

West Briar Middle School Course Descriptions 2010 -- 2011

Academic Classes

West Briar Middle School is committed to meeting the instructional needs of all students. Our academic classes – English, reading, math, science and social studies – offer three levels of instruction. They are as follows:

General: instruction addresses the grade-level learning objectives as outlined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through the state curriculum standards known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP): instruction addresses the grade-level learning objectives along with additional skill sets and strategies designed to help students acquire analytical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school. The pacing is accelerated in Pre-AP classes so that students will be prepared to take high school courses in eighth grade. Teachers receive on-going professional development to ensure successful implementation of this College Board program.

Gifted and Talented (G/T): Pre-AP instruction with differentiation for more depth, complexity and pacing is the G/T curriculum. Students who meet district criteria for G/T identification receive Pre-AP/G/T instruction in homogeneous classroom settings. Pre-AP curriculum for G/T students is designed to provide these students more opportunities to demonstrate skills in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity.

General Elective Classes

Spanish for Spanish Speakers: (7th – 8th Grade)

Native-Spanish-speaking students, who demonstrate fluency in Spanish oral language, will study Spanish formally in an academic setting in the same way that native-English-speaking students study English language arts. All students receive one year of high school credit for this course. 7th grade students will proceed to AP Spanish Language in their 8th grade year.

Prerequisite: Students must have a national percentile score (NPR) of 58% or higher on the 2009 Stanford reading test in order to take this course in place of reading. In addition, they must also meet eligibility by taking a placement test.

The Texas Middle School Program for AP® Spanish Language: (8th Grade)

Native-Spanish-speaking students have the opportunity to use their first language in speaking and writing at an advanced level comparable to 4th or 5th year studies for a non-native speaker. All students receive four years of high school credit upon the successful completion of this course and receiving a grade of 3 or higher on the AP Spanish Language Exam.

Prerequisite: Students must have successfully completed the Spanish for Spanish Speakers course as a 7th grader.

Spanish 7: (7th Grade)

Students will learn basic greetings, grammar structures, verb conjugation, and will learn to communicate in Spanish. Students will learn culture and geography about all of the Spanish-speaking countries from around the world. Students working toward a high school foreign language credit must take Spanish 7 and then Spanish IA/IB in the 8th grade.

Prerequisite: Students must have a national percentile score (NPR) of 58% or higher on the 2009 Stanford reading test in order to take this course in place of reading.

Spanish 1A/B: (8th Grade)

Spanish 1A/B students will learn basic communication and reading skills in Spanish. As well as learning conjugation, verb tenses and important grammar structures of the language, the students will also learn

General Elective Classes -- Continued

culture, geography, and festivities from all of the Spanish-speaking countries. Quizzes, tests, projects, and oral quizzes will be used to assess students. Students will take a final exam at the completion of each semester as part of the requirement for earning the high school credit. The final exam will count as one-fourth of the semester grade.

Prerequisite: 7th Grade Spanish – Full Year

French 7: (7th Grade)

Students will learn basic greetings, grammar structures, verb conjugation, and will learn to communicate in French. Students will learn culture and geography about the different Francophone countries from around the world. Students working toward a high school foreign language credit must take French 7 and then French IA/IB in the 8th grade.

Prerequisite: Students must have a national percentile score (NPR) of 58% or higher on the 2009 Stanford reading test in order to take this course in place of reading.

French 1A/B: (8th Grade)

French 1A/B students will learn basic communication and reading skills in French. As well as learning conjugation, verb tenses and important grammar structures of the language, the students will also learn culture, geography, and festivities from all of the different Francophone countries. Quizzes, tests, projects, and oral quizzes will be used to assess students. Students will take a final exam at the completion of each semester as part of the requirement for earning the high school credit. The final exam will count as one-fourth of the semester grade.

Prerequisite: 7th Grade French – Full Year

Capprensi: (7th – 8th Grade)

During this one semester course, students will have the opportunity to work collaboratively in learning the newest field of education: *Futures Studies*. According to Sandra Burchsted, a Futurist, "The *future* is the only time frame we have the power to influence." Students will be introduced to this exciting new field by learning and using the tools of the futurist – trend extrapolation (projecting past trends into the future) and future wheels (exploring consequences of trends, emerging issues). Students will create scenarios for an alternative future world that are probable, possible, or preferred. They will identify social, economic, and environmental trends and patterns, develop and refine research skills, and create independent performance products.

Prerequisite: The student must be identified as gifted and talented (G/T).

Texas Future Problem Solvers (TFPS): (8th Grade)

In this one semester course, students participate in four-member teams to research and apply the six step TFPS process to at least three different topics. Students are asked to analyze an imagined future and must tackle social, scientific, political, economic or technological issues. Teams explore challenges as they refine their critical and creative thinking skills, focus on one problem area to solve, produce solution ideas, generate criteria to evaluate their solution ideas and determine the best action plan. Students develop generating and focusing skills while working cooperatively and collaboratively in groups.

Prerequisite: The student must be identified as gifted and talented (G/T).

MATHCOUNTS® Competition Program: (7th – 8th Grade)

This year-long class is a national middle school coaching and competitive mathematics program that promotes mathematics achievement through a series of fun and engaging "bee" style contest.

Journalism & Publication 101: (6th, 7th, and 8th Grade)

Students will learn the basics of how real-life writers for magazines, newspapers, online journals, professional blogs, and professional podcasts work. The class will work as a team to produce content for the entire school: news articles, feature articles, opinion/editorial articles, entertainment articles, blog posts, and podcasts.

General Elective Classes -- Continued

Creative Writing Workshop: (7th – 8th Grade)

Based on an array of competitions, events, and projects, students will learn the craft of writing poetry, fiction, and/or drama-writing with an emphasis on building a portfolio that leads toward potential publication.

Competitions include the Holy Grail of writing competitions—Scholastic Writing—and NaNoWriMo, the month long novel writing event. Other competitions and challenges will be introduced as the course continues. Only students serious about writing should apply.

Yearbook: (7th – 8th Grade)

Students that are chosen to be on the yearbook staff will create the entire WBMS yearbook. In the yearbook class, the students will decide on the theme for the yearbook, design every page, take pictures, write stories, and promote the sales for the book. The software the students will learn is EliteVision, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe PhotoElements. Anyone interested in being part of the yearbook staff needs to see Mr. Schwarzkopf in room D100 to fill out an application.

Fine Arts Elective Classes

Beginning Band: (6th – 8th Grade)

This course is offered to any student interested in learning to play a band instrument for the first time. Beginning band is a prerequisite for upper-level band classes. Students will perform 2-3 concerts and 1-2 competitions during the school year. Beginning Band is divided into like-instrument classes meeting throughout the day. Instruments taught in band are flute, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, euphonium, tuba and percussion. **All Beginning Band students must attend an instrument selection interview where the directors guide students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.** The number of students playing a particular instrument is determined by the band directors. Information on how to obtain an instrument will be provided to parents at the selection interview. More information is available at www.westbriarband.org

Intermediate Band: (7th – 8th Grade)

The Intermediate Band is the third band at West Briar and is the next level above Beginning Band. Student in this group have at least one year band experience and have auditioned for the directors. Intermediate Band students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances and competitions.

Concert Band: (7th – 8th Grade)

The Concert Band is the second band at West Briar. Students in this group have at least one year band experience and have auditioned for the directors. Concert Band students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances and competitions. In addition to their band class, Concert Band students are expected to attend practice at least once a week before or after school.

Symphonic Band: (7th – 8th Grade)

Symphonic Band is the top band at West Briar. Students in this group have at least one year band experience and have auditioned for the directors. Symphonic Band students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances and competitions. Symphonic Band performs more often and performs music of greater difficulty than the other band classes. In addition to their band class, Symphonic Band students are expected to attend practice at least once a week before or after school.

Beginning Orchestra: (6th – 8th Grade)

This class is for any student interested in learning how to play an orchestra instrument for the first time. Beginning Orchestra is a pre-requisite for Intermediate or Advanced Orchestra. Instruction is offered for violin, viola, cello, and bass. **All Beginning Orchestra students must attend an instrument selection interview where the director guides students in selecting the instrument that is best for them. These meetings will take place in May.** The beginning orchestra participates in concerts throughout the year, which are held in the evening time. The students will learn how to hold the instruments, properly pluck the strings, learn different notes and rhythms, and finally learn how to use the bow. Information about how to obtain an instrument will be provided by the director at the instrument selection interview.

Fine Arts Elective Classes -- Continued

Intermediate Orchestra: (6th – 8th Grade)

Intermediate Orchestra is the second level of orchestra at West Briar. Students must have at least one year of orchestra experience and have auditioned for the director. Class participants will review skills and concepts learned in Beginning Orchestra and develop a more advanced skill set of finger patterns, rhythm patterns, and bowing patterns. Basic ensemble skills are taught as well. Performances are scheduled outside of the school day and participation in evening performances is mandatory.

Advanced Orchestra: (7th – 8th Grade)

Advanced Orchestra is the top level of orchestra at West Briar. Students must have at least one year of orchestra experience and have auditioned for the director. Advanced Orchestra participates in the performances scheduled throughout the year, as well as in the UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest and other competitions.

Exploratory: (6th Grade only)

This 6th grade elective introduces students to **art, theatre arts, and music** by breaking the school-year into 3 segments of instruction. Students spend approximately 12 weeks studying each of these areas and learn what their interest will be for the year-long courses offered to them as 7th and 8th graders.

General Music: (6th – 7th Grade)

Students will have a general overview of the history of music: They will learn about the use and evolution of instruments, and they will study major composers and different types of music.

Beginning Girls' Choir: (6th Grade)

Choir participants will have the opportunity to perform numerous times throughout the school year, on campus, as well as in the community. The choir will focus on mastering sight-singing, correct vocal production, tonal blend, and overall musicality as an ensemble as well as individually. Ladies participation in choir will give them the opportunity to improve their vocal skills and advance to a higher choir in 7th grade. The choir will end the school year with a choir trip and competition.

Boy's Concert Choir: (6th – 8th Grade)

Boy's Concert Choir is an ensemble open to all grade levels. Students will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around the community. Class time will focus on correct vocal technique, sight-reading, and preparing for concerts. 7th and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to audition for the Region 23 Honor Choir. All members will take part in a spring show as well as an annual choir trip and competition.

Girls' Concert Choir: (7th – 8th Grade)

Concert Choir is a performance ensemble open to 7th & 8th grade ladies interested in learning the fundamentals of vocal production. They will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around our community. This is an excellent class for those ladies who have little to no background in choral singing or sight-reading. Class time will focus on correct vocal technique, sight-reading, and preparing for concerts. Members of Girls' Concert Choir will perform all types of music ranging from renaissance, to gospel, to current pop music. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the Region 23 Solo & Ensemble festival and the Region 23 Choir auditions. These students will also take part in the annual choir trip and contest at Fiesta Texas in San Antonio.

West Briar Select Singers: (7th – 8th Grade)

"Select Singers" is an audition only ensemble for advanced singers and sight-readers. It is open to ladies in 7th & 8th grade with teacher approval. These students will be performing concerts at West Briar as well as in and around the community. In addition to these performances, the Select Singers will be required to participate individually in the Region 23 Solo & Ensemble festival, and compete in the Region 23 Choir auditions. Select Singers will also perform as an ensemble at UIL Concert and Sight Reading contests in early spring. Select Singers is the premiere singing ensemble at West Briar and will be the primary performance connection to the community. These singers will move at a pace faster than the Girls' Concert Choir, and will work on more advanced music.

Fine Arts Elective Classes -- Continued

Dance – Note:

Dance classes at West Briar Middle School are extremely technical and strenuous. **Sign up for dance instead of PE** only if you want a movement class that is different from sports and PE exercises.

Beginning Dance: (6th– 8th Grade)

Students will be introduced to dance fundamentals such as correct placement/alignment, dance terminology, technical skills and a variety of dance genres such as lyrical, Broadway, contemporary, modern, jazz, hip-hop, and cultural. Students will build on their ability to connect movements and memorization of dance choreography. They will have an opportunity to choreograph in small groups and submit their work before judges for the choreography showcase. They will perform in both a Fall and Spring Dance Festival.

Intermediate Dance: (7th– 8th Grade)

Strengthen dance fundamentals learned in beginning level. Learn dance combinations with harder movements performed faster. Choreography assignments have more requirements in the way of creativity and presentation. Continue to learn jazz, modern dance and hip hop. Perform in the Fall Dance Festival and the Spring Dance Festival. **ENROLLMENT ONLY BY THE APPROVAL OF MS. REYNOLDS**

Advanced Dance I: (7th– 8th Grade)

Use perfected dance fundamentals in dance class combinations and choreography assignments. Choreograph class presentations for campus performances. Continue to learn jazz, modern dance and hip hop. Commit to the performance calendar given before the next school year. **ENROLLMENT ONLY BY THE APPROVAL OF MS. REYNOLDS**

Advanced Dance II: (7th– 8th Grade)

West Briar Dance Company. Commit to the performance calendar given before the next school year. **ENROLLMENT ONLY BY AUDITION AND THE APPROVAL OF MS. REYNOLDS**

Break Dance: (6th – 8th Grade)

Learn the latest house routines, rhythms, and break dance tricks being done in LA. You must have upper body strength and basic balance technique. **BY AUDITION ONLY**

Drill Team: (7th – 8th Grade)

Auditions are held in March. Veteran team members must re-audition each year to keep their spot on the team. The Honey Bears Drill Team will perform at various West Briar athletic events including but not limited to football, basketball games and pep rallies. Must be able to attend 7:45am practices EVERY MORNING! Military officers will practice after school 4-5:30pm M/W/TH. This is a rigorous, year long program that includes two mandatory summer camps, fall and spring athletic events, competitions, fall/spring shows and multiple outside performances. **BY AUDITION ONLY AND APPROVAL OF MS. RUGGIANO.**

Cheerleading: (7th – 8th Grade)

Auditions are held in April. Selected students will cheer at various West Briar athletic events including but not limited to football, basketball, and wrestling games. This is a rigorous year-long program that includes two mandatory summer camps, fall and spring athletic events, competition, fall/spring shows and multiple outside performances. **BY AUDITION ONLY AND APPROVAL OF MS. RUGGIANO.**

Art

Exploratory – 6th grade only

Explore pottery, painting, bookbinding and printmaking in this beginning art class and find out how creative you can be!

Fine Arts Elective Classes -- Continued

Art I: (7th – 8th Grade: Full Year)

No Pre-requisite

This class is designed to explore the elements and principles of design through 2 and 3 dimensional assignments that are based upon themes and subjects artist typically use in their art. Major art styles and discoveries from history will be integrated within the curriculum.

Art II: (8th Grade only: Full Year)

Art I is a Pre-requisite. Students must have a desire to continue exploring more complex themes and ideas while learning new techniques and processes.

Teacher Approval required

Theatre Arts I: (7th – 8th Grade: Full Year)

This is the beginning and/or intermediate level for a general exploration of performance, stage movement, improvisation, and theatre history. No pre-requisite

Advanced Theatre Arts: (7th – 8th Grade: Full Year)

This course is designed for the student who has developed a genuine desire to continue to study theatre and possibly audition for theatre at the high school level. Performance requirements, attending live theatre productions, and attending student funded field trips will be part of the course curriculum.

Prerequisite: Theatre Arts I or II and teacher approval through audition.

Technology Elective Classes

Technology Education I: (6th – 8th Grade)

Technology Education at West Briar introduces students to comprehensive technology education solutions for the classroom of the 21st century. With integrated systems of software and hardware tools, along with outstanding support materials, the technology lab prepares today's students to be tomorrow's skilled professionals. First-time technology education students can work through ten-activity modules that provide interesting and fun hands-on projects with step-by-step instructions.

Technology Education II: (7th – 8th Grade)

**Prerequisite: 7th Grade: 6th grade Technology Education
8th Grade: Technology Education I**

Technical Applications: (7th – 8th Grade)

Technology Applications is a one semester course offered to 7th and 8th graders. In Technology Applications students learn the fundamentals of Word Processing, Desktop Publishing, Spreadsheets, Multimedia Presentation, and Database software. Students also learn how to research on the Internet and the rules behind the Copyright Laws.

Computer Concepts: (7th – 8th Grade)

Computer Concepts is an advanced technology class. The main focus of this course is to create well-planned websites. During the semester, the curriculum will cover Macromedia Dreamweaver, Fireworks, and Inspiration software. Along with learning these software applications, students will also learn the principles of designing a website.

Prerequisite: Technology Applications and APPROVAL BY Technology Applications Teacher

Computer Power: (7th – 8th Grade)

This course will be a continuation of Computer Concepts and is offered in the second semester. In this course, students will create Flash movies and add them to the preexisting website. They will also learn how to use Adobe Photoshop and Photo Elements.

Prerequisite: Computer Concepts and APPROVAL BY Technology Applications Teacher