8th Grade Matters

9th Grade

Course Options Preview

What You Need to Know About Prerequisites & Placement



2025-2026

Updated February 2026

Welcome to 8th Grade!



8th grade is an important year as you fine tune your study skills and prepare to enter high school. Everything that you accomplish in 8th grade makes a big difference in the program and courses you will take in high school.

The counseling department has put together this guide to help you understand the 9th grade course options and placement process. Below is a timeline explaining the steps of the 9th grade course placement process. The following pages describe the various options for 9th grade courses in each subject area as well as the criteria for placement in each class. Please contact the 8th grade counselor if you have any questions throughout the year.

Remember, all of the work you do in 8th grade will help determine the courses you will take in 9th grade.

9th Grade Course Placement Timeline

FEBRUARY - APRIL

- Grade level data will be collected at the end of the 2nd quarter for each subject area and reviewed by high school department chairpersons and departments. Please note, we do not round averages.
- Middle / High School Counselors, Department Chairs and teachers will meet with 8th grade students to discuss course criteria, elective options and selection process with students.
- High School Counselors meet with students to choose electives.

APRIL - MAY

- Placement decisions are finalized by high school department chairpersons, building administration and department chairs. Final schedules will be available in August.

If you have questions regarding the placement criteria or the selection process, please contact the appropriate Department Chair:

Rachel Sydlowski RSydlowski@eufsdk12.org - Art
Bryan Johnson: BJohnson@eufsdk12.org - English
Michael Boyle: MBoyle@eufsdk12.org - Social Studies
Jacquelyn Osmanaj: JOsmanaj@eufsdk12.org - Math
Alexandra Bloshenko: ABloshenko@eufsdk12.org - Science
Karina Barrera: KBarrera@eufsdk12.org - World Languages
Lauren Stipo LStipo@eufsdk12.org - Business Education
Mark Dodge: MDodge@eufsdk12.org - Music
Diane Silva: Dsilva@eufsdk12.org - Special Education

Very Important…

The grades you receive in some classes offered in 8th grade become part of your high school transcript.

For students taking the following classes, the final grade will become part of the permanent high school transcript and will be computed into the high school GPA.

- Spanish I
- Italian I
- French I
- Algebra I
- Earth Science Regents

Please speak with your teachers or your school counselor if you are concerned about your progress or grades in any of your classes.

ENGLISH



All students must take four years of English and pass the New York State English Regents exam. Elective English courses may be taken in addition to the one year of English required in each grade.

COURSE OFFERINGS for 9TH GRADERS

ENGLISH 9

Prerequisite: English 8

This course emphasizes the development of skills in methods of inquiry, critical response to reading, and writing to learn. Students learn to become objective readers of their own writing while they develop the skills required for the New York State Regents examination. Students read for a variety of purposes including: reading for literary response, critical analysis, social interaction, and specific information.

ENGLISH 9 HONORS

Prerequisite: English 8 <u>and</u> Departmental Approval

This is an advanced-level course. Students analyze novels, poetry, legends, and plays to develop critical thinking and cogent writing. Subtleties of technique and levels of meaning are carefully evaluated. A rigorous level of academic independence is expected of each honors student.

Selection Process for English 9 Honors:

Student progress in the 8th grade English class will determine eligibility for English 9 Honors. Student grades and work habits are evaluated by the English department and Administrators to determine placement in the honors class.

Eligibility criteria is listed below:

- Immediate Acceptance: Class average equal to or greater than 95%.
- Application Procedure (for students between 90-94.9% Please note that we do not round averages):
  Writing Sample: Spring.
  Criteria:
  - Class average equal to or greater than 90%.
  - Successful completion of honors entry level writing sample.

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

Criteria: Departmental Approval

This course is required for students who may need assistance with literacy skills. Students receive support to meet the standards of a rigorous English curriculum by attending an extra period of English on alternate days. The class is required for students who have not met or are struggling to meet New York State minimum standards for high school.

STRATEGIC LITERACY

Criteria: Teacher Recommendation

This workshop is intended to teach and reinforce basic literacy skills, including comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. It is designed to build reading and writing skills, separately from all other classes. The students work on reading closely and critically as well as writing about informational texts and fiction. The course is a pass/fail, non credit-bearing support period. Student placement is based on reading test scores and performance in ELA and Social Studies. The students are tested periodically to monitor their progress in the designated skill areas. Placement is fluid. Students who consistently achieve grade-level expectations in class and in their ELA and Social Studies' classes are moved out of the workshop.

SOCIAL STUDIES



All students must earn at least four credits in Social Studies and fulfill the following core requirements: complete coursework in Global History and Geography (grades 9 and 10) and pass the corresponding New York State Regents exam at the end of grade 10; pass the United States History and Government course and Regents exam at the end of grade 11; and complete Economics and Government in grade 12.

COURSE OFFERINGS for 9th GRADERS

GLOBAL HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 9

Prerequisite: Social Studies 8

This course examines world civilizations from prehistoric times to the mid-18th century. Emphasis is on developing interpretation skills through the use of primary documents, secondary sources, political cartoons, map reading and chart and graph interpretations in relation to the thematic essay and the document-based essay. This course fulfills the first half of a two-year sequence. Students are required to take the New York State Regents exam at the end of Global 10.

GLOBAL HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 9 HONORS

Prerequisite: Social Studies 8 and Departmental Approval

This advanced course for highly motivated students focuses on the history of civilization in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. This course is both reading and writing-intensive, requiring sophisticated abilities in these areas. Critical reading skills are developed through nightly readings, class discussions and assessments. Writing thematic essays and document-based questions (DBQ) complement the higher order thinking skills that are emphasized in this course.

Selection Process for Global 9 Honors:

Student progress in the 8th grade social studies class will determine eligibility for Global 9 Honors. Student grades and work habits are evaluated by the High School Social Studies department and Administration to determine placement in the honors class. Eligibility criteria is listed below:

- Immediate Acceptance: Class average equal to or greater than 95%.

- Application Procedure for students between 90-94.9%
  (**Please note that we do not round averages**):
  Assessment: Spring.
  Criteria:
  - Class average equal to or greater than 90%.
  - Successful completion of honors entry level writing sample.

MATH



The mathematics program at Eastchester High School strives to develop students' problem-solving skills, confidence in their mathematical ability and appreciation of the relevance of mathematics in today's society. Students are challenged and encouraged to reach their full potential with skills that will carry them through college and the workplace. All students are required to take 3 years of Mathematics to earn a high school diploma. University bound students are encouraged to take 4 years of Math courses.

COURSE OFFERINGS for 9TH GRADERS

ALGEBRA 1

Prerequisite: Math 8

This course is a Regents Math course covering the New York State Next Generation Curriculum for Algebra. The course provides a strong foundation in elementary algebra, functions and their graphs, and statistics. Students will take the New York State Algebra I Regents exam in June.

ALGEBRA 1A

Prerequisite: Math department recommendation

This is the first year of a two-year program covering the New York State Next Generation Curriculum for Algebra. It is designed for students who would benefit from an extended study of the material taught in Algebra I. In 10th grade, students will take Algebra IB and take the New York State Algebra I Regents exam in June.

GEOMETRY

Prerequisite: Algebra 1 taken in 8th grade – Final grade below 90

This course covers the New York State Next Generation Curriculum for Geometry. Topics include Euclidean geometry and proof, logic, constructions and trigonometry. Students will take the Geometry Regents Exam in June.

GEOMETRY HONORS

Prerequisite: Algebra 1 taken in 8th Grade – Final Grade at 90 or above

This course covers the New York State Next Generation Curriculum for Geometry. Topics will be covered in depth beyond the Regents level Geometry curriculum. Topics include Euclidean geometry and proof, logic, constructions and trigonometry. Students will take the Geometry Regents Exam in June.

MATH WORKSHOP

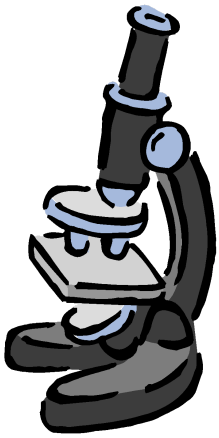
Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation

This course provides students with an additional period of Mathematics every other day. It is designed to support students in their coursework as well as prepare them for the Mathematics Regents Exams. Students who earn Level 1 or Level 2 scores on the Math 8 assessment, as well as those who are recommended by their 8th grade teacher, may be assigned this class.

Selection Process for Math Courses:

Student progress in their 8th grade math class will determine 9th grade course placement. All course decisions are finalized by the High School Math department and Administration.

SCIENCE



The Science curriculum consists of courses that use science as a method of inquiry and learning. Emphasis is placed on the processes of science that allow students to discover and interpret scientific knowledge, develop positive attitudes toward science, encourage an interest in science as a vocation, and utilize problem solving/decision making techniques that relate to a technology oriented society. All students are required to take 3 years of Science to earn a high school diploma. College bound students are encouraged to take 4 years of Science courses.

COURSE OFFERINGS for 9th GRADERS

EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCES

Prerequisite: Science 8

The Earth and Space Sciences course is an overview of earth and solar system processes, including Earth Dimensions, Rocks, Minerals & Resources, Earthquakes and Earth's interior, Surface Processes and Landscaping, Earth's History, Meteorology and Atmospheric Energy, Water Cycle & Climate, and Astronomy. Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 1200 minutes of laboratory work and submit satisfactory reports in order to sit for the Regents exam. All students will take the New York State Earth and Space Sciences Regents exam in June.

LIFE SCIENCE: BIOLOGY

Prerequisite: Regents Earth and Space Sciences taken in 8th Grade – Final Grade below 90

This course studies the fundamental principles of Biology, including the study of organisms, human physiology, ecology, genetics and evolution. In addition to meeting daily, this course includes one laboratory period every other day. Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 1200 minutes of laboratory work and submit satisfactory reports in order to sit for the Regents exam. All students are required to take the Life Science: Biology Regents exam in June.

LIFE SCIENCE: BIOLOGY HONORS

Prerequisite: Regents Earth and Space Sciences taken in 8th Grade – Final Grade of 90+

This course is designed to offer investigations in Biology beyond the Regents level, as described above. Students will take the Life Science: Biology Regents exam in June.

AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite: Students must have a final average of 90 or above in their 8th grade Regents in Earth and Space Sciences, Algebra 1, and English class

This course is an alternative to Life Science: Biology Honors for 9th grade students. It follows a combined curriculum outlined by New York State and the College Board Program. The course is designed to explore environmental topics in a depth equivalent to that of a first-year college course. Due to the fast pace and depth of material, extensive work outside the classroom will be required. Topics include: forms of pollution, population growth, use of natural resources, genetics, evolution, biochemistry, and ecology.

All students will be required to take the AP exam in May and the Life Science: Biology Regents exam in June. Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 1200 minutes of laboratory work and submit satisfactory reports in order to sit for the Regents exam. Students will take Chemistry/Chemistry Honors after successful completion of AP Environmental Science.

Selection Process for Science Courses:

Student progress in their 8th science class will determine 9th grade course placement. All course decisions are finalized by the High School Science Department and Administration.

WORLD LANGUAGES



The ability to communicate in another language provides a unique opportunity to gain access to other people and their cultures. The department is dedicated to the development of proficiencies in communication skills enabling students to speak, understand, read and write in a language other than English.

In order to graduate high school, students must earn at least 1 credit in a second language. College bound students are encouraged to continue their second language studies through high school.

Most students take level 1 of a second language over the course of 7th and 8th grade. After successful completion of the level 1 course, students may move on to level 2 of a second language in 9th grade.

If students do not successfully complete the level 1 requirements, they will be required to repeat level 1 in 9th grade.

Students who do move on to level 2 may also choose to take an additional language if their schedule allows.

The following second language courses are available to 9th graders:

Spanish 1
Spanish 2
Italian 1
Italian 2
French 2 (level 1 is not offered in high school)
Latin 1



ART & MUSIC

In order to graduate high school, students must complete 1 credit in the arts. This credit can be satisfied with either a music course or an art course and students are encouraged to complete this requirement in 9th grade. In some cases, students may choose to take both. The following courses in the arts are available to 9th graders:

STUDIO IN ART

Prerequisite: None

This comprehensive course is designed for the incoming art student and is a prerequisite for all other art courses.

Studio in Art is designed to provide a foundation for advanced courses in art. Emphasis is placed on understanding the Elements of Art and Principles of Design as a basis for composition. Students will explore a variety of artists, art processes, and materials such as drawing, painting, printmaking, and two and three-dimensional design. Student artwork will reflect aesthetic, cultural, and historical contexts. Willingness to get involved in the creative process is a more important requirement than the student's talent or previous experience.

This course fulfills the New York State art requirement for graduation and is a prerequisite for all Art course electives.

SONGWRITING

Prerequisite: None

This course uses critical thinking skills to look at trends in popular music to understand the formulas for successful songwriting. **Students in this class do best when they have access to an iPhone or iPad.** Students will learn basic piano, lyric writing, chord structure, song form, and some technical "track making" skills. These skills will culminate in the writing and production of lyrics and music for original songs using GarageBand (on mac products). **Students should have regular access to an iPhone, iPad, or MacBook.** *(please note: GarageBand is only available on Apple products).* You may take this class without a mac product, but you will have to work with the teacher to find alternative arrangements. These assignments are at least 1/3 of the class.

MUSIC THEORY

Prerequisite: None

In this year-long course, students will learn essential elements of music such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and form. Additional aspects of music such as notation, major and minor scales, modes, key signatures, intervals, chords, cadences, non-chord tones, form, part-writing and score analysis will be studied. Aural dictation and ear training are also an integral part of the course and will be taught throughout the year. Students who are enrolled in band, orchestra, or choir are encouraged to take this course. Rudimentary knowledge of music is helpful, but not required.

SYMPHONIC BAND

Prerequisite: EMS band or recommendation of Director

This course is a prelude to Concert Band. The Symphonic band will meet every day and perform at all concerts. Its repertoire will include: classic band literature, show and movie scores, and marches. Any student who does not have band experience should speak to the director.

STRING ORCHESTRA

Prerequisite: EMS Orchestra or recommendation of Director

String orchestra is a course that provides a setting in which students will be able to display their ability on violin, viola, cello, or double bass. While using an ensemble approach to learning, the student will be able to demonstrate the proper techniques of basic musicianship such as tone, rhythm, articulation, dynamics, pitch, style, and interpretation. Along with the enhancement of basic musicianship, the student will demonstrate the proper disciplines and attitudes of being a positive member of an ensemble. The course meets daily, and runs for the duration of the school year. Performance opportunities include the winter and spring concerts, NYSSMA solo festival, and other music department trips. String orchestra repertoire from the Baroque era to the present is learned.

MIXED CHOIR

Prerequisite: EMS Choir or recommendation of Director

Mixed Choir is open to all students and serves as a foundation for choral singing at the high school. This daily class serves as an introduction to sight singing, ear training, and vocal technique.

Electives



Many students will have the opportunity to choose additional elective courses in 9th grade. These options will be discussed with parents and students in more depth later in the year. Elective options are usually available to 9th graders in the areas of English, Social Studies, Business and Computer Applications, the Arts and World Languages. Electives are subject to change based on student enrollment and teacher availability.

FILM STUDIES

Prerequisite: None

From *Casablanca* to *Jaws*, *North by Northwest* to *Back to the Future*, movies have had an enduring impact on our culture. This half-year elective explores the social impact of Hollywood blockbusters, investigating the social circumstances that inspired these films, how many popular films are made, and the impact that films have on both pop culture and entire generations.

LATIN 1

Prerequisite: None

This elective course develops reading skills supported by listening, speaking and writing skills. Grammar, vocabulary derivation and word study are elements of language skills which will be included. Cultural awareness of the Greco-Roman civilizations in the areas of daily life, myths and legends, history and public life, architecture and art, and literature is a component of this course.

PHILOSOPHY

Prerequisite: None

This course is an introduction to Western Philosophy. Students do not need any background in philosophy, or any plans for further study. The course has 3 broad aims: to introduce students to the tradition of philosophical argument via primary texts; to teach students how, in general, to make and evaluate philosophical arguments; to strengthen written and verbal communication skills. This introductory philosophy course will provide students with the foundational skills necessary for successful research in any discipline.

GLOBAL ISSUES IN THE 21st CENTURY

Prerequisite: None

This course examines major global issues shaping the modern world. Through research, debate, and simulations, students explore challenges such as drug trafficking, human rights, technology, the global economy, warfare, religious conflict, natural disasters, and environmental concerns. They will analyze these issues from multiple perspectives while building skills in critical thinking, research, and public speaking. Students will also consider real-world solutions and gain a clearer understanding of how interconnected today's global society is.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Prerequisite: None

This course is a half credit elective that focuses on Environmental Science and how humans affect the Earth. Topics include but are not limited to: watersheds, human interaction with the environment, and the sustainability of the planet.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Prerequisite: None

This half credit personal finance course covers all of the essential personal finance topics necessary to become a financially capable student and adult. The course uses a variety of resources which include videos, current articles, games, simulations, and discussions to instruct students on all of the financial topics that are necessary to build a strong financial future.The topics that will be covered include: Behaviors with Money, Banking, Investing, Types of Credit, Managing Your Credit, Paying for College, Careers, Insurance, Taxes, and Budgeting. By the end of this course, students will have a thorough understanding of personal finance topics and be prepared to handle the financial responsibilities that exist after graduation.

Students taking this course are eligible to receive 3 college credits at a discounted rate. They will sign up for the credits once the class starts. These credits are taken at most colleges and universities.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Prerequisite: None

If you've ever wondered why some posts blow up, why certain ads follow you around, or how brands seem to "read your mind," this class is for you. In Social Media Marketing, you'll learn how modern marketing actually works online—and you'll build real skills you can use for a job, a club, or your own business.

You'll explore the full social media and digital marketing playbook: content marketing, social media strategy (including *what* to post and *when* to post), landing pages, e-commerce, blogging, email marketing, mobile marketing, media, SEO/keywords, and the numbers behind it all (KPIs + metrics).

This isn't a "read-and-forget" class. Expect hands-on projects, real-world case studies, and challenges that feel like what actual marketers do—planning campaigns, creating content, analyzing performance, and improving based on results. By the end, you'll be able to explain *why* something works online, not just copy trends.

INTRODUCTION to BUSINESS

Prerequisite: None

Are you interested in studying business? Do you want to know more about the different areas of business? This course will provide students with an overview of all aspects of business. It will allow students to identify areas that may be of interest to them and prepare them for their future in the business world. Multiple disciplines of business will be covered:

Management: Principles of management in a diversity of businesses will be introduced. Students will learn how superior management skills are the foundation of all business practice.

Marketing: An overview of many facets of marketing will be presented. Students will learn the *Four P's* (product, place, promotion and price), advertising, market research, and product development.

Finance: Students will learn many aspects of investment and banking domestically and globally. They will research the history of stocks, bonds, and 30 investing to compare patterns to today's investment trends. Students will complete a series of activities to reinforce skills in general areas of accounting.

Human Resources: No business can be successful without its people. Students will study strategies used by businesses to find, motivate, and reward individual employees as well as successful work teams.

Operations: Students will be provided with the concepts, techniques, and tools needed to design, analyze, and improve operational capabilities of an organization.
This project-based course is required for a Business Education sequence.

INVESTING & FINANCE

Prerequisite: None

Are you interested in learning about the stock market? Do you want to learn how to make your money grow? This course will introduce students to fundamental financial concepts and tools used in making financial decisions. The course will cover:
investing in financial tools such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. Students will look at things to consider when making investment choices which include diversification, buying on margin, buying short, and risk versus reward. Students will study how the stock market works and how to invest wisely for their future. Students will participate in a simulation in which they will be able to apply their knowledge of investing.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

Prerequisite: None

This is a project-based course designed for students with no formal programming education. Its goal is to provide students with an understanding of how automation and computation can be used to solve problems. It also aims to help students feel confident of their ability to write small programs in a high level language, allowing them to accomplish simple, yet useful goals. The language used in this course will be Java.

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE PRINCIPLES

Prerequisite: Algebra 1

Advanced Placement Science Principles is a foundational course in the logic of coding. It will focus on strategizing to build algorithms using control structures like if-else statements and loops to solve a problem. This course is taught in JavaScript, and the rigor of the course lies in the creativity and computational thinking that one may apply to find a solution. AP Computer Science Principles also explores the global impact of the internet on society, communication, and collaboration. Students are required to take the Advanced Placement examination in May.

WEB DESIGN

Prerequisite: None

This is a project-based course that teaches students how to build their own web pages. Students will learn the languages HTML and CSS, and will create their own live homepages to serve as portfolios of their creations. Students will finish this course with tangible, professional, mobile responsive websites.

Students with Special Needs



Eastchester High School offers a continuum of services to meet the needs of students who require additional support in school. The comprehensive service delivery model includes regular classes, resource room, co-teaching, labs, workshops, testing modifications, and program modifications. Alternative programs, such as self-contained or special classes, are provided for students whose disabilities prevent them from participating in general education classes.

Placement in building-level support classes are determined by teacher recommendation. Special education programs and placement are determined at the annual Committee on Special Education meetings with parents.

Please refer to the PPS services guide or contact your child's counselor if you would like any additional information on these programs.

Physical Education



The Health Science Department incorporates curricula designed to impart knowledge to students regarding total wellness. Both the Physical Education and Health programs engage all three domains of wellness: physical, mental, and social health. The goal of the Health Science Department is to help each student strive to live healthier lives and thus, improve their quality of life at school, at home, and in the community at large.

In order to graduate high school, New York State requires students to complete 2 credits of physical education. This requirement is generally satisfied with $\frac{1}{2}$ credit per year. In 9^{th} grade, students will take physical education all year, every other day.