



Eighth grade courses



English 8 = 08 Eng

English 8 is a course that focuses on reading and writing skills. A variety of literature is read, including three novels, a play, short stories, and poems. Vocabulary and grammar studies stem from these literary works. Students learn of important literary figures such as Edgar Allan Poe and William Shakespeare. Essays include personal narratives and literary analyses. Shorter pieces of writing are assigned throughout the year. All literary writing assignments are designed to teach students to support their claims with evidence from the text. Punctuation rules are covered in-depth as well.

Human Geography = 08 Hum Geog

Human Geography is the study of how people and places interact with one another and how they transform the natural environment. In this course, students will learn about the basic ideas, principles, and concepts of human geography, develop an appreciation for cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, and evaluate the impact of humans, past, present, and future on the natural environment.

There are 3 levels of math offered to 8th graders with placement by teacher recommendation

Pre-Algebra = PALG

Pre-Algebra serves as a bridge between elementary mathematics and Algebra. This course will build a foundation of algebraic concepts through the use of technology, manipulatives, problem solving, and cooperative learning. Students will explore arithmetic operations, number systems and properties, measurement, geometry, and a detailed introduction to algebraic thinking and concepts.

Algebra I = Alg I

Algebra is a branch of mathematics that involves substituting letters for numbers. Algebra 1 introduces students to variables, algebraic expressions, equations, functions, inequalities, and their multiple representations. Algebra is concerned with finding the unknown, or putting real life situations into equations and then solving them. Algebra students will simplify and evaluate expressions, investigate functions, and solve and graph equations. This course lays the foundation for every subsequent course in mathematics. Success in Algebra I must be encouraged and emphasized since it is an accurate indicator of future success in further fields of mathematics.

Geometry = CP GEOM

The Geometry course includes an in-depth analysis of plane, solid, and coordinate geometry as they relate to both abstract mathematical concepts as well as real-world problem situations. Topics include logic and proof, parallel lines and polygons, perimeter and area analysis, volume and surface area analysis, similarity and congruence, trigonometry, and analytic geometry. Emphasis will be placed on developing critical thinking skills as they relate to logical reasoning and argument. Students will be required to use different technological tools and manipulatives to discover and explain much of the course content.

8th Lab Science = 08 LSCI

Physical science is a hands-on course that builds laboratory skills through experimental investigation. The three main areas of emphasis are 1) using laboratory tools and collecting and analyzing data; 2) learning the foundational concepts of physics and chemistry; 3) communicating scientific findings by writing lab reports and constructing conceptual models.

The major teaching units of physical science include:

FALL: The scientific method and working with data; motion and the laws of motion; work, power and energy; forms of energy and energy conversions.

SPRING: Electricity and magnetism wave properties, light, and sound; atomic structure and the periodic table of the elements; chemical names and formulas; chemical reactions.

Eighth graders may try a new language in our introductory language program OR continue into a level I language

Introductory Language option

Our introductory language program exist to both introduce students to language study and to transition students from classes solely based on comprehensible input (in LS and 6th grade) to a more structured understanding and use of the chosen language. The main goal of the class is to build a strong basis for language study in future years at TA. As such, the class aims to instill productive language study skills, while introducing and employing common vocabulary and basic grammar concepts. Teachers also hope to encourage an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures around the world. With the understanding that ample mistakes will be made during the learning process, emphasis is placed on daily usage of the language as students move towards higher levels of proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For this reason, participation is sometimes prized over accuracy. When students complete the introductory level, they will likely have reached at least a novice-mid proficiency level. In order to track proficiency progress, introductory level students participate in writing and speaking benchmark assessments throughout the year.

Language choices:

Introductory French

= Intro FR

Introductory German

= Intro GER

Introductory Spanish

= Intro SPAN

French 1 = FRN I

French 1 is a course offered to transfer students and students who have completed Introductory French at TA. As such, this is a blended course that moves quickly through a review of intro-level material before covering new topics. For some students, this class is a continuation of language study, but for others, it will be their first experience with a world language.

The major goal in this class is to help students attain reasonable proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, while also encouraging their cultural awareness. Foreign language acquisition is a cumulative process. Students need to build on past information and knowledge in order to progress. Care is taken to use the target language as much as possible, and students are encouraged to practice their skills daily. By the end of the year, students should be able to communicate effectively using basic spoken and written French, to understand basic French texts and conversations, and to have an appreciation for the French-speaking world and its culture. Upon completion of French 1, students will likely have reached at least a novice-mid or novice-high proficiency level. In order to track proficiency progress, Level 1 students participate in writing and speaking benchmark assessments throughout the year.

Spanish I = SPN I

Spanish 1 is a course offered to transfer students and students who have completed Introductory Spanish at TA. As such, this is a blended course that moves quickly through a review of intro-level material before covering new topics. For some students, this class is a continuation of language study, but for others, it will be their first experience with a world language. The major goal in this class is to help students attain reasonable proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, while also encouraging their cultural awareness. Foreign language acquisition is a cumulative process. Students need to build on past information and knowledge in order to progress. Care is taken to use the target language as much as possible, and students are encouraged to practice their skills daily. By the end of the year, students should be able to communicate effectively using basic spoken and written Spanish, to understand basic Spanish texts and conversations, and to have an appreciation for the Spanish-speaking world and its culture. Upon completion of Spanish 1, students will likely have reached at least a novice-mid or novice-high proficiency level. In order to track proficiency progress, Level 1 students participate in writing and speaking benchmark assessments throughout the year.

German I = CP GRM I

The major goal in this class is to help students attain reasonable proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, while also encouraging their cultural awareness. Foreign language acquisition is a cumulative process. Students need to build on past information and knowledge in order to progress. Care is taken to use the target language as much as possible, and students are encouraged to practice their skills daily. By the end of the year, students should be able to communicate effectively using basic spoken and written German, to understand basic German texts and conversations, and to have an appreciation for the German-speaking world and its culture. Upon completion of German 1, students will likely have reached at least a novice-mid or novice-high proficiency level. In order to track proficiency progress, Level 1 students participate in writing and speaking benchmark assessments throughout the year.

German for Native Speakers (8th Gr.) = 08 GER

This course is congruent with the German High School curriculum (Gymnasium) grade 8 and is taught to German native speakers. Generally, the course furthers students' ability to think, read, and write (critically) in their native language. Basic literary theory is taught referring to the books and within the social and historical context of each piece. Throughout the year, students revise the composition of a summary and learn how to compose a literary exposition. The 8th-grade approach towards language is designed to be normative and includes developing personal strategies for correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax. However, the first introductions toward a more descriptive approach are encouraged through critical analysis of language register and contrasting modern and early-modern German. Course materials include a traditional novella, two youth novels, as well as a text and workbook. Assessments include written tests, summaries, essays, presentations, and participation.

French III (German) = GRM FL 3

French 3 is a course offered to German 8th or 9th graders who took and passed French 2 in the 7th or 8th grade. It is also available to new students coming to the United States from Germany and have completed two years of French or the equivalent material covered in French 1 and 2 here at TA. As such, this is a blended course that moves quickly through a review of level-two material before covering new topics. For all students, this class is a continuation of language study. The major goal in this class is to help students increase their proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing attained in French 2, while also encouraging their cultural awareness. Foreign language acquisition is a cumulative process. Students need to build on past information and knowledge in order to progress. French 3 directly corresponds with and builds on the material learned in French 2. Care is taken to use the target language as much as possible, and students are encouraged to practice their skills daily. By the end of the year, students should be able to communicate effectively using spoken and written French in multiple tenses, to understand complex French texts and conversations, and to have an appreciation for the French-speaking world and its culture. Upon completion of French 3, students will likely have reached at least an intermediate-mid or intermediate-high proficiency level. In order to track proficiency progress, Level 3 students participate in writing and speaking benchmark assessments throughout the year.

Computer 8 =08 Comp

This course is designed to prepare students for Upper School Computer Science and teaches more advanced features in the Microsoft Office Suite: PowerPoint for images, audio and video features; Excel to organize large amounts of data into orderly, logical spreadsheets and charts; and an exploration of Excel Macros, Conditional Formatting and Advanced Formulas. Students utilize Code Combat for weekly coding exercises which includes binary, block, HTML, Python and Javascript coding languages. Coding helps students learn to problem solve, develop resilience, and think and expands their creativity. Students will also learn app development, web page design/development, 3D printing, virtual and augmented reality where they can create and solve problems using multiple technological resources. Some of these projects are done collaboratively and some are completed individually. Digital citizenship is taught in depth covering topics such as monitoring their time, creating safe passwords, copy write rules, and managing their digital footprints.

Electives (7th & 8th) grade

Visual Arts = MS Art

This course covers a sequential development of different types of art, such as drawing, painting, and sculpture, with an emphasis on realism. An emphasis is placed on more in-depth individual and independent investigations of the art elements, the principles of design, the different types of art, and the process of creation. The students will explore in their artwork a sequential development of the subjects of art. Art Subjects that will be explored and the elements of art, include: Still Life (geometric shapes, straight lines, value), Portrait (curve lines, shapes) Figure Drawing (geometric shapes, value) Landscape (organic shapes, space) Three -dimensional art (three-dimensional forms), Architectural Exterior Perspective/3-D buildings, and independent (students personal subject choice).The student will able to incorporate their vision of real-world details in each artwork. Upon completion, students should be able to communicate a complete knowledge of drawing. The student will learn about: the art elements, the principles of design, descriptive analysis, critiquing process, effective art terminology, the creative process, use of technology in art creation, and the importance of art in relationship to the creative arts.

Cover-to-cover = MS C to C

This elective class is designed for students who love books and love to read. Cover-to-cover will include a book sharing time and book projects. Additionally, students will help make our library inviting, creative, and a happy place to be. You will help promote a 'love for reading' throughout the school.

Debate = MS Debate

The Debate Team is an academically challenging opportunity for students to explore current issues while developing presentation and public speaking skills. Students will work on research skills, writing skills and leadership skills. This team provides a co-curricular aspect in which students truly consider factual, logical and moral stances in which they have a voice. The goal of this team is to become confident, well-rounded speakers and possibly compete against other debate teams.

Design Thinking = MS Design

Students in this elective will explore creative ways to make their world a better place. Principles of design thinking will be utilized to craft hands-on projects for the betterment of the community. Students will examine the needs in our society and explore concepts of upcycling.*

(*Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products of better quality or for better environmental value. Upcycling is the opposite of downcycling, which is the other half of the recycling process. -Wikipedia)

Digital Photography = MS Photo 7/8

The digital photography elective is designed for students who like playing with photography filters and enjoy crafting narratives. Students will explore the skills of framing a picture, exploring the effect of light, and emphasizing a macro perspective. Additionally, students will study the works of famous photographers, mimicking a wide array of photographic styles. The course will emphasize production and curation of student work. School-wide competitions of all kinds of art will be encouraged, as well as the use of digital tools to enhance our community.

Digital Storytelling = MS Story

Storytelling exists in human cultures throughout time. A powerful story can motivate, entertain, guide, or persuade others. In this elective, students will explore components of compelling narratives, using innovative Web 2.0 tools. Past projects have included green screen use, stop motion animation, cartoon creation and movie reenactments.

Environmental Issues = MS Env Iss

Environmental Issues is an elective class for middle school students who value the importance of a healthy environment. Students will brainstorm ways to conserve resources, reduce waste, and minimize pollution. They will implement some of their ideas through projects and student education. Students will collect recycling for the middle and upper school.

Physical Education = MS PE

Physical Education 7 teaches health skills, demonstrates various physical fitness levels, movement patterns, body awareness and sport skills. Upon completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate correct form for each sport and movement pattern while also combining different movements with sports at different speeds. Students should also be able to provide accuracy and power in each sport skill, Identify and describe benefits to being physically active, compare and contrast an active and sedentary lifestyle, plan their own workout, track and record their heart rate, as well as, identify and understand strategies related to games and sports.

Robotics = MS Robot

This is a beginning course in robotics. We will be utilizing Lego Mindstorm kits, Lego Commander App and various Lego Robotics materials. The objective of this course is to introduce the student to basic programming as well as problem solving strategies. This course will involve students in the development, building and programming of a LEGO Mindstorm robot. Students will work hands-on in teams to design, build, program and document their progress. Topics may include motor control, gear ratios, torque, friction, sensors, timing, program loops, logic gates, decision-making, timing sequences, propulsion systems and binary number systems. Student designed robots will be programmed to compete in various courses as developed by me. Design, build, program and test robots that can complete complex tasks, record live data, respond to environmental changes and more. LEGO MINDSTORMS helps bring technology, science and computer programming to life with hands-on, project-based STEM learning using best-in-class robotics solutions.

Strength & Conditioning= MS Str-B (boys) and MS Str-G (girls)

An intensive course designed to teach students techniques designed to enhance flexibility, speed, agility, reaction time, and aerobic endurance. The weight training portion of the course is geared more toward proper technique than significant increases in strength and power.

Strings (grade 5 -8) = MS STRINGS

Join a small ensemble of students playing strings instruments in the middle and upper school. While most students play the violin, we also include students who play the cello, viola, harp, and other strings students. This elective typically meets twice a week in place of another elective class. We have students of all abilities in our ensemble, and while we accept students to their instrument, we do expect you to practice at home outside of class, and true beginners will likely need additional lessons to catch up.

Rock Music Production = MS Rock Bnd

Rock Music Production: Interested in rock music or in the ways music is produced? Join this class to explore the origins of rock and roll, many of its various subgenres, and to create all kinds of music through the use of instruments and music-making technology.

Theatre = MS Drama

The advanced level of middle school theatre, this course builds upon the previous courses to produce a final, middle-school-only performance. Students in this elective will learn physical and vocal presentation techniques and develop a basic knowledge of theatre arts. They can also become eligible to compete in the AISA Drama competition for solo acting, duet acting, musical drama, and ensemble performance. The course will focus on an overview of production concepts, including auditions, script analysis, rehearsal, production design, costuming, and culminate in a final performance of a one-act play.