

DEERFIELD-WINDSOR SCHOOL

Middle School

Course Descriptions
2025-2026



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HUMANITIES

The Middle School Humanities curriculum comprises courses in Language Arts and Social Studies. Whenever possible, cross-curricular connections are made between Language Arts and Social Studies courses, in order to emphasize the interconnectedness of knowledge.

In Language Arts 8, a student's eligibility for Accelerated (AC) or College Prep (CP) classes is determined by a committee comprising the department head, the student's teacher, and the student's future teacher. Students are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Academic performance during the current year including
 - Performance on major assessments, including tests and 9 week/semester exams
 - Critical reading level
 - Writing maturity
 - Aptitude for critical thinking
- Ability to work independently
- Work ethic (including homework)
- Standardized test scores above grade norm (Verbal Reasoning, Writing Concepts, and Reading Comprehension)

LANGUAGE ARTS

Middle School Language Arts instruction consists of reading thought-provoking texts and responding by means of class activities, discussions, writings, and performances. Writing generated by thought-provoking literature promotes critical thinking and provides rich opportunities for cross-curricular projects in addition to an introduction to process writing, vocabulary development, and meaningful grammar instruction.

6th Grade – *The following is required.*

Language Arts 6 – This foundational course focuses on the skills students need for critical reading and analysis. Genres include novels, short stories, poetry, plays, and excerpts from non-fiction selections. These readings enable students to recognize and analyze figurative language, themes, and other literary elements and provide an opportunity to connect reading to their own lives. Grammar skills are consistently developed, practiced and reinforced within all writing assignments. Writing includes narrative, comparison/contrast, argument, and analysis. Research is introduced.

7th Grade – *The following is required.*

Language Arts 7 – This course builds on and extends the skill sets developed in Language Arts 6 through the examination of the role literature has played in our past- how it helps make sense of our present and how it provides assistance in shaping our future. Students analyze increasingly complex texts, write personal narratives and persuasive and exploratory pieces with increasing sophistication, speak and listen more effectively and research with increasing independence. Students learn to identify central ideas and themes in literature and support claims with explicit and relevant textual evidence.

Students further develop their knowledge of literary terminology and apply that knowledge in the analysis of literary texts with increasing sophistication. Vocabulary, close reading, process writing, and grammar exercises as well as the use of technology enhance students' ability to communicate effectively. Syntax and conventions instruction encourages the writing of increasingly complex pieces.. Grammar studies continue to be developed, practiced, and reinforced through all writing assignments.. Rigor increases each nine weeks to include more challenging texts to engage in deeper levels of critical reading, thinking, and more advanced writing assignments.

8th Grade – One of the following is required.

CP Language Arts 8 – This course builds on, and extends, the skill sets developed in Language Arts 7. The texts invite students to discover what it means to be fully human in our technological world. Themes include the coming of age, overcoming adversity, solving mysteries, and standing up for what is right. Students experience Shakespeare through drama and poetry; they read and reflect on selections through writing and class discussions. Grammar instruction continues as students grow as critical and creative writers. Vocabulary, critical reading and analysis, research, and technology usage continue to be emphasized and enhanced. Collaborative work with other subject areas is created throughout the year.

OR

AC Language Arts 8 – This course builds on, and extends, the skill sets developed in AC Language Arts 7. The study of non-fiction, mystery, drama, horror, and dystopian selections serves as a springboard to understanding the present and possible future world and invites students to discover what it means to be fully human in our technological world. Themes include coming of age, overcoming adversity, solving mysteries, and standing up for what is right. Students experience Shakespeare through drama and poetry; they read and reflect on selections through writing and class discussions. Grammar instruction continues as students grow as critical and creative writers. Vocabulary, critical reading and analysis, research, and technology usage continue to be emphasized and enhanced. Collaborative work with other subject areas is created throughout the year. The accelerated course requires students to work more independently and to read more challenging texts at a faster pace and to engage in deeper levels of critical reading, thinking, and more advanced writing assignments than CP Language Arts 8.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies 6 – This course is a study of American history from the Civil War to the present. Major topics of emphasis are the Civil War, industrialization and the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, WWI, the Great Depression and World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Cold War era. The course includes discussions of current events in the state, nation, and world.

Social Studies 7 – This course is divided into two distinct units of study.

1st Semester: The first unit is a study of state and federal government and civics education. Major topics include how our government was founded, the Constitution, the branches of government, Constitutional Amendments, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

2nd Semester: Georgia Studies is a semester-long course for all 7th graders. The course provides students with an overview of the history, politics, geography, and culture of Georgia. It demonstrates how Georgia fits in with the global economy, the history of the United States, and also the unique features of the state. Students will leave the class with an understanding of the factors that have shaped Georgia's historical, economic, cultural, and political development.

Social Studies 8: World Geography and Global Issues – This course offers students an in-depth study of global geography, major world regions, and contemporary issues shaping the world today. Students will explore physical and human geography, cultural patterns, political systems, and economic structures across continents. Through the study of global issues such as migration, geopolitical conflict, climate patterns, and economic development, students will gain a deeper understanding of the interconnected world they live in. The course also places a strong emphasis on cultivating students' reading, writing, and communication skills. Students will learn to analyze primary and secondary sources, craft well-organized essays, and develop arguments supported by evidence. Regular practice in structured writing, careful reading, and note-taking will prepare students for the rigor of the high school social studies sequence. By the end of the year, students will have the knowledge and skills necessary for success in 9th grade World History.

MATHEMATICS

In Pre-Algebra and Algebra I, a student's eligibility for Accelerated (AC) or College Prep (CP) classes is determined by a committee comprising the department head, the student's teacher, and the student's future teacher. Students are evaluated using the following criteria:

- Academic performance during the current year including
 - Performance on major assessments, including tests and 9 week/semester exams
 - Aptitude for critical thinking
 - Numerical knowledge
- Ability to work independently
- Work ethic (including homework)
- Standardized test scores above grade norm (Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematics)

6th Grade – The following is required.

Math 6 – This foundational course provides in depth study of the properties of numbers and shapes, computation, and problem solving. Topics covered include operations of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, geometric applications, ratios, percentages, integers, exponents, and the metric system.

7th Grade – One of the following is required.

CP Pre-Algebra 7 – This course builds upon and extends the study of concepts learned in sixth grade with an emphasis on pre-algebra skills. Rules, mechanics, and computations are stressed to enable the student to prepare for Algebra I. Concepts related to solving equations are developed throughout the course.

OR

AC Pre-Algebra 7 – This course is intended for students with strong mathematical abilities. It builds on sixth-grade concepts, placing a strong emphasis on pre-algebra and introductory geometry, particularly through real-world applications. As an accelerated program, it demands higher levels of critical thinking and more advanced problem-solving than CP Pre-Algebra 7, while progressing at a significantly faster pace.

8th Grade – One of the following is required.

CP Algebra 1-A – This course is designed to build a solid foundation for success in high school Algebra I. It begins with a review of key math and pre-algebra concepts essential for understanding algebraic principles, then transitions into introductory Algebra I topics. The first semester centers on solving equations and inequalities, while the second semester shifts focus to linear functions. Lessons are paced to promote deeper comprehension and long-term mastery of these core mathematical concepts.

OR

AC Algebra I – This course is intended for students with strong mathematical skills and progresses at an accelerated pace. It offers an in-depth review of fundamental mathematical properties and operations involving algebraic expressions, including polynomial addition, factoring, graphing equations, solving

inequalities, and simplifying radicals. These foundational skills support a deeper exploration and understanding of linear, exponential, and quadratic functions.

SCIENCE

Earth Science 6 – This course is a culmination of topics including geology, meteorology, oceanography, and astronomy. The first unit includes the study of the nature of science and the scientific method, which is referenced and applied throughout the course. Next, the processes that shape and change our planet are investigated and discussed. The third unit includes the study of resources and conservation. The final unit will cover the interactions between the Sun, the Earth, and the Moon. This unit will also cover movement in space, and the Solar System. Knowledge built throughout the year is used to analyze how the different branches interact with each other to create habitats and ecosystems and how resource use and the addition or removal of important species can impact resource use and the ecosystem as a whole. Topics are supplemented with lab activities, and students begin learning the basics of writing lab reports.

Life Science 7 – This course begins with a study of the methods of science. Next, the classification of living things is covered, including taxonomy and the structural units of life (cells, tissues, organs). The following units cover the systems of the body, and include the immune system and pathogens, the skeletal system, muscular system, integumentary system, digestive system and nutrition, excretory system, respiratory system, circulatory system, nervous system, and reproductive and endocrine systems. The theme of homeostasis will be discussed throughout the year. Lab work consists of using compound microscopes, an epidemiology activity, and dissections of various specimens including a chicken wing, sheep heart, cow eye, sheep brain, and frogs. Students will also develop writing skills through lab reports.

Physical Science 8 – This course is based on the study of matter, energy, and motion. The course develops skills and knowledge through lecture and lab activities in measurement, motion, classification of matter, light, sound, heat, electricity, and magnetism. The mathematical measurements and calculations associated with concepts studied are taught during the course.

SPANISH

Spanish 6 – This introductory course exposes students to the core elements of the Spanish language. Basic vocabulary, verb and grammatical structures as well as cultural elements are taught. This course is input based, focusing on vocabulary and reading comprehension. Spoken and written elements will be composed of mostly memorized phrases.

Spanish I-A – This seventh grade course introduces the Spanish language and aims at novice proficiency in the language encouraged through listening, speaking, reading, and writing practices. By interweaving language and culture, the course seeks to broaden students' communication skills while at the same time deepening their appreciation of other cultures. This is the first year of a two-year course.

Spanish I-B – This course builds on and extends the skills acquired in Spanish I-A through the continued study of the Spanish language and the culture. Proficiency in the language is encouraged through listening, speaking, reading, and writing practices. By interweaving language and culture, the course seeks to broaden students' communication skills while at the same time deepening their appreciation of other cultures. This is the second year of a two-year course; the prerequisite for this course is Spanish I-A or an equivalent.

NOTE: Students who complete Spanish I in Middle School will advance to Spanish II in 9th grade unless remediation is recommended by a committee comprising the department head, the student's current teacher, and student's future teacher.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education Department provides instruction in team sports, individual sports, dual sports, and personal fitness in Middle School. Team sports include red ball, basketball, flag football, soccer, speedball, arena ball and newcomb/volleyball. Individual and dual sports offered include motor skill games, archery, tennis, track/field, and pickleball. Personal Fitness will be assessed on a weekly basis in cardio activities. Administration of the American Alliance of Health, and Physical Education and Recreation Test is also a part of the curriculum.

EXPLORATORY COURSES

6th GRADE

Exploratory courses are 9 week courses drawn from the list below and may vary from quarter to quarter or year to year. All students are required to take one Fine Art each Middle School Year.

Student Support

MS Adaptive Strategies (Academic Support Comprehensive Program) - Students participating in the Comprehensive Program must have a current psychological report on file at DWS. Students will receive additional academic support services during their exploratory class to help in their area of need. The ASC will help structure study time, work on test taking and study strategies, maintain communication with classroom teachers and provide weekly updates to parents.

Exploratory Options:

(Courses may change from year to year.)

Art 6 – This course emphasizes the elements of art-line, shape, form, color, texture, space, and value – the rules that govern how elements are organized in a composition. A variety of media are taught and connections to art history, cultures, and artists are made. Students gain a foundation to discuss and evaluate their own artwork, along with peer artwork, in a supportive atmosphere.

Band – This course provides students with learning and performance opportunities on a wide variety of “modern day” instruments (acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, piano, and drums), as well as the traditional wind and percussion instruments. The primary focus is on the development and expansion of skills that are necessary for effective instrumental music performance, while maintaining a fun and exciting musical environment. In addition to large group ensembles, individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in solo and small ensembles and honor bands.

MS Theatre - This course features a range of theatre based activities including, but not limited to, improvisation, scripted theatre, theatre makeup, technical theatre, and theatre movement. Students will learn to (gently) face fears while working to free the imagination, build self-confidence, and become more spontaneous and receptive to new playful ideas in a safe atmosphere. This course encourages students to become more comfortable in themselves, no matter the situation. The course also offers opportunities to dive into the world of technical theatre, learning basic and special effect makeup application, principles of costume and set design, and aspects of moving properly for the stage.

Presentation Skills – Students tackle their fear of speaking in front of others by participating in a wide variety of communication activities. Reading dramatically, participating in scenes from plays, presenting poetry, and participating in debate-style discussions are included. Learning to effectively create visual presentations to augment oral presentations is a major focus. Students are exposed to poetry, plays, stories, and TED talks as they learn to communicate their own stories and ideas in the 21st century.

Life Skills – This course develops students skills and abilities that help to make them successful and independent adults. Units include food, clothing, woodworking, etiquette, and gardening.

Introduction to Technology - This course introduces students to essential technology skills to prepare them for success in middle school and beyond. Students will build a strong foundation in typing through regular practice using Typing Club, focusing on speed, accuracy, and proper technique. They will also develop digital literacy and real-world problem-solving skills by working through engaging, project-based lessons in Google's Applied Digital Skills curriculum. Throughout the course, students will gain proficiency in Google Workspace tools such as Docs, Slides, Sheets, and Drive, while also learning about online safety, digital citizenship, and responsible technology use. By the end of the course, students will be confident, capable digital learners equipped to navigate an increasingly digital world.

Robotics – This activity-oriented, cutting-edge program illustrates how technology is used in engineering to solve everyday problems. This course is designed to motivate students to become creative innovators. Students gain the skills needed to develop, produce, and build innovative products and prototypes as they encounter a variety of challenges involving the application of mechanical principles and programming skills.

7th GRADE

Exploratory courses are 9 week courses drawn from the list below and may vary from quarter to quarter or year to year. All students are required to take one Fine Art each Middle School Year.

Student Support

MS Adaptive Strategies(Academic Support Comprehensive Program)- Students participating in the Comprehensive Program must have a current psychological report on file at DWS. Students will receive additional academic support services during their exploratory class to help in their area of need. The ASC will help structure study time, work on test taking and study strategies, maintain communication with classroom teachers and provide weekly updates to parents.

Fine Arts

Art 7 – This course emphasizes the principles of art and the importance of balance, unity, contrast, emphasis, pattern, movement, and rhythm in the design process. A variety of media are explored and may include painting, sculpture, fiber, book arts, drawing, cartooning, and clay. Resources from art history, cultures, and other artists are used to inspire work.

Band – This course provides students with learning and performance opportunities on a wide variety of “modern day” instruments (acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, piano, and drums), as well as the traditional wind and percussion instruments. The primary focus is on the development and expansion of skills that are necessary for effective instrumental music performance, while maintaining a fun and exciting musical environment. In addition to large group ensembles, individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in solo and small ensembles and honor bands.

MS Theatre - This course features a range of theatre based activities including, but not limited to, improvisation, scripted theatre, theatre makeup, technical theatre, and theatre movement. Students will learn to (gently) face fears while working to free the imagination, build self-confidence, and become more spontaneous and receptive to new playful ideas in a safe atmosphere. This course encourages students to become more comfortable in themselves, no matter the situation. The course also offers opportunities to dive into the world of technical theatre, learning basic and special effect makeup application, principles of costume and set design, and aspects of moving properly for the stage.

Music Theory: Composition – Music making (composing, improvising, performing, listening) continues to change over time. This course provides students the opportunity to share musical creativity by providing and enhancing tools and techniques and fosters their development. Through written assignments, students will develop musical ideas and notation methods that effectively allow students to become successful performers.

World Cultures – This course will be an in-depth study of our current world. Students should have a greater awareness of the political, social, economy, geography and religious happenings of the current world. Through the exploration of current events using online resources, students will acquire a better understanding of the global community.

Digital Media - In this course, students will explore the fundamentals of digital media through hands-on projects that build skills in graphic design, video production, and audio editing. Students will use tools such as Canva, iMovie, Davinci Resolve, Photoshop, Premiere Pro, Audition, Google Workspace, and more to create multimedia content that tells compelling stories and communicates ideas effectively. By the end of the course, students will have built a portfolio showcasing their creativity and technical skills.

Health – This course is designed for students to address ways to maintain overall health and wellness. Students will encourage a healthy lifestyle by developing sound nutritional practices and positive physical activity habits. Topics covered will include the following:

- Promotion and protection of good emotional and mental health.
- Understanding and developing skills to help avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drug use.
- Understanding the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty.

Sports Analytics – Students will be introduced to the analytical research and methods used by professional sports organizations to put the most successful, cost effective teams on their respective playing fields. Students will learn how math data is quantified and applied to personnel decisions.

8th GRADE

Exploratory courses are 9 week courses drawn from the list below and may vary from quarter to quarter or year to year. All students are required to take one Fine Art each Middle School Year.

Student Support

MS Adaptive Strategies (Academic Support Comprehensive Program)- Students participating in the Comprehensive Program must have a current psychological report on file at DWS. Students will receive additional academic support services during their exploratory class to help in their area of need. The ASC will help structure study time, work on prioritization, note taking skills, test taking strategies, and maintain communication with classroom teachers and provide weekly updates to parents.

Fine Arts

Art 8 – This course introduces students to the materials, techniques, concepts, and processes essential to understanding the visual arts and the role of the artist through a series of studio projects. Students explore a variety of media through collage, printmaking, drawing, and painting and learn to layer and combine materials while creating meaningful works of art.

Advanced Art – This course may be taken in the 3rd quarter only or the full second semester. This course offers students the opportunity to explore their art areas of interest and prepare for the Upper School fine arts program. Students build on elements and principles of art to create artwork with strong compositional and technical skills. Additional principles are learned and utilized through hands-on experiences, always allowing for creative expression. Students continue to explore new media and advanced techniques.

Band – This course provides students with learning and performance opportunities on a wide variety of “modern day” instruments (acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, piano, and drums), as well as the traditional wind and percussion instruments. The primary focus is on the development and expansion of skills that are necessary for effective instrumental music performance, while maintaining a fun and exciting musical environment. In addition to large group ensembles, individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in solo and small ensembles and honor bands.

MS Theatre - This course features a range of theatre based activities including, but not limited to, improvisation, scripted theatre, theatre makeup, technical theatre, and theatre movement. Students will learn to (gently) face fears while working to free the imagination, build self-confidence, and become more spontaneous and receptive to new playful ideas in a safe atmosphere. This course encourages students to become more comfortable in themselves, no matter the situation. The course also offers opportunities to dive into the world of technical theatre, learning basic and special effect makeup application, principles of costume and set design, and aspects of moving properly for the stage.

Humanities

Broadcast Journalism – This introduction to journalism allows students to explore what it means to be a journalist and write the news. The focus is on small scale productions such as daily/weekly announcements, real-time sports updates, and student activity/academic reminders. Primary modes of communication is through social media applications such as Twitter and SnapChat with an emphasis on creating captivating and accurate infographics to communicate news concisely and with high interest.

Research, Live, Create: Tell the Story – Students experience a wide variety of ways to inform themselves and others through both formal research and the power of creative storytelling. Participants complete a fully documented research paper from a list of three choices. Emphasis is on creating citations & taking notes in order to meld three credible sources into a coherent, meaningful, research paper. Students then transform their research into the creative writing style of the graphic novel. The course culminates with a reflection on their own life and studies to create graphic panels. Noodle tools, Google Docs, Turnitin, Pixon.com and Story Board are all utilized.

Health Science

Sports Medicine- This course will provide students the basic introduction to the broad spectrum of sports health care. Students will learn how to responsibly prevent injuries resulting from physical activity; while also learning how to recognize, evaluate, and assess injuries with immediate care and treatment.

STEM

Financial Literacy – This course teaches students what money is all about. Students examine and discuss the risks and rewards of being an entrepreneur and the importance of good money management, including how to manage credit, balance a checkbook, and live on a budget. Students also learn about taxes, savings, the stock market, insurance and the cost of owning a home. Simulations and real world examples illustrate the true value of a dollar.

Coding – This course provides an introduction to computer science and coding. Topics focus on core computer science concepts, problem-solving, design, and programming. Students learn fundamental computer science concepts in the context of modeling and simulation through the use of sequencing, repetition, events, conditional logic, animation, storytelling, and debugging.

Modern Home Economics – This forward-thinking, new kind of class that teaches the skills of shopping intelligently, cooking healthy, managing financially, and living well. Students develop valuable skills that will be relevant and useful for the rest of their lives.

Robotics Ready – This activity-oriented, cutting-edge program illustrates how technology is used in engineering to solve everyday problems. This course is designed to motivate students to become creative innovators. Students gain the skills needed to develop, produce, and build innovative products and prototypes as they encounter a variety of challenges involving the application of mechanical principles and programming skills.

