

The Circle Project

A Unit Overview

Below is an overview and some examples of typical topics students study during the interdisciplinary “Circle Project” unit.

Science

We use the idea of circles to help examine our commonly held scientific beliefs.

With the circle in mind, we examine things like:

- Crop circles
- The water cycle
- The food chain

We attempt to apply accepted scientific ideas and thought processes when examining these things. For example, we examine the phenomenon of crop circles to determine if they seem to adhere to what science expects.

Math

Our examination of circles from a mathematical perspective concentrates on:

- Formulas
- Measurement
- Units
- The creation of circles
- Historic mathematical understandings of circles
- The parts of a circle

Social Studies

Topics include the social aspects of circles and circular ideas:

- Dance
- Architecture
- Defense
- The spread of populations
- Social interdependence

Many human social systems have “circular” processes. For example government and power changes often go through predictable changes that seem to bring things, at least to some extent, back to a similar place. Social interdependence and how it often is a cyclical process is a focus. We want the students to see how there is application of these ideas in their own lives so we talk about how there seem to be cycles in an individual’s life or in the lives of a family. Students look at how they are cared for by responsible adults, and how they, in turn, will be positions of responsibility as well.

Language Arts

Individual pieces of literature and the art of literature itself both have circular ideas. We examine the frequent references to circles in poetry, lyrics, and stories and explore how art returns to similar themes over the course of years, changing and returning to important human concerns.