

Virṣā (Sikh Heritage) Standards

Kindergarten (Ages 4-6)

While the daily Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ) provides a collective remembrance of Sikh history for its believers, the seed of the plant needs to be sown early within the minds of its next generation in order to bear fruit. Students in Kindergarten are introduced to spatial, temporal, and causal relationships in the historical context and their connections to the present period. From understanding the individual's place within social structures, while introducing important theological concepts key to understanding Sikhī (ਸਿੱਖੀ), the purpose of the Kindergarten curriculum is to begin the development of the students' civic Sikh identity.

Standard 1: Establishing Self-Identity

- Students identify themselves as individuals and part of a family and a community.
 - *Students understand roles played in each larger group and how they are based on fellowship, bhaū, bhai, and hukam.*

Standard 2: Looking at the Past

- Students understand that history relates to events, people, and places of other times.
 - *Students understand how people lived in earlier times and how their lives would be different today (Pañjāb Gurū Period versus Pañjābī 50 years ago versus America today). They draw upon a variety of stories, legends, songs, ballads, and games in order to describe the environment, lifestyles beliefs, and struggles of the people.*

Standard 3: Relationship with Sikh History

- Students understand collective history by hearing stories about famous Sikhs and past events and legends.
 - *Students read stories that illustrate honesty, courage, friendship, respect, responsibility, and sacrifice for collective welfare. The characters in these stories model these appropriate qualities and values for the students.*

Standard 4: Learning Protocol

- Students understand and identify proper etiquette in the Darbār.
 - *Students will be told explicitly the proper etiquette when entering the gurduārā and what expectations are required of them.*

Standard 5: Important Dates

- Students identify and describe the events or people celebrated during Sikh holidays and why we celebrate them. (e.g., Vaisākhi, Divālī, Holā Mohallā, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Nānak, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Gobind Singh, Shahīdī Chote Sāhibzāde, Gurgaḍī Gurū Granth Sāhib, Māī Bhāgo and Sikh Bibīām Celebration)

Standard 6: Understanding Sikh Symbols

- Students identify and describe Sikh symbols. (e.g. Nishān Sāhib, Khaṇḍā, ‘*Ik Oaṛkāṛ*,’ 5 Kakār, hawk, silver arrow, Gurū Nānak as “founder of the faith,” and the Mūl Mantr)

Standard 7: Becoming Citizens of the Khālsā

- Students learn the melody of the Khālsā Anthem and Sikh Pledge of Allegiance.

Grade 1 (Ages 5-7)

In Grade 1, children listen to and read stories from Sikh history. They learn about major historical events figures, national religious holidays, symbols related to Sikh history and why these are important to Sikhs. In addition, activities that reinforce Sikh decision-making processes and guidelines for living are employed to promote Sikh civic responsibilities. The Grade 1 curriculum continues to strengthen children’s identity as Sikhs.

Standard 1: Establishing a Self-Identity

- Students identify themselves as individuals and part of family through the creation of a family tree.
 - *Students understand that just as they are part of a nuclear family, so they are part of a Sikh communal family. Students should be able to conceptualize and build a timeline.*

Standard 2: Applying Core Principles

- Students understand the teamwork process and elements of honesty, working hard, and sharing with others.
 - *Students engage in activities and games that reinforce fellowship (saṅgat) and cooperation, instead of competition where the emphasis is placed on the end result. Activities that allow decision-making based on consensus should be stressed and drawn parallel to the Gurū Panth decision-making role.*

Standard 3: Geographical Knowledge

- Students locate Sikh historic locations on a map of South Asia.
 - *Students begin simple map construction to give them an understanding of their homeland, roots, as well as reinforce basic map skills and cardinal directions to locate places.*

Standard 4: The Ten Nānaks

- Students identify the Gurūs, describe the role of the Gurū, and explain where the Gurūs receive their authority.
 - *Students begin to understand the purpose of the Gurū. Their relationship to their Sikhs is explained in simplistic terms using analogies of family structures from the family tree.*

Standard 5: Education through Oral Tradition

- Students identify and describe the main characters and their qualities after listening to historical stories about famous and ‘ordinary’ Sikhs.
 - *Students hear stories that illustrate honesty, courage, friendship, respect, responsibility, and sacrifice for collective welfare. The characters in these stories should be expressions of these qualities and these values stressed to the students. In addition, stories of ‘ordinary’ Sikhs who believed in the fundamental values such as justice, truth, equality, human rights, and responsibility for the common good, and explain their significance. Contemporary examples should also be used so students can understand the endless nature of Sikh history.*

Standard 6: Important Dates

- Students identify and describe the events or people celebrated during Sikh holidays and why we celebrate them. (e.g. Vaisākhī, Divālī, Holā Mohallā, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Nānak, Parkāsh Utsav Gurū Gobind Singh, Shahīdī Chote Sāhibzāde, Gurgadī Gurū Granth Sāhib, Māī Bhāgo and Sikh Bibīām Celebration)

Standard 7: Becoming Citizens of the Khālsā

- Students demonstrate the ability to recite the Sikh Pledge of Allegiance and its general meaning and to sing the Khālsā Anthem.

Grade 2 (Ages 6-8)

In Grade 2, students explore their own family’s history and learn about distinctive achievements, customs, events, places, or landmarks from their history. Students are better able to understand their personal history, especially as it is tied to the Sikh Homeland experience. During this project, they will become familiar with the Pañjābī homeland and its terrestrial features. Students explore the lives of the Sikh Gurūs as well as that of the four sons of Gurū Gobind Singh. Through these expositions, Sikh concepts are introduced. In addition, the classical Sikh instruments are introduced to spark an interest in traditional Gurmāt Saṅgīt (ਗੁਰਮਤ ਸੰਗੀਤ). All activities should reinforce the Sikh ideology. The Grade 2 curriculum builds upon previous knowledge and reinforces the Sikh identity.

Standard 1: Geographical Knowledge: Districts

- Students locate all districts of East Pañjāb.
 - *Students will label and identify the 10 districts of Pañjāb through the provision of a blank map and using cardinal directions.*

Standard 2: Geographical Knowledge: Cities

- Students locate major and historical cities of Pañjāb.
 - *Students will label and identify the locations of major cities in each district along with historically important cities, including Anandpur Sāhib and others.*

Standard 3: Geographical Knowledge: Regions & Rivers

- Students locate and name the rivers and regions of Pañjāb.
 - *Students will label and identify the five rivers and regions of historic Pañjāb.*

Standard 4: Establishing a Self-Identity

- Students create a family tree tracing the history of their family through the use of primary and secondary sources.
 - *Students will trace a history of their family and construct a family tree. Students are urged to tie into Sikh history, asking about 20th century events and their family's relationship to them (e.g. Akālī Movement, Pañjābī Subā, Ghallūghārā 1984, etc.). Students will make individual and group chronological timelines.*

Standard 5: The Ten Nānaks

- Students identify the ten Gurūs and two *Chote Sāhibzāde*.
 - *Students will be able to name all 10 Gurūs and 2 Chote Sāhibzāde. They will be able to identify a few key characteristics of each Gurū. The stories about the 2 Sāhibzāde should introduce concepts from Gurbāṇī, including pain (dukh), joy (such), as well as martyrdom (shahīd).*

Standard 6: Sikh Musicology: Instruments

- Students identify the classical instruments of Gurmat saṅgīt.
 - *Students learn to recognize the different classical instruments used for Kīrtan. These should include the Rabāb, Sirandā, Isrāj, Taus, Saraṅgī, Ḍhaḍ, Mīrdang, Tānpurā, Dilrubā, Tablā, and Harmonium.*

Grade 3 (Ages 7-9)

In Grade 3, students are exposed to the culture of their homeland. They learn about the popular folk stories of Pañjāb as well as different manifestations of culture in entertainment, cuisine, and work. In addition, they are presented the evils of caste and gender-based discrimination. The curriculum presents Vaisākhī (ਵੈਸਾਖੀ) 1699 in its context, as well as Māi Bhāgo's (ਮਾਈ ਭਾਗੋ) role in Sikh history. Audible recognition of different tablā (ਤਬਲਾ) beats is presented as part of their Gurmat Saṅgīt training. The Grade 3 curriculum gives students the opportunity to explore their cultural heritage, as well as better understand the revolutionary changes introduced by Gurū Nānak within its context.

Standard 1: Cultural Narratives

- Students learn the folk tales of Pañjāb.
 - *Students read selected stories from Tales of the Pañjāb by Flora Steel and selected passages from Sundrī by Bhāi Vīr Singh. Other folk tales include that of Dūlā Bhattī, Pūran Bhagat, Rājā Rasālū, Sucā Singh Sūrmā, Udham Singh, as well as those of the more recent history.*

Standard 2: The Tradition of Pañjāb

- Students learn the history of the cultural heritage of Pañjāb, including cuisine, poetry, songs, arts, and crafts of the different regions.
 - *Cuisine includes popular foods and names of foods and the seasons with which they are associated.*

- *Introduction to visual arts (Sikh calligraphy, Miniature art) and craftwork such as phulkārīs, etc...*

Standard 3: Introduction to Mental Vices

- Students identify why caste-based, gender-based, and other forms of discrimination and biases are contradictory to Sikh values through the performance of a play.
- *Students should participate in active visual illustrations of the injustices caused by caste and gender-based discrimination.*

Standard 5: Sikh Heroes: Māī Bhāgo

- Students learn about Māī Bhāgo and her role within Sikh history.
- *Students describe the life of Māī Bhāgo, and her historical importance. Through concepts from the Gurū Granth Sāhib, the students will discuss the principles of equality and the high status earned by women within Sikh history.*

Standard 6: Significance and Role of the Pañj Piāre

- Students identify the Pañj Piāre and their place within Sikh history.
- *Students can name the Pañj Piāre. They will be able to give a history of Vaisākhī and why it is such a momentous occasion. The students will be able to recognize the spirit of Khālsā and its dedication to fraternity, equality, and justice. Concepts from the Gurū Granth Sāhib and Sikh tradition regarding Nām, Amrit, and the Rahit should be emphasized.*

Standard 7: Sikh Musicology: Tablā

- Students identify the principle beats of the Tablā.
- *Students audibly recognize primary rhythms, including Tintāl (Pañjābī thekā), Dādrā, Dīpcandī, Cārtāl, Jhaptāl, Kahirvā.*

Grade 4 (Ages 8-10)

In Grade 4, students begin learning the foundations and structural models of the post-Gurū period. The students will learn about the models the tenth Gurū had left in place for the Sikhs. Students will also understand the downfall of the first Khālsā Commonwealth through the infiltration of the five vices. In addition, they will continue to build on their previous knowledge of the Khālsā, through understanding the definition of the Sikh and the process of forming the Rahit Mariādā. As this period represents almost a century of continuous warfare, the Gatkā tradition of the Sikhs will be introduced. The progress of the Gurmat Saṅgīt training continues with the introduction of rāgs in their traditional forms. Finally, Grade 4 presents a period in childhood development where students' understandings broaden. Understanding key similarities and differences with other faiths is critical for Sikh children growing up in the Diaspora and living in a multicultural environment. The Grade 4 curriculum focuses on laying the foundation of Sikh leadership training, as well as broadening students' perspective to the greater community.

Standard 1: Sikh Heroes: Bandā Singh Bahādar

- Students identify Sikh system of leadership under Bandā Singh Bahādar.
 - *Students will identify forms of leadership, empowerment of the Pañj Piāre, and the issuance of Gurmatās. Further discussion includes the duties of the Khālsā in terms of freedom and justice.*

Standard 2: Combating the Mental Vices

- Students identify the five vices and formulate strategies to control them.
 - *Students participate in activities that give students dramatic and situational examples of the Pañj Vikār that allow students to recognize them.*

Standard 3: Defining a Sikh

- Students identify the definition of a Sikh based on the Rahit Mariādā.
 - *Students can identify the clauses that define a Sikh as stated in the Rahit Mariādā.*

Standard 4: Comparative Religion

- Students compare and contrast basic Sikh beliefs with those of other faiths.
 - *Students will create comparison charts with other world faiths including: Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.*

Standard 5: Sikh Musicology: Rāg

- Students appreciate Rāgs and Gurmat Saṅgīt.
 - *Students learn background of kīrtan and audio appreciation of Rāgs (to be selected) and the emotions associated with each.*

Standard 6: Sikh Martial Arts

- Students learn the history and basic steps of the Gatkā martial art.
 - *Students are taught skills, including the paintrā, marorā, and other techniques.*
 - *Students will identify the various traditional shastars, including: kirpān, barchā, carkā, dāhl, gurj, kamān, katār, khaṇḍā, lāṭhī, mārā, soṭī, tabar, talvār, and tūr.*

Grade 5 (Ages 9-11)

Students study the major civilizations of South Asia, in addition to the political and religious upheavals that led to the circumstances for the entry of Gurū Nānak into this world. From understanding the state of the world, the students study the importance of the first five Gurūs and their place in Sikh History. Key concepts of the Sikh ideology and philosophy are examined as they are illustrated in the lives of the Gurūs. As role model identification is strongest during these years, the lives of the Gurūs are emphasized so that students may use them as examples to model their own lives. The purpose of the Grade 5 curriculum is to give students their first concentrated study of the formative years of the Sikh nation.

Standard 1: Comparative Religions: Prophets

- Students identify the key personalities/prophets of the world's major religions and understand the history of their experiences in South Asia.

- *Students will identify the key personalities/prophets and their key ideologies. From understanding the beliefs of these faiths, lessons will move to having students understand the affect of these religions in the South Asian context and particularly in Pañjāb.*

Standard 2: Before the Gurū-Prophets

- Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the time preceding Gurū Nānak.
 - *Students will identify the role of the rivers in agrarian Pañjāb and its role in shaping the inhabitants. Discussion of the history of Pañjāb from the Indus Valley civilization to the Lodhī and Mughal dynasty should be involved. Lessons will progress in having students understand the affect of these religions and civilizations on the South Asian context and particularly in Pañjāb.*

Standard 3: The Life of Gurū Nānak

- Students describe the narrative of Gurū Nānak's history, its importance, while emphasizing the Sikh society at Kartārpur as the Gurū envisioned and lived.
 - *Students should geographically trace the udāsīs of Gurū Nānak and their importance, while understanding the basis for his teachings and the example of his life as major teachings for the Sikhs. Emphasis can be placed on the various Janam Sākhīs and events from the Sākhīs. Students will illustrate features of society at Kartārpur.*

Standard 4: Gurū Nānak's Thought

- Students identify the major worldviews of Gurū Nānak and how they provide solutions to the problems of the world in the 15th century and continue to do so in the present age.
 - *Students will be able to describe Gurū Nānak's views on caste, women, equality, fraternity, wealth, society, warfare, death, justice, hard work, the purpose of life, and the origins of life. The students should be able to do this in a comparative study with that of other religions.*

Standard 5: Comparative Religion: Belief

- Students compare and contrast basic Sikh beliefs with those of other faiths.
 - *Students will create comparison charts with other world faiths including: Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Brahmanical Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism.*

Standard 6: Āsā Kī Vār

- Students translate and recite 24 pauṛīs of Āsā Kī Vār with saloks in Rāg Āsā.
 - *Students learn audio recognition of Rāg Āsā, in addition to its history and details. The students will learn the history, purpose, importance, and Saigat-centered form of the Rāg Āsā. Students will learn proper recitation as well as the meanings and their application.*

Standard 7: The Gurū-Prophet Period: Nānaks I-V

- Students describe the history and times of the Gurūs until the death of Gurū Arjan, including famous Sikh personages.
 - *Students learn the major events and importance of creating institutions by the groundwork laid by the first five Sikh Gurūs. In addition to the Gurūs, students will be introduced to famous Sikh personages such as Bhāī Gurdās, Bhāī Mardānā, Mātā Khīvī, the Bhaṭṭs, Bhāī Buḍhā, and others). Activities should include lessons related to the Gurūs, for example Gurū Aṅgad's establishment of wrestling Akhāṛās.*