



High School Course Descriptions by Grade Level

9th Grade

ELA class appropriate to skill level

- Language Arts
 - Core writing instruction shifts from science and history classes to Language Arts. Students move from crafting content area compositions to composing paragraph level descriptive, narrative, and persuasive writing. Writing assignments begin with expansion of Thinking Maps for planning and drafting in order to sharpen the focus on the development of original ideas. Writers are tasked with introducing a topic and then developing the topic with relevant details which are presented in an organized manner. Writers begin to study and apply writing terminology such as point of view, mood, tone, audience, and purpose. Writing conventions (capitalization, punctuation, etc.) and spelling are addressed with more independence through the use of checklists and word processing. Compositions at the 9th grade level are typically one to three paragraphs in length and are highly scaffolded. Vocabulary development is taught through the use of the Wordly Wise program.
- Literature
 - Reading comprehension is developed through exposure to various genres and cultures via short stories and novels. Readers learn to determine the central idea of a text and then look to identify and highlight specific information which supports the theme. Readers are taught the specific elements of plot, and they learn how to track character development. Class discussions involve more critical thinking as readers are encouraged to think about character motivation in order to address questions asking “why”. With support, readers make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Figurative language is identified and labeled (simile, metaphor, idiom, etc.) in isolation as well as within a text.

Math classes available based on appropriate skill level

- Pre-Algebra
 - Students have the opportunity to gain proficiency with operations with fractions, decimals, and percents, along with understanding ratios and proportional relationships. Word problems and problem solving will continue to be reinforced, along with increased practice with multi-step problem solving. Students will gradually begin to work with the concept of variables and will gain an understanding of the basic rules of Algebra in order to simplify expressions and solve equations for unknown quantities. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum.
- Algebra 1

- Students build off their initial understanding of basic Algebra skills in order to prepare for higher level problem solving, along with more multi-step equation solving. Working with linear representations and the concept of “rate of change” is also emphasized at this level. Students will examine this concept algebraically but will also work frequently with graphs and the idea of slope in order to visually represent a positive or negative rate of change. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum.
- **Integrated Math**
 - Students have the opportunity to work on basic skills involving concepts of number sense, operations, mathematical reasoning, and problem solving. While students will practice problem solving with four main mathematical operations, they will also continue to develop their knowledge of working with parts of a whole, understanding the conceptual relationship between fractions, decimals, and percents. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum.

History

- **US History I**
 - Students examine early Colonial America through World War I, including geography and common themes that emerge, through multi-sensory lessons, short writing responses, weekly quizzes, vocabulary review, and guided note-taking. The focus on writing in 9th grade is through open response questions on quizzes, essays with guided research and notes, and class-generated graphic organizers to guide their writing.

Science

- **Biology**
 - Biology provides opportunities for students to explain processes, create persuasive arguments, develop logical thinking skills, solve problems, and engage their world. Topics covered include: Chemistry of Life: Organic Molecules and Enzymes; Ecology: Food Web, Cycles, and Trophic Levels; Cell Biology; Genetics and Heredity; Evolution and Biodiversity; and Anatomy and Physiology

Health

- Health and Student Issues classes follow the Curriculum Frameworks set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Comprehensive Health education. These classes meet twice a week. They use a psycho-educational group format and are taught by a school counselor. The topics covered include; social communication, bullying prevention, drug and alcohol awareness, puberty/anatomy review, sexuality, social safety, and dating relationships.

Consumer skills

- Students focus on home and self care in this section. Within this topic, students work to understand and practice grocery shopping, meal planning, cooking (including measuring and following a recipe), caring for clothes (including doing laundry), organizing belongings, and home maintenance including repairs and cleaning.

10th Grade

ELA class appropriate to skill level

- Language Arts
 - Students develop multi paragraph descriptive, narrative, and persuasive writing. Writing assignments begin with expansion of Thinking Maps for planning and drafting in order to sharpen the focus on the development of original ideas. Writers are tasked with introducing a topic and then developing the topic with relevant details which are presented in an organized manner. Writers incorporate concrete details and begin to use quotations to support writing. Independence with writing conventions (capitalization, punctuation, etc.) and spelling is encouraged through the use of checklists and word processing. Compositions at the 10th grade level are typically one to three paragraphs in length and are moderately scaffolded. Vocabulary development is taught through the use of the Wordly Wise program. After Winter Break, students begin a unit specifically targeting MCAS preparation.
- Literature
 - Reading comprehension is developed through exposure to various genres and cultures via short stories and novels. Readers learn to identify a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. Readers are taught to recognize that authors make choices regarding how to develop story elements, and they learn to analyze how complex ideas or events are developed.. Class discussions involve critical thinking as readers are encouraged to think about character motivation in order to address questions asking “why”. With support, readers make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Figurative language is identified and labeled (simile, metaphor, idiom, etc.) in isolation as well as within a text. After Winter Break, students begin a unit specifically

Math classes available based on appropriate skill level

- **Pre-Algebra**
 - Students have the opportunity to gain proficiency with operations with fractions, decimals, and percents, along with understanding ratios and proportional relationships. Word problems and problem solving will continue to be reinforced, along with increased practice with multi-step problem solving. Students will gradually begin to work with the concept of variables and will gain an understanding of the basic rules of Algebra in order to simplify expressions and solve equations for unknown quantities. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum.
- **Algebra 1**
 - Students build off their initial understanding of basic Algebra skills in order to prepare for higher level problem solving, along with more multi-step equation solving. Working with linear representations and the concept of “rate of change” is also emphasized at this level. Students will examine this concept algebraically but will also work frequently with graphs and the idea of slope in order to visually represent a positive or negative rate of change. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum.
- **Geometry**

- Students review, build upon, and extend their prior knowledge of Geometric skills and concepts. Students will also be able to use what they already know to learn about new concepts involving angle relationships, volume, surface area, parallel and perpendicular lines, and Geometric notation. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems, and reviewing skills with money and time are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom, as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.

History

- **US History II**

- Students focus on historical events that occurred in the early 1900s in the United States up to present day. Some topics students study include America's involvement in wars, civil rights, the Great Depression, the Space Race, and how these events impact society today. They also work on current events weekly, short writing prompts, graphic organizers and quizzes. The focus on writing in 10th grade is 3-5 paragraph essays, which vary from student to student based on academic ability. Students are required to complete graphic organizers, either as a class or independently, and incorporate revisions and feedback into final drafts.

Science

- **Earth Science**

- Students focus on developing and using models, constructing explanations, and obtaining evaluating and communicating information. Content to be covered includes: Earth's place in the universe, Earth's systems, and Earth and human activity.

Health

- Health and Student Issues classes follow the Curriculum Frameworks set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Comprehensive Health education. These classes meet twice a week. They use a psycho-educational group format and are taught by a school counselor. The topics covered include; social communication, bullying prevention, Internet/social media safety, coping skills and anger management, disability awareness, anatomy review, STI awareness and prevention, and birth control protection methods.

Consumer skills

- Students focus on career exploration in this section. Within this topic area, students spend time on career exploration including the career decision making inventory, the work readiness inventory, researching and evaluating a variety of careers and identifying personal strengths and interests.

11th Grade

ELA class appropriate to skill level

- Language arts
 - Short-term and long-term writing assignments focus on planning, drafting and editing. Writers are tasked with using specific and relevant information and presenting it in an organized fashion. Students are taught to address specific audiences with a determined purpose. Figurative language and vocabulary development help writers paint more vivid pictures. Students begin exploring research writing and learn the importance of using quotations and citations in order to avoid plagiarism. Near the end of the year, personal narratives are started in preparation for college applications.

- Literature
 - Reading comprehension is developed through the use of text annotation, the study of inferential thinking, and the investigation of figurative language. Students analyze how complex ideas or events are developed throughout the course of a text. Discussion contributes to understanding and critical thinking. Independence is promoted throughout with the inclusion of long-term reading assignments.

Math classes available based on appropriate skill level

- **Geometry**
 - Students review, build upon, and extend their prior knowledge of Geometric skills and concepts. Students will also be able to use what they already know to learn about new concepts involving angle relationships, volume, surface area, parallel and perpendicular lines, and Geometric notation. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems, and reviewing skills with money and time are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom, as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Algebra Fundamentals**
 - Students practice and explore introductory topics of Algebra, such as equation solving, rate of change/slope, and graphing linear equations. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Algebra 2**
 - Students build upon the skills they learned in Algebra 1 to solve problems involving higher level algebraic concepts, such as quadratic functions, absolute value equations, and systems of equations. Students will also continue with graphing equations on a coordinate plane, including systems of linear equations, then move to the concept of exponential functions and equations. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.

History

- **World History**
 - Students examine human development from the beginning of civilization to present day including geography and common patterns that emerge throughout cultures through multi-sensory lessons, short writing responses, weekly quizzes, vocabulary review, and independent note-taking. The focus on writing in 11th grade are 5 paragraph essays that require independent research, identifying relevant sources, and integrating that information into writing. Students are also required to edit and add teacher feedback into final drafts.

Science

- **Environmental Science and Technology**
 - Students take a hands-on application of environmental concepts using engineering principles. The students explore environmental concepts in which they work closely with the greenhouse to engage in labs and experiments related to fresh water/food production/food webs/habitats/photosynthesis/water cycle. The students also learn about conservation and renewable resources and then work towards solutions to the problems that are being caused by humans.

Health

- Health and Student Issues classes follow the Curriculum Frameworks set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Comprehensive Health education. These classes meet twice a week. They use a psycho-educational group format and are taught by a school counselor. The topics covered include: Social communication, bullying prevention, Internet/social media safety, pregnancy, parenting, decision-making and assertiveness.

Consumer skills

- Students focus on community resources and introducing financial literacy skills in this section. Within these topic areas, students work on understanding resources in a community, emergency assistance, services for workers, spending habits, banking, bill pay, and shopping for goods and services.

Career Education

- Students focus on career readiness in this section. Students participate in activities to identify, understand, create, and practice smart goals, soft skills, resumes, cover letters, job skills, interviewing skills, post high school planning, and communication in the workplace.

12th Grade

ELA class appropriate to skill level

- Language Arts
 - Long-term writing assignments are given with the focus on planning, drafting, and editing. Writers are given more independence when tasked with using specific and relevant information and presenting it in an organized fashion. Areas of study include speech writing and personal narrative where students write to address specific audiences with a determined purpose. A unit on research writing focuses on using quotations and citations, tracking cited sources, and determining source relevance. Independence and time management are promoted with the inclusion of longer assignments correlating with the Experiential Learning Program.
- Literature
 - Reading comprehension is developed through exposure to various genres and cultures via short stories and novels. Readers identify a theme of a text and analyze its development through written expression and class discussion. Readers discuss and analyze how complex ideas and events evolve through plot development. Class discussions involve critical thinking as readers are encouraged to think about character motivation in order to address questions asking “why”. They are asked to link literature to real world (i.e., Experiential Learning) scenarios through text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.

Math classes available based on appropriate skill level

- **Algebra Fundamentals**
 - Students practice and explore introductory topics of Algebra, such as equation solving, rate of change/slope, and graphing linear equations. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Algebra 2**

- Students build upon the skills they learned in Algebra 1 to solve problems involving higher level algebraic concepts, such as quadratic functions, absolute value equations, and systems of equations. Students will also continue with graphing equations on a coordinate plane, including systems of linear equations, then move to the concept of exponential functions and equations. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Pre-Calculus**
 - Students build upon the skills they learned in Algebra 2 to solve problems involving higher level concepts, such as performing arithmetic operations with complex numbers, vectors, and matrices. Concepts of trigonometry are also incorporated at this level, such as proving and applying trigonometric identities, defining trigonometric ratios, and applying trigonometric ratios to triangles. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving multi-step word problems and reviewing skills with time and money, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Consumer Math**
 - Students have the opportunity to practice and gain proficiency with previously learned skills and examine how those concepts are integrated with everyday life. Concepts covered include real-world applications of percents, such as discounts, sales tax, tipping at a restaurant, and credit card interest. Calculating a weekly, monthly, or yearly salary at a hypothetical job, and looking at sample budgets while analyzing income vs. typical expenses are also included. Reinforcement of basic problem solving skills, such as solving word problems and reviewing skills with money and time, are also embedded within the curriculum. Students will often be permitted to use calculators in the classroom as long as the focus is on problem solving and not solely on computational skills.
- **Integrated Geometry**
 - This course is developed for students who still need to pass the Mathematics MCAS. Students who have difficulty passing the test in the traditional way are able to put together a portfolio of work related to content covered within the Mathematics standards addressed on the MCAS exam. Topics covered include skills within number sense and operations, algebra, geometry, and statistics. After reviewing the required concepts, student work samples are compiled and submitted to the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education in the spring for scoring. Students have the opportunity to re-submit if a passing score is not granted upon initial submission.

History

- **Civics & Government**
 - Students are focusing on understanding the workings of the political system as well as their own political and civic rights and responsibilities, including important social issues. They do this by examining current events, using information from a variety of sources to complete graphic organizers, taking weekly quizzes and writing responses, as well as independently completing a student-led civics project that requires them to research and develop an action plan about a civics issue of their choice. The focus on writing in 12th grade is based upon research, planning writing using graphic organizers, and incorporating revisions from teacher feedback into their final drafts.

Health

- Health and Student Issues classes follow the Curriculum Frameworks set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for Comprehensive Health education. These classes meet twice a week. They use a psycho-educational group format and are taught by a school counselor. The topics covered include; social communication, bullying prevention, Internet/social media safety, public health, community action/service, age of majority, self-determination, health care management, and psychology.

Consumer skills

- Students focus on money management in this section. Within this topic area students work on understanding budgeting and spending habits by participating in activities related to needs versus wants and credit cards/loans.

Career Education

- Students focus on post high school readiness in this section. Students spend time planning for post high school experiences. Readiness for independence incorporates professionalism, self-awareness, self-advocacy, motivation, initiation, and an understanding of ADA versus IDEA laws.

Experiential Learning Program (ELP)

- This program integrates everyday life academics and independent/community living components into each student's overall ELP week experience. Students' are assigned to week 1 or week 2. Once weeks are allocated, each student is placed into life/community skills and real life academic groups that best fit their needs. These assignments enable us to structure each curriculum to more efficiently meet each individual student's needs. Our expectation is that as students increase their independent living skills and knowledge they will have the opportunity to move up through the life skills program as needed. On Mondays, and Wednesdays, students leave for their work placements immediately after first period and return for ninth period. On Thursdays and Fridays, students participate in classroom and community based life skills and outings.