.2
Use rational approximations of irrational numbers to compare the size of irrational numbers, locate them approximately on a number line diagram, and estimate the value of expressions (e.g., π^2).
- CCSS.Math.Content.8.EE.A.1
Know and apply the properties of integer exponents to generate equivalent numerical expressions. For example, $3^2 \times 3^{-5} = 3^{-3} = 1/3^3 = 1/27$.
- CCSS.Math.Content.8.EE.A.2
Use square root and cube root symbols to represent solutions to equations of the form $x^2 = p$ and $x^3 = p$, where p is a positive rational number. Evaluate square roots of small perfect squares and cube roots of small perfect cubes. Know that $\sqrt{2}$ is irrational.
- CCSS.Math.Content.8.EE.C.7
Solve linear equations in one variable.
- CCSS.Math.Content.8.SP.A.1

Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data to investigate patterns of association between two quantities. Describe patterns such as clustering, outliers, positive or negative association, linear association, and nonlinear association.

- CCSS.Math.Content.8.SP.A.3

Use the equation of a linear model to solve problems in the context of bivariate measurement data, interpreting the slope and intercept.

High School Standards:

- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.CP.B.6

Find the conditional probability of A given B as the fraction of B 's outcomes that also belong to A , and interpret the answer in terms of the model.

- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.CP.B.7

Apply the Addition Rule, $P(A \text{ or } B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A \text{ and } B)$, and interpret the answer in terms of the model.

- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.CP.B.8

Apply the general Multiplication Rule in a uniform probability model, $P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A)P(B|A) = P(B)P(A|B)$, and interpret the answer in terms of the model.

- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.CP.B.9

Use permutations and combinations to compute probabilities of compound events and solve problems.

Source List

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