

Ninth Grade

Writing Fundamentals

Theme/Master Question:

How can we use effective writing to get a point across and persuade our readers?

Description:

This course builds further on Composition II and is designed to practice the skills needed to write a longer, argumentative research paper using the six parts of the classical rhetorical arrangement. The course should prepare the student for the written part of the junior and senior theses.

This is done through:

- primarily practice-oriented, based on individual or in-class writings;
- essays, speeches, debates, recitations, and student presentations;
- lecture and discussion, particularly as introductory material or historical framework requires;
- view and discuss pertinent works of poetry and practice writing different poetical forms;
- class should begin each day with a brief activity, questions to consider, or written response designed to focus the class discussion and prepare students for the lesson.

Humane Letters II (history, Bible, literature)

Theme Question:

Medieval/Reformation, Worldview Humanities

Honor and Virtue: How ought we to live?

Description:

This course focuses on the time period from the end of Imperial Rome to the end of the Renaissance. This course covers the emergence of Christian Rome and the development of theology through the creeds, the decline of the Roman Empire and the separation of the Eastern and Roman church, the rise of feudalism and Islam, the formation of the European culture, and the regeneration of humanism through the rise of intellectual Renaissance culture. Students will focus on logical applications and inquiries from this time period, preparing them for the rhetoric track in 10th grade.

This is done through:

- primarily discussion-oriented, based on individual or in-class readings using Socratic Discussion Rubric as a methodological guide; aim for at least 70% discussion;
- classes and units should be built around Key Questions which build to higher Major and Master Questions for each work, unit, semester, and course;
- debates, recitations, and student presentations;
- lecture and discussion, particularly as introductory material or historical framework requires.
- viewing and discussing pertinent works of art, literature, music, and poetry;
- class should begin each day with a brief activity, questions to consider, or written response designed to focus the class discussion and prepare students for the lesson.

Geometry

Theme/Master Question:

What did the Greeks really recognize in the perfection of shapes and numbers?

Description:

In this course, students study transformations, measurement formulas, three-dimensional figures, and shapes and patterns. Students undertake proof-writing, following a carefully sequenced development of logic. Emphasis is placed on drawings, measurements, and visualizations, along with properties and deduction, and the algebraic and numeric representations needed to describe the visual world. Students will be required to study, memorize, and apply Euclid's theorems, postulates, and definitions.

This is done through:

- teacher presents new concept, then coaches students as they apply the concept;
- teaching is primarily coaching, working with students individually and in small groups to practice problem-solving strategies and conceptual thinking about math;
- math should be presented as often as possible with real-life situations;
- emphasis should be placed on logical evaluation of how and why math works as well as aesthetic evaluation of the elegance of the mathematical systems and solutions;
- class should begin each day with a brief activity, questions to consider, or written response designed to focus the class discussion and prepare students for the lesson.

Biology

Theme/Master Question:

How does God's creation evidence his invisible attributes?

Description:

This course introduces students to the life sciences through lectures, reading, laboratories, research papers, and independent projects. Students will develop their lab techniques and evaluate the current research in biology critically. Topics covered include classification (taxonomy), microbiology (bacteria and protista), fungi, cell structure and reproduction, genetics, evolution, and ecology.

This is done through:

- teaching is primarily lecture, reading, discussion, and laboratories; teaching should be inquiry-based, posing key questions around which student learning is centered;
- topics including cloning, gene therapy, stem cell research, and evolution and intelligent design are addressed through class debates;
- class should begin each day with a brief activity, questions to consider, or written response designed to focus the class discussion and prepare students for the lesson;
- laboratory work and experimentation is a key part of this class, both individually and in groups.

Latin

Theme/Master Question:

What do we learn about a people and their culture through their language?

Description:

This course is the third in a mandatory four-year upper school Latin program. Latin III is an early intermediate course in the ancient Latin language. Students engage in the four proficiencies of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on comprehending what they hear and read. Students encounter grammatical concepts in context and focus on using those concepts rather than simply learning about them. As students' comprehension of Latin increases over the course of our Latin program, the ultimate goal is for them to be able to access the literature, culture, and great ideas of Western Civilization in the language in which most of those ideas were originally developed.

This is done through:

- Latin instruction should follow comprehensive input methods as much as possible; teacher will speak slowly, engage in unceasing repetition of structures, and keep speech at a level where students comprehend what is said;
- introduce new Latin structures using conversational topics anyone might want to use in a language: hopes for the future, what students enjoy doing, daily routines, etc.;

- students develop scripts that are used to learn and repeatedly practice grammatical structures;
- employ spaced repetition of grammatical structures and phrases by practicing a structure every day for two weeks, every other day for two weeks, once a week, then once a month until students have become fluent in using the structure;
- use circling to give students the repeated practice they need to learn a target concept (usually 70-150 repetitions are necessary);
- begin naming grammatical concepts only after students have gained familiarity with those concepts through repeated use;
- use of vocabulary posters on walls to aid students in understanding;
- use of games and Latin phrase chants;
- regular use of exit quizzes will guide teacher instruction;
- homework will include rereading of stories, computer quizzes on in class instruction and memorization, and memorization of vocabulary and Latin phrases;