

NORTHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL
Class Summary
Grade 8

Required Classes

English: Continues the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The study of literature includes vocabulary, writing, reading and interpreting. Selected novels and plays include *The Outsiders*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. These units are supplemented with nonfiction articles and poetry. Independent reading is supported through a differentiated reading program that focuses on reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Composition skills are developed through narrative writing, creative writing, literary analysis, and the study of grammar. Other units combining reading, writing, and speaking are short stories, poetry, and a research-based speech unit.

Geography: Students in *Geography* explore the regions of the world using geographic information from print and electronic sources. They analyze important trends in the modern world such as demographic change, shifting trade patterns, and intensified cultural interactions due to globalization. Participants learn that governments are based on different political philosophies and serve various purposes. By learning economic principles of trade and the factors that affect economic growth, students understand why there are different standards of living in countries around the world.

Geoscience: This course employs an exploratory, investigative, and inquiry based approach to study the major interacting components of the earth system: the geosphere (Earth's interior and its rocks and soils), the hydrosphere (Earth's waters), the atmosphere (Earth's air), and the biosphere (Earth's living things). Instructors will focus on the national science education content standards and Minnesota Science standards in the earth and space sciences.

Math: Students are grouped for math based on teacher recommendation, previous achievement and successful completion of prerequisite courses. All students will use a scientific calculator or an approved calculator application on their iPad.

Algebra A - This course covers the 8th Grade Minnesota math standards.

Algebra AA - This course covers the Minnesota 8th grade standards at a faster pace than Algebra A. Due to the faster pace, additional topics will be covered.

Algebra 2 - Requires mastery of 7th Grade Algebra.

Health 8: (Full year, every other day): This year long course is required for all eighth grade students. The intent of the course is to help students take responsibility for the improvement of their own personal, mental, and emotional health, as well as the well-being of others.

Physical Education: (Full year, every other day) Students should change into clothes that allow them to move and are appropriate for the weather. Students will be participating in lifetime sports (tennis, badminton, ping-pong, weightlifting, swimming, bowling, and other recreational activities), and team sports (football, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, soccer, speedball, and softball). A locker with a lock will be assigned to each student. Written Quizzes will be given throughout the school year.

Language and Music Elective Classes

Amistades 8: (Full year, every day): This is a full year course that meets every day and is designed specifically for students who have completed the elementary Compañeros program, Amistades 6, and Amistades 7. This course will contain a variety of topics including more structured language study and cultural issues. A "C" average in Amistades 7 is a prerequisite for registration in this course. Students will need a "C" average grade in Amistades 8 to be eligible for enrollment in Spanish 3+ in 9th grade.

World Language (Spanish IB, French IB, or German IB): (Full year, every other day)
8th graders may enroll in the IA world language courses. IB is the continuation in the series for those students who have successfully completed that level. The thematic content is greeting and leave taking, family, house, school, colors, numbers/money, clothing, time, etc. The grammatical content is present tense-regular verbs, present tense-irregular verbs, definite and indefinite articles, subject/verb agreement, adjectives, subject pronouns, direct objects, question words, basic prepositions, alphabet, word order, punctuation, basic negatives, possessive adjectives, formal/informal forms of address, future time, introduction to past tense and more. World language electives IA & B are a two-year plan of study resulting in the student completing the equivalent of a first year high school language course (no high school credit is earned for any middle school course).

Prerequisite: Grade 7 composite GPA of "C" average or higher. Students must pass each semester of world language instruction to advance to the next semester.

Band 8: Students continue learning basic theory and technique while becoming exposed to a wide variety of musical selections of increasing difficulty. Evening concerts are presented, and students receive a weekly lesson with a band instructor. The 8th grade band tours one day each year. Students are expected to stay in band for the entire year. Students are expected to practice for at least 60 minutes per week, in addition to the full band rehearsals.

Prerequisite: Successful participation in 7th grade band. Students having no prior band experience are welcome to contact the director to begin lessons on a band instrument. These students will be included in band rehearsals after they have gained sufficient technique on their band instrument.

7/8th grade Choir: (Combined 7th & 8th grade sections) This course continues the development of more advanced vocal skills and musicianship. Significant music of the past and present will be studied, as well as proper singing technique and sight-reading. These are skills that are continuing to develop. Evening concerts are presented during the school year, as well as a district choral festival during the day. Individual/Small Group voice lessons are introduced. Final unit of the year is Small Ensembles & or Solos/Groups. Singers get to pick a pop artist/song (Lyrics appropriate) of their choice. Students use rehearsal time and class sharing to improve skills. They can also make an appointment to be shared with just the teacher.

Prerequisite: Successful participation in choir from the previous year, or an interest in developing singing skills.

Orchestra: The class is designed to be a learning experience as well as a time for preparing for performances. Students continue to learn and review the following: scales and etudes, shifting, vibrato, tuning, solos and rhythmic patterns. Each group strives to achieve a balance of sound, good tone, and the ability to play together musically. Music is chosen to give students a well-rounded background of many composers and musical styles. Each student receives orchestra lessons, has an opportunity to participate in an orchestra festival, and may audition for an extra-curricular chamber orchestra that meets outside of the school day. Evening concerts are presented during the school year.

Prerequisite: Successful participation in 7th grade orchestra or consent of the instructor. Students having no prior orchestra experience are welcome to contact the director to begin lessons on an orchestra instrument. These students will be included in rehearsals after gaining sufficient technique on their instrument.

Additional Elective Classes

Exploratory Art: Creating large expressive cardboard/papier mâché masks, drawing self-portraits and combining a famous artist's work & cartoon into a colorful enlargement painting are just a few of the approaches students will take to increase their artistic skills. Students will have the opportunity to utilize a range of media and methods to increase their confidence in expressing themselves visually. The course goal is to have all students realize that they can produce art while receiving exposure to influential artists and art movements!

Creative Food & Design: Explore your creative side. Are you the next Iron Chef? Students will develop culinary skills while preparing and serving a variety of foods and snacks. Are you the next top designer? Sewing and design will expose students to the use of the hand and machine sewing, fashion design, and creative crafts. Participants will explore other important topics such as nutrition, money management, budgeting, and it's all a game of Life.

Robotics & Woodworking: This course explores all that is Robotics! We begin by exploring electricity and electronics by building and testing circuits. This unit wraps up with a hands-on **SOLDERING** project they will take home. We then explore block programming using the **Sphero Robot**. **VEX Robotics Equipment** is then used to explore **Mechanisms**. Students will learn how to use and manipulate mechanisms to change speed, torque and type of movement. We use the VEX equipment to build some machines and program them using a C-based computer programming through **RobotC**. This course is a very hands-on, fun, project-based class. We end the year exploring **Fluid Power**, where students will use the woodshop to build a **Fluid Power Project**.

Engineering, Design & Woodworking: This course studies and applies the Engineering Design Process as it pertains to product design. Students will learn an industry standard 3D design software package called **Autodesk Inventor**. They will complete assignments with Inventor as they learn different features of the program. Student will use the **MakerBot Replicator 3D printer** and **Laguna Tools IQ CNC Router** to complete some of their projects. Students will learn how to communicate and collaborate with their classmates to solve design challenges in a project based environment. Both woodworking Hand Tools and Power Machines will be used to build projects students design.

Intro to Journalism: Intro to Journalism: This course is for students interested in exploring opportunities that involve video production and careers in broadcasting. Students will learn how to use production equipment while creating morning news footage and learn how to use multiple applications to produce news segments. Students will learn how to positively critique news productions and learn about careers in the field of broadcasting and journalism through research and guest speakers. Students will read the daily news in class and will become aware of the headlines. **Please note:** Students in this class take part in **all** aspects of TV production: operating equipment, directing, writing, and on-air delivery of news and entertainment. This elective is open to all 7th and 8th grade students.

Brain Games for Building Higher Order Thinking Skills: Brain Games are not just for fun! Playing carefully crafted and complex games can positively impact the way brains develop, process, discern, and organize information. The purpose of this course is to exercise our brains through puzzles and games. This course will help develop skills in problem-solving, strategizing, memorization, predicting and deliberate decision-making. The goal is to provide an engaging social and collaborative environment that inspires critical thinking, opportunities for healthy competition, and surmountable challenges that spark excitement and success. A small sample of the games we will use are Chess, Mancala, Mastermind, Katamino, and Sudoku.

Drop/Add Policy: Withdrawal from courses requires parental consent, and must be done the first few weeks of school.