



# Middle School Course Offerings 2023-2024

THE MONTGOMERY ACADEMY

### English

#### English 5

English 5 is divided into two main focuses. In the fall, students read works of fiction, working to develop and promote the critical thinking and comprehension skills needed to intelligently discuss works of literature. Fiction skill units include: identifying and comparing traditional story elements, plot, making inferences, theme, point of view, and summarizing. The spring semester will highlight non-fiction works, focusing on comprehending academic writing and crafting/defending arguments. Students will read a wide variety of literature to practice these skills: novels, short stories, poetry, and scholarly articles. Units focusing on specific spelling, vocabulary, and grammar skill sets and rules will be integrated weekly to enhance student's composition. In addition to the skill unit studies, students will participate in book clubs featuring realistic fiction, mystery, and fantasy/science fiction novels throughout the year.

#### Humanities: Grade 6

The sixth-grade Humanities class incorporates both language arts and social studies. The course focuses on experiences of reading and responding to literature and composing works while cultivating independent thinkers and collaborative leaders. Through their studies, students learn how ancient civilizations are related to the world today. Skills will be developed across content and include reading comprehension related to world history; elements of literature and literary analysis through novels and historic documents; and composition skills, including grammar and mechanics. Students begin to refine their composition skills and the basic components of a proper paragraph (topic sentence, examples and evidence, conclusion sentence). At the end of the year, students have both an understanding and a working knowledge of the world around them, past and present.



#### English 7

In English 7, students develop their reading, writing, and interpretive skills. Students complete engaging learning exercises that address the areas of vocabulary, composition, grammar, reading, and interpreting. Students refine their composition skills, in particular paragraph structure, writing a 5-paragraph essay, and mechanics. They learn to read actively and to analyze both orally and in writing the literature that they read. Grammar study in English 7 builds on knowledge of terminology and concepts and an understanding of the necessary grammatical framework, enabling students to effectively proofread and correct their work. Students engage in a vocabulary study focused not only on memorizing the meanings of words, but on applying the words' meanings and on using the newly learned words in students' own writing.

#### English 8

The major focus of English 8 involves the integration of grammar, study of literature, and emphasis on composition and critical thinking. Through the study of selected novels, emphasis is placed on paragraph development, the full essay, and correct use of mechanics. During the second semester, students are assigned a major documented paper. Students spend several weeks doing research on their chosen

## COURSE OFFERINGS

topics, and once research is completed, work on the papers themselves. Grammar study expands to include grammar skills that are more sophisticated, such as use of parallel structure, verb and pronoun errors that occur most frequently in essay writing, and focus on more complex sentence construction. Also included in the curriculum is the continued study of vocabulary and short units of grammatical skills needed in their writing. Literature that will be studied in depth includes *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

### Mathematics

#### Math 5

Math 5 reinforces previous skills taught in elementary grades. Students will learn to compute numbers to 10,000,000, round and estimate numbers to the nearest thousand, and solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. This course introduces fractions, decimals, and percentages. Students will learn to compare and round decimals and rewrite decimals as fractions, as well as solve word problems that involve percentages. Math 5 will introduce algebraic equations using variables to represent unknown numbers. This course will also introduce the area of a triangle and using ratio to compare numbers or quantities.

#### Math 6

Math 6 solidifies and expands on elementary concepts, develops math literacy and number sense, and explores the application of mathematical operations in problem solving. The course introduces integer operations, variables, expressions, and equations. Additionally, the course develops students' understanding of statistical thinking, graphical analysis, applications of geometric concepts, and an understanding of financial literacy. Students should be able to connect mathematical concepts to their everyday experiences.

#### Math 6 Accelerated

Math 6 Accelerated provides similar course content to the Math 6 course, but with additional rigor and expectation for independence. A strong emphasis is placed on number fluency and with integers, fractions, and decimals and proficiency with the application of mathematical operations in problem solving. Additionally, the course develops students' understanding of statistical thinking, graphical analysis, applications of geometric concepts, and an understanding of financial literacy. Students should be able to connect mathematical concepts to their everyday experiences.

#### Pre-Algebra 7

Pre-Algebra 7 provides students with an introduction to the concepts of algebra and geometry, and reinforces properties of real numbers, placing a strong emphasis on the continued study of integers, order of operations, variables, expressions, and equations. Students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Problem solving activities and applications encourage students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions.



## COURSE OFFERINGS



### Pre-Algebra 7 Accelerated

Pre-Algebra 7 Accelerated provides similar course content to the Pre-Algebra 7 course, but with additional rigor and expectation for independence. A strong emphasis is placed on the connection between arithmetic and algebra, writing and solving equations and inequalities, and mastery of number theory and fraction concepts. Students explore the language of algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics in verbal, graphical, and symbolic form. Problem solving activities and applications encourage students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions.

### Algebra I

Algebra 1 explores linear equations and inequalities, systems of linear equations, exponential, rational, and quadratic functions graphically, numerically, and symbolically. In addition, operations of polynomials, radicals, and rational expressions are studied. Included are the properties of exponents. Problem solving and applications encourage students to model patterns and relationships with variables and functions using algebraic symbols.

### Geometry

Geometry emphasizes visualizing and understanding Euclidean geometric properties and mathematical relationships, making, and verifying conjectures, and establishing connections between geometric and algebraic properties. After an introduction to logic and reasoning, students develop a thorough foundation in proof writing using theorems and postulates. Students apply their proving and problem-solving skills to the concepts of measurement, congruence, proportionality, and similarity. Exploration of geometric properties is completed with a study of right triangle trigonometry, properties of circles, and an introduction to measurement of two and three-dimensional shapes. *Placement Prerequisite:* Successful completion of Algebra I as determined by the math department.

## Science

### Science and Geography: Grade 5

Fifth Grade Science and Geography is a hands-on, interactive course that dives deep into the seven continents of the world, looking closely at the location of countries, learning about each one along the way. Students engage in exploring landforms, map features, and rocks and minerals throughout the course. Taking part in learning about flight and rocketry through hands-on activities, focusing on the world of flight and aerodynamics is a class favorite. Students have the opportunity to take a closer look at fish, amphibians, and reptiles. This course is designed to promote deep thinking, curiosity, and an interest about science and the world around us.

### Life Science: Grade 6

Life Science is an introductory course designed to provide a solid foundation in the discipline and allow students to apply scientific principles to real-world situations. Students develop a strong understanding of the scientific method as a process by which scientists systematically ask and answer scientific questions. Emphasis is placed on developing curiosity and appreciating the wonder that arises from observing the natural world. Life Science builds off of students' Lower School experiences through further hands-on exploration and investigation to prepare them for higher-level science courses. Students also have the

## COURSE OFFERINGS

opportunity to participate in problem solving scenarios that take place on an annual field trip to McDowell Farm School in Nauvoo, Alabama.

### Earth Science: Grade 7

The purpose of the 7th grade Earth Science course is to expose students to the science of the Earth and to study the branches of science which include meteorology, geology, oceanography, seismology, astronomy, and volcanology. These areas are best understood when they are experienced through inquiry based hands-on investigations of real world phenomena. As such, we do many labs and activities in class to support the scientific concepts. Critical thinking skills are cultivated as we set out to investigate and explore many scientific concepts, laws, and theories. Beach, maritime forest, and salt marsh ecologies as well as coastal geology will also be studied during a class trip to Jekyll Island, Georgia.

### Physical Science: Grade 8

Physical Science is an introductory course designed to allow students to explore the basic concepts of physics and chemistry, with an emphasis on a conceptual understanding, including the application of these concepts to everyday life. Laboratory activities are an integral part of this course.



## History

### History 7: American Foundations

Beginning in the first semester, American Foundations studies the social and political origins and the fundamental principles on which the United States was founded. The course begins with the first landing of non-natives from Europe and moves to colonial settlement. Further study includes the development of America's early government, the rise of political parties, and the growing tension between national power and states' rights. Another goal of the course is to offer a number of activities using primary and secondary sources. This will include enrichment exercises, and cooperative learning experiences. Over the course of the year, each student will participate in frequent small-group work and will take part in a variety of hands-on activities.

In the second semester, American Foundations serves as an introduction to the basic principles and structure of the U.S. Constitution and the American system of government. Topics include general civics, republicanism, federalism, separation of powers, check and balances, and civil liberties. This study of the structure of the American system of government will culminate with a major research project. For this research, students will examine primary and secondary sources, study real-life court cases, utilize technology to analyze essential concepts, and participate in discussion on significant issues in American political history.

### History 8: The US and Beyond

The first semester will be a study on the social history of the United States from the Civil War to the Progressive Movement. The major political events will be discussed, but an additional focus will be on the social and cultural movements associated

## COURSE OFFERINGS

with each event and time period. Furthermore, a large portion of the semester will be devoted to studying the roles of various groups in society such as women, immigrants, Native Americans, and African Americans. The second semester will be a survey of the major events throughout the world during the 20th century. A focus will be on both World Wars, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights Movement. In both semesters, students will also examine the lives of influential Americans from each era, with great attention given to determining the qualities that helped these men and women become successful leaders. Students will study this content through a variety of methods that include: interpreting primary sources, photographs, writing essays that support a thesis, watching historical film and listening to sound clips, utilizing proper note taking, and exploring creativity with projects. The assignments are designed to help students develop their skills as students of history as well as prepare them to be competent, active, and productive citizens.

### **Additional Course Requirement**

#### **Physical Education**

The Montgomery Academy Middle School Health and Physical Education Program is a fitness based program designed to promote the health and fitness of our students. The program strives to enhance the joy of physical activity and to improve the motor skills, health knowledge and fitness levels of our students. Our program emphasizes fitness based performance. Seventy percent of each student's week is devoted to fitness based individual activities. Basic weight training, flexibility, agility/speed training, running, cross training, core exercises, and circuit training are a major part of these fitness based individual activities. Thirty percent of our program is devoted to team or individual sports or activities. These team sports and activities emphasize many of the skills that are taught in our fitness related activities.



#### **Enrichment: 5th & 6th Grade**

5th and 6th Grade Enrichment courses allow students to explore a carousel of disciplines that provide a well-rounded academic experience. These learning opportunities include STEM, Art, Drama, Music, Leadership, Research/Technology, and Study Skills - each subject taken at different times of the year. By experiencing these varied topics at this grade level, students will have a more informed idea of what electives they would like to take when they are given the opportunity to choose their elective courses in 7th and 8th grade.

#### **World Language Electives**

##### **Spanish IA: 7th Grade**

The Middle School Spanish program introduces the young learner to basic language training by stressing role-playing methods. Students will develop vocabulary, grammatical structures, reading comprehension and written and oral expression in Spanish through the integrated skills approach. The instructor will use a series of computer-based technologies to expand and individualize basic textbook activities. Use of the Internet and various websites provided through the textbook will reinforce and broaden concepts learned in the classroom. Digital voice recordings and videos of student performance are some of the course highlights. At this level, students learn to appreciate the culture and civilization of a selected group of

## COURSE OFFERINGS

Spanish-speaking countries.

### Spanish IB: 8th Grade

Spanish IB continues the initial language training using the same technological teaching approach with the young eighth grade learner. The textbook provides the framework to further language learning through the integrated skills approach, while use of the Internet and select websites broaden students' language proficiency. Students gain self-confidence in expressing themselves in the language by expanding vocabulary, verb conjugation, and reading comprehension, along with writing and speaking skills. Students continue the familiarization process of the cultural legacy of a selected group of Spanish-speaking countries.

### Latin IA: 7th Grade

Latin IA is the first half of the Latin I course. It includes basic vocabulary with English derivatives, an introduction to grammar, the translation of beginning stories, and a study of Roman culture, such as Roman provinces, gladiators, the legion, and the history of Rome to the end of the Republic. There are regular vocabulary quizzes, periodic tests with sections on vocabulary, grammar, and translation, and a project each semester.

### Latin IB: 8th Grade

Latin I includes basic vocabulary with English derivatives, an introduction to grammar, the translation of beginning stories, and a study of Roman culture. Culture units include Roman myth, the house, and foods, with each unit relating Roman culture to modern culture. There are regular quizzes, periodic tests with sections on vocabulary, grammar, and translation, and a project each semester.

*\*In order to be eligible for the AP French Language course, students must begin with IA in Grade 7 or level I in Grade 8.*

### French IA: 7th Grade

The Middle School French program introduces the young learner to basic language training by stressing foundational grammar and conversation methods. Students will develop vocabulary, grammatical structures, reading comprehension, and written and oral expression in French through the integrated skills approach. The instructor will use a series of computer-based technologies to expand and individualize basic textbook activities. Use of the Internet and various websites provided through the textbook will reinforce and broaden concepts learned in the classroom. Digital voice recordings and videos of student's performances are some of the course highlights. At this level, students learn to appreciate the culture and civilization of a selected group of French-speaking countries.

### French IB: 8th Grade

This course is a continuation of the 1A course. It continues to build on foundational skills in French vocabulary, grammatical structures, and conversation. The instructor will continue to use a series of computer-based technologies to expand and individualize basic textbook activities. Use of the Internet and various websites provided through the textbook will reinforce and broaden concepts learned in the classroom. Digital voice recordings and videos of student's performances are some of the course highlights. At this level, students learn to



## COURSE OFFERINGS

appreciate the culture and civilization of a selected group of French-speaking countries. They should also be able to sustain a basic conversation and understand novice-level texts.

### French I: 8th Grade

French I serves as an introduction to the French language and culture through the four essential skills of language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Activities in class focus on these skills as students build vocabulary and learn basic grammatical structures. We will practice reading comprehension through short readings in various mediums including but not limited to newspaper articles, songs, and editorials. Written activities to expand vocabulary and practice new structures using these various forms will assist in daily practice. Students will spend a considerable amount of time using French in a communicative setting through various oral activities and with the use of authentic resources that will emphasize practical usage of the French language. Students will also begin an exploration of French and Francophone culture around the world to further emphasize the important role the French language plays in contemporary global societies. The goal for French I students is to reach a middle to high novice level in all four skills while gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of the importance of learning a second language. Diverse activities both inside and outside of class will compliment our exploration of other cultures as well as assist in building confidence communicating in the target language.



## Arts Elective

### Chorus-Fall, Spring or Year Course

Middle School chorus focuses on excellence in choral music. This is achieved through daily exercises which include demonstrating proper breath support, and developing good vocal tone and correct vowel pronunciation. The chorus performs for student assemblies and presents two concerts each year. Students also participate in the all-state choral festival, young voices festival, and choral performance assessments. The Middle School chorus consists of students in both seventh and eighth grades. \*A Middle School student may enroll in two consecutive semesters of Chorus within one academic year.

### Art-Fall or Spring Course

In Middle School Art, students focus on developing skills, which include drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, and collage. They have the opportunity to experiment and refine skills using a variety of art media. Each lesson is reinforced with our continuous study of the elements of art and the principles of design, which improve each student's image making skills as well as their artistic vocabulary. Art history is a very important part of this course, and provides students with inspiration for their own work. Students are educated in the necessary skills of the critique where they must intelligently discuss and assess their peers' artwork as well as their own. \*A seventh-grade student may not enroll in two consecutive semesters of art within one academic year.

### Theater-Fall or Spring Course

Theater is open to seventh and eighth graders as an elective. This one-semester survey of performance techniques includes acting as well as some of the history of the theater around the world. In addition to putting students on their feet and on stage, students explore the literature, performance practice and influences of important periods in theater history. They also participate in creative non-performance projects. The class may be repeated, since

## COURSE OFFERINGS

different periods and skill sets are emphasized each year. \*A Middle School student may not enroll in two consecutive semesters of theater within one academic year.

### **Speech & Debate-Fall or Spring Course**

Middle School Speech & Debate introduces seventh and eighth grade students to the various speech and debate activities that are available to the members of the Upper School Speech & Debate Team. Through the process of learning about speech and debate, students gain essential organizational, analytical, and presentational skills that will help them in the remainder of their upper school careers and beyond. Class activities include prepared and impromptu speeches, public reading of prose and poetry, individual and team debate, and mock-Congress. \*A Middle School student may not enroll in two consecutive semesters of Speech & Debate within one academic year.

### **Technology Elective**

#### **STEM Lab–Fall or Spring Course**

STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. Rather than teach the four disciplines as separate and discrete subjects, STEM integrates them into a cohesive learning paradigm based on real-world applications.

### **Additional Elective**

#### **Study Hall**

Study Hall is a proctored time for students to complete homework and prepare for projects and tests. No student may have more than one study hall period during a school day





# THE MONTGOMERY ACADEMY

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and the pursuit of excellence.*