



San Marcos Academy  
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW  
Lower High School (Grade 10)

The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect*” (Romans 12:2). At the sophomore level, the students more clearly understand and articulate clearly what is good, beautiful, and true. Applying the wisdom of antiquity, they begin the path of virtuous servant-leadership.

***Lower high school students are expected to perform the following:***

*Sophomores* are formulating basic attitudes and essential skills necessary to function as responsible maturing adolescents. They demonstrate a growing value for discovering, contemplating, understanding, and exhibiting that which is good, beautiful, and true. They aspire to the highest ethical standards, living to the glory of God and serving as an example for the betterment of others.

*Sophomores* are increasingly self-governing, with an ever-decreasing degree of supervision. The students will desire to produce quality work, regularly striving for excellence in a growing array of endeavors—academic and extra-curricular.

*Sophomores* are fully literate, able to read and comprehend varied and challenging texts. They can gather and effectively use new knowledge—classifying and organizing the information, supporting inferences, and justifying conclusions. They are able to write grammatically correct and complex sentences, and compose in an array of genres. They have a growing vocabulary and understand how to organize and present persuasive speeches to large groups. They are able to communicate with varied cultures and groups, and are able to use technology and media toward this end.

*Sophomores* achieve prescribed academic and personal goals, identify and practice essential organizational skills, recognize quality work and compare it to their own performance, move from performing directed study habits to self-directed learning, identify and function within an academic support network, understand and practice a broad array of sound study skills, and recognize and correct any attitudes or behaviors that would jeopardize their potential.

*Sophomores* will be able to demonstrate a growing ability to integrate and reconcile added knowledge into a view of the world as it truly exists in form, substance, and interpretation as revealed by God’s word. They are developing a capacity to associate complex inter-relationships of diverse, disparate, and/or tangential, concrete or abstract information. They are increasing in knowledge of how to apply learning across-the-curriculum.

*Sophomores* will be able to recognize and imitate appropriate behavior in normal settings. They will develop expanding social skills such as problem solving, coping, communication, adherence to rules and social conventions, etc. Sophomores are aware of the nuances of varied cultures and groups and are learning to communicate accordingly. They can increasingly resolve conflict and peacefully persuade others. They will demonstrate an ability to cultivate an interdependent social network. Students will consistently treat others with respect.

***What does this look like at San Marcos Academy?***

- Much of our students' learning in the humanities courses is conducted through inductive research of primary sources and Socratic discussions with one another, led by the teacher.

- Our tenth grade honors students should be able to recognize and begin to meaningfully engage in the “Great Conversation,” as a result of their examination of Western art, history, literature, theology and philosophy. Rather than relying solely on anthologies that skim the surface of thousands of events, SMA will utilize the most significant primary sources, thoughtfully treated with depth, to develop each student’s competency.
- In tenth grade students compose essays in all language-based classes. By the end of their sophomore year, these should be well-written, with increasingly complex sentence structure, expansive vocabulary, persuasive qualities, and logical consistency. Multiple essays and other genres will be generated. To prepare the students for future work on the thesis, a research paper, comprised of an approved interdisciplinary theme, will be presented as the culminating work for the spring final exam.
- Math and science courses require sophomores to solve problems, calculate using linear reasoning, and express their understanding of difficult concepts with words as well as through successful calculation and experiment. During this year, all measures are taken to ensure the student has mastered the foundational material in mathematics, to prepare them to work in higher levels. Focus in the lower high school is on mastery of the scientific method, comprehension and proper use of scientific terminology, testing scientific theory, identifying modern pseudo-scientific fallacies that conflict with sound theology, and following lab procedures safely.
- Lower high school classes prepare students to self-manage, to better prepare them for college and life. As such, less structure is applied as students demonstrate the ability to perform at that level. Teachers are encouraged to modify their classroom procedures and expectations according to student ability and performance. However, those students who continue to show a lack of ability in the area are given ample reinforcement by the consistent and clear communication with parents and/or staff that will provide support for the student.

***These expectations are accomplished within the context of the following courses of study:***

English – Most Sophomores enroll into English II, which is World Literature. However, this class will focus upon building grammar, composition, and rhetoric skills. Those who have yet to develop these skills at an acceptable level by the end of the fall semester will be encouraged to take a class in Research and Technical Writing. In order to enroll into the honors course, students must demonstrate an adequate score in the preceding honors English course and adequacy in both reading and writing. Examples of literary genres will be explored, proper understanding and use of literary terms will be accomplished, and selected whole novels and other literary works are read, where students analyze works in their historical and cultural contexts, identify aesthetic value, and examine the truth-claims. Essays will be regularly written throughout the course. (Pre-requisite English I)

Humanities II(H) - This course is required of those taking honors English II. It is a cross-disciplinary approach to history, literature, theology, law, and the arts with a focus on the development of the contributions of classical literary works that have contributed toward Western Civilization. Students should be able to fluently read and comprehend these works. Students should be prepared to think deeply about the literature, write persuasively, and communicate clearly on the assigned themes. (Co-requisite English II-H)

History – Those students who are taking honors coursework will enroll into a course on Western Civilization. Other students will study World History. All students will be expected to read and comprehend the text and other assigned works. They must be able to compare, contrast, and analyze these works in depth. They must be able to reasonably infer causal relationships. The course will enable students to analyze primary sources, as well as develop research and writing skills to enable students to include historical facts as evidence for their senior thesis.

Science – In tenth grade, students who have successfully completed Physics will take Biology. Honors

students who have completed Biology (H) will be enrolled in Chemistry (H). To be enrolled in Chemistry, the student must have completed or is currently enrolled in Algebra 2. To complete successfully any of these courses, students must be able to master variant uses of the scientific method, perform basic algebraic calculation, demonstrate sound reasoning, and follow lab procedures.

**Math** – At this level, honors math students will take the Algebra 2(H) course. Most other students will be enrolled into Geometry. By the end of the Geometry course, it will be determined whether the student should take Math Models or Algebra II. Upon completion of Algebra II, students may qualify college dual-enrollment classes during their junior or senior years.

**Languages** – Students are required to take at least two years of a foreign language in order to graduate on the foundation plan. In the tenth grade, non-honors tracked students will take a second year of Latin, French, or Spanish. Honor students will complete their third and final year of foreign language. To be able to perform successfully in either of these courses, students must be able to compare, contrast, and process information through both written and auditory stimulus. They must be able to meet deadlines, and remain focused on language development.

**Religion** – First year sophomores are expected to take religion their first semester, unless granted approval to meet their graduation plan. Tenth grade students are eligible to take either the Religious Foundation Course (RFC) or Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ (LMJC). To complete successfully these courses, students must be able to read and comprehend texts, recall information, analyze truth-claims, and make reasonable inferences. Each of these courses will enable students to be able to use religious truth as evidenced in the senior thesis.

**Electives** – Continued enrollment in these classes is contingent upon the sophomore student’s contribution to the learning. Failure to perform at an acceptable level may necessitate the student’s placement in an alternative class or elective. These electives consist of, but are not limited to, JROTC, Band, Cheerleading, Visual Art, Photography, Theatre Arts, Research & Technical Writing, Analysis of Visual Media, Clay, Principles of Information Technology, or Learning Skills. Other elective courses are offered through the SMA Distance Education program. On-campus electives are contingent upon meeting minimum enrollment requirements and staffing. Additional fees may apply.

***What is the typical schedule of an SMA tenth grade student?***

**Regular College Preparatory Sequence** – *The following course of study is recommended for those students intending to attend a college or university after high school, and satisfies both the Foundation and Multi-Disciplinary Endorsements.*

Grade 10
English 1
Geometry
Biology
W History
LOTE (Latin 2, Sp 2, Fr 2)
Religion (RFC or LMJC) or Elective
Fine Art, Athletics, or Elective
Endorsement Course or Elective

NOTE: For those seeking endorsements, elective sections should be carefully planned to ensure you are meeting the academic requirements. Review the graduation requirements, class ranking formula, policies and procedures that govern course selections in the student handbook.

**Honors College Preparatory Sequence** – *The following course of study is recommended for those students intending to attend a highly competitive college or university after high school,*

and satisfies both the Foundation and Multi-Disciplinary Endorsements.

Grade 10
English 2(H)
Humanities 2(H)
Algebra 2(H)
Chemistry (H)
Western Civilization (H)
LOTE - Latin 3(H), Sp 3(H), or Fr 3(H)
Religion (RFC or LMJC) or Elective
Fine Art, Athletics, or Elective

NOTE: For those seeking endorsements, elective sections should be carefully planned to ensure you are meeting the academic requirements. Review the graduation requirements, class ranking formula, policies and procedures that govern course selections in the student handbook.

**Students with English as a Second Language and those enrolled into the Learning Skills Program –** Alternative graduation plans must be approved by the Academic Dean as determined in consultation with the LS Director and Guidance Counselor.

### ***What can tenth grade students expect at San Marcos Academy?***

- The sophomore class learns leadership in all facets of SMA and its programs by watching effective leaders in the upper classes, including those in JROTC, band, and athletic teams.
- Sophomores are encouraged to attend most social gatherings.
- Tenth grade students can take some AP Exams, earning them college credit, if they score high enough.
- Tenth grade students take the PSAT test to prepare them for candidacy as a National Merit Scholarship Qualifier (NMSQ) during their Junior year.
- Returning tenth grade students are eligible to be elected as Secretary or Treasurer of the Student Council.
- Tenth grade students are writing papers to get ready for their senior thesis.
- Qualified students can compete in statewide TAPPS Academic and Art competition.
- Can participate in individual education programs under the direction of faculty or staff.

### ***What must I do to prepare for my tenth grade year?***

- You are expected to be able to read proficiently, write fluidly, and calculate mathematics. DON'T rush to take upper level courses until you have demonstrated an ease in your performance at the foundation level.
- Decide on which organizations you would like to either start or join.
- Read the assigned novels, literary and historical works that will be required for your core courses.
- Take your first SAT or ACT prep course (e.g., Kaplan, Princeton Review), plan on taking a second one the following summer.
- Plan to coordinate vacation trips to those venues that have nearby colleges you may be interested in visiting. Visit as many colleges and universities as you may be interested (It's never too early to start).
- Spend some time getting better connected with your church or faith community.
- Add some intellectually enriching activities to your summer plans, visit some museums, take a trip to a historical site, or join a book club.
- Decide on a schedule that will optimize your grade point average and class rank.
- Identify those areas that need to be improved, and attend workshops at area colleges. For example, take a reading course, a writing course, or a math enrichment course.