



HILLSDALE

**COURSE
DESCRIPTION GUIDE**

GRADES 7-8

TAKE FLIGHT!
2026 - 2027

Building Character, Expecting Excellence

Dear Hillsdale 7th and 8th Grade Students and Parents:

Building Strong Foundations for the Future:

The 7th and 8th grades are key years of growth and preparation. At Hillsdale, we offer a well-rounded curriculum that builds the academic skills, habits, and confidence students need for success in high school and beyond. While graduation may seem distant, the choices made during these years shape future opportunities.

School is a team effort. Students, families, and staff work together to make thoughtful course selections that balance challenge and exploration. Our guiding expectation, “Every Student Completes Every Assignment, Every Day, in Every Class,” reflects our belief that consistency, responsibility, and effort are essential for long-term success.

Exploration and Early Planning:

This Course Guide outlines academic courses and elective opportunities designed to strengthen core skills and introduce new interests. Electives allow students to explore areas such as the arts, technology, wellness, and career-related fields while developing time-management and decision-making skills. Approved full-year courses in 8th grade also provide opportunities to begin earning high school credit.

Preparing for What Comes Next:

Our goal is for every student to enter high school confident and prepared for increased expectations. We encourage students to take ownership of their learning as families partner with staff for guidance and support.

At Hillsdale, every step matters, and the journey starts here. Falcons, Take Flight!

Mr. Keib

Principal
Hillsdale Grades 7–12

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7th-Grade Course Descriptions

English Language Arts (ELA)

Seventh-grade ELA focuses on developing students' literacy skills by analyzing a variety of text genres, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and informational texts, in alignment with Ohio's Learning Standards. Students enhance their ability to cite textual evidence, infer meaning, and determine themes. Writing instruction emphasizes narrative, expository, and argumentative styles, with a focus on organization, clarity, and the use of evidence. Vocabulary development and grammar are incorporated throughout the year to support effective communication. Students also participate in collaborative discussions and presentations to strengthen their speaking and listening skills.

Mathematics

Seventh-grade mathematics introduces students to key concepts, including proportional relationships, operations with rational numbers, and expressions and equations. Students explore probability and statistics, developing skills in interpreting and analyzing data. Geometry focuses on understanding and solving problems involving scale drawings, area, surface area, and volume. Aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards, the curriculum emphasizes real-world applications and fosters problem-solving, mathematical reasoning, and critical thinking.

Typical math pathway:

Math 7 (7th grade) → Math 8 (8th grade) → Algebra I (9th grade)

Students who qualify based on test results may be recommended for an accelerated math course aligned with 8th-grade math standards.

Advanced math pathway for accelerated students recommended by the 7th-grade math teacher based on end of year testing scores. This pathway is for students planning to take higher-level math courses in high school.

Typical accelerated math pathway:

Math 8 (7th grade) → Algebra I (8th grade) → Geometry (9th grade)

Science

In 7th-grade science, students explore life, Earth, and physical science topics aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards. Key focus areas include scientific processes, interactions of matter and energy, Earth's cycles, and ecosystems.

Students conduct hands-on experiments and apply the scientific method to develop their analytical and inquiry skills. Real-world connections are emphasized, encouraging students to think critically about how scientific principles impact their lives and the environment.

Social Studies

Seventh-grade social studies focuses on world history from ancient civilizations to the first global age, emphasizing cultural, technological, and societal developments. Students examine the impact of events, ideas, and people on world history and analyze primary and secondary sources to build critical thinking skills. Geography, economics, and civics are integrated throughout the curriculum to provide a well-rounded understanding of global interconnections.

8th-Grade Course Descriptions

English Language Arts (ELA)

Eighth-grade ELA builds on the skills developed in previous years, focusing on analyzing complex texts and exploring universal themes in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students develop their ability to evaluate arguments, identify bias, and synthesize information across multiple texts. Writing instruction emphasizes argumentative, expository, and narrative forms, with a focus on precision, coherence, and the support of claims with evidence. Students refine their grammar, vocabulary, and speaking skills through collaborative discussions, debates, and presentations.

Mathematics

Eighth-grade mathematics deepens students' understanding of algebraic concepts and geometric principles, preparing them for high school mathematics. Topics include linear equations, systems of equations, functions, and the Pythagorean theorem. Students also explore transformations and congruence in geometry and apply these concepts to real-world situations. For students who qualify, Algebra I is offered as an accelerated option. This high school-level course covers advanced topics, including linear and quadratic functions, polynomials, and solving equations and inequalities, providing a strong foundation for higher-level mathematics. Aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards, both courses emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to model and analyze mathematical relationships.

206 ALGEBRA I

*Full Year • 1 credit • Required • Grade 8-12 • *Fee None • Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation, subject to change based on end of year testing*

Algebra I is the first course in our college-preparatory mathematics sequence. It will cover the ninth-grade indicators of the Ohio Standards for Mathematics. Topics will include numbers and operations, measurement, geometry, algebra, and statistics, with an emphasis on algebra. Expect homework every day.

*Students will take a State of Ohio end-of-course exam to earn points toward graduation.

Science

In 8th-grade science, students explore key concepts in Earth, Life, and Physical Science to build a strong foundation in how the natural world works. They learn about Earth's structure and changes over time, including plate tectonics and fossils; study life science topics such as genetics, reproduction, and population evolution; and investigate physical science principles such as forces, motion, and energy. Throughout the year, students develop critical thinking and scientific inquiry skills by conducting experiments, analyzing data, and applying what they learn to real-world situations, preparing them for more advanced science courses and state assessments.

Social Studies

Eighth-grade social studies focuses on the history of the United States from early exploration and colonization through the Reconstruction Era. Students study the founding principles of the United States, the Constitution, and the early development of government while examining the economic, political, and cultural factors that shaped the nation. Primary and secondary source analysis, cause-and-effect relationships, and civic engagement are emphasized to help students become informed and active citizens.

7th- and 8th-Grade Electives

It is highly recommended that every student schedule a study hall each semester. With a study hall included, students may choose two (2) electives per semester. Band and Choir are full-year courses. All other electives are offered as semester courses, unless otherwise noted. Eighth-grade students may earn high school credit only through selected full-year elective courses listed in this guide; regular semester electives do not earn high school credit at the 8th-grade level. This structure helps ensure students maintain a balanced schedule while allowing flexibility to explore elective interests.

Students will have the opportunity to take electives during both their 7th- and 8th-grade years. Each elective may be taken only once during this two-year period; students may not repeat the same elective in both years.

Agriculture Adventures: Grow It, Raise It, Sustain It!

Get ready to dig in! Agriculture Adventures is a fun, hands-on class where students explore how plants, animals, and the environment all work together to feed and support the world. Students will learn about plant and animal sciences, soil health, and sustainability through interactive activities, projects, and real-world examples. From understanding where food comes from to learning how to care for the land, this course shows how agriculture plays a big role in everyday life—perfect for curious minds who like to learn by doing!

Almost Adulting Boot Camp: Real Skills for Real Life

A hands-on boot camp designed to teach students real-world skills they can use right away. Through interactive activities and practical challenges, students will learn everyday fix-it and safety skills, such as using basic tools, changing a tire, and understanding home safety. They'll also practice personal and professional skills, including tying a tie, sewing on a button, ironing clothes, and proper grooming.

In addition, students will build kitchen confidence by preparing simple meals, following recipes, and using appliances safely. The course also focuses on independence and real-world readiness, including basic money management, communication skills such as making professional phone calls, and knowing how to handle everyday and emergency situations. This class focuses on building confidence, independence, and readiness for life beyond the classroom through hands-on learning.

Art Adventures: Create, Experiment, Discover!

Love to draw, paint, create, or try new things? This original art elective invites students of all abilities to explore a variety of art materials and techniques through fun, hands-on projects. Students may experiment with various media while learning how artists turn ideas into finished creations.

Along the way, students may discover how creativity connects to real-world careers such as graphic design, animation, illustration, fashion, architecture, and fine arts. This course encourages imagination, problem-solving, and personal expression while helping students build skills and confidence for future art and design classes.

Band: Where Music Comes Alive

Band expands on the skills developed in previous years, allowing students to explore more advanced repertoire and ensemble techniques. Students refine their musicianship by focusing on phrasing, intonation, and musical expression while mastering more challenging rhythms and harmonies. The course emphasizes collaboration and personal growth, encouraging students to take on leadership roles within the ensemble. Performances at school concerts, community events, and regional festivals provide a platform to showcase their progress. The seventh and eighth-grade band prepares students for high school band and other advanced musical opportunities while cultivating a lifelong appreciation for music.

Build It! Woodworking Basics

This hands-on course introduces students to shop safety and basic woodworking skills through simple design-and-build projects. Students learn to measure, plan, and use tools safely while developing problem-solving and craftsmanship skills. Along the way, students explore career pathways related to woodworking and the skilled trades, including construction, carpentry, engineering, manufacturing, and design. This course builds practical skills and confidence for future career and technical education courses.

Choir: Voices Unleashed

Choir builds on the skills introduced in lower grades, allowing students to refine their vocal techniques and expand their repertoire. Students explore more complex harmonies, dynamics, and musical phrasing while continuing to develop their sight-reading and interpretive skills. The course emphasizes vocal independence and group cohesion, encouraging students to take ownership of their musical contributions. Performances at school events, concerts, and community engagements provide opportunities to showcase their growth as vocalists. The seventh- and eighth-grade choirs prepare students for high school-level choir while fostering a deeper appreciation of choral music.

Click, Create, Share! Digital Journeys

Ever wonder how videos, graphics, podcasts, and websites are made? This hands-on course lets students explore the exciting world of digital media through creative projects in video, audio, graphic design, basic web content, and digital storytelling, such as blogging. Students experiment with ideas, learn to plan and create content, and practice using technology responsibly in a school-based setting to produce materials such as a yearbook. Along the way, they build creativity, collaboration, organization, and digital citizenship skills that prepare them for more advanced digital media, technology, and career-focused courses in high school. This class is perfect for students who enjoy creativity, curiosity, and trying new things.

Discover Your Future: Career Exploration

What do you want to be when you grow up? This course helps students begin to answer that question by exploring their interests, strengths, and career options in an engaging, interactive way. Using Naviance, students complete interest and skills surveys, explore careers, and learn the education or training required for the jobs they're interested in.

Students will connect what they learn about themselves to possible career paths and begin setting goals for high school and beyond. Along the way, they'll learn how school choices today can open doors to future opportunities. This course builds confidence, self-awareness, and planning skills while helping students discover exciting possibilities for their future.

ELA Lab

The ELA lab continues to provide targeted support to students who require additional reading and writing assistance. Instruction is individualized to address specific needs, including fluency, comprehension, critical analysis of texts, and written communication. Students engage in skill-building activities and strategies to access grade-level content more independently. The course emphasizes practical application and prepares students for the increased academic demands of high school ELA while fostering growth in their confidence and literacy abilities. The school staff assigns this course.

Inside the Living Body: Anatomy & Physiology Foundations

This advanced course in anatomy and physiology is designed for students with a strong interest in how living organisms function and for those considering careers in related fields. Students examine the relationship between structure and function as they explore cells, tissues, and major body systems, including the integumentary, skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, lymphatic, urinary, reproductive, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, nervous, immune, endocrine, and sensory systems.

Learning is hands-on and inquiry-based, with labs, dissections, investigations, and a culminating project that reinforces scientific thinking and real-world application. Students also explore health, disease, and career pathways working with humans and animals. This course is recommended for motivated students and is intended as an advanced elective beyond typical 7th and 8th-grade science coursework.

Math Lab

The math lab provides targeted support for students who need additional help with foundational and grade-level math skills. Instruction focuses on solving equations, understanding functions, and working with geometric concepts, including transformations and the Pythagorean theorem. The course uses personalized learning plans, collaborative activities, and real-world applications to enhance mathematical understanding and problem-solving abilities. This intervention is designed to close learning gaps, build confidence, and prepare students for the increased rigor of high school mathematics courses. The school staff assigns this course.

Think. Tinker. Create! STEAM Try It Studio

This hands-on STEAM course invites students to explore science, technology, engineering, art, and math through creative problem-solving and design challenges. Students will experiment, build, test, and improve projects using real-world applications while learning how ideas turn into solutions. Along the way, students explore STEAM-related career pathways, including engineering, technology, design, robotics, architecture, and innovation. This course develops curiosity, collaboration, and

critical-thinking skills that prepare students for advanced STEAM and career-focused courses.

Transitions: Skills for Life, School & What's Next

Transitions is a fun, hands-on course for 7th- and 8th-graders designed to help students grow, explore, and gain confidence as they prepare for high school and beyond.

Students will develop essential life skills, including communication, goal-setting, healthy relationships, and cooking, through engaging projects and real-world activities. The course also introduces career exploration and personal strengths, helping students better understand their interests and future possibilities. This class supports students as they transition academically, socially, and personally, while learning skills they'll use every day. This class includes a cooking unit where students learn basic independent living skills, including preparing simple, nutritious meals.

All 8th-grade electives taken for high school credit are recorded on a student's official high school transcript. These courses mark the beginning of a student's high school GPA. Because grades earned in these classes permanently affect high school academic records, students should be prepared for increased rigor, higher expectations, and the responsibilities that come with high school-level coursework.

8th-Grade Electives for High School Credit

702 AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES (AFNR)

*Full Year • 1¼ credit • Elective • Grade 8-12 • *Fee \$12.00 • Prerequisite: Teacher/Parent Approval*

This first course in the career field is an introduction to Agricultural and Environmental Systems. Students will be introduced to the scope of the Agricultural and Environmental Systems career field. They will examine principles of food science, natural resource management, animal science & management, plant & horticultural science, basic shop principles in woods, power technology, and bioscience. Students will examine the FFA organization and the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program. Throughout the course, students will develop communication, leadership, and business skills essential to the agriculture industry.

A key part of the program is the National FFA Organization, a national student organization that develops premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Through FFA, students have opportunities to build leadership skills by serving as officers, strengthen public speaking and communication through contests and presentations, and participate in career development events, teamwork, and community service.

Agricultural Education courses are worth 1.25 credits because learning occurs both in and beyond the classroom. The 1.25 credit is earned through required FFA participation in class, along with outside work, including projects, leadership activities, competitions, supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs), and other hands-on work completed inside and outside regular class time. This real-world learning is an essential part of agricultural education, not extra or optional work.

870 GUITAR I

*Semester • ½ credit • Elective • *Fee: None • Prerequisite: Teacher/Parent Approval*

Beginner-level guitar learning the basics of notes, chords, improv, composing, and ensemble playing.

871 GUITAR II

*Semester • ½ credit • Elective • *Fee: None • Prerequisite: Guitar I & Teacher/Parent Approval*

Beginner-level guitar learning the basics of notes, chords, improv, composing, and ensemble playing. Guitar 2 playing builds on Guitar 1.

001 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*Semester • ¼ credit • Required • *Fee \$17.00 • Prerequisite: Teacher/Parent Approval*

A course designed to expose students to different sports, leisure activities, and fitness opportunities, and develop a healthy attitude towards physical activity and its contribution to living a healthy lifestyle. Individual and group activities are offered with emphasis on participation and sportsmanship.

612 SPANISH I

*Full Year • 1 credit • Elective • *Fee \$5.00 • Prerequisite: Administrator Approval*

Introduction to Spanish language and Hispanic/Latino Cultures is a general introduction to the Spanish language and its associated structures, nature, uses, and significance on a local, regional, national, and global scale, as well as a broad overview of some of the cultures, contributions, history, humanities, and geography of Spanish-speaking countries and people. In this class, students will learn to communicate at a basic level using the building blocks of practical language: words, phrases, and tasks that support basic proficiency. Through video, music, conversations, compositions, presentations, skits, collaboration, discussions, and demonstrations, a willing student can expect to gain basic skills in Spanish conversation, proper pronunciation, survival, and awareness of some cultural perspectives associated with the Spanish language. This course is available to 8th-grade students who are selected by the administration based on qualifying assessment and testing data.