



# Odyssey

Living History Education For Young Explorers  
A Focus Option Program of Portland Public Schools

**Learn about the**

## **345 Cluster Curriculum Overview**

All Odyssey students are supported to successfully complete their History, Science, Language Arts, Literature and Art studies, which include many exciting writing, research, simulation and field study activities.

Odyssey students are provided with a rich historical context for their learning. At the beginning of the school year, students form teaming groups and work hard to prepare their **teams** for the great adventure of becoming the real people of their historical time period by **simulating** their real-life experiences. In team- based History Study, teams read historical sources, working cooperatively to respond to the history reading and **writing focus** questions. A team writing focus may take more than one class session to finish, as teams work at different paces. Cluster teachers conference with each team, helping the students to arrive at meaningful and complete responses to the questions. Teams finish any **incomplete** responses and are re-evaluated by the teacher, thus ending the team cycle for that writing focus. At the end of each unit of study, a cluster teacher helps each team complete a review of the essential concepts studied. Then every team member individually completes a History **post test**.

At the end of each unit of study, the typical cluster schedule, in place from the beginning of the year, is flexed to include time necessary for the **culminating activities** of that unit of study. During these last weeks of the Unit, students complete the remaining enrichment activities for this period, celebrating the culmination of their unit studies with a mid-

year performance piece. Students present this program to the entire Odyssey Community.

Student teams study two or three **integrated units** each year, developed around an historical theme. Units culminate in **performance**-based activities in winter and an extended **field study** trip in late spring. Students explore the following themes:

- Change and Continuity in American Democracy: Ideas, Institutions, Practices, and Controversies
- Contact and Interaction of Peoples, Cultures, and Ideas
- Economic and Technological Changes and Their Impact on Man, Culture, Ideas, and the Environment
- The Changing Role of America in the World

### **345 Units Cycle**

**Year One:** Students take on the identities of various Native American tribes living in North America before 1492. The students focus on the theme of **Change** as they learn about North American landforms, geology, mountain building, volcanoes, earthquakes, erosion, and the ecosystems of the Far North. While studying the culture and history of these early American peoples, students perform the legends, music, and dances of their tribes and cultivate typical native foods in their Heritage Garden for the Potlach-Powwow Celebration. In February, student teams become expeditions of exploration sailing to discover and conquer the New World. They study the history of

North America's first contact with European explorers, and the immense changes that occurred as a result of that contact.

**Primary History Units:**

- Peoples of North America / The North American Continent Prior to European Contact
- The Exploration and Conquest of the New World / The Role of Spain and Portugal

**Typical Culminating Events:**

- Living History Native American Museum
- Powwow/Potlatch Celebration

**Typical Field-Study Trip:**

- Trek through five Native American reservations in Oregon and Washington

**Year Two:** Students are divided among the American Colonies, focusing on the theme of **Cause and Effect**, as they study the life of our nation's earliest settlers. As in all units, literature, science, writing, history and the arts are integrated into the historical theme. Next, children experience the American Revolution, with a physical science study centered on energy. The victorious Americans celebrate with a Guilde Faire and

Harvest Festival. The year ends with the new nation's exploration of the West. As students study life sciences contextually, they travel through Washington and Oregon to Fort Clatsop with the Lewis and Clark expedition.

**Primary History Units:**

- England's Turn / Colonial America
- The American Revolution
- Lewis and Clark / The Mountain Men

**Typical Culminating Events:**

- Colonial Guild Fair
- American Revolution Harvest Celebration

**Typical Field-Study Trip:**

- Down the Columbia with Lewis and Clark to Fort Clatsop, and an OMSI plant-animal study

**Year Three:** We keep the excitement alive as students take on historic identities of the Union and Confederacy while they examine the theme of **Cycles**. After exploring the Civil War, the role of technology, and the physical science of machines, children study the westward expansion movement, experiencing the hardships and joys of life on the wagon trains along the Oregon Trail. In period costumes, they follow the trail from Fort Boise over the Blue Mountains to the verdant green valleys of the Willamette River, finally arriving at Oregon City.

**Primary History Units:**

- The Oregon Trail / The Making of Portland and Oregon
- A Nation Divided / The Union in Crisis / Civil War

**Typical Culminating Events:**

- Industrial Revolution Invention Fair
- Civil War Peace Cotillion

**Typical Field-Study Trip:**

- Down the Oregon Trail as Pioneers, from Idaho to Oregon City

**345 Homework Expectations**

Students at this level are expected to benefit from homework, with 30-50 minutes of effort daily, Monday through Friday, considered appropriate. Students may need occasional help from their parents, especially at the beginning of the year. By the 5th year, most students are working without parent involvement whatsoever. Teachers *scaffold* work for students as they need it. Scaffolding is generally a temporary solution, as children build homework stamina throughout the year.