

Jenison Junior High School

Eighth Grade Course Descriptions



CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Language Arts – Full Year

This required course focuses on reading, writing, grammar, and speaking skills. Students read and respond to novels through genre-specific book clubs that include small-group discussions, individual conferences, and writing assignments. Students also read and write poetry, short stories, and nonfiction, with continued grammatical and mechanics embedded into instruction.

Mathematics – Full Year

Students will be placed in a mathematics course based on past performance and teacher recommendations. All eighth grade mathematics courses cover the 8th Grade Common Core State Standards created by the State of Michigan. All eighth grade mathematics courses will prepare students for high school level geometry and advanced algebra courses. All mathematics courses recommend a scientific calculator.

Science – Full Year

Eighth grade science is an integrated science course which provides an in-depth exploration of life, Earth, and physical sciences. The curriculum includes hands-on experiments, collaborative projects, and critical thinking exercises designed to build a strong foundation in scientific concepts and practices. Topics covered include adaptation and natural selection, focusing on the mechanisms of genetic variation. The course examines Earth's history through the study of fossils, rock formations, and geological processes, with an emphasis on data interpretation. Properties of sound and light, including wave behavior and technological applications, are analyzed through experiments and simulations. The curriculum also explores gravitational forces, mass, weight, and orbital motion to explain motion on Earth and in space. Regional climate and weather patterns are studied by investigating the interactions between Earth's systems. Natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and hurricanes are analyzed with a focus on risk assessment, mitigation strategies, and the role of human activities in influencing their frequency and impact. Students will examine how human actions contribute to hazard risks and explore scientific approaches to minimize these effects. This course emphasizes inquiry-based learning, critical analysis, and practical applications, preparing students for advanced scientific study.

Social Studies – Full Year

This course of study covers the time period from the 1700's to the 1900's, starting with American Revolution. Units include United States government, westward expansion, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and immigration in the 19th century. Concepts studied during each of these units include geography, history, government, and economics. Attention is given to chronology, cause and effect, connection to the present, and application to our lives.

Challenges and Choices - 9 weeks

Challenges and Choices is designed to help teens manage peer pressure. Students will learn about making good decisions, being assertive and setting high standards. Topics include: understanding the social consequences of drug abuse, mental health, developing respectful social and dating relationships, and examining the benefits of abstinence. This course is required for all 8th Grade students.

APPLICATION CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Challenge Social Studies

The Challenge U.S. History course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in U.S. History. This course examines the major turning points in American history beginning with the events leading up to the American Revolution, the origins of our constitution, reform movements, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the impact of the frontier, the changing nature of business and government, and the struggle to achieve class, ethnic, racial, and gender equality. The curriculum and academic expectations will be differentiated to accommodate gifted and highly motivated students.

Open to students through an application process

Challenge Language Arts

Challenge Language Arts is a course designed for students who excel in and are passionate about Language Arts content. The course follows the standard Junior High curriculum, which is based on the Common Core reading, writing, speaking, and listening state standards. Students in this class will meet these standards by participating in a discussion-enriched model focused on reading and writing within a variety of genres. The curriculum and academic expectations will be differentiated to accommodate gifted and highly motivated students. ***Open to students through an application process***

FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

French 1/2 - Full Year – Full Year

(high school level course)

Students will learn how to speak, understand, read, and write in French at a basic level about simple things such as sports, food, school, and family in the present tense. These skills are practiced and learned through speaking activities, games, skits/dialogues, songs, written work, and special projects. Along with the study of the language, students will also learn about the life and culture of French-speaking countries. This is done through movies, readings, and special projects that teach about customs and food throughout the Francophone world. Evaluation will be on how students express themselves through speaking and writing, as well as projects, and class participation.

At the end of the year students will earn high school credit, but the GPA will not be added to high school GPA. Successful completion of this course counts as one year of the two year world language requirement for high school credit/graduation.

Spanish 1/2 - Full Year – Full Year

(high school level course)

Students will learn how to converse, read and write at a basic level about simple things such as sports, food, school, and family. These skills are practiced and learned through oral drills, games, skits, songs, written work, and special projects. Along with the study of the language, students will also learn about the life and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. This is done through movies, readings, and special projects to teach about Hispanic food and customs. Evaluation will be on oral expression, as well as written materials and class participation. Students must have successful completion of one level prior to advancing to the next. *At the end of the year students will earn high school credit, but the GPA will not be added to high school GPA. Successful completion of this course counts as one year of the two year world language requirement for high school credit/graduation.*

French 3 & 4

Prerequisite French 1/2

(high school level course)

Using French 1/2 as a foundation, this course explores the language in greater depth as students become proficient in a more advanced skill set. Students will experience applicable and relevant units of curriculum like giving directions and narrating in the past tense while continuing to acquire more vocabulary each unit. In addition to the cultural components learned in the first year, students will explore more aspects of the culture of the French-speaking world. *At the end of the year students will earn high school credit, but the GPA will not be added to high school GPA. Successful completion of this course counts as one year of the two year world language requirement for high school credit/graduation*

Spanish 3/4

Prerequisite Spanish 1/2

(high school level course)

Using Spanish 1/2 as a foundation, this course explores the language in greater depth as students become proficient in a more advanced skill set. Students will experience applicable and relevant units of curriculum like giving directions and narrating in the past tense while

continuing to acquire more vocabulary each unit. In addition to the cultural components learned in the first year, students will explore more aspects of Hispanic culture and the Spanish Speaking world around them. Students must have successful completion of one level prior to advancing to the next. *At the end of the year students will earn high school credit, but the GPA will not be added to high school GPA. Successful completion of this course counts as one year of the two year world language requirement for high school credit/graduation*

ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

MUSIC

Band - Full Year

Students enrolling in Band should have had prior training in 7th grade on a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. Basics of good band sound, good intonation, technique, and the responsibility and commitment of performing in an ensemble are stressed. The 8th grade band performs five times during the school year. All performances are required and attendance will impact the student's grade. Practice time, behavior, and effort are also considered in the grade. Private lessons are encouraged, but not required for participation in the band program.

Bel Canto Choir - Full Year

This choir is for 8th grade girls at Jenison Junior High who have demonstrated an appropriate level of rehearsal technique, team skills, vocal technique, performance skills, and sight-reading. Students involved in this choir will perform at the winter and spring concerts as well as other performances for the community. Other performances may be at retirement communities, the Festival of Voices Concert, and performances with outside groups such as University Choirs and Semi-Professional Choirs. In addition, Bel Canto choir members are eligible to audition for special solo singing opportunities, and will participate in the Elementary School Tour. The learning pace of this second year choir experience is faster than the Arietta Choir experience and includes an even wider variety of music styles. Leadership skills are a focus as well as musical independence. Students who are electing choir in eighth grade for the first time should schedule a "meet and greet" with Mr. Cain to learn more about the choir experience at Jenison Junior High.

Male Chorus - Full Year

This choir provides a special opportunity for all seventh and eighth grade young men to develop their voices and musical abilities by singing in a choir of their peers. The Male Chorus members will learn a variety of vocal/choral styles that will include both Traditional, and Commercial (Pop, Rock, Jazz, Show etc.) music. Students involved in this choir will perform at the winter and spring concerts, and some of the Jenison Elementary schools as well as other performances for the community. Other performances may be at retirement communities, the Festival of Voices concert, and performances with outside groups such as University Choirs and Semi-Professional Choirs. This ensemble sometimes receives invitations to perform outside the community at music educator conferences, and for university music schools. Instructional topics/activities continue to include harmony (2, 3, and 4 part) and ear training, vocal tone production appropriate with various musical styles, music theory, sight-reading, and the development of poise and self-confidence. In addition, eighth grade Male Chorus members are eligible to audition for special solo singing opportunities, and will participate in the Elementary School Tour. Leadership skills are a focus as well as musical independence. Students who are electing choir in eighth grade for the first time should schedule a "meet and greet" with Mr. Cain to learn more about the choir experience at Jenison Junior High.

Orchestra - Full Year

Students enrolling in either of the 8th grade orchestra should have had at least two to three years of prior string training on violin, viola, cello, or bass. A minimum of five after-school performances are required during the year. Attendance at all performances is mandatory and will impact the student's grade. The class emphasizes learning to play as an ensemble, and extending existing techniques including bowings, shifting to upper positions, vibrato, advanced listening skills, and learning to follow the conductor. Private lessons are encouraged, but not required for participation.

ART

Visual art classes at the junior high are a low stress, high energy, and highly creative environment. Success in art class is based on your ability to challenge your imagination and your willingness to be open to new ideas!

Ceramics & Sculpture – 9 weeks

This course is designed to introduce students to the fantastic world of 3-D art! Students will work with a variety of materials including clay, paper mache, wire, and other sculptural mediums. Throughout the nine-week course, they will learn about specific styles and techniques used in 3-D art, learn about famous artists and cultures, and construct dynamic pieces of 3-D artwork.

Drawing & Painting – 9 weeks

This exciting course is designed to improve basic 2-D art skills and to challenge each student's imagination. Students will develop better drawing skills and learn different painting techniques. Materials ranging from standard pencils to ink and paint will be used in creating works of art. During the nine weeks, students will learn about several famous artists and how their artwork is directly related to what is being taught in class.

ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

Performance Arts – 9 weeks

Performance Arts is a 9-week elective course offered at Jenison Junior High. The class is divided into three main units with each focusing on a component of performance. The three units are: performing with your voice, performing with your body, and performing as part of a group.

COOKING

Cooking 101 – 9 weeks

Cooking 101 is an activity-oriented class designed to help students become more independent. Through class activities and six cooking experiences students will learn about kitchen safety, food preparation, baking basics, and good nutrition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education at Jenison Junior High is a nine-week experience designed to give students a dynamic opportunity to develop sport skills while forming lifelong positive fitness habits. Each of the three different classes of physical education will begin with helping students to increase their fitness levels in the areas of muscle strength, flexibility, agility, and cardiovascular endurance. The three classes are as follows:

Individual Sports – 9 weeks

This course will concentrate on the improvement of specific skills and game strategies to compete in a variety of individual and leisure sporting activities. Through practice and individual competition, students will learn how to break down skills into specific sequential steps that they can improve on to become more competent in their leisure time activities. This class will include frisbee golf, badminton, basketball golf, tennis, golf, pickle ball, spike ball and fowling.

Team Sports – 9 weeks

This course will give students the opportunity to participate in a variety of popular sports such as flag football, floor hockey, volleyball, basketball, team handball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, tennis, and softball. Students will concentrate on the improvement of specific skills and strategies needed to successfully compete in interscholastic as well as recreational sports. Along with skill development, this course will include many exciting tournaments and competitions.

Weight Training – 9 weeks

This course is noncompetitive, offering all students the opportunity to individually improve on their overall health and fitness and to achieve personal fitness goals. Students will be introduced to training methods designed to improve flexibility, muscular strength, agility, and cardiovascular endurance. This class is for anyone and everyone who wants to improve their fitness, coordination, and athletic ability. Students will make fitness gains by setting realistic goals and by designing workouts that will maximize results. Some activities will include weight training, agility training, flexibility training, and cardiovascular training.

STEM – Science Technology Engineering Math

Coding – 9 weeks

During this nine week elective students will focus on computer programming, also known as coding. Students will engage in coding as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun. The course inspires students as they code with Tynker while using Parrot Mambo drones. Students will program their own interactive stories, games, and animations using Scratch. Finally, students will build their own robot using VEX IQ and learn to program it to complete tasks autonomously.

Everyday Engineering –9 weeks

During this nine week elective students will focus on using the engineering design process to solve real world problems. Students will engage in the practices of real-life scientists, technicians, engineers, and mathematicians. Through real-world problems and projects, students will be exposed to a variety of different types of engineering and STEM careers.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

Technology Education and Design – 9 weeks

Using problem solving methods and models, students will draw and design a blueprint of their own house. Students will research, design and create the blueprint using online sources. Students will also investigate new innovative design using new business models and real world applications. Class competitions and rewards will add to the excitement of the challenges! On a more traditional note, each student will be introduced to procedures and practices for using woodworking power tools to construct a culminating class project. Upon passing a safety test, students will read working drawings, follow design protocols to machine their project parts, assemble, and apply a finish to their projects. The use of measurement devices, drill press, bandsaw, power sanders, dremel tool, and hand tools will be used for project production.

Applied Technology – 9 weeks

Using problem solving methods and models, students will attempt to design, create, and produce technological systems. Team-led design scenarios will include building a bridge using toothpicks and glue to support a payload. Students will also investigate new innovative design using new business models and real world applications. Class competitions and rewards will add to the excitement of the challenges! On a more traditional note, each student will be introduced to procedures and practices for using woodworking power tools to construct a culminating class project. Upon passing a safety test, students will read working drawings, follow design protocols to machine their project parts, assemble, and apply a finish to their projects. The use of measurement devices, drill press, bandsaw, power sanders, dremel tool, and hand tools will be used for project production.

LINKS - Peer to Peer Program

LINKS – Semester Course

The LINKS course is designed to give students an opportunity to work peer to peer within a classroom setting. Students selecting this course will be placed with a student with a disability either in their general education class or special education class. Students will learn how to support and advocate for their peer LINK student within the assigned class through helping with organization, communication, independence, socialization, and the academics of the class. This course will focus on curriculum in which you will learn about disabilities and those with differences around you. Students must have parent permission, complete an application and an interview in order to participate in this course. *This course is offered to 8th Grade students only*