

2024-2025

# Eighth-Grade Curriculum Guide

## Eighth-Grade

### *Growing Toward Independence*

Islander Middle School teachers support and guide eighth-grade students to accept responsibility and prepare to live as productive and contributing citizens. Eighth-grade students are expected to take ownership of their learning and are presented with a more rigorous and self-directed curriculum. This type of program capitalizes on students' strengths and allows them to address their weaknesses. Eighth-graders are encouraged to think critically and to make logical, responsible and thoughtful decisions.

**All 7th and 8th grade students have a fine arts requirement to be completed over the course of their 7th and 8th grade years. Choices include at least a full year of Band, Orchestra, or Choir or the completion of a two trimester Drama (Drama I and Drama II) or Art (Art I and Art II – must be completed in same school year) sequence. Art 6 and Drama 6 do not count toward this requirement. Students may also elect to take additional fine arts courses while at IMS.**

#### Required

Language Arts 8

Social Studies 8

Math (TBD)

Science 8

P.E. – 1 Trimester

(May be waived with approved directed athletics. Waiver available online or in IMS Office)

#### Electives

Choose from list of Year and/or Trimester length classes

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## Core/Required Courses

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### Language Arts 8

Eighth-grade Language Arts integrates reading, writing, listening and speaking experiences aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Students will study a variety of literary genres (short stories, historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, nonfiction biography, drama, poetry) from adopted eighth-grade curriculum, focusing on both informational/expository and literary/ narrative text. Writing instruction is intentional and integrated within the reading scope and sequence. Students maintain a writing portfolio with evidence from multiple on-demand, and process-pieces to demonstrate progress and proficiency.

### Social Studies 8

At IMS our 8th grade Social Studies course explores the history of the United States from the age of exploration and colonization to the end of the Gilded Age. Through this work students will gain an understanding of the scope and sequence of the historical, economic, geographic, cultural and political events and trends that have led to the creation of the modern United States. Students will develop their reading and writing skills through an analysis of historical documents and examination of multiple perspectives on United States history in order to make connections to the present and synthesize an understanding of our uniquely American story. Primary and secondary source readings, analysis, discussions, dialogue, research projects, and creation of various multimedia presentations completed individually, with partners and groups provide opportunities to strengthen public speaking, organization and interpersonal skills while simultaneously developing student mastery of history content. These [“21<sup>st</sup> century skills”](#) fit perfectly with our theme of history as a history of interconnected interactions.

## **Math III (formerly called Pre-Algebra)**

Math III extends and culminates previous math skills and concepts from Math II, transitioning students to the more specialized math courses of Algebra and Geometry. The formal methods of algebra introduced in Math II are extended as students explore linear functions and solve more complex equations and inequalities. Students model problems with mathematical functions represented by graphs and equations, eventually learning to interpret the slope of various functions in contextual situations. They connect measurement and geometry by exploring properties of geometric figures by solving problems involving sides/angles of triangles to find unknown measures. Students work with squares and square roots using basic geometric theorems such as the Pythagorean Theorem. They build on their experience of organizing and interpreting data, creating displays for 2 data sets in order to compare, analyze and draw conclusions. Mean, median and mode are used to summarize and describe information and students expand their work with probability to deal with more complex situations and displays. To prepare for high school level math courses, students deal with additional key topics involving numbers and operations. This includes scientific notation and exponents in expressions containing both numbers and variables. To better understand the full breadth of the real-number system, students are introduced to sets of numbers including rational and simple irrational numbers. Additionally, students refine their reasoning and problem-solving skills as they move more fully into the symbolic world of algebra. They learn to communicate mathematical ideas, to make generalizations, to draw logical conclusions and to verify the reasonableness of their solutions.

## **Algebra**

Algebra is the first year in a three-year college prep math sequence. Algebra focuses on the structure of the real number system. This course examines symbolic representations in solving real-world problems. Linear functions, quadratic functions, systems of equations, and problem solving are some of the topics within the enriching course outline. Graphing, both as a means of displaying data and analyzing data in one or two dimensions, is an integral part of this course. A solid foundation in arithmetic and pre-algebra skills is essential for success in this course.

A scientific calculator, ruler and graph paper are required.

Algebra grades for IMS students will be automatically posted on their Mercer Island High School transcript. Students will have until the end of their junior year to keep the grades as posted or request removal of these grades. If a student chooses to remove their grades, they will not receive high school credit for the course. At that time, students also have the option of selecting a P instead of a grade mark, which would not affect their GPA and they would receive high school credit for the course.

## **Honors Geometry**

Honors Geometry is the second year in a three-year college prep math sequence. In this course, students will develop a logical system of thought. Honors Geometry focuses on plane geometry with integration of some space and coordinate geometry. This course develops geometric concepts using formal proofs and algebraic applications. Algebra is used extensively for areas, volumes, lengths, angle measures, and graphing. Thus, successful completion of Algebra I is essential.

A scientific calculator, ruler, protractor, compass, and graph paper are required.

Geometry grades for IMS students will be automatically posted on their Mercer Island High School transcript. Students will have until the end of their junior year to keep the grades as posted or request removal of these grades. If a student chooses to remove their grades, they will not receive high school credit for the course. At that time, students also have the option of selecting a P instead of a grade mark, which would not affect their GPA and they would receive high school credit for the course.

## **Science 8**

Welcome to our 8th-grade Earth Science course, where we embark on an exploration aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Throughout the year, students will delve into the fascinating realms of energy, weather and climate, plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes, geologic time, human impact, and Earth in space. Through hands-on projects, laboratory activities, engineering challenges, and the examination of real-world phenomena, students will apply scientific principles and develop critical thinking skills. From understanding Earth's energy systems to exploring the impact of human activities on the planet, this course provides a comprehensive and engaging journey into the complexities of Earth Science. Join us as we unravel the mysteries of our dynamic planet, fostering curiosity and scientific inquiry among our students.

## Physical Educations Courses (PE, Fitness, Yoga)

*Physical Education is required for at least one trimester. While Physical Education is an important part of school, Islander realizes that many students benefit from physical activity outside of school through organized sports and other physical activities. These students can complete and submit a PE Waiver instead of taking this required course (pending approval).*

### PE 7/8

PE classes may include both 7th and 8th grade students with focus on advanced team sports. The curriculum will meet Washington State Expectations through recreational activities and strategies. Students are encouraged to change into athletic attire or purchase an IMS uniform (free uniforms can also be provided upon request). Students are also required to wear supportive athletic shoes to decrease risk of injury. Talk with Mr. Millsap, Mr. Dupuis or Mrs. Bylsma if you would like more information on this course.

### Fitness

Do you want to build strength and speed? Are you searching for workouts and training tips that will provide an edge over your competition? Do you just need a chance to move during the school day? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you should seriously consider taking this trimester length class. In addition to experiencing a variety of popular workouts, students will also enjoy some good old fashioned team games sprinkled in throughout the trimester. Students are encouraged to change into athletic attire or purchase an IMS uniform (free uniforms can also be provided upon request). Students are also required to wear supportive athletic shoes to decrease risk of injury. Talk with Mr. Millsap, Mr. Dupuis or Mrs. Bylsma if you would like more information on this course.

### Yoga

Decrease stress and take deep breaths while improving strength, power and flexibility. This trimester course supports the IMS Physical Education requirement while placing emphasis on individual activity and personal health. Students may be required to change for Yoga into comfortable clothing that will support their ability to move confidently. Students should avoid wearing low cut necklines, skirts, pants or shorts with a low-waist. A yoga mat will be provided. Talk with Mr. Millsap, Mr. Dupuis or Mrs. Bylsma if you would like more information on this course.

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## Electives

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### Aerospace

Aerospace is a STEM course that focuses on the science and engineering of human flight in Earth's atmosphere and beyond. From hot air balloons to airplanes to rockets, students will learn about how humankind has developed the science of flight and where the space age will take us next! To support this learning, students will participate in several hands-on building projects to include: parachutes, hot air balloons, gliders, and rockets, as well as a multitude of other small flight experiments and demonstrations. These experiences have been designed to build on science concepts and skills taught in core science classes. This class may include both 7th and 8th grade students, but is not repeatable. Lab/supply fee required.

### Art Series: (Art I & II) (Each a trimester length class – must be completed in the same school year)

Art and Design is a comprehensive visual art course that introduces the basics of design and creative expression. Students learn to think and create like an artist. They will craft artworks by tapping into their creativity, using their imagination and learning to apply the concepts of the elements and principles of design. Art and Design takes students on an exploration of a variety of art mediums and techniques such as drawing, painting, ceramics, mixed media and photography. Each unit of study will focus on an art style from a variety of artists, cultures and times. The second trimester is a continuation of the first trimester but with more focus on the principles of design and longer-term projects that require the technical and conceptual skills learned in Art I. These courses have a supply fee.

### **Art III (Prerequisite - Art I and II Series and this class can be repeated)**

This is a trimester-long class that continues the format of the ART I and II series in that students will work with a variety of media in ceramics, drawing, photography, and painting. Each unit of study will emphasize the creative process and critical thinking. Art III students are encouraged to pursue their artistic style of seeing and using visual imagery as a means of communication. Student input is encouraged in the selection of projects to allow for more personalized instruction. This class can be repeated because projects will be different depending on the students' interests. There is a supply fee.

### **Debate**

Want to speak your mind? Want to be able to articulate your arguments in a positive and effective way? Want to learn about all sorts of issues happening around the school and the world? Debate is for you! You will work with a partner to come up with great ideas on how to argue your case in a debate competition. We discuss issues that you choose. You will learn how to research effectively, write persuasively, and speak clearly to present your information. Debate is an exciting and challenging course that will definitely stretch your mind and help you figure out what your position is on all of the current problems facing the world today.

### **Drama I (No prerequisite)**

Drama I will introduce students to many different areas of theatre, primarily through performance. Students will study basic theatre history, character development through monologue study, as well as scene development and blocking skills in pair and ensemble scenes, and improvisation in both individual and group exercises. Students also will get their first taste of script writing, developing their own scene as a final performance within given parameters. This course has similar units of study to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade drama elective, but with more complex and challenging materials to expand the skills of the actors in this course. Completion of Drama I & II fulfills the fine arts requirement.

### **Drama II (Prerequisite-Drama I or Instructor Approval)**

Drama II offers students the chance to further explore theatre. Studies will focus on scene work and performances, movement techniques, improvisation, and character work. Students will also perform Shakespearean theatre scenes, create their own scripts and perform them, explore musical theatre through listening and reading songs and lyrics, and learn about the technical elements of theatre such as makeup, costume, and set design by designing such elements for a production of a play of their choosing or design. Completion of Drama I & II fulfills the fine arts requirement.

### **Filmmaking**

Have you ever wanted to make a movie? Do you have great ideas? Or maybe you just want to get better at tech. In this class, students will use a variety of technological tools to be part of the ever-evolving field of digital storytelling. A mix of video, audio design, and animation will be used to bring student ideas to life. Both fiction and nonfiction formats will be explored in this class. Students will work individually and in groups throughout the trimester. This is a fun class to learn how to work with others, share creative ideas, and demonstrate school spirit. Students will leave here ready to use the latest digital tools for future school projects and whenever else life calls for good storytelling. No repeats.

### **French 1 MS (Year-long course) (Prerequisite – French 7)**

This year-long class continues the progression from 7th grade French. The five trimesters (two in 7th grade and three in 8<sup>th</sup> grade) are the equivalent of the first-year French course at the high school. Successful completion of this course will allow the student to register for French 2 at the high school. Students will continue their study of the French language through listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural exploration. Students who did not take French in 7th grade may not take French in 8th grade.

French 1 MS grades for IMS students will be automatically posted on their Mercer Island High School transcript. Students will have until the end of their junior year to keep the grades as posted or request removal of these grades. If a student chooses to remove their grades, they will not receive high school credit for the course. At that time, students also have the option of selecting a P instead of a grade mark, which would not affect their GPA and they would receive high school credit for the course.

## **Leadership I**

Leadership 1 is a trimester length elective course designed for 7th and 8th-grade students who want to build their leadership skills. During this course, students will develop their own personal leadership profile (resume), learn to develop their speaking skills, develop team-building skills, and plan school and community activities. This course is recommended for students involved in student organizations in and out of school and is the prerequisite for Leadership 2.

## **Leadership II (Prerequisite – Leadership I)**

Leadership 2 is a trimester length elective course designed for 7th and 8th-grade students who want to take an active role in improving the climate of our school and gaining lifelong leadership skills. We will assist in planning and implementing activities and events for the entire student body. Daily class time will be utilized for student-led mini-lessons in leadership, planning and committee work, as well as continuing to look for new and innovative ways to improve the climate of our school. Students must take Leadership 1 before signing up for Leadership 2. You may take L2 multiple trimesters.

## **Mandarin Chinese 1 MS (Year-long course) (Prerequisite – Chinese 7)**

This year-long course is a continuation of Mandarin Chinese 7 with the expectation that students have a basic knowledge of Chinese pinyin, character creation/evolution, and sentence structures. The focus of Mandarin Chinese 1 is to provide students with a solid foundation of Chinese pinyin, vocabulary, grammar and culture. Students will have opportunities to develop listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension and writing skills. Chinese culture will be introduced through projects, readings, songs and videos. Successful completion of this course will allow the student to register for Mandarin Chinese 2 at the high school. Students who did not take Mandarin Chinese in 7th grade may not take Mandarin Chinese in 8th grade. Mandarin Chinese 1 MS grades for IMS students will be automatically posted on their Mercer Island High School transcript. Students will have until the end of their junior year to keep the grades as posted or request removal of these grades. If a student chooses to remove their grades, they will not receive high school credit for the course. At that time, students also have the option of selecting a P instead of a grade mark, which would not affect their GPA and they would receive high school credit for the course.

## **Marine Biology**

Our oceans are one of the last frontiers of exploration. Current issues that affect our oceans will eventually impact us all. In this course students investigate, research, and discuss topics including ocean exploration, ocean water chemistry, seafloor features, invertebrates, vertebrates, human impact on oceans, and - of course - the diversity of marine life. Through hands-on activities including several dissections and labs, students will learn about organisms ranging from microscopic plankton all the way up to some of the largest animals on earth. If you are fascinated by life at sea and love learning about science, then this course is for you! This course is open to both 7th and 8th grade students, but is not repeatable. Lab/supply fee is required.

## **Music (Year-long courses)**

### **8th Grade Concert Band**

The Concert Band is available to students who have previously taken 7th Grade Band or Beginning Instruments. Increased sophistication of literature and performance skills are the focus of the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band. Curriculum stresses heightened levels of player independence. Literature highlights the expressive elements of music. Skill building continues to be an important facet of the program, but the emphasis shifts increasingly toward expressive and sophisticated performance opportunities. All 8th Grade Band students have the opportunity to perform in small chamber ensembles. Selected students also perform with the orchestra. The Concert Band participates in the Eastshore Band Festival. Fee: shirt and binder. Any student enrolled in 8th Grade Band is eligible to participate in the IMS Jazz Band.



## Choir

Students who enroll in Choir develop fundamental skills in choral singing such as breathing, posture, music reading, three- and four-part harmony, performance technique, etc. No previous singing experiences or voice training is required, rather the desire and joy of learning a variety of songs in a fun, disciplined class setting. Choir participates in the school's music concerts, choral festivals, district wide Showcase concert, as well as special school assemblies. Classes may include 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.

## Orchestra 8

8th Grade Orchestra meets on a daily basis. There is an increased sophistication of literature and performance skills. Active and focused participation in the ensemble learning process is essential for success in this course. Students participate in the Eastshore Orchestra Festival and other activities throughout the year.

## Photo/Film/Music

This survey course will provide opportunities for students to further appreciate the media forms of photography, film, and music. Students will be given experiences in creating photographs while learning the history of photography, learn the history and components of film, and understand the place of music in our modern society. **NOTE: This course does not meet the criteria for completion of IMS's fine arts requirement.** No repeats.

## Introduction to Computer Programming

Learning how to write computer code is one of the best skills a middle school student can have. Plus, it's a lot of fun! This course provides an introduction to coding in Python. Students master basic coding concepts common to all programming languages, such as statements, conditionals, and loops, and are additionally introduced to: libraries, procedural graphics, and complex input. Students develop coding-related skills such as decomposition of large programs, debugging, and analyzing code written by others. Students will be able to create games, animations, and other interactive programs in Python upon completion of the course.

## Intermediate Computer Programming

*Note: Introduction to Computer Programming is a pre-requisite for this class. You can take a challenge test with Ms. Olson if you haven't taken the course.*

In this course, we will work with advanced Python commands to create animations and visual games. Students learn to use images from outside their program to create sprites and sprite-based animations for use in graphical programs. Students explore more in-depth coding concepts such as the list data structure and functions. Students completing this course will be able to create graphical, sprite-based games using custom images, and can write dense, well-organized code. Students may repeat this class with teacher approval.

## Introduction to Robotics

In this class, students will learn how to build and program EV3 and SPIKE robots. Students will utilize the engineering design process to construct robots which will perform basic movements and use sensors to navigate through obstacle courses. They will build dragster robots to maximize gear ratios for speed and will create battle bots to "fight" other bots by pushing them off a platform. In addition, students will work in teams to create a synchronized dance and end with a final robot designed to make a difference in the world.

## Intermediate Robotics

*Note: Students must have taken the Introduction to Robotics as a pre-requisite.*

In Intermediate Robotics, students will utilize their knowledge of the engineering design process to construct and program robots at a high level. Students will learn how to program the robots using basic Python and block coding. They will begin by learning advance programming techniques with the SPIKE robots. Students will compete in teams to create advanced builds with the EV3 robots such as the Elephant, Stair Climber and Tug of War bot. Students' culminating project is a design of their own to complete a complex task.

## **Advanced Robotics**

*Note: Students must have taken the Intermediate Robotics as a pre-requisite or obtain teacher approval.*

Have you ever programmed a flying drone? Advanced Robotics will have the opportunity to fly and program drones, print items in the 3D Printer, build several life-size builds like scooters, and compete with Vex Robots in various fun competitions. You'll build a team bot and play soccer and basketball with the robots as well. This class is for students who already have intermediate skills in robotics and want to build and program more advanced builds.

## **Social Justice – Race/Ethnicity, Sex/Gender, Sexual Identity**

This course examines the role that identity and privilege play in everyone's lives, specifically examining the areas of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and sexual identity. The class gives students a chance to learn about what goes on in our country and to empathize with people from many different backgrounds—starting with the other students in the class. You will have opportunities to create group projects, conduct individual investigations, and participate in group discussions about society and our place in it. If you love learning about our communities, our rights, each other, and the differences we can make together, then this is the class for you!

## **Social Justice – Socioeconomic Status, Ability/Disability, Mental Health, Appearance**

This course examines the role that identity and privilege play in everyone's lives, specifically examining the areas of socioeconomic status, ability/disability, mental health, and appearance. The class gives students a chance to learn about what goes on in our country and to empathize with people from many different backgrounds and in many different life situations—starting with the other students in the class. You will have opportunities to create group projects, conduct individual investigations, and participate in many group discussions about society and our place in it. If you love learning about our communities, our rights, each other, and the differences we can make, then this is the class for you!

## **Spanish 1 MS (Year-long course) (Prerequisite – Spanish 7)**

This year-long class continues the progression from 7th-grade Spanish. The five trimesters (two in 7th grade and three in 8<sup>th</sup> grade) are the equivalent of the first-year Spanish course at the high school. Successful completion of this course will allow the student to register for Spanish 2 in high school. Students learn the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students are introduced in a variety of ways to the diverse cultures of Spanish speaking countries, including but not limited to: geography, customs and holidays. Students are expected to communicate in Spanish as they progress in the Spanish program. To build long-term memory and develop skills in Spanish, students will also be expected to practice vocabulary outside of class. Students who did not take Spanish in 7th grade may not take Spanish in 8th grade. A workbook fee may be required.

Spanish 1 MS grades for IMS students will be automatically posted on their Mercer Island High School transcript. Students will have until the end of their junior year to keep the grades as posted or request removal of these grades. If a student chooses to remove their grades, they will not receive high school credit for the course. At that time, students also have the option of selecting a P instead of a grade mark, which would not affect their GPA and they would receive high school credit for the course.

## **Student Mentor**

Student Mentors help peers with special needs by participating in electives, working on academic skills and assisting in social settings. Student Mentor will explore issues involving diversity and leadership skills. Assignments include goal setting and a final reflective essay. Motivation, compassion, initiative and responsibility are characteristics needed by student mentors.

## **Teacher's Assistant**

### **Teacher's Assistant - Business Center, Library, Teacher (One Trimester; Pass/Fail Grading)**

Business Center TA - log in all students coming in and out of the Business Center and assist students to print documents from thumb drives, server and email. Students will routinely troubleshoot issues, including jammed printers, new printer cartridges, etc. Students may also inventory and clean technology equipment in classrooms and iBook carts, fix iBook carts, check power cords and replace, when necessary, replace missing keys from keyboards, check printer for tone, and may assist with rebuilding laptop and desktop computers.

Office TA - work in the Student Attendance Office. Routine tasks include picking up attendance, delivering messages, filing, waiting on students at the counter, and general office work as assigned. An Office TA must make sure that phones and ear buds are put away while in the office and on deliveries.

Teacher TA - work in an assigned classroom. Routine tasks may include preparing handouts, creating bulletin boards, organizing classroom papers, running errands, correcting papers, filing, or other duties as assigned.

Library TA – help out in the library, including assistance with inventory, displays, organization, and processing library materials.

Being a Library TA requires an aptitude for detail-oriented work:

- Ability to learn library shelving systems
- Ability to alphabetize
- Consistent attention to detail
- Ability to work independently

## **WEB Leader Class**

WEB (*Where Everybody Belongs*) is a program where 8th grade WEB Leaders help the incoming 6th graders feel safe, informed, and connected to our community at IMS. The WEB Leaders enrolled in this course will have additional practice to develop who they are as a leader, as well as planning and leading activities for the 6th graders. In order to be part of the WEB program, current 7th graders need to apply to be a WEB Leader. The application for the WEB program and more information about the WEB program will be available for current 7th graders on Schoology in the Spring. Students interested in being a WEB Leader should select this trimester elective class.

## **Creative Writing**

Do you want to become a better writer and have fun doing it? If so, this class is definitely for you. In Inspired Writing we will combine critical reading and purpose driven writing to help you to write powerfully and mindfully. We will inform, persuade, and entertain a variety of audiences through our writing of poetry, memoirs, short stories, and many other writing forms. No repeats.

## **Yearbook (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester)**

Want to know the theme, or better yet, *pick* the theme of the yearbook? Want to publish a real book, take photographs, and write creative stories? Want to learn software you can use the rest of your life? Seventh and eighth grade students will work collaboratively on theme, page layout and design, photography, interviewing, and copy/caption writing in order to produce this historical document. Returning yearbook students are encouraged to apply as editors for the new yearbook staff. This elective is challenging and requires each student to take responsibility for meeting real deadlines for a real publishing company, but it is also very fun!