

West York Area Middle School

Course Guide 2026 – 2027



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Core Subjects

English/Language Arts

English/Language Arts: Grades 6 - 8

These courses are designed to instill in our students a life-long love of reading and writing through constant modeling and exposure to various genres, styles and types of writing. Throughout the middle school experience, students will be making the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”. English/Language Arts classes are an integrated reading and writing program held within a daily, year-long (36 week) course. All courses are designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards with an emphasis placed on reading comprehension of grade level fiction and non-fiction text, drawing inferences from a variety of text and multimedia resources, writing for a specific purpose (narrative, expository, argumentative), development and use of academic vocabulary, and presentation skills. Each grade level course will employ an increasingly complex yet systemic process for writing, research, and presentation skills that will be reflected in other content areas. Instruction will be differentiated to meet the individual needs of each student derived from achievement and growth data while seeking to meet or exceed grade level standards.

Intensive Reading Intervention (Reading Comprehension): Grades 6 - 8

Enrollment in this course is through administrative placement only. This remedial class will utilize the READ180 curriculum as well as possibly System 44. Both are a balanced reading intervention approach that combines direct instruction, small group instruction, modeled and/or independent reading to serve students who are reading below grade level. This curriculum serves a maximum of fifteen students per class.

English ESL: Grades 6 - 8

Enrollment in this course is through administrative placement only. This class will utilize the System 44, READ180, and/or other English language development curriculum based on the needs and English proficiency levels of the students. All curricula serve students who are in the process of acquiring the English language and are supplemented with remedial services outside of class time. System 44 (a foundational reading and phonics-based intervention) and READ180 (a balanced reading intervention approach) combine direct instruction, small group instruction, and modeled and/or independent reading to develop phonics and reading skills. Other English language development curriculum may be used to help students acquire listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the English language, including grade-level content and standards as appropriate.

Math

Math Grade 6

This is a comprehensive mathematics program held within a daily, year-long (36 week) course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and emphasize collaborative learning that provides real life application. Specifically, concepts developed in this course include: fractions, whole number and decimal arithmetic, integers, the number line, coordinate plane, absolute value, ratios, unit rates, percent problems, expressions, solving equations, writing and graphing inequalities, quantitative relationships, number sentences, area, surface area, volume, coordinate geometry, statistical analysis, graphing, and interpreting data.

Math Grade 7

This is a comprehensive mathematics program held within a daily, year-long (36 week) course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and emphasize collaborative learning that provides real life application. Specifically, concepts developed in this course include: properties of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, single-step real world problems, unit rates, proportional relationships, percent problems, ratios, linear expressions, multi-step real world problems, solving equations, writing and graphing inequalities, scale drawings, triangles, three-dimensional figures, angles, circles, area, surface area, volume, sample analysis, central tendency, and probability.

Pre-Algebra 7

Prerequisite: Students must qualify based on successful completion of Math 6 (85% or higher), along with daily classroom performance and Grade 6 teacher recommendation.

This is a comprehensive mathematics program held within a daily, year-long (36 week) course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and emphasize collaborative learning that provides real life application. Specifically concepts developed in this course include: properties of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, unit rates, proportional relationships, percent problems, ratios, linear equations and inequalities, linear and nonlinear graphs, linear relationships, scale drawings, triangles, three-dimensional figures, angles, circles, area, surface area, volume, sample analysis, central tendency, probability, scientific notation, transformations, similarity and congruence, Pythagorean theorem, scatter plots, line of best fit, and two-way tables.

Math Grade 8

This is a comprehensive mathematics program held within a daily year-long (36 week) course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards and emphasize collaborative learning that provides real life application. Specifically, concepts developed in this course include: real numbers, approximations of irrational numbers, exponential expressions, square and cube roots, scientific notation, proportional relationships, linear equations, systems of linear equations, linear and nonlinear functions, linear relationships, transformations, Pythagorean theorem, volume, scatter plots, line of best fit, and two-way tables.

Algebra I Grade 8

Prerequisite: Students must qualify based on successful completion of Pre-Algebra 7(85% or higher), and in some cases Math 7(92% or higher), along with daily classroom performance and Grade 7 teacher recommendation.

This is a comprehensive mathematics program held within a daily, year-long (36 week) course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards while preparing the students for success on the Keystone Algebra I assessment as well as the grade level PSSA assessment. The course will emphasize collaborative learning that provides both real life and memorable application. Specifically, concepts include simplifying square roots, polynomials, factoring, rational expressions, linear equations and inequalities, systems of linear equations and inequalities, relations and functions, domain and range, rate of change, measures of dispersions and central tendency, data displays and analysis, and simple and compound probability. Concepts of geometry will be presented in preparation for a successful transition to the Integrated Math program beginning in Grade 9.

NOTE: Successful completion of this course will prepare students to enroll in the Honors Integrated II Course at the High School.

Science

The Middle School Science Program is a daily, semester-long (18-week), course designed to support the Pennsylvania STEELs standards. In these courses, students will develop the skills and knowledge to think critically, solve problems, and address real-world challenges based on phenomena for each unit of study. Each unit of study builds upon and spirals throughout the 6th, 7th and 8th grade curriculum. Students will work together as a class, in small groups and independently through investigation and inquiry.

Science Grade 6

Students will respond to questions and phenomena in the following units:

- **Thermal Energy** - How can containers keep stuff from warming up or cooling down?
- **Weather, Climate, and Water cycling** - Why does a lot of hail, rain, or snow fall at some times and not others?
- **Plate Tectonics and Rock Cycling** - What causes Earth's surface to change?
- **Natural Hazards** - Where do natural hazards happen and how do we prepare for them?
- **Cells and Systems** - How do living things heal?

Science Grade 7

Students will respond to questions and phenomena in the following units:

- **Chemical Reactions & Matter** - How can we make something new that was not there before?
- **Chemical Reactions & Energy** - How can we use chemical reactions to design a solution to a problem?
- **Matter Cycling & Photosynthesis** - Where does food come from and where does it go next?
- **Ecosystem Dynamics** - How does changing an ecosystem affect what lives there?
- **Earth's Resources & Human Impact** - How do changes in the earth's system impact our communities and what can we do about it?

Science Grade 8

Students will respond to questions and phenomena in the following units:

- **Contact Forces** - Why do things sometimes get damaged when they hit each other?
- **Sound Waves** - How can a sound make something move?
- **Earth in Space** - How are we connected to the patterns we see in the sky and space?
- **Genetics** - Why are living things different from one another?
- **Natural Selection and Common Ancestry** - How could things living today be connected to the things that lived long ago?

Social Studies

Cultural Geography – Grade 6

Cultural Geography is a daily, semester-long (18-week), course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards. This course consists of the study of Geography, focusing on the physical and cultural aspects of the Western Hemisphere. This course is designed to explore the five themes of geography. Students will examine the physical shape of the Earth, its different environments, natural resources, and weather systems. The student will also become familiar with the cultural similarities and differences between the Native American tribes in North America as well as the Maya, Aztec and Inca and what impact European Exploration had on them.

World Civilizations – Grade 7

World Civilizations is a daily, semester-long (18-week) course that discusses the growth of the human experience from prehistoric times to the year 1500 A.D. Students will analyze the development of the cultures of various civilizations throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. Students will compare these civilizations to each other, as well as, draw conclusions about the impact these civilizations have on life today. An emphasis will be placed on the six major components of all civilizations (geography, religion, achievements, politics, economics, and social structure).

American Cultures I - Grade 8

American Cultures I is a daily, semester-long (18-week), course designed to reflect the rigor of the Pennsylvania Core Standards. This course discusses the development of the American experience from the establishment of the United States to 1920. Students will analyze the impact that events such as the Civil War, Reconstruction, and World War I had on the politics, economy, and culture of the United States. Highlights will be placed on the role of Pennsylvania in the birth and growth of a new nation, with particular attention given to York County and surrounding areas. Students will be required to produce a number of written assignments and projects, including group projects and long-term research projects.

Exploratory Subjects

Grade 6

Art 6

Sixth grade art focuses on the elements of art and principles of design, specifically color, pattern, texture, shape and form. Students experiment with color schemes and how to incorporate them into everyday life. Tints, shades and neutrals are introduced as students expand and use their knowledge of the color wheel in various projects. A variety of media is used throughout the course to afford students the opportunity of experimentation.

Three-dimensional art is introduced as students create a relief sculpture giving it shape and form. Students look at the symmetry, texture and pattern in historical works of art from other cultures and ancient civilizations. These elements and principles are incorporated into their own sculpture. Students compare and contrast abstract and realistic art while creating their own piece of abstract art. Various artists and artwork are viewed in order to gain a better understanding of the two genres. Students learn how to create a realistic landscape as they learn point of view, horizon line, foreground, middle ground and background. Using this knowledge, they create their own landscape with these properties.

Computer Education 6

Students are introduced to the function of input, output, and storage devices; basic word processing skills; and good digital citizenship as it pertains to the safe use of the Internet as a research tool. Additionally, students will receive explicit instruction on strategies to guard against identity theft and cyber scams as well as strategies for safe and appropriate on-line communication. Students will demonstrate their understanding of skills in these areas through a variety of activities and projects.

Family And Consumer Science (FACS) 6

Students will be introduced to food safety, kitchen safety, measuring, recipe analysis, and tool identification. Together with their team, students will experience basic food preparation skills and kitchen sanitation through lab experiences. Students will also practice interrelationship skills, personal goal setting and career explorations through the creation of a life collage.

Health 6

The 6th-grade health course helps to direct students toward life-long physical fitness and overall wellness. Our health curriculum, which covers many topics relating to activity, nutrition, stress management, and mental / social health, provides students with both useful knowledge and the skills needed to live a healthy lifestyle. Topics include defining total health, focusing on living a healthy lifestyle, examining factors that impact our health, and determining the impact of lifestyle choices on our wellness. The importance of exercise, proper nutrition, and stress management will be studied along with growth and development which includes puberty and adolescence.

Music 6

The goal of this course is to expose students to basic music theory. Students will also learn more about the Instrument Families: Strings, Brass, Woodwind, & Percussion as well as the human voice and how it functions. Students will continue learning about the human voice while they learn about opera.

Physical Education 6

The Middle School Physical Education curriculum introduces a variety of activities that promote positive social interaction through team-building and competitive / non-competitive strategies. Our program is designed for our students to:

- Improve gross and fine motor skills.
- Understand cognitive development regarding learning strategies, decision making, and problem solving.
- Improve health-related fitness (cardiovascular endurance, muscle fitness, and flexibility).
- Promote a positive attitude toward physical activity leading to life-long physical fitness.
- Improve self esteem by increasing self-confidence, assertiveness, emotional stability, independence, and self-control.
- Use fitness assessments to help guide students to life-long fitness.
- Help alleviate and manage stress.

Project Lead The Way: Computer Science 6

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. This course teaches students that programming goes beyond the virtual world into the physical world. Students are challenged to creatively use sensors and actuators to develop systems that interact with their environment. Designing algorithms and using computational thinking practices, they code and upload programs to microcontrollers that perform a variety of authentic tasks. The unit broadens students' understanding of computer science concepts through meaningful applications. Teams select and solve a personally relevant problem related to wearable technology, interactive art, or mechanical devices.

Project Lead The Way: Design And Modeling 6

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Design and Modeling. This course provides students opportunities to apply the design process to creatively solve problems. Students are introduced to the unit problem in the first activity and are asked to make connections to the problem throughout the lessons in the unit. Students learn and utilize methods for communicating design ideas through sketches, solid models, and mathematical models. Students will understand how models can be simulated to represent an authentic situation and generate data for further analysis and observations. Students work in teams to identify design requirements, research the topic, and engage stakeholders. Teams design a toy or game for a child with cerebral palsy, fabricate and test it, and make necessary modifications to optimize the design solution.

Grade 7

Art 7

Seventh grade art has a greater focus on the elements (line, shape, form, color, texture) and principles of design (unity and variety, emphasis and focal point, pattern and repetition, scale and proportion, rhythm and movement). Students continue to experiment with color schemes and how they currently use them in everyday life. Tints, Shades, Neutrals, Secondary and Tertiary colors are introduced as students continue to expand and use their knowledge of the color wheel in various projects. Three-dimensional art is taken a step further than sixth grade as students create a larger scale relief sculpture, giving it shape and form. Students look at the symmetry, texture and pattern in historical works of art from other cultures and ancient civilizations.

These elements and principles are incorporated into their own sculpture. Students compare and contrast contemporary, abstract and realistic art while creating their own abstract art work. Various artists and artwork are viewed in order to gain a better understanding of the genres presented. Students learn how to create a realistic landscape as they learn point of view, horizon line, foreground, middle ground and background. Two- and three-point perspective studies introduce students to realistic landscape.

Computer Education 7

Students will work cooperatively in this class to create a product-based business. Students will engage in creating a business model for their company while learning what it means to be entrepreneurs. Students will create a brand/logo for their company and conduct marketing research to create promotional materials including social media promotional advertisements and a commercial for their product. Students will work as a team to develop the concept and storyboard for the commercial and edit the video using a video and sound editing software in Adobe Creative Cloud. All groups will then prepare a "pitch" to present to the "Shark Tank" Panel.

Family And Consumer Science (FACS) 7

Students will gain practical experience measuring ingredients to complete several recipes together with their team. Food labs will give students practice on the safety and use of the microwave, stove, oven and the blender. 7th grade FACS includes a review of the U.S.D.A. recommended food safety handling practices as well as an introduction to common foodborne illnesses. Students will also engage in several activities focused on Soft Skill development including non-verbal communication, listening, tone, interviewing and teamwork.

Health 7

The 7th grade health curriculum focuses on several body systems. Within these respective body systems these specific topics are covered: anatomy & physiology, skeletal system, integumentary system, cardiovascular system, and the reproductive system will be examined. Other health topics that are discussed are: mental health, wellness, drugs & alcohol, motivation & goal setting, and communicable diseases.

Music 7 - World Drumming I

In this course students will learn how to play drums and percussion instruments from Africa and the Caribbean. While doing this, students will learn about these cultures and their music. Students who take this course learn to listen, respect others, lead and follow leaders, and use cooperative teamwork through the music that is played. In addition to playing the drums there will be some movement and singing as well as creating new music within a small group. This is a hands-on class which involves participation and performance as the main component.

Physical Education 7

The Middle School Physical Education curriculum for 7th grade provides every student an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that will positively impact fitness levels and motivate them to embrace lifetime wellness. By actively participating in activities that focus on positive social interactions and team building, our students will have the following opportunities:

- Developing fine and gross motor skills.
- Learning game-based strategies and implementing effective decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Improving health-related fitness (Cardiovascular endurance, muscle fitness, and flexibility).
- Promoting a positive attitude toward physical activity leading to a more active lifestyle.
- Enhancing self-esteem by increasing self-confidence, assertiveness, emotional stability, and self-control.
- Using fitness assessments to determine fitness levels and to help guide students towards life-long wellness.
- Participating in activities that help to deter and alleviate stress.

Project Lead The Way: Magic Of Electrons 7

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Magic of Electrons. In this course, students will explore the question “How do electricity and electronics affect my life?”. Students use tools such as the engineering design process, an engineering notebook, computer simulations, and circuit design prototyping materials to invent and innovate. They will learn how creative thinking and problem solving can change their world! Through hands-on projects, students explore electricity, the behavior and parts of atoms, and sensing devices. They learn knowledge and skills in basic circuitry design and examine the impact of electricity on the world around them.

Project Lead The Way: Green Architecture 7

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Green Architecture. In this course, students will use tools such as the engineering design process, an engineering notebook, and Autodesk® Revit® software to invent and innovate. Today’s students have grown up in an age of “green” choices. In Green Architecture, students learn how to apply this concept to the fields of architecture and construction by exploring dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability as they design affordable housing units using Autodesk® 123D® Design software.

Grade 8

Physical Education: Health And Fitness 8 (Required)

Students are expected to change for physical activities. Proper attire (sneakers, West York T-shirt, and navy-blue shorts) is required for all activities. The 8th Grade PE, Health, & Fitness Course is designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to participate in physical education units both indoors and outdoors. Safety and sportsmanship will be emphasized. Prior to the start of each PE unit, students will be given the opportunity to choose their upcoming experience. A variety of health topics (see below) will also be covered during instructional time.

- **Outdoor PE Units:** Opportunities for students will consist of but are not limited to soccer, flag football, softball, ultimate frisbee, lacrosse, field hockey, tennis, track and field, and other outdoor-team sports.
- **Indoor PE Units:** Opportunities for students will consist of but are not limited to basketball, volleyball, floor hockey, eclipse ball, tseball, tchoukball, and other indoor-team sports.
- **Leisure & Recreation PE Units:** Topics are designed to introduce the students to a variety of leisure and recreational activities. Possible opportunities for students will include speedminton, pickleball, table tennis, rock wall climbing, backyard games, dance, and other individual and team sports at a less competitive level.
- **Health Education Units:** Topics covered will include the following: Nutrition/Digestive System, Relationships/Human Sexuality, and Introduction to First Aid & Safety.

Additional 8th Grade Exploratory Courses

Fine Arts Courses

(Students are required to take at least one of the following courses.)

2D Art

This course explores the elements of art and principles of design in depth as students prepare for high school and a global world. Students use the knowledge gained in art from 6th and 7th grade and apply it into their 8th grade work. Projects require a greater use of higher-level thinking as students work with abstract ideas and problem solve difficult and challenging activities. Students explore a variety of media, offering them choices for creating work, in order to help prepare them for the variety of classes offered at the high school. Art is a form of communication, students use it to help communicate and express thoughts, ideas, and opinions.

3D Art

This course will focus on the manipulation and production of three-dimensional artwork. This class lends hands-on experience to build confidence, self-awareness, and self-expression. Students think outside-of-the-box as they create a 3D sculpture-in-the-round. Abstract thinking helps them visualize and sculpt dimension on all sides of an object. Prior to sculpting, historical

works of art are viewed and discussed to aid students in the understanding of this challenging concept. Students will broaden their fine-motor and gross-motor skills, spatial awareness, ways to express themselves creatively as well as problem solving.

Music 8

The goal of this course is to explore and broaden the student's musical knowledge of different genres through music appreciation questions and musical genre exploration. A large portion of the class will be devoted to digital music creation through an online program (currently Soundtrap) where students will learn to create songs by using loops, sampling other sounds into new music, creating their own drum and keyboard loops and working collaboratively and sharing music with each other.

World Drumming 8

In this course students will learn how to play drums and percussion instruments from Africa and the Caribbean. While doing this, students will learn about these cultures and their music. Students who take this course learn to listen, respect others, lead and follow leaders, and use cooperative teamwork through the music that is played. In addition to playing the drums there will be some movement and singing as well as creating new music within a small group. This is a hands-on class which involves participation and performance as the main component.

Technology Education & Engineering

(Students are required to take at least one of the following courses.)

Computer Education 8

Students will explore problem solving and the Design Process while being introduced to application development. Students will work cooperatively on an app design that will solve a problem. They will leave the course with a better understanding of the Design Process and improved problem-solving skills. Students will also have a foundational knowledge of the process of app design and development: user centered design, marketing research, prototyping, debugging and testing. Code.org Computer Science Curriculum, and Computer Discoveries will be taught in this course. This is an elective course for 8th grade students.

Creative Technology 8

In this course, students will explore 2D animation using a variety of methods. A brief history of animation will be discussed and students will use a technique that dates to the early days of cinema and animation; rotoscoping. Additionally, students will learn fundamental animation techniques and processes to design animation sequences like frame by frame animation and tweening. Adobe Photoshop software will be used in this course. This is an elective course for 8th grade students.

Automation and Robotics 8

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Automation & Robotics. Students use tools such as the engineering design process, an engineering notebook, and VEX Robotics® programming software to invent and innovate. This course allows students to trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems.

Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and cars.

Biomedical Science 8

This course follows the Project Lead the Way curriculum for Medical Detectives. In this course, students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, dissect a sheep brain, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.

Additional 8th Grade Exploratory Courses

Exercise and Fitness 8

Students will continue learning how to properly and safely utilize our fitness equipment. By participating in a variety of cardiovascular and strength-training activities, students will maximize their exercise time while following an individualized workout plan. Students will also learn about proper preparation for exercise, fitness testing / measurement and goal setting, and review / practice exercise and fitness principles. Our goal is to positively impact lifetime physical fitness by focusing on health-related fitness components. Sport-specific workouts will also be available for those students who set goals to improve their athletic performance.

Family and Consumer Science (FACS) 8

Students will learn skills needed to care for clothes as well as produce, repair, and recycle textile products. In addition, students will understand the work of a family in terms of budgeting and meal management skills through team preparation and planning of breakfast foods.

Fibers and Fabrics 8

Sewing is an important life skill. It develops fine motor skills, builds self-confidence and inspires creativity. In this course, students will learn how to safely operate a sewing machine and how to follow a pattern. Students will practice communication, technical reading and problem-solving skills.

First Aid and CPR 8

This course is designed to prepare students to recognize an emergency and follow appropriate action plans. Throughout the course the student will attain the knowledge and skills necessary to help sustain life, reduce pain and minimize the consequences of injury, illness, respiratory and cardiac emergencies, until more advanced medical help arrives. Successful completion of this course will provide the student with the skills necessary to take the CPR/First Aid and AED assessment with the American Red Cross.

Additional Courses

Band

The band strives to meet the needs of both experienced and inexperienced members. Membership requires the attendance at full band rehearsals, sectional rehearsals or lessons, and attendance at school performances, which are often outside the normal school hours. Scales, phrasing, fingerings, tone production, rhythms, musical notation and musical expression are stressed. Students will improve their instrumental skills through playing and sight-reading a variety of music. The band performs periodically throughout the school year. Other ensembles such as the jazz band, York County Middle School Honors Band are chosen from students in the current band program.

Grade 6

The emphasis is placed on reinforcing and refining those skills learned in elementary school and developing technical and tonal control both individually and as an ensemble. Students in sixth grade who wish to be in band should have participated in band at the elementary level, or take private lessons to catch up to that level if they have never been in band before. Students are required to attend a weekly in-school small group lesson in addition to full ensemble rehearsals. This is a graded class and students have to submit a song performance each marking period, as well as participate in performances outside of the school day and follow band habits and behaviors to be successful.

Grades 7 & 8

The emphasis is placed on overall musicianship. A high level of performance is expected with attention to detail and precision. Students in 7th and 8th grade band should have participated in 6th grade band or be able to play to that level. Students are required to attend a weekly sectional in addition to full ensemble rehearsals. Basic marching band skills are introduced at this level. The entire program is designed to prepare students for the high school band program. This is a graded class and students have to submit a song performance each marking period, as well as participate in performances outside of the school day and follow band habits and behaviors to be successful.

Chorus

Grade 6

Chorus is open to all interested students and is a graded class. Membership requires attendance and participation in chorus rehearsals, small group sectionals and various performances, which are often outside the normal school hours throughout the year. Unison and two-part music are taught, as well as basic music notation and proper tone production. Self-confidence, stage presence, and responsibility for actions are goals of the choral program.

Choir

Grades 7 & 8

Choir is open to all interested students and is a graded class. Membership requires the attendance and participation in choir rehearsals, small group sectionals and various performances, which are often outside normal school hours throughout the year. Two- and three-part music is taught, as well as basic music notation and proper tone production. Self-confidence, stage presence, and responsibility for actions are goals of the choral program.