



Washington Square Academy

Curriculum 2025-2026

Grade 9

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English

Advanced English (College Level)

Objectives

This course requires students to read college-level texts critically and with an understanding of the ways rhetoric supports the author's purpose. Most of the reading will be of nonfiction texts from a wide range of disciplines and time periods. The course also requires students to regularly write essays of synthesis, analysis, and argument, producing multiple drafts of each essay.

The knowledge and skills acquired in this course will prepare highly-motivated students to excel on the College Board's AP English Language and Composition* exam in May. Course content will broadly align with the College Board's AP Language and Composition curriculum*.

*AP is a trademark registered and owned by the College Board. WSA has no affiliation with the College Board.

Text & Reference Materials

- The Bedford Reader, 15th Ed., X.J. Kennedy; D.M. Kennedy; J. Aaron; E.K. Repetto, Macmillan Learning
- The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric, 3rd Ed., Shea, Scanlon, & Aufses (Author), Bedford/St. Martin's

Honors English

Objectives

Students will cite strong textual evidence to support textual analysis; identify multiple themes in complex works of literature, especially as those themes interact with each other to create meaning; understand competing or contradictory motivations of complex characters; place literature in cultural contexts, recognizing how a character's point of view and actions signal acceptance or rejection of cultural norms or the intellectual ideas of a period or place; acquire an increasingly comprehensive academic vocabulary; demonstrate understanding of the conventions of Standard English; write in a variety of styles and genres, paying close attention to purpose, context, and audience; design and deliver polished presentations for a variety of purposes.



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Texts & Reference Materials

Literature:

(Note that selections may vary by academic year.)

Novels & Plays:

- Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neal Hurston
- Small Island, Andrea Levy
- Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
- Passing, Nella Larsen
- Fat Ham, James Ijames
- Oliver Twist, Charles Dickens
- Story of Your Life, Ted Chiang

Selected Short Stories:

- "The Outing," Lydia Davis
- "The Lottery," Shirley Jackson
- "Going to Meet the Man," James Baldwin
- "Bartleby, The Scrivener," Herman Melville
- "The Dead," James Joyce
- "The First Day," Edward P. Jones
- "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" Joyce Carol Oates
- "The Garden Party, Kate Mansfield

Selected Poems:

- Sonnets, William Shakespeare
- "We Wear the Mask," Paul Laurence Dunbar
- Selections from Billy Collins' Poetry 180
- "Incident," Countee Cullen
- "Annabel Lee," Edgar Allen Poe
- "The Garden of Love," William Blake
- "Knoxville, Tennessee," Nikki Giovanni
- Lyrics from popular music (e.g., works by Taylor Swift, Kendrick Lamar, Tupac Shakur)
- Romantic poetry (Wordsworth, Keats, Blake, Coleridge)
- Metaphysical poetry (Donne, Marvell, Cowley)

Selected Works of Non-Fiction:

- The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank (with supporting primary source documents)
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot (with supporting primary source documents)
- Newspaper articles and essays on a variety of topics, student- and teacher-selected

Language:

- *Wordly Wise* Vocabulary Study, Levels 9-10



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- *The Rooted Mind*: Latin and Greek Roots Challenge
- Various teacher-generated materials
- Selections from NoRedInk.com and IXL.com



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Mathematics

Overarching Objectives (All Courses)

Students will deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. In accordance with their individual readiness, students will explore and analyze the following: geometric principles; complex equations and functions; sequences, series, and trigonometric functions. Through collaborative projects, real-world applications, and rigorous practice, students will build confidence in their mathematical abilities and develop critical thinking skills. Materials will be teacher-generated and pulled from a variety of sources.

Math 9 Geometry Honors

- Quadrilaterals
- Transformations
- Circles
- Volume & Surface Area
- Probability
- Proofs
- Congruent and Similar Triangles

Math 9 Algebra II Honors

- Solving Equations
- Functions Review
- Complex Quadratics
- Polynomial Division
- Factoring Multivariable Polynomials
- Exponents and Logarithms
- Radicals
- Inequalities

Math 9 Pre-Calculus Honors

- Composite and Inverse Functions
- Trigonometry
- Complex Numbers
- Rational Functions
- Conic Sections
- Vectors
- Matrices
- Probability



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Science

Advanced Biology (College Level)

Objectives

Students will acquire introductory college-level biology content knowledge and skills. Emphasis is placed on inquiry skills and enduring conceptual understandings in four key areas: evolutionary processes and the diversity of life; biological systems as they use energy and molecules to grow, reproduce and maintain dynamic homeostasis; biological systems as they store, receive, transmit, and respond to information; the complex properties and interactions of living things.

The knowledge and skills acquired in this course will prepare highly-motivated students to excel on the College Board's Advanced Placement Biology* exam in May. Course content will broadly align with the College Board's AP Biology curriculum*.

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Texts & Reference Materials

- Campbell Biology AP Edition, 12th Ed. by Urry, Cain, & Wasserman. Pearson
- AP Biology: Pearson Test Prep Series for Campbell Biology
- Teacher-generated materials

Honors Science

Objectives

Students will recognize and understand concepts and processes of evolution; natural selection; genetics. WSA's Science Curriculum is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).(variation and distribution); the relationships between genetic molecules and organisms; the history and energy of our solar system; the geology of Earth; climate change; the impact of human activity on climate and biodiversity; and particle physics.

Texts & Reference Materials

- Marshall Cavendish Education: *Physics Matters, Chemistry Matters, Biology Matters*



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- Teacher-generated materials

Topics

Natural Selection & Evolution:

- Evidence of common ancestry and diversity
- The four factors of Natural Selection
- Adaptation of populations
- Natural Selection and environmental adaptation
- Environmental changes: speciation and extinction
- Lab: Battle of the Beaks Natural Selection Activity: Students will simulate Darwin's finches and see how survival of the fittest can lead to evolution.

Genetics:

- Cellular division and differentiation
- Chromosomal inheritance
- Inheritable genetic variations
- Variation and distribution of traits

From Molecules to Organisms:

- Genes, proteins, and tissues
- Interacting body systems
- Feedback mechanisms and homeostasis
- Lab: Berry Full Of DNA: DNA Extraction

Earth & Space Science:

- Nuclear fusion and the Sun's energy
- The Big Bang Theory
- Orbital motions
- Evidence of plate tectonics
- Evidence of the Earth's history
- The creation of landforms
- Carbon cycling in the Earth's systems
- Coevolution of life on Earth
- The impacts of human activity on Earth systems
- Biodiversity, natural resources, and human sustainability
- Climate change and future impacts

Physics:

- Fission, fusion, and radioactive decay
- The Second Law of Thermodynamics
- Macroscopic energy due to particle position and motion
- Wave-particle duality of electromagnetic radiation



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Social Studies

Objectives

In accordance with their individual readiness, students will explore and analyze topics from high school World History frameworks. Emphasis will be placed on student acquisition of the following skills:

Research and Inquiry:

- Develop research skills by asking questions, gathering information from primary and secondary sources, and evaluating the reliability of sources

Critical Thinking:

- Analyze historical events and multiple perspectives to develop critical thinking skills
- Make reasoned judgments; compare and contrast the treatment of a topic in primary and secondary sources
- Analyze in detail a series of events as described in a text
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis
- Summarize points of agreements and disagreement; and demonstrate their ability to reevaluate their thinking after exposure to new evidence and lines of reasoning

Communication:

- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives
- Practice communicating their ideas effectively through writing, speaking, and delivering visual presentations

Texts & Reference Materials

- Teacher-generated materials including historical periodicals and primary sources
- Document-based questions
- *NewsELA*

World History I

Classical Civilizations

- The Persian Empire: Structure and Influence
- Ancient Greece: City-States, Democracy, and Philosophy
- Ancient Rome: Republic to Empire, Governance and Law

World Religions and Philosophies

- Major World Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Philosophical Traditions: Confucianism, Daoism, Stoicism



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- The interaction and spread of religions through trade and conquest

The Middle Ages

- The Fall of Rome and the Rise of Feudalism in Europe
- Islamic Caliphates and the Golden Age of Islam
- The Byzantine Empire and its influence on Europe

The Age of Exploration

- Motivations for Exploration: Economic, Religious, and Political
- Major Explorers and their voyages: Columbus, Magellan, da Gama
- The impact of exploration on indigenous populations and global trade

The Renaissance and Reformation

- Cultural and Intellectual Movement of the Renaissance
- Impact of Humanism and key figures (e.g., Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo)
- The Protestant Reformation and its effects on Europe

The Age of Revolution

- The American Revolution: Causes and Consequences
- The French Revolution: Key Events and Ideals
- The Haitian Revolution and the fight for abolition

The Industrial Revolution

- Origins of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain
- Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts
- The rise of labor movements and responses to industrialization

Global Connection and Conflict

- Imperialism and Colonialism: European Expansion in Africa and Asia
- The Opium Wars and their impact on China
- The Scramble for Africa: Causes and Consequences

World History II

The Age of Imperialism

- European global empires (The Congo, South Africa, China)
- Colonialism: consequences for colonized societies; the economic and social impacts of colonial rule

World War I

- Causes of World War I
- The Battle of Verdun
- Primary source analysis: “Dulce et Decorum Est”
- The collapse of Russian, German, Austrian and Ottoman Empires



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World War II

- The causes of World War II
- Dictators of World War II: The rise of Hitler, Mussolini, and Imperial Japan
- Battles of World War II; Stalingrad, Kursk, Midway, and Island-Hopping
- The atomic bombing of Japan

The Cold War

- Collapse of the British and French Empires
- The US and USSR as the remaining great powers
- Mutually-assured destruction
- Proxy wars
- Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan

Global Civil Disobedience:

- US Civil Rights and disobedience
- Analysis of Supreme Court decisions
- Segregation vs. Integration
- Discussion and analyses of constitutional amendments
- Significant figures of the Civil Rights Movement
- Women's suffrage and the Equal Opportunity Act
- Protests: France; the Chinese Cultural Revolution; and Prague Spring 1968

The Post-Cold-War World

- US as the sole superpower
- The relationship between China and America
- Brexit



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World Languages

Mandarin

Students in Washington Square Academy's Mandarin Program take the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) Test at the appropriate level at the end of Grades 6-9.

HSK is China's national, standardized test of proficiency in the Chinese language for non-native speakers (similar to the TOEFL in the United States). Students who successfully complete WSA's Mandarin Program are well on their way to obtaining full HSK certification, a qualification that may open many doors for them not just personally, in terms of a love and understanding of this beautiful language and culture, but also professionally, in terms of educational and employment opportunities.

Course materials for each grade level include elements of the HSK Curriculum as well as a variety of teacher-generated sources designed to motivate and inspire each individual student. At Grade 8, these materials are supplemented with [Cheng & Tsui's Integrated Chinese](#) texts and workbooks.

Spanish Intermediate or Advanced

Objectives

Students will work on their Spanish language knowledge and skills in accordance with their readiness. The aim is to enhance students' proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing while deepening their understanding of Hispanic cultures, literatures, and contemporary issues.

Texts & Reference Materials

- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: ¡Avancemos!
- Teacher-generated materials

Skills

Communication Skills

- Develop advanced speaking and listening skills in diverse contexts
- Improve reading comprehension of authentic texts in various genres
- Enhance writing skills through creative and analytical writing tasks



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Cultural Competence

- Explore and analyze cultural, historical, and social aspects of Spanish-speaking countries
- Understand and appreciate the diversity within the Spanish-speaking world
- Engage in discussions about contemporary issues within Hispanic cultures

Critical Thinking

- Analyze literary and cultural texts critically
- Develop the ability to formulate and express opinions on various topics
- Make connections between language and associated cultural contexts

Language Proficiency

- Increase vocabulary and grammatical accuracy in both spoken and written Spanish
- Use idiomatic expressions and advanced grammatical structures
- Prepare for advanced assessments, such as AP Spanish exams or proficiency tests

Topics

Grammar and Vocabulary

- Subjunctive vs. indicative moods
- Complex sentence structures and verb forms
- Idiomatic expressions and regional variations

Hispanic Literature

- Study of significant works from authors such as Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, and Isabel Allende
- Themes of identity, culture, and history in literature

Cultural Studies

- Examination of traditions, festivals, and daily life in various Spanish-speaking countries
- The influence of history, religion, and economics in shaping cultures

Media and Film

- Analysis of contemporary Hispanic films and their cultural implications
- Exploration of news media in Spanish-speaking countries and its impact on society

Contemporary Issues

- Discussions on immigration, globalization, and social justice in the Hispanic world
- Debates on environmental issues, education, and politics in Spanish-speaking countries

Research Project

- Students will select a topic related to Hispanic culture, literature, or contemporary issues and conduct in-depth research
- Presentation of findings in both written and oral forms