



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

THE EMERY/WEINER SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
2008-2009

ENGLISH

English 6

English 6 introduces students to—and prepares them for—Emery/Weiner's middle school language arts curriculum. The course focuses on the four elements of the English language: vocabulary, grammar, literature, and writing. Common themes studied in the course include resourcefulness, resiliency, identity, and responsibility. Students take part in hands-on activities, personal writing, formal writing, and class discussion. In addition, students explore the curriculum through regular participation in collaborative learning groups.

English 6 Advanced

Advanced 6th grade English covers the fundamental elements of the English language including vocabulary acquisition, grammar and conventions of communication, appreciation and analysis of literature, along with various forms of writing. The theme of the course is "Achieving Independence." The curriculum challenges students to become independent thinkers, readers, writers, and editors. Three historical novels and one memoir have been chosen to complement the theme. Additionally, students are required to share related periodical articles with the class.

English 7

English 7 builds upon the fundamentals of English language study begun in sixth grade. Students use *The Elements of Writing* to focus on grammar, diagrams, usage, spelling, punctuation, sentence development, and paragraph structure. Through critical reading of selected novels, students examine various themes including survival, independence, self awareness, and overcoming prejudices. In addition, the course continues to build upon the composition skills and the writing process initiated in sixth grade. Emphasis is placed on expository, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive essays. The course also includes a brief study of the origins of the English language.

English 7 Advanced

English 7 Advanced presents a more rigorous and in-depth study of literature, composition, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, students are exposed to complex diagramming, punctuation, spelling, usage, and sentence and paragraph structure. A variety of novels are read and analyzed including works of historical fiction and non-fiction, the course also includes a more intensive study of the origins of the English language.

English 8

English 8 continues the study of the English language by further developing the basic skills acquired in English 6 and English 7. The course focuses on the application and logic of literary terms, critical analysis of literature, and development of writing skills. Vocabulary and grammar instruction are integrated into the literary context. The primary theme of the course centers on the power of words and its effect on young people. Additionally, students explore the curriculum through regular participation in group discussion, written analysis, and direct assessment.

English 8 Advanced

English 8 Advanced provides a more rigorous and in-depth study of the application and logic of literary terms, critical analysis of literature, and development of advanced writing skills. Through group discussion, written analysis, and direct assessment, students explore a variety of literary genre including short stories, novels, plays, and poetry. Students become more active readers by investigating the relationship between literature and self and by analyzing and discussing each text in detail.

HISTORY

American History 6

History 6 introduces students to – and prepares them for – Emery/Weiner’s middle school history curriculum. Students are introduced to the foundation of skills and methods used to study history including: note-taking, active reading of historical documents and texts, identifying and organizing main ideas, creating outlines, composing five-paragraph essays, and presentations. The course surveys American History from the Age of Exploration to the Reconstruction Era. The course assists students in developing an understanding of the important events in America’s past and their impact on the world. The course also includes the study of American geography, the development of United States government, and the meaning of citizenship in a democratic nation.

American History 7

American History 7 builds on the skills introduced in American History 6 and picks up the content where students finished the previous year covering the time period of the Civil War to the end of the Twentieth century. The purpose of the course is to examine the complex issues of modern American history, such as inclusion and exclusion, war and peace, conflict and conflict resolution, human rights, cultural and ethnic diversity, and reform and conservatism. These themes are studied in the context of an ever changing society including its values, attitudes and social standards. In order to identify continuity and change in American society, students examine historical periods covering Reconstruction, the Progressive era, World War I, and the Twenties, The Great Depression and Reform.

American History 7 Advanced

American History 7 Advanced delves more deeply into the themes and events of American history from the Civil War to the end of the Twentieth century. The course has a rigorous pace, emphasizes note-taking and organization, and develops both advanced analytical reading skills and written composition skills.

Ancient World History 8

Ancient World History 8 explores the plight of mankind from the Neolithic Age through the fall of the Roman Empire and subsequent rise of Byzantium. Students begin their study by analyzing the importance of natural resources and location to the development of early civilizations. Using primary and secondary sources students trace the beginnings of government, the development of various occupations, the advent of writing, and finally the interaction amongst differing peoples. The course of study transitions to an in-depth look at governments and citizens. Students read the works of Aristotle, Confucius, and other pertinent philosophers as they search for the definition of citizenship and seek relationships between the government and the governed. Research projects focus on the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece, and China. Using a variety of sources, students engage in the writing process focusing on the skills of topic selection, thesis composition, format, and the completion of the written product. This course is the first in a three-year world history sequence that continues during the 9th and 10th grades in The Emery/Weiner Upper School Division.

Ancient World History 8 Advanced

Ancient World History 8 Advanced delves more deeply into the themes and events of Ancient history from the fall of the Roman Empire and subsequent rise of Byzantium. The course has a rigorous pace, emphasizes note-taking and organization, and develops advanced analytical and written composition skills. This course is the first in a three-year world history sequence that continues during the 9th and 10th grades in The Emery/Weiner Upper School Division.

JUDAIC STUDIES

Rhythms of Jewish Life 6

This year-long course in Judaic Studies centers on the major Jewish life cycle events, Jewish holidays, and core Jewish truths and values. Students have opportunities to collect family memories of past life cycle events as well as to envision their own. Tzedakah, “justice,” is a core Jewish value that is inherently present in all life cycle events and holidays. Students create action plans to realize the fulfillment of tzedakah in their lives. A major requirement of this course is a creative research project focused on the students’ Bar/Bat Mitzvah Torah portions.

Exploring the Tanach: An Encounter with the Jewish Bible 7

This course is a survey of the Bible. Students learn primary decoding skills, basic biblical grammar and methods of critical thinking and interpretation. Additionally, students take a closer and deeper look at Biblical exegesis and learn how to appreciate the myriad of valid, interpretative approaches to the material. During the year, students are expected to master content as well as hone their analytical skills through exercises such as critical reading, essay-writing, and in-class debates. Additional topics include: repentance, Shabbat, leadership, the power of word, growth through change, free will, and the land of Israel.

Exploring the Tanach: An Encounter with the Jewish Bible 7 Advanced

Judaic Studies 7 Advanced delves more deeply into the themes, concepts, literature, and events explored in the basic Judaic Studies 7 course. The course also assumes greater Hebrew proficiency on the part of its students, permitting more intensive analysis of the original text.

Mishnah and the American Jewish Experience 8

The study of Mishnah focuses on making personal connections to the ancient text and understanding how the Mishnah can help students make relevant decisions in their daily lives. A variety of instructional techniques enable students to discover the layering of Jewish tradition. Students engage in individual and group study to analyze the ancient texts in Hebrew and English.

Mishnah and the American Jewish Experience 8 Advanced

The study of Mishnah focuses on making personal connections to the text and understanding how the Mishnah can help students make decisions in their daily lives. Creative learning techniques are emphasized. In addition, examples from American Jewish history are employed to bring the text of the Mishnah to life. Students engage in intensive study in which the texts are learned primarily in the original Hebrew requiring that the students enrolled have a greater command of the Hebrew language.

LANGUAGES

Hebrew I

This course will initiate the fundamentals of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The Hebrew program enables students at this level to start developing linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their fundamental grammatical structures and to converse in simple Hebrew. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Introductory exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

Hebrew II

This course will stress the fundamentals of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The program enables students at this level to start developing linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their fundamental grammatical structures and to converse in simple Hebrew. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Continued exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

Hebrew III

This course will deepen the fundamental components of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The program enables students at this level to develop linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. In this course the students explore different places and the various cultures in Israel. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their fundamental grammatical structures and to converse in simple Hebrew as well as familiarize themselves with Israel. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Continued exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

Hebrew IV

This course will deepen the fundamental components of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The program enables students at this level to use their linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their prior grammatical knowledge and to converse in Hebrew as well as familiarize themselves with the diverse cultures in Israel. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. At this level students are expected to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking and comprehensive approach to the language. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Continued exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

Hebrew V

This course will deepen the fundamental components of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The program enables students at this level to deepen their linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their prior grammatical knowledge and to converse fluently in Hebrew. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. At this level students are expected to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking and comprehensive approach to the language. They communicate only in Hebrew, read articles, write essays and present a project in Hebrew. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Continued exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

Hebrew Enrichment

This is a course for fluent Hebrew speakers. This course will deepen the fundamental components of conversational Hebrew, reading, writing and speaking, through interweaving language and culture. The program enables students at this level to explore their linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity. By the end of this course students will be able to strengthen their prior grammatical knowledge and to converse fluently in Hebrew. Students will integrate the four basic skills through various activities. Reading, writing, speaking and correct usage of grammatical structures are all implemented in the program. At this level students are expected to demonstrate critical and analytical thinking and comprehensive approach to the language. They communicate only in Hebrew, read articles, write essays and present various projects in Hebrew. Assessment does not consist only of evaluation of the means (grammatical structures and vocabulary) in isolation but rather as a whole in context. Continued exposure to Jewish Holidays, traditions, Israeli culture, and geography is included.

MATH

Math 6

Math 6, is a course designed to explore, develop, and strengthen each student's understanding of various mathematical concepts. This course prepares students for success in future math classes by helping them become more confident in their own abilities to calculate and solve problems. The topics highlighted in this course are: understanding whole numbers, decimals and fractions; discovering patterns; collecting and displaying data; identifying geometric relationships; probability and learning about functions and graphs. Additionally, real world applications are incorporated with respect to each of the topics covered.

Math 6 Advanced

Math 6 Advanced is a course designed to explore, develop, and strengthen each student's understanding of various mathematical concepts. This course prepares students for success in future math classes by helping them become more confident in their own abilities to calculate and solve problems. The topics highlighted in this course are: understanding whole numbers, decimals and fractions; discovering patterns; collecting and displaying data; identifying geometric relationships; probability and learning about functions and graphs. Additionally, real world applications are incorporated with respect to each of the topics covered and concepts are covered in greater depth. This course moves at a faster pace and assumes students are able to master concepts and retain this mastery with greater proficiency than those enrolled in Math 6.

Pre-Algebra (6th-8th grade)

Pre-Algebra is designed as a preparation for high school Algebra and Geometry courses. The course will include a review of basic arithmetic skills and properties and then will extend those skills to include their application to Algebra. The topics highlighted in this course are: understanding rational numbers, functions, sequences, exponents and roots, ratios and proportions, percents, multi-step equations and inequalities, foundations of geometry, data and statistics and graphing lines. Additionally, this course moves at an accelerated pace and will explore mathematical concepts in greater depth.

Math 7

Math 7 is a course designed to explore, develop, and strengthen each student's understanding of various mathematical concepts. This course prepares students for success in future math classes by helping them become more confident in their own abilities to calculate and solve problems. The topics highlighted in this course are: operations with fractions, decimals and percents; computations with integers and rational numbers; discovering relationships and patterns; solving linear equations; fundamentals of geometry; understanding measurement and interpreting statistical data. Additionally, real world applications are incorporated with respect to each of the topics covered. Most students enrolled in this course will have successfully completed Math 6.

Algebra 1 (7th and 8th grade)

Algebra 1 is a full-credit high school course. The entire Algebra I curriculum will be covered, including six different functions (linear, absolute value, exponential, quadratic, radical, and rational) and their real-world applications. Students will also become familiar with the major functions of the graphing calculator. Most students enrolled in this course will have successfully completed Pre-Algebra.

Geometry (8th grade)

The goal of this course is to introduce and reinforce skills as well as to engage students with new concepts and real world applications. These goals are achieved through the use of technology, visual aids, and group discussions. In Geometry, these objectives are expressed through topics including: length, angle measurement, logical reasoning, polygons, establishing congruence of triangles, perimeter, area, Pythagorean theorem, three-dimensional figures, symmetry, similarity, and circles. Most students enrolled in this course will have successfully completed both Pre-Algebra and Algebra I.

6th Grade Courses

Math 6	Math 6 Adv.	Pre-Algebra
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7th Grade Courses

Math 7	Pre- Algebra	Algebra
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8th Grade Courses

Pre-Algebra	Algebra	Geometry
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SCIENCE

Life Science 6

Life Science 6 begins with an overview of topics studied throughout the course. The curriculum focuses on basic life science concepts and process skills. Primary units of study include cells, genetics, simple organisms, plants, animals, and the human body. The course also emphasizes skill development including reading for understanding, comprehension, written summaries and note-taking, observation, and organization of information.

Life Science 6 Advanced

Life Science 6 Advanced is a course devoted to the in-depth study of the themes and concepts developed in the basic Life Science curriculum. The students are required to use advanced thinking skills such as analysis of data, problem solving, prediction, assessment, and drawing conclusions.

Earth Science 7

Earth Science seeks to test students understanding of the world beneath their feet, on the earth's surface, and in the atmosphere above them. Students study such topics as plate tectonics, volcanoes and earthquakes, and layers of the earth including the rock cycle and use of maps and contours to understand the shape of the earth's crust. A unit on the Houston area develops student knowledge of local geography. In addition, students study the atmosphere above us, learning about weather patterns and the impact they have on our lives. The course concludes with a unit on astronomy.

Earth Science 7 Advanced

Earth Science 7 Advanced delves more deeply into the concepts and topics of basic Earth Science. The course has a rigorous pace, emphasizes note-taking and organization, and develops advanced analytical skills, written composition, problem solving, observation, and prediction.

Integrated Physics and Chemistry 8

Integrated Physics and Chemistry seeks to prepare students for advanced science courses by building a substantial foundation in the concepts of both physics and chemistry through practical lab applications. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the semester-long research paper and hone their analytical skills through extensive scrutiny of scientific journal articles and news stories.

Integrated Physics and Chemistry 8 Advanced

IPC Advanced seeks to prepare students for advanced science courses by building a substantial foundation in the concepts of both physics and chemistry through practical lab applications. Theories and concepts are covered in depth and at a rapid pace. Students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the semester-long research paper as well as selected readings from major science journals and magazines. Students in IPC Advanced are required to complete an individual Science Fair Project.

ENRICHMENT COURSES

6th Grade Fine Arts Rotation

The 6th grade fine arts rotation gives students an introduction to the electives that we offer at a more comprehensive level in the 7th and 8th grades. Each student participates in a six week rotation in each of the following courses:

- Instrumental Music
- Technology Applications
- Theater Arts
- Visual Arts

Theater Arts (7th & 8th Grade)

The focus of this one-semester course is to give the students an overall appreciation of theater, both as active participants onstage and behind the scenes, and as informed patrons of the arts. By getting as close to the realm of professional theatre as possible, the course seeks to dispel myths surrounding these professions and offers the students a true understanding of the realities of “a life in the theater.”

Visual Arts (7th & 8th Grade)

The Middle School Visual Arts curriculum builds the basis for a fine arts education. Through hands-on exploration of various media, students acquire knowledge of fundamentals such as the elements of art, color theory, and an understanding aesthetics, perspective, proportion, composition, and design.

Film Appreciation (7th & 8th Grade)

The goals of this one-semester course are to broaden the students’ movie-watching vista, to encourage them to move away from the “new release” wall at the video store, and to be more adventurous in the films they choose to explore. Through teaching film vocabulary and putting focus on the various jobs associated with the making of a film, students are encouraged to articulate their opinions on movies and to see more than just “stars and story.”

Introduction to Spanish (7th & 8th Grade)

This course is designed to emphasize that learning a foreign language is exciting, worthwhile, and fun. The course builds and strengthens comprehension of the Spanish language and Latin culture through reading and translation. Students will learn a working vocabulary, the fundamentals of grammar, an understanding of the language, and an appreciation of the people who speak it.

Introduction to Latin (7th & 8th Grade)

This course is designed to emphasize that learning a foreign language is exciting, worthwhile, and fun. The course builds and strengthens comprehension of the Latin language through reading and translation. Students journey through the ancient city of Pompeii as they acquire a working vocabulary, the fundamentals of grammar, an understanding of the language, and an appreciation of the people who spoke it.

Instrumental Music (7th and 8th Grade)

Students in this course will be introduced to ensemble music in a variety of styles from rock, folk, country, and jazz. The musical styles taught are dictated by the instruments we have in the ensemble and by student wishes. One class each week is devoted to theory and musicianship. Students learn how to read music, to form chords, and to decipher rhythms. In addition, students receive ear training and are challenged by exercises in rhythmic and melodic dictation.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The focus of the middle school physical education program is to provide a daily opportunity for students to take part in a wide range of physical activities and experiences that promote a mastery of the core skills introduced at the elementary level. Middle school physical education builds a framework for lifetime activities and healthy living. Middle School is a time of transition, which may bring about drastic changes physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. To bridge this transition successfully in our curriculum, students explore and apply information as well as participate in activities that empower them to assume responsibility for their own lifetime health, wellness, and fitness. 7th and 8th graders may also participate in competitive school team athletics: soccer (boys and girls), volleyball, basketball (boys and girls), baseball (boys), tennis (boys and girls), and track & field (for boys and girls, grades 6-8).