HIGHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

# 8th Grade Course Guide 2026-2027

Highland Middle School
3515 W. Hawthorne Rd.
Spokane, WA 99208

*Mead School District, 2323 E Farwell Rd, Mead, WA 99021*

Highland Middle School
8th Grade Courses

## Eighth grade required courses

| | |
|---|---|
| Math* | 2 semesters |
| English<br>(see course descriptions for options) | 2 semesters |
| Social Studies | 2 semesters |
| Science | 2 semesters |
| Physical Education | 1 semester |

**Students will be placed in the appropriate math course.*

## Eighth grade elective courses (students choose one of the following)

| | |
|---|---|
| Band | Year-long class |
| Choir | Year-long class |
| Orchestra | Year-long class |
| Spanish 1 | Year-long class |
| Yearbook | Year-long class |

## Students choose three of the semester-long classes

- Art
- Design & Modeling
- Design & Fabrications
- Entrepreneurship
- Visual Arts through Leadership 8
- Unified PE Buddy
- Intro to Cooking
- SOS - Student of Service
- Crime Scene Investigation
- College Readiness

# Highland Middle School
# 8th Grade Course Descriptions

## REQUIRED COURSES

## ENGLISH

**English 8** The eighth grade English course focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening and research skills that are all taught and reinforced through our core curriculum program called *Collections.* Students read a variety of classic and contemporary novels along with nonfiction essays, speeches and articles. Reading comprehension and vocabulary study are foundational in all English classes. Writing is taught throughout the core curriculum and focuses on the three modes: narrative, information and argument. Students learn structure, organization, word choice, idea development and conventions as they deepen their understanding about how to communicate through writing.

**Honors English 8** This course uses the same core curriculum program as English 8, but the activities take them deeper into the content. Students will also read more complex texts that may be above grade level. This course is designed to offer an enriched and challenging sequence of study for students who may be advanced in reading and writing. This is an advanced course that is open to all students; however, students should thoughtfully consider enrollment in an honors course.

## MATHEMATICS

**Math 8** Students take their understanding of unit rates and proportional relationships to a new level, connecting these concepts to points on a line and ultimately using them to solve linear equations that require them to apply algebraic reasoning as well as knowledge of the properties of operations. Students will also expand their understanding of numbers beyond rational numbers.

**Algebra I** Algebra I is foundational for all future math courses. Students explore algebraic problem-solving for linear, exponential and quadratic functions as represented in context or as a graph, equation and table. Areas of study include arithmetic and geometric sequences; linear systems and inequalities, polynomials and factoring; and modeling and statistics. This course is consistent with Washington State Standards. *A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year (WAC 180-51-030).*

**Geometry** In this course, students will strengthen their logical system of thought while developing geometric concepts and addressing formal proof through transformational reasoning. Algebra is used throughout to analyze characteristics of geometric figures through the coordinate plane. The Common Core State Standards and Standards for Mathematical Practices are followed in this course. *A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year (WAC 180-51-030).*

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**Health and Fitness Education** This course emphasizes team and individual sports, lifetime activities, and health and fitness concepts. Students will participate in a wide variety of activities, as well as gain an understanding of how to plan their own lifelong health and fitness.

## SCIENCE

**Science 8** This course offers students the opportunity to explore the natural and physical wonders of the earth and space. The three big ideas addressed in eighth grade science are: Energy, Astronomy and Earth. Career Technical Education (CTE) and Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) principles are infused in a project-oriented curriculum.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

**Social Studies 8 (U.S. History)** Eighth graders examine ideas, issues and events from the colonization of the Thirteen Colonies through Reconstruction and the Industrial Age at the end of the nineteenth century. Students will explore the founding of the United States and the framing of our Constitution in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding of current events and politics, society, culture and economy in the United States.

## MUSIC ELECTIVES (year-long courses)

**Beginning Band** Beginning Band is for the student who has little or no band experience. There will be performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional rehearsals and events. Students are responsible for providing their own instruments. The band instructor will guide this process during the first week of school. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

**Symphonic Band** This course is for advanced students with concert band experience. Along with music fundamentals at the individual level, students will learn group techniques in an advanced band setting. This band has a number of performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional rehearsals and events. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

**Wind Ensemble** An elite band for students with advanced band experience. Musicians are expected to perform at the fourth-year level. The curriculum consists of developing and refining techniques introduced in previous bands. Along with stressing individual musicianship, group ensemble techniques will be dealt with on an advanced level. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional required rehearsals and events. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

**Percussion Ensemble** This course is open to all percussion students with at least one year of percussion instruction. Emphasis will be placed on the development of technique and skill necessary to perform percussion ensemble literature, marching percussion literature, and in a concert band setting. The percussion class is a co-curricular performance-based class. As such, attendance is required for all events that involve percussion students. Many of these events take place outside the school day.

**Jazz Ensemble I** Jazz I is an elective class for the most advanced students who have auditioned and been selected as members of the ensemble. Students in Jazz I are required to also have a concert band as their elective, unless their instrument is piano or bass. The curriculum consists of advanced jazz techniques such as ensemble playing, style, feel, jazz theory and improvisation. This band has a number of performances throughout the year.

**Jazz Ensemble II** Jazz II is a "zero hour" class for students who have auditioned and been selected as members of the ensemble. Students in Jazz II are required to have a concert band as their elective, unless their instrument is piano or bass. The curriculum consists of developing jazz techniques such as ensemble playing, style, feel and improvisation. This band has a number of performances throughout the year. Jazz II rehearses Mondays and Thursdays from 7:00 am to 8:00 am. Auditions are held at the beginning of the year.

**Concert Choir** For all voices - sixth, seventh and eighth grade - no audition required. Students will learn and improve vocal skills by performing literature from many genres including American, sacred, jazz and contemporary. Students will perform in night concerts and travel to festivals. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. This is not an audition-based choir. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase.

**Treble Choir** For Soprano, Mezzo Soprano and Alto voices, advanced singers in mostly seventh and eighth grade, by audition. Students will learn and improve vocal skills by performing challenging literature from many genres. Students will perform in night concerts and travel to festivals. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase. This is an audition-based choir and will be a year-long (two semester) commitment.

**Jazz Choir** For all voices including Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone, mostly eighth grade advanced singers by audition only. Students will learn and improve classical and jazz vocal skills in particular, performing challenging literature from many genres including chamber and jazz music. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase. This is an audition-based choir and will be a year-long (two semester) commitment.

**Beginning Orchestra** This course is for beginning students with little or no experience in playing an instrument. All that is needed is a desire to learn a String Instrument and explore the joy of making music with others. Instruments and materials will be provided, but you are welcome to get your own as well (please contact me if you are wanting to purchase an instrument so I can support this process with size and quality). Students will learn body position, music reading and music performing ensemble skills. There will be 2 concerts, Holiday and Spring. Grading is based on daily participation, preparation and performance attendance. Grade Level 6, 7, 8.

**Intermediate Orchestra** This course is designed for the Intermediate string student with 1-2 years of playing experience, and already established body position, music reading and music performing ensemble skills. Students will refine fundamental skills while exploring new techniques and playing more advanced music in 5 part harmony. New more advanced techniques such as vibrato, shifting will be learned. There will be several concerts during the year demonstrating synthesis of musical Performance Targets and newly learned techniques. Grading is based on daily participation, preparation and performance attendance. Student placement will be by the teacher based on playing skills. Grade Level 6, 7, 8.

**Chamber Orchestra** This course is for string students who already have a solid foundation in string playing and have played for 2+ years. Students will learn to use vibrato and shifting consistently in their daily playing. They will explore new key signatures, rhythms and bow technique that will be incorporated into their grade 2-3 level songs for String Orchestra. They will continue to grow in their understanding and abilities to artistically express themselves through studying composers of a variety of time periods and styles. They will both perform at school, for community events and for competition. Student placement will be by the teacher based on playing skills. Grade Level 6, 7, 8.

## ELECTIVE COURSES (Year Long)

**Spanish I** Students will acquire the tools to communicate in Spanish at a beginning level through listening, speaking, reading and writing. A variety of interactive learning methods will be used in this foundation course. Students must earn a C or better grade in order to advance to Spanish II at the high school. *A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year. (WAC 180-51-030)*

**Yearbook** In yearbook class, students learn to write for an audience. They learn great picture taking skills. They learn to close a sale. They learn to celebrate each others' achievements. They learn to meet deadlines. They learn to be honest, thorough and accurate. The Yearbook is a memory book, a history book, a record book, and/or a reference book. When I think of the "purpose of a yearbook," it is perfectly clear that the process of publishing that book offers an opportunity for students to learn so much-not only about journalism, but about life

# ELECTIVE COURSES

**Art** In this class you will be introduced to the Elements of Art, using a variety of mediums for both two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. You will get to make your own ceramic mug and explore what Highland's studio has to offer.

**College Readiness** This class is for any student who wants to attend college after high school and would like to learn more about the skills necessary to be "college ready." This is primarily a project-based class, focused on helping students with critical thinking, organization, note-taking, and problem-solving. Students will learn strategies to succeed on the PSAT/SAT and increase their knowledge of college and career options. You will also learn how to give an effective presentation, create a 4-year high school plan, attend a virtual (or in-person) college fair, visit a college campus, learn from guest speakers, and much more!

**Design & Modeling** This high energy class blends arts, design, engineering, construction, and innovative inventions in a hands-on, project based class. Various projects will expose students to laser cutters, 3D printers, CAD software, and workshop tools. Students will participate in Maker Days, an opportunity to pursue your own creative goals using the tools available here at Highland.

**Design & Fabrications**
***Prerequisite: Design & Modeling***
In this class you will learn some skills of the construction trades. You will learn how to safely use woodworking power tools, and have the opportunity to build multiple products using those tools. Students will also learn and use woodworking design software to create drafting plans to guide the fabrication process. This hands-on class will keep you engaged every day.

**Entrepreneurship** This hands-on, highly engaging class introduces students to concepts like design thinking, marketing, supply/demand, and overhead costs. Students create products and services to sell to customers during Market Days, Student Store and competitions like Shark Tank. Students will learn the value of money through class jobs where they pay bills, manage bank accounts, and spend token money.

**Visual Arts through Leadership 8** In this course, students will learn what it is to be a servant leader and work to put that learning into action. This class is hands-on as we work to plan and execute school-wide initiatives to create a sense of community in our school. Examples include putting on assemblies, planning details for the Fund Run, decorating for holidays, assisting with our Bite2Go program, and lunch time entertainment.

**Unified PE Buddy:** Students in this class will support our DLC students during Physical Education. This is a rewarding and engaging class where students build meaningful connections, develop leadership skills, and experience the joy of inclusive teamwork. Interested students must complete the application process.

**Intro to Cooking** Through performance tasks and projects students learn to follow recipes, practice safety protocols, use kitchen tools/equipment, plan meals and gain an understanding of where food comes from. Working in teams, students engage in cooking labs to prepare a variety of foods to sample. No cooking experience required!

**SOS - Student of Service** This elective is a hands-on course that focuses on assisting the main office and counseling center or DLC class. An Office SOS will deliver notes and run errands from classrooms, office, Counseling Center, etc. An SOS is expected to be organized and to assist in preparing class paperwork (file, staple, 3 hole punch, fold, alphabetize, etc.). An SOS will assist the office with school equipment and/or materials (whiteboards, desks, sport uniforms, etc.), display student projects, assist teachers with various jobs, mentor other students, and/or complete other tasks as designated by school staff. This is an opportunity for students to be placed in a leadership role with a modest amount of responsibility, while working in an independent environment with appropriate supervision. Placement in SOS class will be at counselor/office discretion.

**Crime Scene Investigation (CSI)** Crime Scene Investigation is a stand alone course that helps students to understand how crime scenes are processed, and evidence is collected. We will focus on the crime scene basics, identifying and matching fingerprints, DNA analysis, blood spatter analysis, manner and cause of death, as well as ballistics and tool marks identification.

## SUPPORT COURSES

**Study Skills** This course helps students improve their organizational, note-taking, research, presentation, interpersonal, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Students work on binder organization, goal setting and group academic work. Students will be assigned to this class.

## MULTILINGUAL SUPPORT

Following Washington's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Frameworks, Highland is committed to building equality for Multilingual (ML) students. This Multi-Tiered approach involves the delivery of universal instruction for all students, including the ML student. Additional support will be provided for the ML student, if necessary, by utilizing the ML teacher push-in model into the general education classroom. For those students who require intensive support, the ML teacher will provide sheltered instruction to further address the student's needs.

## SPECIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

*Students must be qualified through the Mead School District's Special Services Department. Each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) services will be determined on a case by case basis. A continuum of services will be provided for each individual student's needs.*

**Resource Room** The purpose of the Resource Room is to provide specially designed curriculum and individual instruction in the basic skills of reading, written expression, mathematics, and other areas as determined by the IEP team.

**Life Skills** The course goal is to teach the functional skills that a student needs to become a productive and independent family member, citizen, employee, and a participant in a variety of vocational and leisure time activities. Consequently, they will be taught to develop healthy self-concepts, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to become productive citizens.

**Developmental Learning Center** This is a Mead School District program for middle school students who qualify for special education services and who have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The curriculum is highly individualized and based on each student's IEP. The program focuses on functional academics, communication skills, and the development of social and adaptive skills. This is a non-graded program for middle school students.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The Mead School District complies with all federal rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. Inquiries regarding compliance procedures may be directed to the school district's Title IX/RCW 28A.640.