

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 building students' abilities at making and defending their claims with evidence and reasoning in writing, discussions, and in oral presentations. Written texts are expected to be between 600 to 900 words or more. Students will learn within a Writers Workshop setting and will work cooperatively with other students to create, refine, research, and defend claims in writing and in debate. 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. Throughout the course, 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.

The topics covered include solving equations: linear, multi-step, systems, rational, and radical. Expansion and factoring of expressions. Reinforcement of topics from two-dimensional geometry is integrated into this curriculum. This includes applications from similar and congruent triangles, perimeter, the Pythagorean Theorem and its applications, as well as geometric proportion. Finally, introductory instruction in the area of mathematical probability is provided to reinforce use of fractions and numerical modeling.

Social Studies

This course will take students from the ancient civilizations to the European Renaissance. 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 will focus on the Rise of Civilizations, Greece, Rome and the Byzantines, the Islamic Empires, and the European Middle Ages, Renaissance and European Exploration. Next year in Grade 9 they will continue from the 16th Century into the modern era.

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 observing, inferring, hypothesizing, comparing, contrasting, measuring, interpreting data, use of numbers and communication are a key focus throughout the year.

Arabic

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 II: 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).

Art

Students 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.

Students also 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.

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 1000 LE for the rental of a school instrument with 300 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.

Design

In this class, students apply practical and creative thinking skills to solve design problems through exploring the role of design in both historical and contemporary contexts. There is a focus on the holistic design process rather than the final product or solution. The design cycle is used as a way to structure inquiring and analyzing design problems, developing and creating feasible solutions, and testing and evaluating students' models, prototypes, products or systems.

Green Program

The core concepts of the Green Program/Horticulture course revolve around sustainable living and the use of technology to improve human lives. The course is a blend of science and social studies. It is largely hands on and project based with the scientific processes of collecting data mixed with an understanding of growing populations and the need for more and better-quality food sources. It will also involve an understanding of how to make plants in a variety of ways and basic plant care.

Coding

This class offers an introduction to Computer Science with a focus on computer programming. Students will gain an understanding of the fundamental principles and concepts of Computer Science and will learn how to use computer programming as a problem-solving tool. Students will be practicing breaking up large problems into smaller, simpler ones that are easier to solve. As they move on through the year, students will start learning how to use programming as a creative tool and will be able to make animations and simple video games through independent projects.

Creative Writing:

This class integrates the AISE English Department core principles into a rigorous study of the foundations of creative writing and the development of individual voice and polished work. This course will consist of training in the elements of Fiction, Poetry, and Creative Nonfiction. This elective course will give students who are curious and motivated the techniques, skills, and individual guidance necessary to focus on the various genres of English as a refined fine art.

The goal of the course is to provide a high level of instruction and experiences that prepare students for further study at the high school, university or professional level.

8th Grade Choir

8th Grade Choir builds on what was learned in grade 7. All students will sing in the choir. An emphasis will also be put on music theory to aid students in their choral development. Performances will occur periodically throughout the year.