

Grade 8 Course Descriptions

English

The focus of Grade 8 English is to prepare the student for the rigors of all courses in High School in that reading and writing skills are critical elements of all subjects. Key components of the curriculum include writing narrative, persuasive and expository essays, critical thinking, literature and poetry analysis, vocabulary, and grammatical and editing skills. In addition, the course focuses on public speaking to both enhance student confidence and oral English skills. Writing texts are expected to be between 600 to 900 words or more. Students will learn and practice research skills throughout the year, and will be expected to work cooperatively with other students to both research and present a debate topic in an organized and competitive forum. In addition to the general academic requirements, students are expected to read independently each day and to focus on speaking English both in the classroom and in their lives at large to increase skills and more effectively achieve the aims and abilities that will lead them eventually toward their American or IB diploma.

Algebra (Integrated Math 2)

Students focus on symbolic reasoning and calculations with symbols, which are central in algebra. Through the study of algebra, a student develops an understanding of the symbolic language of mathematics. In addition, a student in algebra develops algebraic skills and concepts and uses them in solving problems.

Tables and graphs are used to interpret algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities and to analyze functions. Computers and other appropriate technology tools (when available) can be used to assist in teaching and learning. Graphing utilities enhance the understanding of functions; they provide a powerful tool for solving and verifying solutions to equations and inequalities as well as providing a focus on probability. Throughout Algebra, students should be encouraged to talk about mathematics, use the language of symbols of mathematics in representations and communication, discuss problems and problem solving, and develop their confidence in mathematics.

Pre-Algebra (Integrated Math 1)

Student reviews or extends concepts and skills learned in previous grades and new content that prepares students for more abstract concepts in algebra and geometry. A grade eight student gains proficiency in computation with rational numbers (positive and negative fractions, positive and negative decimals, whole numbers and integers) and uses proportions to solve a variety of problems. New concepts include solving two-step equations and inequalities, with a focus on the Pythagorean theorem and probability.

Social Studies: Middle Ages – Early Modern Times

This course will take students from the Ancient Roman Empire to 1815 C.E. Within the course, students will focus on the transitions of power, technology, and trade throughout the expanding world. Interactions between people and an exploration of how geography has affected humanity will facilitate students' understanding as they begin to question history and view it as a living, ever-changing content area. Students will investigate the foci of power throughout the globe and examine how and why power has shifted. The main subject area will be history, but geographical and economic themes will also be used to explain historical events. The primary content themes of the course will deal with Western Civilization and Middle Eastern Civilization and the connections between them. The course will end with a research paper examining the French Revolution and movement of the West towards democratic and capitalist societies. The aim of the course is to give the students a better understanding of the world that they live in today.

Science: Basic Physics & Chemistry

Students in 8th Grade Science develop an understanding of the scientific process as they survey both physics and chemistry. Students continue to emphasize data analysis and experimentation through hands-on inquiry. The concept of change is explored through the study of transformations of energy and matter. Students focus on integrated topics, which include physical science formulas and basic chemistry concepts. Students will begin to explore the natural scientific laws that guide everyday motion of matter. Science process skills such as observation, classification, inferring, hypothesizing, comparing, contrasting, measurement, interpreting data, use of numbers and communication are a key focus throughout the year.

Arabic 8

This class represents a progression from grade 7 Arabic. Students read and write compositions in modern Standard Arabic, with a focus on the preliminary study of syntax. Students summarize novels and simple poetry to develop their verbal skills in language. Students become more familiar with the more advanced genres of literature as they advance. Students follow the grade 8 Ministry curriculum for Arabic, religion and social studies.

Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL):

Beginning: The main emphasis is on Modern Standard Arabic. A student who successfully completes the first year of MSA can expect to possess a working competence in reading and in writing Modern Standard Arabic.

Advanced: This course includes advanced reading and writing as well as lectures in special topics. At the end of the advanced course, students should also be able to communicate with ease and clarity with native speakers.

Physical Education and Health

Students in this class demonstrate competence in skillful movement in dynamic game situations and in a variety of recreational activities. They transition from modified versions of movement to more complex applications across all types of physical activities. Students demonstrate the ability to assume responsibility for guiding their own learning as they apply their knowledge and abilities to create a practice plan to improve performance in a selected game, sport, or recreational pursuit. They will also demonstrate mature responsibility as they show respect for others and their safety, make reasoned and appropriate choices, resist negative peer pressure and exhibit fair play. Students are able to set goals, track progress and participate in physical activities to improve fitness. They will develop a repertoire of physical abilities and begin to develop competence in specialized versions of lifetime activities.

Students will explore several Health topics relevant to their age and social maturity. They will develop an awareness of stress on their personal lives. They will know the difference between positive and negative stressors, either using it to work for positive change or to take steps to reduce stress in their lives and lessening the effects on one's health. Students will gain an understanding of how diseases are transmitted and how to take precautions to avoid illness.

Elective Classes

French/Spanish – Level I

In level I foreign language courses, students begin to develop communicative competence in the target language and expand their understanding of the culture(s) of the people who speak the language. Communicative competence is divided into three strands:

- Speaking and writing as an interactive process in which students learn to communicate with another speaker of the language
- Listening and reading as a receptive process in which students develop comprehension of the target language
- Speaking and writing in a presentational context in which students focus on organization of thoughts and awareness of their audience in delivering information.

In level I classes, students learn to communicate in real-life contexts about topics that are meaningful to them. To develop students' communicative competence, emphasis is placed on use of the target language in the classroom and on use of authentic materials to learn about the culture. Rather than isolating grammar in a separate strand, it is integrated into instruction according to the vocabulary and structures needed in the various situations in which students are required to function. Through the language learning process, students develop a greater understanding of the structure of their own language and the unique aspects of their own culture. An important component of learning a modern foreign language is using the language in the real world beyond the classroom setting. This can be accomplished in a number of ways through integration of technology into the classroom, as technology is an important means of accessing information in the target language and in providing students the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the language.

French/Spanish 2: Intermediate

In level II foreign language courses, students continue to develop their communicative competence by interacting orally and in writing with other speakers of the target language, understanding oral and written messages in the language, and making oral and written

presentations in the language. They begin to show a greater level of accuracy when using basic language structures, and they are exposed to more complex features of the language. They continue to focus on communicating about their immediate world and daily activities. They read material on familiar topics and write short, directed compositions. Emphasis continues to be placed on use of the target language in the classroom as well as on use of authentic materials to learn about the target culture(s).

8th Grade Art

In 3D Studio first semester, students will explore basic 3D processes and materials in a variety of 3D media. Both traditional (plaster, ceramics) as well as non-traditional (fabric, found objects, etc.) will be emphasized. Students develop technical skills that empower them to communicate ideas visually, with the focus on developing the ability to analyze form and space relationships. Students will be encouraged to develop concepts, work through ideas, to experiment, embrace risks, and to learn from failures in the design process. Students will emphasize art making as an ongoing process that involves the student in informal and critical decision-making. Originality, effort, and creativity will be emphasized.

In 2D Studio second semester, students explore basic 2D processes and materials for a variety of 2D art media. They engage in exploration, analysis, and investigation of the creative process. Students develop technical skills that empower them to communicate ideas visually, with the focus on realistic representations of their environment. Students acquire knowledge that permits them to identify art styles and the periods to which those styles belong. They develop inquiry skills and vocabulary as they explore the meaning of works of art, using analysis of subject matter, themes, and symbols. Students develop an increased awareness of the nature of art and of their relationship to it as they explore the meaning and value of works of art.

8th Grade Band

In 8th grade, students who have previously participated in music at AISE may choose to continue in Band. This class is designed for students to continue their musical growth. Instruction builds upon and reinforces fundamental skills learned previously. This course is also considered a prerequisite for students wishing to be in the band at the High School level. Students perform each semester and are expected to practice their instruments regularly outside of class. This course requires a fee of 600 LE for the rental of a school instrument with 200 LE to be refunded upon

return of the instrument in good condition. Students must have previous experience playing a band instrument, either from Grade 7 Band or from playing at a previous school.