

2025-2026 Tarkington Middle School Course Catalog

Tarkington ISD's mission is to empower, support, and inspire our students to achieve academic success and to pursue excellence in all aspects of learning so they may live purposeful and productive lives. In pursuit of this mission, Tarkington Middle School offers a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning, providing opportunities for all students to experience success in high school and beyond graduation. Working together with their parents and the school, students can make informed decisions concerning programs and course selections during their middle school years. This middle school course catalog is designed to explain the basic requirements for successful steps from sixth through eighth grades and to prepare for a smooth transition into the high/senior high school program. TMS students are encouraged to begin early discussions with their parents, teachers and counselors about the opportunities available in high school and postsecondary education to begin appropriate academic and career preparation pathways in middle school.



Advanced Course Requirements

- Students are expected to maintain a passing grade in advanced courses to continue on the advanced academic pathway.
- Students are expected to score at least Approaching on CBAs and Benchmarks administered throughout the school year.
- Should students fall below these performance expectations, mandatory after-school interventions may be required. Failure to attend interventions or consistently low academic performance may result in removal from the advanced academic program. Students who are removed from the advanced academic program in either math or ELA will be placed in on-level academic classes.

	Advanced Math	Advanced ELA
6th Grade	• Students scoring in the top 60 percentile on their 5th grade math STAAR or in the top 40th percentile on a local measure will automatically be placed in 6th grade advanced. Curriculum 6th grade math and first two six weeks of 7th grade math. Students will take the 6th Grade Math STAAR.	• Score Meets or Masters on 5th grade reading STAAR test; OR • Score in the top 40th percentile on a local measure.
	Advanced Math	Advanced ELA
7th	• Score Meets or Masters on 6th grade	• Score Meets or Masters on 6th grade

Grade	math STAAR test; AND Score Meets or higher on 7th grade Placement Test covering missed 7th grade TEKS. Curriculum Remaining 7th grade math TEKS and all of 8th grade math TEKS. Students will take the 8th grade math STAAR.	reading STAAR test; OR Score in the top 40th percentile on a local measure.
8th Grade	- Score Meets or Masters on 7th grade math STAAR test; AND - Score Meets or higher on 8th grade Placement Test covering missed 8th grade TEKS. Curriculum All Algebra 1 TEKS. Students will take Algebra 1 EOC and earn high school credit upon successful completion. Students will also take TSIA assessment at the end of 8th grade.	- Score Meets or Masters on 7th grade reading STAAR test; OR - Score in the top 40th percentile on a local measure.

Advanced Course Exit Guidelines

Exit processes are in place to assist students in making sound course selection decisions. Students and parents must be aware that grades earned in Advanced Academic courses follow the student to on-level courses and will be included in the student's overall course average.

1. It is expected that students seek assistance when needed to be successful in the course.
2. Students are expected to remain in the Advanced Academic course at least one full semester.
3. Students petitioning to exit an Advanced Academic course should meet the following criteria:
 - a. Student/Parent Conference with the teacher
 - b. Completion of course assignments
 - c. Attendance at recommended tutorials

The decision to exit will be based on input from the teacher, student performance in the course, availability of space in other courses and timing of the request. Students experiencing success (able to maintain a C or better semester average) in the course should remain in the course for the year.

Gifted & Talented Students

Students identified as Gifted and Talented (GT) are required to take at least one advanced class each academic year. This requirement is designed to provide rigorous and enriching educational experiences that align with the unique abilities and potential of GT students.

Middle School Course Selections

In the spring semester, students will meet with the counseling center to select courses for the coming school year. Students will be enrolled in eight classes. Some classes are required and some courses are selected by students. Course selections are impacted by class sizes and available staff. In addition, some electives require instructor approval. To prepare for course selections, please visit the TMS Counselor Page on the Tarkington ISD website.

Required Core Courses

All students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade are required to take English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. Advanced courses are designed for students who consistently demonstrate above grade-level academic skills. Students will experience the regular content at a faster pace and be expected to direct their own studies more independently and in greater depth. Advanced courses are available in English Language Arts and Math for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

- **6th Grade English Language Arts**
Middle School Reading and English Language Arts (RELA) supports the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. Students consistently participate in activities that address the content specified in the grade 6 English Language Arts-Reading TEKS.
- **Advanced 6th Grade English Language Arts**
Middle School RELA at the Advanced level compacts grade level curriculum in order to prepare students for advanced placement level work in high school. Students are required to prioritize and commit the necessary time to read analytically, think critically, and produce independently both during and outside class. To succeed in this course, students should be self-motivated, independent learners with strong reading and writing skills.
- **6th Grade Math**
Sixth grade on-level classes cover the 6th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students work with all concept strands of mathematics, with a focus on numeration and operations with positive rational numbers and integers, proportionality including additive and multiplicative relationships, expressions and equations, measurement and data, and personal financial literacy.
- **Advanced 6th Grade Math**
This class covers 6th grade and part of 7th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students' progress rapidly through a review of operations with fractions and decimals and concentrate on problem solving with rational numbers, equations, integers, ratio, proportion, percents, and personal financial literacy. Students in this program should be those desiring to complete at least five years of high school mathematics, including Calculus.
- **6th Grade Science**
This science course is an integrated science course that involves topics from life, earth, and physical science. It is designed to stimulate students' curiosity in an atmosphere that encourages them to generate questions concerning their environment and how their world works. Laboratory investigations emphasize accurate observations, collection of data, data analysis, and the safe manipulation of laboratory apparatus and materials. Library research and special projects may also be required. Problem-solving and critical thinking are emphasized.
- **6th Grade Social Studies - Contemporary World Cultures**

Students will study people, places, and societies of the contemporary world. Societies for study are from the following regions of the world: Europe, Russia and the Eurasian republics, North America, Central America and the Caribbean, South America, Southwest Asia-North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, and the Pacific realm. Students learn the influence of people on events in those societies and the locations and geographic characteristics of various societies.

- **7th Grade English Language Arts**

Middle School Reading and English Language Arts (RELA) supports the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. Students consistently participate in activities that address the content specified in the grade 7 English Language Arts-Reading TEKS while continuing to read widely in classic and contemporary selections and informational texts.

- **Advanced 7th Grade English Language Arts**

Middle School RELA at the Advanced level compacts grade level curriculum in order to prepare students for advanced placement level work in high school. Students are required to prioritize and commit the necessary time to read analytically, think critically, and produce independently both during and outside class. To succeed in this course, students should be self-motivated, independent learners with strong reading and writing skills.

- **7th Grade Math**

Seventh grade on-level classes cover the 7th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students work with all concept strands of mathematics, with a special emphasis on the fluency in numeration and operations of rational numbers, proportional relationships, and represent linear and geometric relationships verbally, tabularly, graphically, and with equations, and solving problems in varied contexts.

- **Advanced 7th Grade Math**

This class covers the remaining 7th grade and all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This course is designed for the student who has already mastered the first part of the seventh grade objectives and is ready for the subsequent grade level's topics and objectives. The seventh grade accelerated class completes all middle school mathematics topics and investigates pre-algebra topics, such as foundations of functions, in greater depth. Students in the Advanced program should be those desiring to complete at least five years of high school mathematics including Calculus.

- **7th Grade Science**

This science course is an integrated science course that involves topics from life, earth, and physical science. The course involves students in laboratory and field investigations focusing on the behaviors of living organisms and natural phenomena as well as making accurate observations, collecting, and analyzing data, and manipulating laboratory apparatus and materials in a safe and economical way. Special collections, library research, and short and long projects may also be required.

- **7th Grade Social Studies - Texas History**

This course provides an overview of the history of Texas from early times to the present. Students examine the full scope of Texas history, including Natural Texas and its People; Age of Contact; Spanish Colonial; Mexican National; Revolution and Republic; Early Statehood; Texas in the Civil War and Reconstruction; Cotton, Cattle, and Railroads; Age of Oil; Texas in the Great Depression and World War II; Civil Rights and Conservatism; and Contemporary Texas eras.

- **8th Grade English Language Arts**

Middle School Reading and English Language Arts (RELA) supports the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. Students consistently participate in activities that address the content specified in the grade 8 English Language Arts-Reading TEKS. Eighth students refine and master previously learned knowledge and skills.

- **Advanced 8th Grade English Language Arts**

Middle School RELA at the Advanced level compacts grade level curriculum in order to prepare students for advanced placement level work in high school. In addition to mastering the content of the grade-level classes, this challenging class requires the study of additional literary works, including independent reading of one or more novels, as well as an intensive study of vocabulary. Students are required to prioritize and commit the necessary time to read analytically, think critically, and produce independently both during and outside class. To succeed in this course, students should be self-motivated, independent learners with strong reading and writing skills.

- **8th Grade Math**

Eighth grade on-level classes cover the 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This course provides instruction in all mathematics strands with heavy emphasis on all aspects of real number operation, problem solving, and pre-algebra skills, such as foundations of functions.

- **Algebra I**

Eighth grade accelerated classes cover the Algebra I Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and follow the high school curriculum for Algebra I. The student in the eighth grade accelerated program completes high school Algebra I, receives one unit of high school credit but no high school grade points for this course, and is ready to move to Advanced Geometry as the ninth grade mathematics course. Upon passing this course with a yearly average of 70 or above, the student receives high school credit and the course cannot be repeated. Students in the accelerated program should be those desiring to complete at least five years of high school mathematics, including Calculus.

- **8th Grade Science**

This science course is an integrated science course that involves topics from life, earth, and physical science. Laboratory and field investigations are designed to promote an understanding of basic concepts and theories through investigations and experimentation. Students make observations of interactions among systems and acquire data using scientific tools and their senses. The investigations performed emphasize accurate observations, collection of data, data analysis, and the safe manipulations of laboratory apparatus and materials in the field and in the laboratory. In addition, special collections, library research, and short-term projects may be required. Long-term projects are required.

- **8th Grade Social Studies - United States History**

This course surveys the history of the United States from exploration through Reconstruction. Students will study exploration and colonization, the struggle for independence, the creation of the new nation based on the Constitution, the Age of Jefferson, the Age of Jackson, westward expansion, early industrialization, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

Elective Courses

- **Agriculture: (7th Grade)**

A course designed to explore the agricultural concepts of plant and animal systems, food production, mechanical systems, entrepreneurship, leadership, and environmental sciences. Students will engage in hands-on activities, problem-solving projects, and collaborative learning experiences to apply these concepts in real-world contexts.

- **Art: (6th, 7th, & 8th Grade)**

This course is an introduction to the elements and principles of art. It is designed to support the development of student's creativity and self-expression through a variety of media and techniques including but not limited to painting, drawing, sculpting and design; recognizing and using the elements of art.

- **Athletics: (7th and 8th Grade)**

Athletics consist of specific skill training, agility drills, weight training and cardiovascular endurance designed primarily to prepare the student for the specific competitive sport(s) in which he/she participates. Athletics classes are available for football, volleyball, and basketball. Classes meet during the regular school day; however, during competitive weeks, extended time for practice will be required and will be scheduled before or after the school day. Games will take place outside the school day. Students representing Tarkington and the University Interscholastic League in Athletics will also have athletic policies to which they must adhere.

- **AVID: (6th Grade)**

AVID Elective course builds upon the foundational components of the AVID philosophy. Students receive additional academic, social, and emotional support to help them succeed in their most rigorous courses. Students will create short and long-term goals and, as a result, begin to understand the value in taking charge of their actions. They will start working on intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. They will expand their knowledge base regarding Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR). Students will be exposed to various field trips, guest speakers, and research to increase their knowledge of college and career options.

- **Band: (7th & 8th Grade)**

Middle School Band consists of 7th and 8th grade students that have completed at least one year of Beginner Band. Students will demonstrate independently and in ensembles: accurate intonation and rhythm, fundamental skills, and basic performance techniques while performing easy to moderately difficult literature. This course will have several performances and contests throughout the school year.

- **Beginner Band: (6th Grade / First Year Students)**

The Middle School Beginner Band course consists of students who are in their first year of band. Beginning Band is a full year course designed as a student's introduction in learning to play a wind or percussion instrument. This course will have two performances during the school year; one at the end of each semester.

- **Career Explorations: (Required for 7th Grade & 8th Grade)**

This course provides students with knowledge of the prerequisite skills for general employment as well as the means of obtaining those skills. Skills include fundamentals of maintenance of personal appearance and grooming. The course also includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow employees to get along with their co-workers, make important work-related decisions, and become strong members of the work team. Students will learn and apply basic knowledge of what is expected in the workplace. Students will explore CTE pathways that are available in high school.

- **Library Aide (8th Grade)**
This course is designed as an opportunity to gain work experience for academically exemplary students. Students are given an opportunity to assist with various tasks on campus. Students must have good attendance, good behavior, and meet grade level expectations for all objectives on the seventh grade STAAR to be an aide. This is an eighth-grade elective only.
- **Physical Education: (Required for 6th and 7th Grade)**
Students will be provided opportunities to increase knowledge and motor skills basic to efficient movement; experience rules, knowledge, and basic skills in beginning or intermediate participation in individual, dual, and team sports; understand the relationship of motivation and development of a high level of personal and physical fitness and the ability to maintain this level; and develop knowledge and skills for leisure and lifetime sports activities.
- **Pre-Athletics: (6th Grade)**
Pre-athletics is a crucial building block for students who wish to participate in seventh-grade athletics. This class serves as a foundation, providing essential skills and knowledge that are necessary for successful participation in athletics at the next level. It prepares students both physically and mentally, ensuring they are ready to engage in organized sports activities. Successful completion of Pre-athletics alone does not guarantee entry into seventh-grade athletics.
- **Theater Arts: (6th, 7th, & 8th Grade)**
General introduction of fundamental production aspects of the theatre and the exploration of acting techniques. A fun and creative process of exploring storybook characters (superheros, princesses, your favorite personalities) and bringing popular stories to life. All students are welcome...No prerequisites. The class maintains an open and creative environment.
- **XLR8: (Required for 6th, 7th & 8th Grade)**
In this interactive elective course, students will explore the powerful principles behind Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit*, tailored specifically for middle school success. Through engaging activities, discussions, and practical exercises, students will learn how to take initiative, set and achieve goals, manage their time effectively, communicate with confidence, and develop strong relationships. By the end of the course, students will have a toolkit of habits to help them thrive academically, socially, and personally, both in school and beyond.

College, Career, and Military Readiness

Students earn High school credit upon successful completion of the following courses. Students who have excessive absences in these courses will be required to make up absences after school hours. Failure to make up absences will result in a denial of high school credit.

College, Career, and Military Readiness Preparation Timeline

Grades	Goals and Objectives
Grade 6	Begin to investigate college/career goals and objectives that align with personal interests. Consider careers that fit your personality and ability and the pathways to those careers.

- Grade 7 Continue to investigate college/career goals and objectives that align with personal interests. Take the initial CTE Survey course (General Employability) which will allow students to learn about various pathways that are available at the high school level. Begin the process of developing a high-school four-year plan. Choose 8th-grade electives that will satisfy the foundational curriculum to various high school CTE pathways.
- Grade 8 Continue to investigate college, career, and military information to choose a CTE Program of Study and an endorsement that aligns with your chosen career pathway. Attend campus meetings regarding academic planning, high school graduation requirements and develop a four-year plan.

Elective Courses for High School Credit

- ****Digital Communications in the 21st Century: (8th Grade)***

The Digital Communications program of study explores the occupations and educational opportunities associated with the production of audio and visual media formats for various purposes, such as TV broadcasts, advertising, video production, or motion pictures. This program of study may also include exploration into operating machines and equipment to record sound and images, such as microphones, sound speakers, video screens, projectors, video monitors, sound and mixing boards, and related electronic equipment. This course serves as the introductory course for the Audiovisual and Communications pathway in high school.

- ****Principles of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources: (8th Grade)***

An introductory class that provides a broad overview of the agricultural field, covering topics like plant and animal science, crop production, environmental considerations, career opportunities within agriculture, leadership development, and basic agricultural technology. Students will learn about the FFA Organization and have opportunities for supervised agriculture work experiences and FFA participation. This course serves as the introductory course for the Animal Science, Construction, and Welding pathways in high school.

- ****Principles of Hospitality and Tourism: (8th Grade)***

Students will learn about food preparation, food safety, and the basics of cooking and baking. Principles of Hospitality and Tourism will emphasize the principles of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling the management of various food service and hospitality operations. It will provide insight into the operation of a well-run restaurant, food production skills, various levels of industry management, and hospitality skills. This course serves as the introductory course for the Culinary Arts pathway in high school.

- ****Business Information Management I (BIM): (Required for 8th Grade unless already taken)***

In Business Information Management I, students implement personal and interpersonal skills to strengthen individual performance in the workplace and in society and make a successful transition to the workforce and postsecondary education. Students apply technical skills to address business applications of emerging technologies, create word-processing documents, develop a spreadsheet, formulate a database, and make an electronic presentation using appropriate software. The course meets the high school technology requirement and serves as the introductory course to the business pathway in high school.

Subject Area	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
English Language Arts	6th Grade ELA or 6th Grade ELA Advanced	7th Grade ELA or 7th Grade ELA Advanced	8th Grade ELA or 8th Grade ELA Advanced
Math	6th Grade Math or 6th Grade Math Advanced	7th Grade Math or 7th Grade Math Advanced	8th Grade Math or Algebra 1
Science	6th Grade Science	7th Grade Science	8th Grade Science
Social Studies	World Cultures	Texas History	US History
Elective	PE or Pre-Athletics	PE or Athletics	Career Explorations
Elective	XLR8	XLR8	XLR8
Elective	AVID	Career Explorations	Student Choice
Elective	Student Choice	Student Choice	Student Choice