

9th Grade Honors Course Information

Participation in honors level classes at the junior high level can help students prepare for more rigorous courses in high school. These high school advanced courses, in turn, can prepare students to do better on the ACT, SAT, or other college entrance exams, as well as to succeed in high school and college course work.

AP Human Geography: This is an exciting introductory college-level course for the accelerated and motivated student. The course will introduce the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, interactions, and alteration of Earth's surface. It requires additional reading, writing, and study time with a great reward of increased understanding of the world in which we live, and the development of analytical thinking skills. Students will be expected to prepare for and take the AP Human Geography test in May, potentially earning them college credit. The cost of the AP test is approximately \$100.

Biology: Because the Biology curriculum is written for 10th grade, pacing will be rigorous, involving a high volume of class notes, reading, and writing on a weekly basis. Students will be expected to have advanced mathematical, reading, writing, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and be motivated learners. Tests will be challenging and there will be a significant amount of homework assigned. Many of the assignments will require independent study outside of class. Students will be expected to do quality work, with assignments turned in on time. Students should take this class in 9th grade if they really love science. Space is limited for this class. It is recommended students have A's and B's in math and science, end of level test scores of 3 or 4, and enrolled in Secondary Math I Honors. Students should be aware that if they take biology in 9th grade, they will still need two more science credits to graduate, meaning they will need to take chemistry, physics, or an AP science. If they don't want to take those higher level science classes, they need to take Earth Science in 9th grade and leave biology for 10th grade.

Honors English: In addition to the foundations in traditional 9th grade English, this course also focuses on in-depth analyses and reflection of a variety of novels, consideration of novelists/poets of various genres, and a wide range of projects including writing, project-based learning, and debate.

This course is designed to encourage a surplus of student participation, as students are encouraged to interact in group and class discussions using the higher level thinking skills of Bloom's Taxonomy. They will prepare mini-lessons, collaborate on class projects, and demonstrate accountability in the following areas: class assignments/projects, speaking, presentation, and formative and summative assessment.

Junior High Honors Courses Indicators for Student Success

Please thoughtfully consider the following criteria as you are deciding about whether junior high honors level courses will provide the most appropriate learning environment for your child. Read over this form and discuss it with your child. Be confident that they can achieve at the level described.

An honors student should meet the following criteria:

1. Typically, be performing at a 3 or 4 proficiency level on the end of level tests in a specific subject area before considering enrolling in an honors level course in that subject area.
2. Consistently earn an "A" or "B" (or a "3" for 6th graders) for the subject in which they desire to take an honors course.
3. Have a high level of interest and strong desire to be challenged in the subject in which they would like to take an honors course.
4. Consistently exhibit most of the characteristics described below.
5. Typically, reading and writing at or above grade level.

Learning/Intellectual Characteristics:

- Enjoys tasks that are more challenging than average
- Has a ready grasp of underlying principles, and can quickly make valid generalizations about events, people, and things
- Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts
- Reasons things out
- Analyzes problems and considers alternatives
- Enjoys complex concepts and processes

Motivational/Affective Characteristics:

- Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems
- Needs little external motivation to follow through in work completion
- Often requires little direction from teachers
- Is highly self-motivated and persistent
- Has high expectations of self and others

When deciding whether to enroll a student in a particular subject area honors course, please consider the following subject specific characteristics:

Math/Science:

- Is interested in numerical analysis
- Has a good memory for storing main features of a problem and its solutions
- Reasons effectively and efficiently
- Organizes data and experiments to discover patterns or relationships
- Is flexible in solving problems

Social Studies/Language Arts:

- * Has advanced vocabulary for age or grade level
- * Reads a great deal; does not avoid difficult material
- * Enjoys language (verbal or written) communication; has advanced communication skills
- * Organizes ideas and sequences in preparation for speaking and writing
- * Likes to study and research in areas of interest