

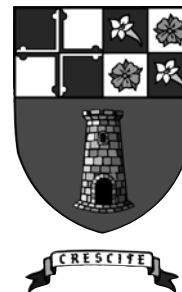
The Heights

# MIDDLE

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

# SCHOOL



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# Philosophy of The Heights School

## Mission Statement

The Heights School is a private, independent, preparatory school for boys, grades three to twelve. The school assists parents in the intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual education of their sons. Dedicated teachers impart rigorous academic training in all the major areas of the liberal arts. Formation in virtue fosters respect for every person, a desire to serve God and others, and an optimistic attitude towards life's challenges. The school's Christian orientation and spiritual formation are entrusted to Opus Dei, a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church.

## Purpose of the Middle School

The personal formation of each student is paramount to the mission and objectives of The Heights School. With this personal development in mind, the primary purpose of the Middle School is to help students develop Habits, most particularly skills for learning that can be used repeatedly throughout their academic career. While learning about facts and the subject matter in any class must be a priority, enabling each student to develop the habits of mind necessary for a life of learning is of the utmost importance at this stage in a boy's education. This purpose is accomplished through the following elements of the Middle School.



## Key Aspects of the Middle School

### FACTUAL CONTENT AND HABITS OF MIND

As a student is developing an understanding of subject material, he should not only strive to understand the factual content but he should also be developing ways to learn more effectively. The role of the teacher in the middle school years is that of a guide as the student develops learning habits and academic skills. Long after a student has had to review the facts he learned in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade, he will likely still retain the lasting habits that helped him learn and will no doubt utilize these habits in more advanced subject material later in life. The habits that a student develops, including a love for learning, will ultimately have the greatest impact on his academic life as he matures.

Historically, all curriculums that claim to take a classical approach to education have their roots in the liberal arts. The liberal arts are not meant to be merely factual or pragmatic like many modern school curriculums; rather, the emphasis is on both training the mind for later use and learning disciplines because they, in themselves, are worthy of learning. This distinction must be recognized in order to fully appreciate the meaning behind an education that emphasizes the liberal arts.

An emphasis on the liberal arts is found in the Middle School and throughout the Upper School at The Heights. The curricula and subject matter from the Middle School into the Upper School are designed to be vertically aligned. This vertical integration takes place in most subjects. Course content intentionally builds upon itself and teachers rely on a base of knowledge they understand to be previously constructed by classes students have already taken. The Upper School builds on the strong habits of mind fostered in the Middle School. Students in the Upper School continue to develop their habits while at the same time focusing on integrating, accumulating, and expressing the knowledge they absorb during their studies. The overall curricula at The Heights is based upon the belief that some things are worth knowing for their own sake and that learning these things will improve the self and, secondarily, will also prepare a student for his future professional life and work.

## **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AS MENTOR**

All teachers at The Heights are called upon to be mentors to students. The role of mentoring at the middle school level permeates all of the work of a faculty member. Every faculty member strives to teach students on a level that is both intellectual and personally developmental. Mentoring takes on special meaning given how formative the middle school years are for boys and how impressionable students are at this age. The guided growth of the student relies on the interpersonal relationship a faculty member establishes with him and often with his family. Developing these relationships with both parents and students is a main priority and is a focus for our collective work at The Heights.

Establishing a relationship with all middle school students that encourages trust and dialogue about their intellectual, personal, social, and spiritual development is a fundamental goal of a Heights teacher. In an effort to be of service to families, establishing a similarly meaningful relationship with a student's parents for the sake of assisting them as they care for their son's development is also an essential part of the mission of The Heights.

As a way of caring about each student's individual needs, an approach embodying "cura personalis" (Latin for "care of the whole person") is the focus of a mentor's work at The Heights. At the heart of this mentoring is a teacher's central belief that at every point in the school day the most important person to care for should be the student present to him at that moment.

While every teacher holds the role of acting as a mentor to his students, a special mentor is designated for each student as an official "advisor". Advisors are specifically designated teachers who act as a contact point regarding a boy's developmental needs. To this end, students meet with their advisors on a regular basis and parents are asked to inform their son's advisor of his developmental needs. Despite an advisor's officially designated role, an advisor is just one of many faculty members at The Heights who provide opportunities for personal formation and growth.

## **EMERGING FREEDOM, HIGH EXPECTATIONS, AND SELF-DISCIPLINE**

Opportunities for meeting high expectations, gaining self-discipline, or lacking discipline emerge in a student's life during the middle school years as each student is granted more freedom. This development takes place within the context of naturally growing responsibilities and the personal freedom given to each student at The Heights. The educational philosophy at The Heights recognizes the personal freedom of each student and, in doing so, respects the individual's will as controlled by the student. The Heights School seeks to provide opportunities for students to exercise their will appropriately and, in doing so, to develop good judgment. When freedom is misunderstood, disciplinary discussions often take the tone of mentoring discussions and all disciplinary measures seek to identify and correct the personal deficiency within the student that caused the need for discipline. At The Heights, students are deliberately given freedom because students who receive freedom are also given the opportunity for the development of good judgment, self-discipline, and bridling their own will.

During these years of enormous growth, the expectations that are held for students by others become especially important. Middle School students find themselves somewhere between man and boy, and most of them are still realizing their full potential. As they are testing the waters of adolescence, students will inconspicuously look to parents, teachers, and friends for direction in the form of expectations held for them. Ultimately, students often perform to the expectations held for them, whether those expectations are high or low. The attention given to an individual student's personal formation will often shape the expectations he holds for himself. A large part of the mentoring process and caring for the individual student necessarily involves teachers making their high expectations and regard for a student known and allowing the student to react to these expectations by seeking to meet them. These self-expectations, in turn, dictate a great deal about how a student will act, what he values most, and how determined he is to reach his potential. A tradition of trust, freedom, and high expectations for our students facilitates the eventual development of a will that freely chooses the good.

# II. The Middle School Curriculum

## An Overview of Subjects by Grade

### ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Middle School fields teams for each grade (6, 7, 8) in the following sports: soccer, basketball, baseball, lacrosse, wrestling, and track. Swimming and golf are teams that include the Middle School.

### HONORS LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Honors Language Program is a program of language studies that is designed to challenge a student beyond the usual rigorous course of studies offered to all students. This program begins in the seventh grade and allows an additional class option. The Honors Language Program allows students who are looking for a particularly challenging program of foreign language to elect enrollment in a Spanish class on a daily basis as well as their required Latin class. Students taking Spanish will be expected to perform more homework and will be selected on the basis of past grades. This additional Spanish class would count as the student's elective class.

### FIELD TRIPS

The Middle School curriculum also includes activities such as the class camping trips, manners curriculum, gentlemen's dinners, ski trips, and a variety of other curriculum-based, educational trips that take place on a monthly basis. Field trips are meant to develop outside interests and often to act as an adventure, stretching a student to learn lessons outside the familiar classroom setting. These extracurricular activities, especially the class camping trips and other adventure trips, foster a sense of class unity and provide opportunities for the young adolescent to move beyond the comfortable self.

## Sixth Grade Curriculum + Course Guide

The sixth grade classes are the sole occupants of three classrooms and have several teachers visit their stationary homeroom. Each sixth grade has a homeroom teacher who is responsible for overseeing the majority of the academic work performed by a class.

### LANGUAGE ARTS (GRADE 6)

Language Arts in the sixth grade covers the basic parts of speech and sentence structure, with the goal of improving a student's writing ability and understanding of grammar. Students will learn to recognize verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions when they are used in sentences. Students will be able to distinguish a linking verb from an action verb and a common noun from a proper noun. In addition, students will study phrases, clauses and the different types of sentences. Providing a student with a solid foundation in grammar enables him to express himself more clearly and forcefully. The grammar text is *Grammar and Writing 6* published by Saxon. It is a workbook filled with concise chapters of distinct grammatical concepts that build on one another and are paired with many practice questions that reinforce what has already been learned. The primary mode of instruction is classroom presentation of the principles in each section followed by homework that is assigned nightly to reinforce the concept covered in class. The principles are reinforced by diagramming sentences in essays written by the students.

Teachers derive words for their vocabulary lessons from the texts students read in literature. Students will be tested on the definitions of words and how to use them in sentences. Teachers supplement their vocabulary lists with textbooks such as *Vocabulary from Classical Roots* published by Educators Publishing Service. These textbooks teach students common root words, enabling students to surmise the meaning of unfamiliar words. Furthermore, the textbooks test a student's ability to use words in a sentence, giving him a more vibrant sense of the word.

## LITERATURE (GRADE 6)

The sixth grade literature curriculum is generally geared toward fostering within the student both practical and theoretical pursuits. Therefore, literature is seen not only as a pleasurable interest, but as a mode of knowledge, instructing not only the mind, but the heart.

Stressing both oral and written traditions, a love for literature is fostered in our students through study of poetry and stories of various lengths and kinds. The books read in the sixth grade year include: *Souder* by William H. Armstrong, *The Golden Fleece* by Padraic Colum, *Gods, Heroes, and Men of Ancient Greece* by W.H. D. Rouse, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and *Selected Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb. Poems for study are chosen from a working list and by the homeroom teacher's preference.

The main skills developed through the sixth grade literature curriculum include reading comprehension, reading aloud, memorization and recitation of poetry, literary criticism, plot mapping, and composition of critical essays and short fiction. The textbook selections in the sixth grade Literature course recognizes that it is as important to cultivate the imagination as it is to cultivate the will or the intelligence.



## MATHEMATICS (GRADE 6)

This course is a combination of the theory and practical application of arithmetic and geometry. Major concepts covered include the following: the review and mastery of operations with fractions and mixed numbers, reciprocals, ratios, proportions, exponents, square roots, scientific notation, order of operations, algebraic addition, simple equations, perimeters, circumferences, areas, and volumes. Through working with the abstract concepts and relations of numbers and figures, the student develops and sharpens his imagination and reasoning capacity. Because the student must solve problems that require a number of subordinate steps to find a solution, the importance of attention to detail is impressed upon him as well as a stepwise approach to solving problems. Students are encouraged to recognize how a small error in an initial step will affect the conclusion of most math problems. The primary textbook for the course is *Math 87* by Hake & Saxon.

## EARTH SCIENCE (GRADE 6)

This course acts as an introduction to the geological sciences and in doing so also serves as preparation for the study of chemistry. Major topics covered include the following: the earth's topography, rocks, minerals, water displacement, specific gravity, the earth's interior, magnetism, fresh water, the oceans, the atmosphere, the planets, and the moon. The course strives to impress upon the student the immensity, order, and beauty of the created world. It gives him a deeper understanding of the physical world with which he has relevant, daily contact. This is an understanding prior to the laboratory and atomic analysis of chemistry. Through classroom demonstrations and activities, habits of observation and analysis are exercised. The primary textbook for the course is *Earth Science* published by Prentice Hall.

## **AMERICAN HISTORY (GRADE 6)**

The focus of the American History course in the sixth grade is on the westward expansion of the 1800's. Students study the plight of the immigrant laborer, the impact of industry and the railroad, the conditions of life in the north and south, slavery, the wars and battles of the West including the Mexican War, the lives of mountain men, traders and trappers, the voyage of Lewis and Clark, the conditions leading up to the Civil War, and the outbreak of the Civil War. Students complete their study of the Civil War when they revisit the topic in-depth during the seventh grade history course entitled Lands and Conquests.

As students learn more about the adventures of westward expansion, they are required to take notes and learn how to outline chapters for later study. History is taught from the perspective of a factual story and in an analytical sense students are expected to understand the major themes of the day and how they relate to one another throughout a course of events. The textbook series used for the sixth grade history course is entitled A History of US by Joy Hakim.

## **RELIGION (GRADE 6)**

The sixth grade Religion course guides the student through a variety of topics ranging from the ancestral roots of the Hebrew people to the beginning of Christianity/Catholicism and finally to The Resurrection following the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ's passion and death on the cross. The student will gain a better understanding of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, and a greater appreciation for the lives and contributions of the saints. They will be asked to write in-depth papers on a variety of content related topics citing specific quotes taken from Scripture and the writings of the saints.

Outside reading includes a book on the life of St. Isaac Jogues and his companions who evangelized and converted multiple tribes of Indians. Also, different chapters from the Bible will be assigned and read in class. The student will develop an enhanced knowledge of the role of Mary, the Mother of God, in salvation history, as well as a more comprehensive understanding and personal appreciation of the powerful mystery of the Holy Eucharist available to us daily in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The student can choose to take advantage of frequent opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a part of regular chapel services. The class objective is for the student to develop a deeper prayer life as well as a greater understanding of his faith and ways to live his faith. The primary textbook is Following Christ, part of the Faith and Life series published by Ignatius Press.

## **INTRODUCTION TO LATIN THROUGH LANGUAGE ARTS (GRADE 6)**

This material is taught through the Language Arts class and gradually introduces the student for the first time to the grammar, vocabulary, syntax, sounds, history, and importance of the Latin language. The grammatical topics covered are as follows: the first and second declensions of nouns and adjectives, the first and second conjugations of verbs (present, future, imperfect tenses), and the present conjugation of selected irregular verbs. A large portion of the course is given to Latin vocabulary and famous Latin sayings. The student begins to learn how to analyze language systematically through the translation of simple sentences. The student also gains an elemental knowledge of many English words through their Latin roots. The primary textbook for the course is Latina Christiana by Cheryl Lowe.

## **ART (GRADE 6)**

The sixth grade Art class studies perspective, realism, architecture, and color through a variety of media. Students are expected to draw and sketch as well as understand and appreciate great works of art. This blend of experiences is intended to develop an aesthetic awareness in the student. The opportunity is provided for longer-term projects, and an after school Art Club is available for additional developmental time.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (GRADE 6)**

Students participate in physical education class on a daily basis. The emphasis of this class is on fitness, skill development, understanding the rules of a variety of sports, engaged participation, and sportsmanship. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy competition and are given the opportunity for exercise on a daily basis. Depending upon the season, soccer, basketball, baseball, and lacrosse teams practice during this class period under the supervision and direction of their coaches. All other middle school sports teams practice outside of physical education class.

## **ELECTIVE (GRADE 6)**

Sixth Grade students have the option of choosing a full year of Band or any two of the following semester long courses: Lands and Climates (Geography and the study of climates), Writing Workshop (expository writing), Reading Workshop (critical reading and comprehension).



## **Seventh Grade Curriculum + Course Guide**

### **THE SEVENTH GRADE CORE:**

#### **ENGLISH LITERATURE, LANGUAGE ARTS, AND LATIN.**

The Seventh Grade Core is taught as a double period in the morning and includes the following topics all taught by the same instructor: English Literature, Language Arts, and Latin.

### **ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE ARTS (GRADE 7)**

The emphasis of the seventh grade English course is to promote sound reading habits as well as critical and analytical thinking and expression. An emphasis is also placed upon grammar, sentence structure, and word usage in the context of written expression. There are three main components to the seventh grade English class: literature, grammar, and vocabulary.

The primary objective of the literature component is to enhance a student's interest in reading while introducing concepts of literature analysis. Students will be expected to discuss and critically analyze what they read. Short papers on literature based topics will be common. The class readings are selected to appeal to the seventh grade boy's sense of adventure and heroism. Once literary concepts such as plot, character, setting, are introduced, class discussions take on a more analytical nature and lead towards the student's appreciation of an author's skill and technique. A variety of short stories are particularly well-suited to the accomplishment of this goal. Papers are written comparing and contrasting short stories and authors as well as the use of setting, characterization, and other literary concepts. Finally, students write their own short story in addition to their many other essays.

The seventh grade grammar component reinforces all the fundamental grammatical concepts so that the students have a firm basis in grammar and the application of grammar to their writing, a process that takes most boys successive years of study and practice. The

grammar text is Grammar and Writing 7 published by Saxon Publishers. It is a workbook filled with concise chapters of distinct grammatical concepts that build on one another and are paired with many practice questions that reinforce what has already been learned. The primary mode of instruction is classroom presentation of the principles in each section followed by homework that is assigned nightly to reinforce the concept covered in class. The principles are reinforced by diagramming sentences in essays written by the students.

The primary objective of the vocabulary component is to broaden the student's word usage and word construction knowledge. The textbook used for the vocabulary component is Vocabulary from Classical Roots from Educators Publishing Service. The vocabulary text is structured around words that use common Latin or Greek roots. The fundamental approach of the text is to enable students to recognize roots so that they may learn to discern the meaning of unfamiliar words. Often vocabulary words are also taken from the novels read in class in order to help the student better understand the readings.

### **LATIN A (GRADE 7)**

The study of Latin is an important aspect of The Heights academic curriculum because of its connection, pedagogically and linguistically, to the liberal arts. All Middle School students are therefore required to take Latin as part of their Seventh grade core class. The textbook employed for the course is Vade Mecum, written by members of The Heights Classics Department. This course covers the rudimentary facets of Latin grammar including the first three declensions of nouns and adjectives, allowing students to become familiar with the case uses. The conjugation of verbs in the active voice of all six tenses is also studied. Through a rather extensive exposure to new vocabulary words, the boys learn several other topics such as noun/adjective agreement, syntax, verb principal parts, the imperative mood, the vocative case, and the formation of adverbs. Simple sentences and short paragraphs are translated, both from Latin to English and English to Latin.

Learning the many forms of Latin words significantly develops the student's ability to memorize. As there are an exceedingly large number of English words derived from Latin, the course will expand the students' English vocabulary as well as foster an aptitude for deciphering the meaning of new words based upon their Latin roots. The fixed and clear structure of Latin grammar will give the boys a greater understanding of English grammar and of the nature of language in general. This discipline is intended to form students as comprehensive readers, expressive writers, and clear thinkers. The improvement of note-taking and organizational skills and the attainment of proper test-taking techniques are additional goals of the course.

### **LIFE SCIENCE (GRADE 7)**

This course is designed to develop an appreciation and understanding of biology in everyday life. It seeks to have students understand that the world around them is really a collection of countless mysteries and discoveries. Developing a sense of fascination with biology within each student is a primary goal of the course. In addition to developing a fascination for science, a practical familiarity and base of knowledge is developed as it is required for a more advanced study of science. The textbook used in this Life Science course is entitled Exploring Life Science by Prentice Hall.

The course is divided into two semesters: Environmental Science and Human Biology, with different instructors for each semester. Environmental Science studies environmental factors that affect local ecosystems, including our own campus. The course will be accompanied by laboratory experiments that will help students answer some of these "mysteries" with the help of the scientific method. There will be the opportunity to complete lab experiments as well as discuss current information in the field of science.

The Human Biology semester of Life Science focuses on learning about all the major systems of the human body and identifying major organs. The structure of each major organ is examined as well as how that structure relates directly to the function the organ plays in the body. In this semester, students embark on a discovery of the human body that is nothing less than a discovery of their own physical being.

The Life Science course seeks to develop skills within the students that will allow them to pose questions, make observations and inferences, develop hypotheses, design experiments, make measurements and collect data, interpret data, and draw conclusions. Since much of learning science requires developing a new vocabulary, students also develop a new scientific vocabulary through the use of a notecard note-taking system. The student leaves this course with a greater appreciation and fascination for biology and how the study of biology can be found all around us and includes the study of our own physical being.

### **PRE-ALGEBRA (GRADE 7)**

The seventh grade Pre-Algebra course continues to build a foundation for advanced mathematics by emphasizing basic skills and problem-solving techniques. Major topics studied and reviewed include but are not limited to: converting decimals, fractions and percents, geometric area and volume of various shapes, averaging quantities, order of operations, changing rates, algebraic steps, ratios, word problems, probability, exponents, square roots, scientific notation, and distance problems. The main textbook for the course is Algebra published by Saxon mathematics. The Saxon math series of textbooks is particularly useful given the way the student is reminded of past lessons in every problem set.

The habits and skills that this course seeks to establish for students include: order in problem solving, neatness, completeness, attention to detail, perseverance, proper arithmetic, showing problem-solving steps, verifying solutions, and identifying and correcting common sources of mistakes.

### **RELIGION (GRADE 7)**

The seventh grade religion course provides an in-depth understanding of the doctrine of grace. The student develops an appreciation for this supernatural gift from God given to us through Jesus Christ and God's plan for salvation. The student will study creation, divine revelation, Adam and Eve, and the prophets. Then, the student will study Christ as the source of all grace and the founding of the Church. Throughout this course, students deepen their knowledge of the seven sacraments and the virtues. The course includes familiarization with the liturgical calendar, feast days, the lives of saints, prayers and selections from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The course is ultimately designed to challenge students to increase their love for God and their hope for heaven. In order to cultivate a life of piety and develop a prayer life, the student will have regular opportunities each month for confession, spiritual talks and recitation of the rosary during a chapel service held once every two weeks by The Heights' chaplains. The primary textbook is *The Life of Grace, of The Faith and Life Series* published by Ignatius Press.



## **LANDS AND CONQUESTS (GRADE 7)**

The major topics covered in the seventh grade History course are World War II, the Civil War, and geography. Students gain an appreciation for these two enormously significant historical events and, while doing so, learn a great deal about the resulting geography that was impacted by each war. World War II is a vast topic often understudied in many secondary school history classes but nonetheless considered by many historians to be the most influential event of the twentieth century. Students study the impact of World War II on both their own country and the countries of Europe and the Pacific. The Civil War is covered in-depth as well and the surrounding battlefields in the area present an enriched opportunity for study and relevance. Finally, students gain insight into the personal character and tenacity of those involved in each of these two conflicts.

Most specifically, the course instructs the students in the following: the causes and conditions during the time periods leading up to WWII and the Civil War, an understanding of influential military and political leaders in both wars, the major geography of Europe, Asia and The United States including cultures, people and physical features, and major battles that are used to explain military strategies, tendencies of leaders and eventual results. While accomplishing the course objectives, students develop the following habits: organizational and note-taking skills, the self-discipline of studying class notes every night, long-term planning for monthly sets of homework projects, and analytical thinking skills as opposed to rote memorization. Finally, it is an objective of this class to allow students to develop an interest in military history that will last them a lifetime.

## **ELECTIVE (GRADE 7)**

Students have the choice of registering for one of three courses as their elective: Honors Spanish, Intermediate Band, or Art.

## **HONORS LANGUAGE PROGRAM/SPANISH (GRADE 7)**

This introductory, elective class is designed to build the basics of Spanish which will be necessary in order to improve a student's competency in Spanish. The class moves quickly through the material and a foundation is laid for an advanced study of Spanish in the years to come. The focus is on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Spanish. During this first year, grammar and vocabulary are emphasized since they are the foundation for these four basic skills. Daily activities, homework, periodic quizzes, and short presentations will be a part of regular classes. News programs, videos, newspapers, magazines and maps will also be used to practice listening, comprehension, and versatility in the student's use of Spanish. The students should also use opportunities for speaking in class to enhance their pronunciation skills and fluency. Class participation will enhance the student's mastery of Spanish as well as his understanding of the spoken word. The primary text for this class is *¡En español!* published by McDougall Littell.

## **ART (GRADE 7)**

The seventh grade Art class is a survey class that studies perspective, realism, architecture, and color through a variety of media. Students are expected to draw and sketch as well as understand and appreciate great works of art. This blend of experiences is intended to develop an aesthetic awareness in the student. The opportunity is provided for longer-term projects and an after school Art Club is available for additional developmental time.

## **INTERMEDIATE BAND (GRADE 7)**

Students can choose this daily opportunity to practice their instrument as their full year elective class. Students in the Band are expected to have an interest in developing their performance ability and will need to make a commitment to practicing their instrument on a regular basis. Students will perform as a group in several concerts and competitions throughout the year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (GRADE 7)**

All students participate in physical education class on a daily basis. The emphasis of this class is on fitness, skill development, understanding the rules of a variety of sports, engaged participation, and sportsmanship. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy competition and are given the opportunity for exercise on a daily basis. Depending upon the season, soccer, basketball, baseball, wrestling, and lacrosse teams practice during this class period under the supervision and direction of their coaches. All other middle school sports teams practice during times outside of physical education class.



## **Eighth Grade Curriculum + Course Guide**

### **ENGLISH (GRADE 8)**

The eighth grade English course emphasizes literature, vocabulary, grammar, and poetry. The major themes of adventure and leadership emerge throughout the literary works studied during this course, which include but are not limited to: *The Illiad* by Homer, *Rolf and the Viking Bow* by Allen French, and *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare. The student's vocabulary is expanded by examining new vocabulary found in the literary texts or by utilizing *Vocabulary from Classical Roots*, a workbook by Educator's Publishing Services.

A student's understanding of grammatical standards is reinforced through regular writing assignments and a supplementary writing course. *English Workshop* is a grammar workbook that is further used to reinforce a student's understanding and regular adherence to grammatical standards. Throughout the course of the year, students are also challenged to memorize poetry and recite selected poems, emphasizing the importance of presentation. Regular and frequent writing assignments on the literature component of the course allow students to become efficient writers as they learn from the great works of literature they read. An appreciation for literature and authorship is fostered as well as the ability to analyze a text in depth.

### **LATIN B (GRADE 8)**

The eighth grade Latin course furthers the objectives established in the seventh grade Latin course. The second part of the Heights' own *Vade Mecum* textbook is utilized. After a rapid but comprehensive review, new aspects of Latin grammar are covered including the fourth and fifth declensions, the passive voice, demonstratives, relative clauses, indirect statements, participles, and the subjunctive mood. Longer prose stories are translated into English for the first time in a boy's academic work. Upon completion of this course, the students can expect to enter a standard Latin II class at the high school level.

Due to an increase in the amount of forms students will be required to learn, the students will be able to especially hone their ability to memorize. They also will further enlarge a growing vocabulary and continue to perfect the important skills of proper note-taking and test-taking. The fixed and clear structure of Latin grammar will give the boys a greater understanding of English grammar and of the nature of language in general. In studying the advanced aspects of grammar and in advancing through the translations, the boys will assume superior habits of thought and patterns of learning. This discipline is intended to form students as comprehensive readers, expressive writers, and clear thinkers. By the end of this course, students will have the ability to read the works of great writers such as Cicero, Ovid, and Vergil in their original language and they will have the option of continuing their classical education by taking ancient Greek as early as ninth grade.

### **ALGEBRA 1 (GRADE 8)**

This course will begin with a thorough review of the major topics from the seventh grade pre-algebra course. Following this review of material, this course covers the following mathematical topics: angles, polygons, perimeter, rectangular area, unit multipliers, areas of triangles, graphs, variables, word problems, equivalent equations, reciprocals, exponents, roots, volume, surface area, circumference and pi, graphing inequalities, theorems for exponents, advanced word problems, graphing linear equations, intercept-slope method, multiplication and division of polynomials, subscripted variables, simplification of radicals, monomial and binomial factoring, difference of squares, quadratic equations and formula, completing the square, distance problems, uniform motion problems, and additional topics if time permits.

The habits and skills that this course seeks to establish for students includes: order in problem solving, neatness, completeness, attention to detail, perseverance, proper arithmetic, showing problem-solving steps, verifying solutions, and identifying and correcting common sources of mistakes. The textbook used is Algebra 1 - An Incremental

Development, 3rd Edition, by Saxon. While most students take Algebra I during their eighth grade year, Algebra II is an honors level course that is open to Eighth grade students who have already completed Algebra I.

### **PHYSICAL SCIENCE (GRADE 8)**

This course acts as an introduction to physical science and in doing so covers the major areas of physics and chemistry. The course intends to be a wide survey of the laws of motion and matter and seeks to fascinate students by their first in-depth exposure to these physical sciences. The text used is Physical Science published by Scott Foresman. The following major topics are covered throughout the course: mechanics, Newtonian physics, laws of motion, heat and temperature, thermodynamic models of chemistry, waves and sound, the behavior of lightwaves, electricity and magnetism, the structure of matter, chemistry and the periodic table, and the universe and solar system.

The objective of the class is to stimulate a further interest in science for the student, to provide an understanding and fuller relationship between major physical laws and the physical world that surrounds us, to develop some level of quantitative thinking and problem-solving capability, and to provide an appreciation of the usefulness of mathematics, real life examples and experiments.

### **RELIGION (GRADE 8)**

The eighth grade religion course seeks to encompass the truths taught by the Catholic Church, beginning with the abiding presence of Christ, prayer, the sacraments, worship, the Blessed Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, the communion of saints, prominent saints of the first two thousand years, the universal call to holiness, virtue, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, vocations, the lay apostolate, marriage and the family, the Christian in the world, law and conscience, the social order, the absolute and infinite dignity of each human life from conception until natural death, and the last things of death, just judgment, and the

afterlife. The main textbook used is *Our Life in the Church of the Faith and Life* series published by Ignatius Press.

The first quarter of the course is devoted to Confirmation preparation because most of the eighth grade students are to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in their local parishes. This preparation takes in a great many of the truths of the Catholic faith, but concentrates on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and the Church. Study materials include *A Brief Review for Confirmation* published by The Daughters of Saint Paul, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and two chapters from *The Life of Grace* by Ignatius Press.

Even if all of the truths of the Catholic faith are studied, understood, and able to be defended, little is accomplished unless these truths are lived well in our everyday and ordinary lives. Carrying out our ordinary work, whatever our station in life, and sanctifying it by offering it to God, is to live the truths of our Catholic faith heroically and to fulfill the call to holiness that each of us has been given.

In order to help transform the teaching of our Catholic faith into a faith that is lived on a daily basis, the course is augmented with materials, such as: *Our Lady of Fatima* by William Thomas Walsh, chronicling the faith of three small poor children who grow to live extraordinarily holy lives; *The Cure of Ars*, about the patron saint of parish priests, written by Mary Fabyan Windeatt; writings by Pope John Paul II; videos; and other materials that demonstrate the faith being lived by ordinary people in their everyday lives. Each student writes an essay on a favorite saint and then makes a presentation to the class on the life of that saint. In order to cultivate a life of piety and develop a prayer life, the student will have regular opportunities each month for confession, spiritual talks, and recitation of the rosary during a chapel service held once every two weeks by the Heights' chaplains.

## **ANCIENT HISTORY (GRADE 8)**

The eighth grade Ancient History course is a survey of the early civilizations that have played a pivotal role in the development of Western culture. The primary text for this survey is *Ancient and Medieval Worlds* by Helen and Robert Howe and is supplemented by handouts from other texts and sources. Chronologically, the class begins in the cradle of ancient culture, the Tigris-Euphrates valley, with an examination of the great Mesopotamian societies, including the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans. It moves on to another great river valley, the Nile, to examine the Egyptians, and then surveys the early Indo-European civilizations of the Hittites and the Persians. Included also is a look at the smaller Eastern Mediterranean cultures of the Phoenicians, Arameans, and Hebrews. Throughout this survey course, students will be asked to grasp both the distinctive features and the accomplishments of each society, ranging from its political and religious institutions to its artistic and intellectual achievements, as well as its place in the larger story of the ancient world.

Having set the stage with a survey of the major Middle Eastern civilizations, the class will then shift its focus to the two great Mediterranean civilizations: Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. As befitting their monumental impact on the West, these two civilizations will receive a more thorough and systematic treatment, beginning with the early Bronze Age Greek societies of the Minoans and Mycenaeans and continuing to the Fall of Rome. Along the way, students will meet such imposing figures as Pericles, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, and review the epic military struggles on which history turned, including the Persian, Peloponnesian and Punic Wars. Students will also encounter the remarkable genius of these two civilizations, from the unparalleled philosophic and artistic brilliance of fifth century Athens—the age of Socrates and Sophocles—to the pragmatic genius of the Romans, exemplified in their innovations in engineering, architecture and law.

Pursuing such an ambitious survey of Ancient History proficiently requires students to develop a number of critical skills, including the skill of discerning chronological and geographical context. This requires

the essential skill of memorization, of mastering various dates and being able to identify key places on a map. Discerning chronological and geographical context involves the skill of being able to move back and forth across different eras and regions of the ancient world, recognizing both the distinctiveness of such eras and regions as well as the impact that they have on each other. It is to know why, for example, historians distinguish between Classical Greece and Hellenistic Greece, or what role climatic and topographical factors played in giving early Mediterranean cultures a huge cultural leap over those of Northern Europe. A major goal of this course is making students more adept at using and explaining such context in history.

The second category of skill developed is the careful reading and outlining of text. In the study of history, more so than in most fields, it becomes crucial not to become lost in an array of facts but rather to discern major topics from minor details, and to be able to summarize and organize such information accordingly. Toward this end, students will learn and practice extensively the outlining of text. Such skills will be further sharpened by taking notes on class lectures.

Finally, the third major skill developed is the critical evaluation of sources. This skill is the ability to evaluate a source of information in terms of its particular point of view and biases and thus better determine not only its perspective but its reliability and usefulness as well. A simple example makes clear how recognizing that a Spartan account of the Peloponnesian War will likely differ significantly from an account by their opponents, the Athenians.

A culminating project of the course is a research paper in the second semester. Here, choosing a specific topic concerning Ancient Greece or Rome, students are given the opportunity to integrate and display the various skills they have developed, along with general writing and research skills, to attempt their own historical scholarship.

### **ELECTIVE CLASS (GRADE 8)**

Students have the choice of registering for one of three courses as their elective: Honors Spanish, Intermediate Band, or Art.

### **HONORS LANGUAGE PROGRAM: SPANISH B (GRADE 8)**

This year-long elective class is designed to continue building the basics of Spanish necessary to improve language competency. Students in the Honors Language Program are enrolled in both Latin and Spanish classes. The learning focus is on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in Spanish. During a second year, grammar and vocabulary are still stressed heavily, but a new focus on the oral skills of listening and speaking is added. Daily activities, homework, periodic quizzes, and presentations are a part of regular classes. News programs, videos, newspapers, magazines and maps will be used to practice listening, comprehension, and versatility in the student's use of Spanish. The students should also use opportunities for speaking in class to enhance their pronunciation skills and fluency. Class participation will enhance the student's mastery of Spanish as well as his understanding of the spoken word. The primary text for this class will be ¡En español! published by McDougall Littell.

### **ART (GRADE 8)**

The eighth grade Art class is a survey class that studies perspective, realism, architecture, and color through a variety of mediums. Students are expected to draw and sketch as well as understand and appreciate great works of art. This blend of experiences is intended to develop an aesthetic awareness in the student. The opportunity is provided for longer term projects and an after school Art Club is available for extra developmental time.

### **INTERMEDIATE BAND (GRADE 8)**

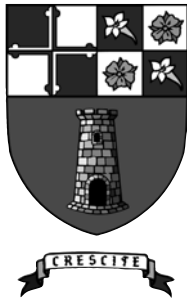
Students can choose this daily opportunity to practice their instrument as their full year elective class. Students in the Band are expected to have an interest in developing their performance ability and will need to make a commitment to practicing their instrument on a regular basis. Students will perform as a group in several concerts and competitions throughout the year.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (GRADE 8)**

Students participate in physical education class on a daily basis. The emphasis of this class is on fitness, skill development, understanding the rules of a variety of sports, engaged participation, and sportsmanship. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy competition and are given the opportunity for exercise on a daily basis. Depending upon the season, soccer, basketball, baseball, and lacrosse teams practice during this class period under the supervision and direction of their coaches. All other middle school sports teams practice outside of physical education class.

### **STUDENT EXCHANGE TO SPAIN (GRADE 8)**

The Heights Middle School participates in a limited student exchange with The Retamar School in Spain. Interested and academically eligible students from The Heights will be able to travel to Spain for three weeks at a time. Participating Heights students will be hosted by families of The Retamar School and will also act as a host to a Retamar student as he visits The Heights. This exchange intends to provide a unique opportunity for cultural immersion as well as an opportunity for students to develop their growing sense of independence. Students will be considered eligible if their grades are judged to be sufficient and if they have demonstrated the ability to independently remain up to date on their schoolwork.



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