

# MIDDLE SCHOOL HONORS PROGRAM



**PAVIRTUAL**  
CHARTER SCHOOL

A COMMUNITY OF PARTNERSHIP, LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

## Middle School Honors Program

The Middle School Honors Program is designed to encourage and support outstanding students who display exceptional academic ability and desire optimized learning opportunities. While all PA Virtual courses meet PA Core Standards and are designed to prepare students for higher education, Honors Program courses in Science, Math, History, and ELA delve deeper into the content at a more rapid pace and have elevated expectations for both quality and quantity of student work. These courses are more rigorous and stretch student learning above and beyond grade level. Students participating in the Middle School Honors Program may be required to complete additional reading, research, writing, and individual/collaborative projects. Teachers deliver instruction and curriculum at a faster pace and in greater detail while incorporating more complex analysis and additional resources. Students in grade 8 have the opportunity to earn high school credit for the English 9 and/or the Algebra I Honors courses.



## Eligibility

Current PA Virtual Students must:

- Demonstrate high academic achievement in prior courses.
- Have a score of 90% or above in the previous year's courses.
- Be recommended by the previous year's teacher(s).
- Demonstrate measurable success on NWEA Map Diagnostic Exams and/or the PSSA Exams.

Incoming students from other educational placements may be eligible for Honors courses based on the following:

- A score of 90% or above in the previous year's courses
- Learning coach request supported by transcript documentation

Here are some common traits and characteristics found in PA Virtual Honors Program students:

#### 1. Academic Excellence

- Maintains consistently high grades across various subjects.
- Actively engages in class discussions and demonstrates a deep understanding of the material.
- Takes on challenging coursework and excels in honors or advanced classes.

#### 2. Strong Work Ethic

- Demonstrates a strong commitment to learning and is dedicated to their studies.
- Completes assignments on time and with a high level of accuracy.
- Shows initiative in seeking additional knowledge beyond the standard curriculum.

#### 3. Curiosity and Critical Thinking

- Asks thoughtful questions and demonstrates curiosity about the subject matter.
- Applies critical thinking skills to analyze information and solve problems.

#### 4. Positive Attitude

- Maintains a positive and enthusiastic approach to learning.
- Encourages and supports classmates, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

#### 5. Effective Communication

- Expresses ideas clearly and articulately, both in writing and verbally.
- Collaborates well with peers and teachers, fostering a positive and communicative classroom environment.

#### 6. Responsibility and Organization

- Manages time effectively and stays organized with assignments and deadlines.
- Takes responsibility for their own learning and academic success.

# Honors Course Descriptions



## Pre-Algebra (Grade 7)

This full-year course is designed for students who have completed a middle school mathematics sequence but are not yet algebra-ready. This course reviews key algebra readiness skills from the middle grades and introduces basic Algebra I work with appropriate support. Students revisit concepts in numbers and operations, expressions and equations, ratios and proportions, and basic functions. By the end of the course, students are ready to begin a more formal high school Algebra I study.

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## Algebra 1 Honors (Grade 8)

This full-year Honors course introduces students to linear, exponential, and quadratic functions by interpreting, analyzing, comparing, and contrasting functions that are represented numerically, tabularly, graphically, and algebraically. Technology is utilized within some lessons to further support students in identifying key features as well as displaying images of the functions. The course builds upon the basic concepts of functions to include transformations of linear and nonlinear functions. Students deepen their understanding of quantitative reasoning, piecewise functions, and quadratic functions through performance tasks. The additional performance-based skills allow the Honors students to apply more of the concepts taught in the course. The course concludes with students analyzing data through displays and statistical analysis. This course is a high school equivalent course. Upon successfully completing the course with a grade of 80% or higher, the student will receive high school credit.



## Honors Language Arts 8 (Grade 7)

In this course, students build on their knowledge and blossom as thoughtful readers and clear, effective writers. A balance of literary and informational texts engages students throughout the course in reading critically, analyzing texts, and citing evidence to support claims. Students sharpen their vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills through lessons designed to provide explicit modeling and ample opportunities to practice. Students also routinely write responses to texts they have read, and use more extensive, process-based lessons to produce full-length essays in narrative, informative, analytical, and argumentative formats. In this full year course, students develop a mastery of reading, writing, and language arts skills.

## **Summit English 9 Honors (Grade 8)**

In Summit English 9 Honors, students engage in interactive instruction that encompasses reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. The curriculum emphasizes the exploration of various literary genres and their elements. Students learn to carefully read, interpret, and analyze literature and nonfiction works of cultural or historical significance appropriate to Grade 9. Throughout the course, students practice narrative, informative, and argument writing. They also develop and deliver presentations and participate in discussions with their peers. This course is a high school equivalent course. Upon successfully completing the course with a grade of 80% or higher, the student will receive high school credit.



## **Honors Life Science (Grade 7)**

This full-year middle school course focuses on introducing students to the diversity of life found on our planet. The course includes an overview of scientific principles and procedures and leads students toward a clearer understanding of cells and heredity, the five kingdoms, human body systems, and ecology. As students refine and expand their understanding of life science, they will apply their knowledge in investigations that require them to ask questions and explore the world around them. Throughout the course, students will also solve problems, reason abstractly, and learn to think critically.

## **PA Physical Science A and B (Grade 8)**

This full-year course focuses on basic concepts in chemistry and physics and encourages exploration of new discoveries in the field of physical science. The course includes an overview of scientific principles and procedures and has students examine the chemical building blocks of our physical world and the composition of matter. Additionally, students explore the properties that affect motion, forces, and energy on Earth. Building on these concepts, the course covers the properties of electricity and magnetism and the effects of these phenomena. As students refine and expand their understanding of physical science, they will apply their knowledge to complete interactive virtual labs that require them to ask questions and create hypotheses. Hands-on lab options are also available.



## History

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### **Honors World History I (Grade 7)**

World History I offer a comprehensive exploration of human history from prehistory through the fourteenth century. Organized chronologically and regionally, the course delves into the development of civilizations, religions, philosophies, arts, and sciences across various cultures.

In Semester A (HST07AE2), students begin by examining the earliest human societies, including hunter-gatherers and early agricultural communities. They study the four river valley civilizations—Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China—and explore the origins of major world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Confucianism.

Semester B (HST07BE2) continues with an analysis of classical civilizations, including Greece and Rome, the Byzantine Empire, and the rise of Christianity and Islam. The course concludes with a study of medieval societies in Europe, North Africa, and East Asia up to the fourteenth century.

Throughout both semesters, students engage in historical thinking by analyzing primary sources, interpreting maps, conducting research, and writing in various formats. Geographical concepts are integrated within the historical narrative to provide context and enhance understanding.

### **Honors World History II (Grade 8)**

World History II course builds upon the foundation of World History I, guiding students through global developments from the 15th century to the modern era. This two-part course offers a deeper understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and social forces that have shaped today's world.

Semester A (HST08AE2) begins with the Renaissance and Reformation, followed by the Age of Exploration, the Enlightenment, and revolutions in science, industry, and governance. Students explore the impacts of European colonization, the Atlantic slave trade, and the rise of nation-states.

Semester B (HST08BE2) covers the 19th and 20th centuries, including imperialism, world wars, the Cold War, and movements for independence and civil rights around the globe. Students also study globalization and contemporary world issues.

Throughout both semesters, students practice historical analysis using primary and secondary sources, develop research and writing skills, and make connections between past and present to become more informed global citizens.



## Electives

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### **Spanish I: Grade 8 (Elective)**

Students begin their introduction to Spanish with fundamental building blocks in four key areas of foreign language study: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Each week consists of an ongoing adventure story, a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, numerous interactive games reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, and multimedia cultural presentations covering major Spanish-speaking areas in Europe and the Americas. The course has been carefully aligned to national standards as set forth by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

### **Additional Course Descriptions**

To see descriptions for core subject courses that do not fall under the Honors Program as well as additional courses required for 7th and 8th grade students, [click here](#).