



San Marcos Academy
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW
Middle School (Grade 7)

Aristotle once said, “*It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.*” Education in the middle grades aligns with the adolescent’s natural development toward individuation to apply critical thought and well-formulated logic to identify and sift fallacies then internalize the ancient wisdom as codified in the historic Christian faith.

Middle school students are expected to perform the following:

Middle school students are aware of basic attitudes and essential skills necessary to function in the learning community. They learn to become functional students by prescribed standards and structure. They increasingly exhibit what is the good, beautiful, and true. These students internalize the “Golden Rule”, and increasingly accept personal responsibility, and an expanding sense of morality. They aspire to the highest ethical standards, living to the glory of God and serving the betterment of others.

Middle school students will be able to recognize self-governing behavior and quality work. They will demonstrate developmental progress of striving for academic and personal excellence. The students will increasingly desire to produce quality work.

Middle school students are increasingly literate. They can read and comprehend varied and challenging texts. They can gather and effectively use new knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences and justify conclusions. They are able to recognize poor grammar, write grammatically correct sentences, paragraphs, and compose accurate essays within and across disciplines. These have a growing vocabulary. They are able to communicate with varied cultures and groups. They are able to use technology and media toward this end.

Middle school students will conform behaviors to prescribed learning goals, regularly practice essential organizational skills, recognize quality work and compare it to their own performance, perform directed study habits, function within the academic support system, understand and practice essential study skills, recognize and minimize at-risk attitudes and behaviors.

Middle school students gather and effectively use new knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences and justify conclusions. These students utilize, evaluate, and refine the use of multiple strategies to solve a variety of types of problems. They generate new and creative ideas by taking considered risks in a variety of contexts. They are able to show a rudimentary ability to expand and integrate their knowledge into varied environments. They are able to demonstrate higher taxonomies that integrate their knowledge across the curriculum.

Middle school students will be able to recognize and imitate appropriate behavior in the classroom and dorms. They will normally exhibit basic social skills, such as coping, conflict resolution, communication, obedience to rules, etc. These students are sensitive to cultural differences. They cultivate and maintain a functional social network. They are learning to treat others with respect. In middle school, students rudimentarily communicate with other cultures and groups. They recognize how to communicate as to resolve conflict and persuade others. They properly use words in context, with age appropriate vocabulary. They are able to use basic technology and media to communicate to others.

What does this look like at San Marcos Academy?

- Much of our students' learning in the humanities courses are conducted by the Oxford method, through inductive research of primary sources and Socratic discussions with one another, led by the teacher.
- Our seventh grade students should be able to recognize and begin to engage the “Great Conversation”, because 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 uses the most significant primary sources, thoughtfully treated with depth, to develop each student’s competency.
- In seventh grade, students become well versed in grammar and composition, regularly composing essays in all language-based classes. Grammatical errors should be recognized and corrected. Written assignments should contain sound sentence structure, and sufficient vocabulary to convey increasingly logical thought patterns.
- Math and science courses require students to solve-problems, calculate using linear reasoning, and express their understanding of difficult concepts with words as well as through successful calculation and experiment. Periodic measures are taken to ensure the student has mastered the foundational material in mathematics. Focus in the middle school is on competence in the scientific method, comprehension, and proper use of scientific terminology, and conducting lab procedures safely.
- An aim of middle school classes is to prepare students to self-manage with adequate reinforcement. As such, structure is lessened once sound study habits have been formed. Students who continue to show immaturity or lack of ability to self-manage 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 7 – The language component of this class will focus primarily upon grammar and composition. 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. The literature component will explore various literary genres and achieve proper understanding and use of literary terms. An anthology of selected works is read, where students analyze them in their historical and cultural contexts, identify aesthetic value, and examine the truth-claims. Essays will be regularly written throughout the course.

Humanities 7 - This course is required of those taking honors English 7. Humanities is a cross-disciplinary approach to history, literature, theology, law, and the arts; focusing on the primary contributions of medieval literature that shaped Western Civilization. Students should be able to fluently read and comprehend these works. Using the Oxford method, students should be prepared to think deeply about the literature, write persuasively, and communicate clearly on the assigned themes. (Co-requisite English 7H)

History –Seventh grade enroll into Texas History. This covers the geography of Texas and its history from the first pre-historic settlers through the present day. The course is designed to give students a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of Texas, its history, its geography, its people, its culture, and its heritage. 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. Students must reasonably infer causal relationships. The course will enable students to analyze a few primary sources, as well as develop research and writing skills to enable students to include historical facts as evidence.

Science – In seventh grade, students take Life Science. The purpose of this course in Life Science is to introduce seventh grade students to life science terminology and history - the axioms, processes, and methodology of science - then covers molecular and cell biology, genetics, taxonomy, a survey of the five kingdoms of life, ecology, and the environment. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between structure (what it is) and function (what it does). For successful completion of this course, students must be able to understand and apply the scientific method, perform basic mathematical calculation, demonstrate sound reasoning, and follow lab procedures.

Math – At this level, honors math students will take the Pre-algebra (H), while others take the final course in mathematics. Those who have struggled in mathematics may be required to enroll into a Math Lab. To be successful in these classes, students need to be able to memorize formulas or concepts and apply them to the right problems, think in causal relationships, process information with both written and auditory stimulus, and exhibit an earnest desire to spend whatever time is necessary to ensure they have a mastery of the basic skills.

Physical Education – All seventh grade students must take a Physical Education course in middle school. The Phys Ed course is designed to coincide with the development of the middle school sports program. Students are expected to suit out every day and work with the coaches, who will be teaching them healthy lifestyles and training them in various sports.

Foreign Language – Students will have an opportunity to continue study in French or Latin. This is the second year of study on the Middle School level.

What is the typical schedule of an SMA seventh grade student?

The SMA Promotion Plan –

Fall	Spring
Texas History 7	Texas History 7
English Language Arts 7	English Language Arts 7
Math 7	Math 7
Life Science 7	Life Science 7
Bible 7	Bible 7
Foreign Language 7	Foreign Language 7
Physical Education 7	Physical Education 7
Prep Band	Prep Band

The SMA Honors Plan –

Fall	Spring
Texas History 7(H)	Texas History 7(H)
English Language 7(H)	English Language 7(H)
Humanities 7(H)	Humanities 7(H)
Pre-Algebra 7(H)	Pre-Algebra 7(H)
Life Science 7(H)	Life Science 7(H)
Physical Education 7	Physical Education 7
Foreign Language 7	Foreign Language 7
Prep Band	Prep Band

To what can seventh grade students look forward at San Marcos Academy?

- The seventh grade class learns leadership by watching effective leaders in the eighth grade practicing it in Academy programs, including JROTC, band, and athletic teams.
- Seventh grade students can attend middle school social gatherings and dances.
- Seventh grade students are learning the skills needed to get ready for high school.
- Qualified students can compete in statewide PSIA Academic and Art competition.
- Qualified students can join the NJHS.

What must I do to prepare for my seventh grade year?

- Do everything you can to become proficient in reading, writing, and calculating math. DO NOT rush to take upper level courses until you have demonstrated an ease in your performance at the foundation level.
- Decide on what organizations you would like to join.
- Read those novels, literary and historical works that will be required for your core courses.
- Add some intellectually enriching activities to your summer plans, visit some museums, take a trip to a historical site, join a book club, *et al.*
- Spend the summer trying to be better connected to your church or faith community. Therefore, you can come back to school strong in spirit, mind, and body.
- Decide on a schedule that will provide you with an academic foundation that will carry the weight of more difficult courses you will take throughout your high school career.
- Identify those areas that need to be improved, and attend workshops at area services. For example, take a reading course, writing, or math enrichment.