



WMS 8th Grade Course Descriptions 2023-24

8th grade students start the day with a Connect advisory course followed by six 54-minute periods. Four periods are dedicated to daily CORE classes in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Two periods of the day are dedicated to ENCORE classes that are exploratory and/or career and technology courses. A music class is required and can include Choir, Band, General Music, or both Choir and Band. Required ENCORE courses in 8th grade include Physical Education/Health and Art 8-Media and Visual Arts Combination. Elective ENCORE options include Spanish 8 (2 trimesters), Family Consumer Science 8, Project Lead the Way/STEM Magic of Electrons 8, Theater Arts 8, and Team Sports PE 8. The administration will attempt to meet all preferred electives but cannot guarantee placements as they will be dependent on class availability.

Connect

CONNECT 8: Connect is a 25-minute, daily advisory period for students to “Connect” with their dedicated advisor, themselves, peers, and the community. Instructional content and activities will include social/emotional learning, digital citizenship, community service, and executive functioning practice. Advisors will also help to monitor academic progress and goal setting.

Core Academic Classes

ENRICHED LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERATURE 8: 8th grade enriched language arts is a self-selected, yearlong option for students looking for an enriched learning experience. The curriculum in the enriched course will use similar thematic units as grade-level language arts but with an enhanced complexity, depth, and pace. Instruction will spend less time on background knowledge or teacher-led practice, and more time cultivating habits of independent thinking, creativity, collaboration, and leadership. Students interested in electing this course should display strong abilities in past language arts classes and above-grade-level reading, vocabulary, verbal, and writing skills. Registrations will be reviewed by 7th grade staff to ensure proper placement.

LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERATURE 8: All students that do not elect the enriched course will be scheduled for this course. In 8th grade language arts, students will spend the year focusing on independent and teacher-directed reading, writing, and critical thinking. Units begin by introducing big questions for students to consider as they read novels or selections from the course anthology. Students will be working with teachers throughout the year on scaffolded assignments to develop the skills needed to be independent lifelong learners.

MATH: Algebra 8: 8th grade students who are placed into Algebra 8 will spend most of the year working with the linear aspects of algebra. Topics include solving and manipulating equations and inequalities, graphing, and analyzing linear functions. Also, students will learn about the Pythagorean Theorem and the properties of exponents.

Intermediate Algebra A/B: Prerequisite - Pre-Algebra 7

This course is a study beyond linear topics in Algebra. Topics in this course will include systems of inequalities, exponent laws, polynomial arithmetic, and factoring. Quadratic, exponential, radical, and rational functions will also be studied. In this rigorous course, students can expect a high workload and a rapid pace. Students are expected to keep up with the work in order to succeed.

Geometry A/B: Prerequisite - Intermediate Algebra A/B

This course includes the study of parallel and perpendicular lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, circles, trigonometry, and transformations. Students will also practice formal logic by writing proofs. In this rigorous course, students can expect a high workload and a rapid pace. Students are expected to keep up with the work in order to succeed.

WORLD GEOGRAPHY 8: World Geography is an 8th grade core class that explores the world using the 5 Themes of Geography. During this yearlong class, the student will “travel” throughout the world looking at both the Political (Human-Made) and the Physical (Natural Features) landscape of our planet. Government systems, country borders, history, culture, religion, and current events are a few examples of topics that will be used by the students throughout the year. The study of World Geography will help the modern-day student better understand the interactions of our planet's physical and social connections. This course is aligned with the 8th grade Minnesota State Social Studies Standards.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE 8: All students in 8th grade will learn about Physical Science this year. Through a three-dimensional lens and phenomenon-based instruction, students will learn about physical interactions through many different units of study. Students will get a chance to learn through hands-on lab activities, small projects, and in-class discussions. This course is aligned with the 8th grade Minnesota State Science Standards.

Music *(All WMS students are required to have a music class.)*

BAND 8: Eighth Grade Band is the most advanced instrumental course offered at Waconia Middle School. This yearlong experience builds comprehensive musicianship through music performance built on varied musical literature and skill development. Students in 8th Grade Band will perform at least four concerts per school year. Individual growth and achievement are encouraged through participation in band class as well as small group lessons that meet on a rotating cycle throughout the year. Students participating in 8th grade band will also have the opportunity to participate in jazz band, percussion ensemble, pep band, solo ensemble festivals, honor bands, and the Waconia High School Marching Band. 8th Grade Band is a continuation of 7th grade band - students wanting to join in 8th grade band as a new player are welcome and should contact a band director to get started!

CHOIR 8: Choir classes meet on alternating days for the entire school year. This yearlong commitment will provide great growth in the students' singing strength and music reading skills. If students want to learn to use their voice well, sing with their friends, or just like music, then this is a class for them. Choirs will perform in three local school performances including in school festivals with the high school choirs. There are other opportunities to perform like showing us your favorite song in class on “Performance Days,” and “Ultimate Karaoke” as well

as learning how to critique singers on shows like “The Voice” or “American Idol.” You could also audition for our Waconia show choirs, concert solos, and/or MN State Level Honor Choirs. Choir is a great place to grow musically, express yourself, and take advantage of our nationally known music programs in Waconia!

GENERAL MUSIC 8: General Music class meets on alternating days for 1 trimester. This course gives students a general overview of many different areas of music. Units may include pitch and rhythm basics, keyboards, ukulele, bucket drumming, and composer studies. Students are graded on accurate practicing, performing individual and group projects, presentations, in-class assignments, quizzes, and tests.

Physical Education/Health

ALTERNATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH 8: A combined PE and Health course is a requirement for students and will most often be opposite a student’s music election. Students taking the general music course can elect to take an additional trimester of PE. PE and Health courses are in the process of adjustment for the 2023-24 school year.

Physical Education provides students with an opportunity for physical activity during the school day. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a program consisting of skill development, lead-up games, team sports, lifetime games, ice arena, and physical fitness activities. The students receive instruction in rules, skills, and strategies associated with the different sports. Fitness testing is done twice a year to guide physical conditioning activities. The program promotes the spirit of cooperation, leadership, fair play, friendly competition, and the development of problem-solving skills.

Health 8 topics include character building, mental/emotional health, and relationships. During the character unit, students will focus on the WMS Core Values and relate them to their own lives. The mental/emotional health unit will teach students how to cope with stress and have them participate in various stress management techniques. We will also discuss eating disorders, depression, and suicide and focus on strategies to help combat these disorders and mental health issues. Current events covered include e-cigarettes and opioid addiction as well as topics that come up in the news.

Unique Learners Courses

SPECIAL EDUCATION/ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: Students that require Special Education or English Language Learner services according to their Individualized Education Plan will be scheduled for a specialized class with a licensed special education or English language learner teacher most often in the place of PE and/or Music courses.

MATH AND READING SKILLS: Students identified by standardized test scores and/or teacher recommendation as needing additional reading or math support will be scheduled into remedial skills classes to receive additional basic skills support in math and/or reading. These trimester length courses are added most often in the place of PE and/or Music courses.

GIFTED AND TALENTED/ HIGH LEVEL LEARNERS: Students identified as high-level learners and/or gifted and talented (GT), according to ISD 110 identification standards, will have the option to be placed in a trimester-length High-Level Learners course. This course would be in place of an elective course.

Encore Course- Required

ART 8 Media/Visual Arts Combination: 8th grade Art is a required course that will meet daily for a trimester. In this course, students will be introduced to new materials in combination with familiar visual mediums to experience how the visual and media arts work together and are used in functional ways. Students will be using both visual mediums (paint, pencil, clay) and digital media tools to reinforce their engagement in Art and pique their interest in continuing to explore Art at the high school level. In the course, we continue to set goals for students to strengthen their comfort in developing their own style, progress their understanding of artist foundations, and expand their creative problem-solving skills through four processes: Creating, Responding, Performing/Presenting, and Connecting. This course is aligned with the 8th grade Minnesota Art Standards.

Encore Courses- Electives

SPANISH 8: Elective Spanish 8 introduces students to the Spanish language and culture. The goal of the class is to have real and immediate communication in Spanish. The instructor will use simple, repetitive stories, told in Spanish, to teach basic Spanish phrases and culture. Students develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. This class will address the five national language standards: communication, connections, culture, comparisons, and community. Spanish 8 will occur during 2 trimesters. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be prepared to continue to Spanish 2A at Waconia High School.

FAMILY and CONSUMER SCIENCE 8: Elective FACS 8 is a continuation of FACS 7. Students will be exploring the FACS topics of Interior Design, Clothing Textiles, Personal Finances, Job Skills, and Farm to Table Cooking. Students will gain a variety of skills that will help them in their futures, explore different career options, and give them insight into classes that are offered at the high school. Major projects for this course include designing a 3D model of a home, sewing pajama pants, completing a job application, and cooking food!

STEM MAGIC OF ELECTRONS 8: In this elective course, students examine the behavior and parts of atoms as well as the impact of electricity on the world around them. They learn skills in basic circuitry design and use what they know to propose designs such as a burglar alarm for an art museum. This course is part of a nationally recognized engineering STEM curriculum developed by Project Lead The Way (PLTW) www.pltw.org.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURING ENTREPRENEURSHIP 8: The elective Industrial Technology course is an exploration of woodworking technology, concepts, and processes through student projects. Every student will have the opportunity to plan, design, and build a small woodworking project. Throughout this process, students will be using 21st-century skills of communication, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Students will also be involved in a Manufacturing/Entrepreneurship unit. In this unit, students will learn about the challenges of starting and running a small business. As a class, they will set up their own company and mass-produce a product for sale. This course will prepare students for the Industrial Technology and Engineering courses offered in high school.

THEATER ARTS 8: In this elective course, students will be introduced to the elements of theater and the collaborative team of artists that make a dramatic production a success. They will explore the technical aspects of theater design and production. Students will learn about theater history and the variety of theater genres. Goals for students are set on understanding elements of theater, performance techniques, and technical production skills. This is a new offering for 2023-24.

TEAM SPORTS PHYSICAL EDUCATION 8: This PE elective provides students with a trimester of Physical Education in addition to the required PE/Health course described above. Students choosing General Music will most often be scheduled into this additional PE course. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a program consisting of skill development, lead-up games, team sports, lifetime games, ice arena, and physical fitness activities. The students receive instruction in rules, skills, and strategies associated with the different sports. The program promotes the spirit of cooperation, leadership, fair play, friendly competition, and the development of problem-solving skills. This is a new course for 2023-24.

Waconia Middle School Course Election Worksheet 2023-24 8th Grade Classes

Student Name (First and Last): _____

Current Connect Teacher or Previous School: _____

*Elected courses are a commitment for the school year. Please read through the course descriptions carefully to assist you in making your course selection decisions.

Music Electives (1 required)

CIRCLE ONE OPTION BELOW

1. Band 8
2. Choir 8
3. Band 8 and Choir 8
4. General Music 8

Exploratory Electives (Rank 1-4)

Rank the 6 classes below with a 1, 2, 3, or 4. #1 is your first choice and #4 is your last choice.

_____ **Spanish 8 (2 Trimesters)**

_____ **PLTW/STEM Magic of Electrons**

_____ **Family and Consumer Science 8**

_____ **Ind. Tech. Manufacturing Entrepreneurship 8**

_____ **Theater Arts 8**

_____ **Team Sports PE 8**

English Language Arts

CIRCLE ONE OPTION BELOW

1. Language Arts/Literature 8
2. Enriched Language Arts/Literature 8

REQUIRED COURSES

Core Math (Full Year)

Math 8- Placed

(Placement based on
identification criteria)

Intermediate Algebra A/B- Placed

Geometry A/B- Placed

Core Social Studies (Full Year)

World Geography 8- Required

Core Science (Full Year)

Physical Science 8- Required

Required Encore Course

Art 8 (1 Trimester)

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Scheduling Questions Contact: Counselors Mrs. Deren (sderen@isd110.org) or Ms. Galindo (pgalindo@isd110.org) or Principal Mr. Clausen (sclausen@isd110.org) or Asst. Principal Mr. Andrews (iandrews@isd110.org)

Return this page only to your CONNECT teacher by **Wednesday, April 26, 2023.**