

8th Grade Course Descriptions

HISTORY

Academic American History 8

This course is designed for students to closely examine the topics related to shaping American History from the birth of our nation through Reconstruction. Students will learn about the Constitution, Creation of a new nation, the Jefferson Era, Manifest Destiny, the Age of Reform, the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Honors American History 8

In this course, students will expand their knowledge base relative to events shaping American History from the birth of our nation through Reconstruction. Students will learn about the Constitution, Creation of a new nation, the Jefferson Era, Manifest Destiny, the Age of Reform, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Students will debate Civil War topics.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Traditional Language Arts 8

The Language Arts block (two periods) provides students with a comprehensive program that teaches the Common Core State Standards and helps students become better readers, writers and thinkers so they are better prepared for college, careers, and beyond. The major objective of this course is to develop students' ability to read and understand fiction and nonfiction text and to write, speak, and listen as ways of communicating effectively. This course moves at a slower pace to help developing learners find greater success when reading novels, plays, short stories, and poems. Writing is also a strong component in the course using the Collins Writing Program. Students will write narrative, persuasive, and descriptive pieces. Grammar and editing instruction is integrated into the processes of reading and writing. This course entails student completion of a novel based project/task, per grading period

Traditional Language Arts 8 Units of Study:

- **Narrative Writing:** Writing a thesis, writing with detail, focusing a topic, incorporating dialogue, peer revision process, conventions, and body structure
- **Novel Study:** *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Communications and Media Study:** Narrow a topic, compose questions, interview subject, oral presentation using media.
- **Poetry Unit:** Students will analyze a series of poems by professional and student poets. Students will also write their own poetry using form, figurative language, image creation, line breaks with purpose and other poetic devices.
- **Novel Study:** *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Public Speaking Unit:** Students will write and deliver planned and impromptu speeches, culminating with a formal argumentative speech.

- **Short Story Study:** Selections from *Prentice Hall Literature* anthology: discussion and questions regarding literary elements, devices, and vocabulary.
- **Drama Study:** *The Governess* by Neil Simon and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (a play adaptation): comparing two texts, point-of-view, bias, propaganda, vocabulary.
- **Research Report:** Students will research a Holocaust survivor practicing note-taking, peer/self-editing for content, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing multiple sources using MLA format.
- **Novel Study:** *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain: PSSA open-ended response, author's purpose, main idea, supporting text, setting, theme, plot structure and vocabulary.
- **Argument Writing:** Students will write a literary analysis of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* citing research using argument and identifying the author's purpose for writing the novel.
- **Vocabulary:** *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots: A Study of Word Families II*.
- **Grammar Study:** Analysis of proper sentence construction, types of sentence structures, sentence combining, clauses, phrases, verbals, run-ons, fragments, agreement, capitalization and punctuation.

Academic Language Arts 8

The Language Arts block (two periods) provides students with a comprehensive program that teaches the Common Core State Standards and helps students become better readers, writers, and thinkers so they are better prepared for college, careers, and beyond. The major objective of this course is to develop students' ability to read and understand fiction and nonfiction text and to write, speak, and listen as ways of communicating effectively. This course has students reading novels, plays, short stories, and poems. Writing is also a strong component in the course using the Collins Writing Program. Students will write narrative, persuasive, and descriptive pieces. Grammar and editing instruction is integrated into the processes of reading and writing. This course entails student completion of a novel based project/task, per grading period.

Academic Language Arts 8 Units of Study:

- **Narrative Writing:** Writing a thesis, writing with detail, focusing a topic, incorporating dialogue, peer revision process, conventions, and body structure
- **Novel Study:** *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Communications and Media Study:** Narrow a topic, compose questions, interview subject, oral presentation using media.
- **Poetry Unit:** Students will analyze a series of poems by professional and student poets. Students will also write their own poetry using form, figurative language, image creation, line breaks with purpose and other poetic devices.
- **Novel Study:** *Oddballs* by William Sleator. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Public Speaking Unit:** Students will write and deliver planned and impromptu speeches, culminating with a formal argumentative speech.
- **Short Story Study:** Selections from *Prentice Hall Literature* anthology: discussion and questions regarding literary elements, devices, and vocabulary.
- **Drama Study:** *The Governess* by Neil Simon and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (a play adaptation): comparing two texts, point-of-view, bias, propaganda, vocabulary.

- **Research Report:** Students will research a Holocaust survivor practicing note-taking, peer/self-editing for content, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing multiple sources using MLA format.
- **Novel Study:** *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain: PSSA open-ended response, author's purpose, main idea, supporting text, setting, theme, plot structure and vocabulary.
- **Argument Writing:** Students will write a literary analysis of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* citing research using argument and identifying the author's purpose for writing the novel.
- **Vocabulary:** *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots: A Study of Word Families II*.
- **Grammar Study:** Analysis of proper sentence construction, types of sentence structures, sentence combining, clauses, phrases, verbals, run-ons, fragments, agreement, capitalization and punctuation.

Honors Language Arts 8

The Language Arts block (two periods) provides students with a comprehensive program that teaches the Common Core State Standards and helps students become better readers, writers, and thinkers so they are better prepared for college, careers, and beyond. The major objective of this course is to develop students' ability to read and understand fiction and nonfiction text and to write, speak, and listen as ways of communicating effectively. This course moves quickly as students read novels, plays, short stories, and poems. Writing is also a strong component in the course using the Collins Writing Program. Students will write narrative, persuasive, and descriptive pieces. Additional readings are assigned in the Honors program, some as a class and some independently. Grammar and editing instruction is integrated into the processes of reading and writing. This course entails student completion of a novel based project/task, per grading period

Honors Language Arts 8 Units of Study:

- **Narrative Writing:** Writing a thesis, writing with detail, focusing a topic, incorporating dialogue, peer revision process, conventions, and body structure.
- **Novel Study:** *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Communications and Media Study:** Narrow a topic, compose questions, interview subject, oral presentation using media.
- **Poetry Unit:** Students will analyze a series of poems by professional and student poets. Students will also write their own poetry using form, figurative language, image creation, line breaks with purpose and other poetic devices.
- **Novel Study:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. PSSA open-ended response, inferences/conclusions, character traits, motivation, conflict and vocabulary.
- **Public Speaking Unit:** Students will write and deliver planned and impromptu speeches, culminating with a formal argumentative speech.
- **Short Story Study:** Selections from *Prentice Hall Literature* anthology: discussion and questions regarding literary elements, devices, and vocabulary.
- **Drama Study:** *The Governess* by Neil Simon and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (a play adaptation): comparing two texts, point-of-view, bias, propaganda, vocabulary.
- **Research Report:** Students will research a Holocaust survivor practicing note-taking, peer/self-editing for content, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing multiple sources using MLA format.

- **Novel Study:** *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain: PSSA open-ended response, author's purpose, main idea, supporting text, setting, theme, plot structure and vocabulary.
- **Argument Writing:** Students will write a literary analysis of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* citing research using argument and identifying the author's purpose for writing the novel.
- **Vocabulary:** *Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots: A Study of Word Families II.*
- **Grammar Study:** Analysis of proper sentence construction, types of sentence structures, sentence combining, clauses, phrases, verbals, run-ons, fragments, agreement, capitalization and punctuation.

MATHEMATICS

Math 8

The course is comprised of a traditional instructional approach with exposure to: fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, ratios/proportions, percents, algebraic problem solving, geometric figures/properties and transformations, Pythagorean Theorem, probability and statistics, volume and surface, and linear functions and number systems.

Foundations of Pre-Algebra 8

The course is comprised of instruction related to fractions, mixed numbers, decimals, ratios/proportions, percents, algebraic problem solving, geometric figures/properties and transformations, Pythagorean Theorem, probability and statistics, volume and surface, and linear functions and number systems.

Algebra IA

This course covers the first part of Algebra I course with focus on problems solving of various algebraic functions relative to patterns and linear functions, proportional and linear functions, computation, measurement and estimation, multiple representations, functions/number systems, reasoning and connections.

Algebra 1

This course is a more intensive approach to Algebra focusing on a variety of algebraic topics to include: linear and quadratic equations, polynomials, factoring, graphing, working with rational and irrational numbers, developing problem solving skills, etc.

SCIENCE

Academic Science 8

This course will expose students to a Physical Science component by identification and examination of atomic structure and movement, forces of motion, and chemistry.

Honors Science 8

In this course, students will expand their awareness of atomic structure and movement, forces of motion, chemistry. Students will apply knowledge of chemical testing to water quality testing of Trappmill Run through Creek Connection program.

SPECIALS / ELECTIVES

Astronomy 7/8

The semester pass/fail course requires students to use critical thinking to explore the challenges of deep space travel and how reality differs from fiction. Students will plan a mission to Mars with a crew of 4-6 astronauts of different gender, race and nationality. Students will research the conditions of deep space and Mars. Using this information, students will design a ship capable of carrying the astronauts safely and design a habitat for their six week stay on Mars. Students will work in small groups and present their findings.

Band 7/8

Students enrolled in this graded course meet daily in a full concert band setting. Membership is open to all students who have successfully completed a band class in the previous year. This course will be a continuation of the technical training started in the beginning classes. Emphasis is placed on the attainment of skills necessary to meet high standards of music performance. This group will perform in the winter concert in December and the spring concert in May.

Ceramics 7/8

This semester pass/fail course has been designed to give students a general understanding of ceramics. In this semester long course, students will begin with a brief history of ceramics. This past to present look at ceramics will provide students the opportunity to develop their critical inquiry skills relative to aesthetics and criticism of the various ceramic pieces presented by the instructor. Students will learn how to correlate the elements and principle of design into their discussions about ceramic art and will use these skills for the implementation of developing their own/group projects. Students will understand the difference between functional and artistic ceramics. Students will look at what it takes to have a proper ceramic studio, including set up and organization of tools and equipment, safety procedures, as well as different kiln types and operation. Students will learn the ceramic terminology with each lesson. A sketchbook will be utilized for recording all written aspects of the class such as notetaking, brainstorming, compare and contrast, design development, instructions, self-evaluation, etc. Throughout the course, students will produce many different forms of ceramic ware. They will explore various construction methods (pinch, coil, and slab). The stages of clay, decoration methods, how to repair and replace damages as well as glaze techniques. Connections between other curricular areas may also be explored (Greek ceramics, musical instruments, etc.).

Chorus 7/8

Chorus students will learn to use their vocal instrument to create a correct and pleasant singing sound. In addition to learning proper vocal production and technique, students will also learn music reading skills, sight-singing skills, listening skills, and performance skills. Chorus also offers opportunities for students to develop team building and leadership skills. This is a performance-based class. Participation in concert performances outside of regular class hours is required.

Computational Thinking with Robots 7/8

This semester pass/fail course requires students to utilize their knowledge of number and operations, algebraic patterns, relations, functions, measurement, data analysis, probability, unit conversions, quantitative relationships, visual and spatial reasoning skills, geometry and various other mathematical calculations. The Calculator controlled robot activities allow students to create programs in TI-BASIC to run their robots. Students will use and apply the noted mathematics and science concepts to direct their robots through a variety of challenges.

Creek Connections 7/8

The semester pass/fail course facilitates and promotes awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of water resources and covers ecological topics not in the general curriculum. Units include Watersheds and Wetlands, Pest Management, Environmental Health, Agriculture and Society. Course entails group work, case studies, lab activities, writing and a culminating student-led project within the community. Relevant case studies and problem solutions from *Environment and Ecology for Pennsylvania* will be referenced throughout the course

Exploratory French – 8th grade

In this two semester online pass/fail course, students begin their introduction to French with fundamental building blocks in four key areas of foreign language study: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. The course consists of 180 lesson days formatted in an intuitive calendar view, which can be divided into two 90-day semesters. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. As students begin the course, they construct their own Avatar that accumulates “Avatar bucks”—by performing well on course tasks—to use to purchase materials (clothing, gadgets, scenery, etc.) at the “Avatar store”. Each unit consists of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, and multimedia cultural presentations covering major French-speaking areas in Europe and across the globe. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). This middle school course helps students engage in language learning; master common vocabulary terms and phrases; comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns; instigate and continue simple conversations, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts; generate language incorporating basic vocabulary and a limited range of grammar patterns; read, write, speak, and listen for meaning in basic French; analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various French-speaking countries; regularly assess progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and speaking/writing submissions. Since this is an exploratory course, students interested in furthering their knowledge of this foreign language will be required to register for French 1 at the senior high level.

Exploratory German – 8th Grade

This two semester online pass/fail course introduces students to German with fundamental building blocks in four key areas of foreign language study: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. The course consists of 180 lesson days formatted in an intuitive calendar view, which can be divided into two 90-day semesters. The course represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. As students begin the course, they construct their own Avatar that accumulates “Avatar bucks”—by performing well on course tasks—to use to

purchase materials (clothing, gadgets, scenery, etc.) at the “Avatar store”. Each unit consists of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, and multimedia cultural presentations covering major German-speaking areas in Europe. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). The Middle School German 1 course helps students engage in language learning; master common vocabulary terms and phrases; comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns; instigate and continue simple conversations, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts; generate language incorporating basic vocabulary and a limited range of grammar patterns; read, write, speak, and listen for meaning in basic German; analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various German-speaking countries; regularly assess progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and speaking/writing submissions. Since this is an exploratory course, students interested in furthering their knowledge of this foreign language will be required to register for German 1 at the senior high level.

Exploratory Spanish – 8th grade

This two semester online pass/fail course introduces students to Spanish with fundamental building blocks in four key areas of foreign language study: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. The course consists of 180 lesson days formatted in an intuitive calendar view, which can be divided into two 90-day semesters and represents an ideal blend of language learning pedagogy and online learning. As students begin the course, they construct their own Avatar that accumulates “Avatar bucks”—by performing well on course tasks—to use to purchase items (clothing, gadgets, scenery, etc.) at the “Avatar store”. Each Unit consists of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, and multimedia cultural presentations covering major Spanish-speaking areas in Europe and the Americas. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). The Middle School Spanish 1 course helps students engage in language learning; master common vocabulary terms and phrases; comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns; instigate and continue simple conversations, and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts; generate language incorporating basic vocabulary and a limited range of grammar patterns; read, write, speak, and listen for meaning in basic Spanish; analyze and compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries; regularly assess progress in proficiency through quizzes, tests, and speaking/writing submissions. Since this is an exploratory course, students interested in furthering their knowledge of this foreign language will be required to register for Spanish 1 at the senior high level.

Game Design 7/8

This semester online pass/fail course is intended for students who love gaming and want to design and build original games from beginning to end. Students will learn how to use Multimedia Fusion 2, a popular game design software program, to create engaging, interactive games in a variety of genres. Additionally, students will get a solid foundation in the basic concepts of game development. By the end of this course, students will have a variety of polished games ready for a game-development portfolio. Step-by-step instruction guides students through various

game-design projects as they learn how to use Multimedia Fusion 2. Each section of the course is followed by an assignment that builds upon the skills students learned in that section. In each assignment, students will use the skills learned in the step-by-step instruction to customize the look and feel of each section's game. **This course must be completed at school. The School District's software license for Multimedia Fusion 2® only applies to computers on the school campus.**

Geography 7/8

The semester pass/fail course will address basic geographic concepts (example – U.S. capitals and cities, world countries and capitals, landforms, world countries, latitude & longitude, geographic themes, map use, climate, weather, time zones, charts and graphs). Various international athletic activities, food, holidays, languages, economics, architecture, music, art will be discussed throughout. Students will utilize their critical thinking skills, the internet, Google Earth, Kahoot, Geo Tracking, Doulingo, Memrise, Virtual Tours articles, news related current event shows to create STEM based projects, and participate in Skype/podcasts sessions. Various projects and debates are also a component of the elective course.

Jazz Band 7 & 8

Students enrolled in this graded course meet daily in a full jazz band setting. Membership is open to all students who play alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, bari saxophone, trumpet, and trombone and who successfully completed a band class in the previous year. Membership is open to pianists, drummers, guitarists, and bassists who successfully pass the audition at the end of the previous school year. This course will cover many types of jazz (swing, blues, Latin jazz, jazz rock) and also introduce the students to improvisation. This group will perform at the winter concert in December and the spring concert in May. (Students who play concert band instruments will also be expected to participate in the concert band portion of the concert). Additional jazz band performances will most likely be scheduled throughout the year.

InnovatED 8

This is a hands-on, project-oriented introductory engineering course for students. The course is designed to address national educational standards in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. The goal, as a team, is to open one's mind and gain knowledge in STEAM related fields, as well as develop one's skills needed for success in the 21st Century. All students will actively engage in solving real-world problems by using prior knowledge, scientific inquiry, content knowledge, and technological design. Creativity, teamwork, communication, and critical thinking are essential components of the course.

Music 8

Music 8 is designed to enable students to explore various areas of music and covers topics such as rhythm, dictation, theory concepts and the human voice. Students will also be exposed to selections from various 20th century artists.

Recycle It! 7/8

This semester pass/fail course has been designed to provide students with an understanding of how artist today are inspired to use recycled materials to create art and help the environment. This is not a craft class. Students will be challenged to investigate, hypothesize and formulate different ways recycled materials can be used to make true works or art. Initially, they will make observations watching videos, and researching artists who are currently making art from recycled materials. Students will formulate a variety of design concepts within their sketchbook.

NOTE: Sketchbooks will be utilized for recording all aspects of the class such as notetaking, brainstorming, compare and contrast, design development, instructions, self-evaluations, etc., that they will hypothesize its success as a work of art. Students will learn how to correlate the elements and principles of design into their discussions about recycled artwork and will use these skills for the implementation of developing their own/group projects. Students will then follow their directed ideas that they will critique, analyze and then use to design a group/individual work of art. One example of this is to create a sculpture using plastic bottles. The possibilities with tis one recycled medium are endless. Students may make something purely artistic, like a bottle sculpture, to something utilitarian like a green house. The possibilities are truly endless.

Technology Design and Innovation – 8th grade

Most students use applications and play games on technological devices on a daily basis, but have never dreamed of building their own application or game. The goal of this course is to show students that they can design and program software to create their own application or game and contribute in today's highly digitized society.

Technology Education 8

Exploring technology is an activity-based course that introduces students to technology by examining the basic systems of communication, manufacturing, construction, transportation and bio-related areas. During the semester course, students will study the evolution of technology, invention, and innovation, impacts of technology, the systems approach, and various problem solving methods. The course incorporates computer based applications and a hands-on approach through the use of the wood shop.

Theatre Technology, Design, and Production 7/8

The semester pass/fail course is a STEAM based exploration of the duties of stage technicians and their contribution to the total aesthetic effect of a dramatic production. Students will focus on developing the basic tools and procedures for creating elements of technical theatre, to include: stage elements, set design and construction, lighting design, costumes and makeup, sound engineering, and stage management.

Visual Arts 8

Visual Arts 8 encourages originality, development of skills in the design and media through the creative problem solving process, art criticism, understanding art history and aesthetic perception. It is essential that students be introduced to the arts as a reflection of human imagination and human achievement.

Wellness 8

The yearlong fitness- based physical education course will provide fitness education and access to help students understand, improve and maintain their physical well being with heart-rate monitoring as the critical component. Students will also be provided instruction in and practice with the concepts of nutrition and maintaining a healthy lifestyle pertaining to topics as: body systems, dental health, disease prevention and control, drug use / misuse, first aid, and safety. The traditional class instruction coupled with the daily “mini-lessons” for all students in healthy eating habits and good nutrition. The course is not designed to develop specific athletic skills.

Library

The junior high library follows a flexible schedule. Free periods are allotted for students to select reading materials, which are selected by the librarian to foster a love of reading and support the school-wide Accelerated Reader program. Classes come to the library sporadically throughout the school year for instruction on topics involving library science and to research skills. Projects represent collaborative efforts between the subject teacher and the library teacher and meet PA Academic Standards within each subject’s curriculum.

Instructional objectives for each grade level are as follows:

- Access professional music reviews to create student music reviews (Music Collaboration).
- Accessing primary source interviews, write a five paragraph essay about a Holocaust survivor that includes a bibliography (Language Arts Collaboration).
- Debate Union and Confederate viewpoints during the Civil War by using reliable print and electronic resources to gather evidence (Social Studies Collaboration).
- Engage in lessons about digital self-expression and identity (Digital Literacy Curriculum—CIPA).