



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

Upper School

2024-2025

Curriculum Guide

GRADES 9-12

Philosophy

The Upper School at Westridge prepares every student to handle with confidence the opportunities and challenges that she will encounter on her intellectual and personal journey. It is an environment where girls have the freedom to be themselves and are empowered to learn and grow into their best bold selves.

The program is designed to foster in girls the habits of mind and character that will enable them to engage with and connect to the subjects they study with depth, nuance, and balance. Rather than simply receiving and repeating information, students are encouraged to think critically and to view themselves as contributors to the body of human knowledge. As a girl advances from the 9th to the 12th grade, classes are designed to give her increasing responsibility for her own intellectual progress and to provide her with the academic, personal, and leadership skills to succeed in Upper School, college, and beyond.

Courses of Study

The Upper School program offers balance among humanities, mathematics, sciences, visual and performing arts, computer science and engineering, physical education, and athletics. In every discipline, electives and advanced courses of study allow each girl to thrive within her areas of interest and strength to develop a well-rounded foundation.

The following list of required and recommended courses at each grade level is designed to provide an overview of the Westridge Upper School curriculum and its sequence. As with all things, a student's past coursework and academic performance inform individual course sequences. Full course descriptions, elective course options, and detailed explanations of graduation requirements can be found in our Catalogue of Courses at www.westridge.org/upperschool. Please note that course offerings may change each year.



Westridge Advanced Courses

To expand meaningful rigor throughout our program, Westridge faculty have developed Advanced Courses to replace and go beyond standardized Advanced Placement classes. These courses are designed to cultivate sophisticated, inquiry-based, and independent thinking, and integrate more student research projects and interdisciplinary studies. New Westridge Advanced Courses are being rolled out through the 2025-2026 school year. We are excited to share more at www.westridge.org/advancedcourses.

9th Grade

English I
World Views: Ancient & Modern
Geometry or Honors Geometry
Biology
World Languages and Cultures
· Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, or Latin
Physical Education/Activity Credit
Human Development 9: Transition to Upper School
Visual Art, Music, or Theatre

10th Grade

English II
Crisis and Courage in Global History
Algebra II or Honors Algebra II
Chemistry or Honors Chemistry
World Languages and Cultures
Physical Education/Activity Credit
Human Development 10: Self & Society
Visual Art, Music, or Theatre

11th Grade

English III, Advanced English III, or Perspectives in Literature
We the People: The Search for Freedom in the United States
Pre-Calculus or Honors Pre-Calculus
World Languages and Cultures
Physical Education/Activity Credit
The College Process 11: Voice & Vision
Laboratory science course
Visual Art, Music, or Theatre (if not completed)

12th Grade

Required*:

English IV, Perspectives in Literature, or Advanced Topics in Literature
The College Process 12: Your Chosen Path
Physical Education/Activity Credit (if not completed)
Visual Art, Music, or Theatre (if not completed)

Recommended:

History
Mathematics
Science
World Languages and Cultures
Visual Art, Music, or Theatre

**Seniors are required to enroll in five academic courses.*

Advanced Courses

Advanced Aerospace Engineering	Research in History*
Advanced Aerospace Engineering: Systems Engineering	Full Stack Web Development
Histories of Art: Sparkle and Scandal*	Advanced English III
Advanced Art Studio Practicum	Global Studies*
Advanced Art Studio Intensive	Advanced English IV: Topics in Literature
Chamber Orchestra*	Environmental Science and Sustainability
Advanced Biology II	Latin IV Vergil: From Olympus to the Underworld
AP Calculus (AB)**	Advanced Studies in Chinese Language and Culture
AP Calculus (BC)**	Advanced Studies in Chinese Literature
Advanced Chemistry II	Perspectives in Literature
AP Computer Science A**	Advanced Physics I
Computer Science and Engineering Capstone	Advanced Physics II
Advanced Ethics	Advanced Cultural Studies in Spanish
Crisis and Courage in Global History*	Advanced Statistics
The Modern Middle East*	We the People: The Search for Freedom in the United States*

* students may elect into Challenge by Choice option for advanced designation

** course to be phased out for a Westridge Advanced Course in 2025-2026

Electives

Creative Writing	Newspaper
Engineering & Design (Robotics or Rocketry)	Peer-to-Peer
Costume Construction	Student Voices
Technical Theatre	Permaculture Garden
Speech and Debate	Sustainable Building & Design
Yearbook	



13
AVERAGE
UPPER
SCHOOL
CLASS SIZE

Westridge Global Scholars

Students passionate about global studies may, working with the faculty Global Scholars Committee, undertake in-depth study of a modern-day global issue through an intentional selection of classes, experiential programs, and directed service. While coursework and activities also meet core graduation requirements, students in the program build a digital portfolio of their work, present their work to the committee, and earn special Global Scholars transcript designation.

Visual and Performing Arts Courses

There are endless ways for students to get involved in visual and performing arts here at Westridge—our program is process-oriented, teaching students that the discovery and growth that occurs while making art is just as important as the final product. The Art Department offers courses in painting and drawing, photography, 3D design, ceramics and pottery, time-based art, film, and advanced studio art. The Music Department offers choral and orchestra courses, including Glee Club and Chamber Orchestra. In addition to extracurricular performance opportunities, the Theatre Department offers Acting I, Theatre Production, and Fundamentals in Costume Design, which meet the arts graduation requirement, and electives in costume construction and technical theatre.

Physical Education

P.E. classes offer many fun and diverse activities, such as yoga, strength training, conditioning, and aerobic exercise. In addition, beginning, intermediate, and advanced dance courses are P.E. options. Students may receive physical activity credit for participation in competitive athletics.

Athletics

Go Tigers! Competitive athletics includes 13 different sports in the Upper School. Over the past decade, our athletes have achieved honors including 11 Prep League championships, one California Interscholastic Federation Southern Section (CIF-SS) tennis championship, and Interscholastic Equestrian League Overall High-Point Team Championship as well as multiple appearances at CIF-SS quarterfinal, final, and CIF State Championships. For information on varsity and junior varsity athletics, visit www.westridge.org/athletics.

Service and Community Engagement in Upper School

The service and community engagement graduation requirement spans three years of Upper School and culminates in presentations of students' Commitments to Service (CTS) or Community Action Projects (CAP). In grades 9-11, students are required to spend time and energy off campus providing needed community services and building relationships with community organizations.

Student Support

With a long-block schedule of only four classes per day, girls experience student life at a manageable pace and have time built into their schedules for clubs, free time, and meeting with teachers and advisors. All students belong to an advisory group, led by a faculty advisor, that meets regularly to support students and build community. As part of each student's course load, the Human Development class focuses on students' developmental, emotional, and physical well-being as they mature into young adults. Westridge has two school counselors, a dean of student support, class deans, an Upper School learning support specialist, and a school nurse on campus to provide any additional support as needed.

Upper School Schedule

All grades at Westridge operate on a six-day cycle. Days are designated as 1-6 and referred to as odd or even days. In addition, each Upper School block/class time is given a letter A-H.

Our block schedule means classes meet every other day, allowing for deeper class discussions and collaboration in 70-minute class blocks. Over the course of four years in the Upper School, graduation requirements are met through a thoughtfully planned selection of courses, including advanced courses, electives, and visual and performing arts options that successfully position our students for intellectual, social, and emotional growth, as well as the college admissions process.

9th Grade

Ninth grade students take a balanced course load of English, history, math, science, language, the arts, and human development. Advanced courses are available beginning in the tenth grade year. We believe ninth grade is a time of transition and foundation-building, and the caliber of the Westridge curriculum is such that our standard courses inherently offer the appropriate level of challenge. Non-credit elective courses are offered during "H Block" once or twice a rotation, depending on the course. There is a 30-minute block each day for assemblies, class meetings, 1:1 advising, clubs, advisory, and community gatherings.

SAMPLE 9TH GRADE SCHEDULE - ODD DAYS

(optional)		8:40-9:50 A Block		10:05-11:15 B Block	11:25-12:35 C Block		1:25-2:35 D Block	2:40-3:10
Day 1	Office Hours	Language	Morning Break	English	Geometry	Lunch	Biology	Assembly
Day 3	Office Hours	Language	Morning Break	English	Geometry	Lunch	Biology	Class Meeting
Day 5	Office Hours	Language	Morning Break	English	Geometry	Lunch	Biology	Office Hours

SAMPLE 9TH GRADE SCHEDULE - EVEN DAYS

(optional)		8:40-9:50 E Block	9:55-10:25		10:40-11:50 F Block	12-1:10 G Block		2-3:10 H Block
Day 2	Office Hours	Visual or Performing Arts	Advisory	Morning Break	Aerospace Engineering	World Views	Lunch	Sustainable Building & Design
(optional)		8:40-9:50 E Block		10:05-11:15 F Block	11:25-12:35 G Block		1:25-2:35 H Block	2:40-3:10
Day 4	Office Hours	Visual or Performing Arts	Morning Break	Aerospace Engineering	World Views	Lunch	Free Block	Student Leadership
Day 6	Office Hours	Visual or Performing Arts	Morning Break	Aerospace Engineering	World Views	Lunch	Human Development	Clubs



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

324 Madeline Drive, Pasadena, CA 91105 • www.westridge.org