

2011-2012 Nordonia Middle School

A legacy of achievement,
a commitment to the future.

8th Grade Course Description Guide



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This brochure is designed to give students and parents a quick overview of courses offered at Nordonia Middle School. For more detailed information, please feel free to call the building principal at 330-467-0584.

All classes align with the Ohio Academic Content Standards and the Nordonia Hills Course of Study. To find a complete description of the Content Standards, visit www.ode.state.oh.us. Courses of Study may be found at www.nordoniaschools.org.

Course Descriptions

Math 8—Year Course

This is a problem centered course to promote a deeper engagement and learning for students. The goal of this program is to help the students develop a knowledge, understanding, and skill of mathematics. It also creates an awareness and appreciation of the connections among mathematical strands and between mathematics and other disciplines.

Algebra - Year Course

This course provides a study of first year algebra with emphasis on linear equations and their applications, linear graphing, and polynomial operations and uses.

Science - Year Course

Eighth grade science follows an integrated science curriculum with a strong focus on earth science with such topics as: weather, the solar system, earth's interior, tectonic plates, weathering and erosion. Other topics in eighth grade include laws of motion and transfer of energy. Practiced skills include observation, measurement, and presentation of scientific data and evidence-based decision making.

Social Studies—Year Course

The eighth grade year brings students back home to the Americas. The year is all about American History starting with colonization of North America and moving chronologically through beginning of the United States to the Civil War that almost broke the country apart. The students will learn about American history with units covering Colonization, the Revolutionary War, the New Nation, Government/Citizenship, Westward Expansion, Pre-Civil War and Civil War/Reconstruction.

Language Arts - Year Course

Here are the characteristics of our middle school literacy program:

- ◆ High proportion of time is spent on actual reading and writing
- ◆ Emphasis is on the integration of reading and writing
- ◆ Emphasis is on teaching strategies for reading comprehension
- ◆ Skills/strategies are taught in the context of actual reading and writing
- ◆ Lessons are built on the background information and experience of the students
- ◆ Speaking and listening are integrated with reading and writing activities
- ◆ Teacher models for students how an experienced reader and writer plans and accomplishes goals
- ◆ Hands-on experiences are provided for students to help them understand what they read and write
- ◆ Teacher facilitates discussions by asking open-ended questions that require critical thinking
- ◆ A variety of groupings are utilized

Physical Education - Semester Course

Students entering the eighth grade will participate in a variety of activities in physical education, beginning with a cooperative games unit in which students take part in team building activities and initiatives. Students then begin a journey through a variety of team sports such as team handball, volleyball, soccer and basketball. Students will take on various roles other than player, such as coach, referee, statistician, athletic trainer and administrator. Games are modified for maximum participation and an emphasis is placed on skills, game tactics and strategies.

Art - Semester Course

The eighth grade visual art curriculum utilizes “State Standards for Visual Arts” as a guideline for a semester course of study. The art curriculum will reinforce previously learned skills and will re-introduce our students to the elements of art and principles of design through the exploration of basic art concepts. Students will work on a variety of assignments which are designed to develop their abilities to make critical judgments about art and to understand and appreciate the influence of art from other times and cultures. The course is designed to include many hands-on experiences which will include drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture using a variety of tools, techniques, and media.

Choir - Year Course

This choir focuses on developing the adolescent voice, concentrating on matching pitch, breath support, and ear training. Written work consists of theory worksheets that are completed in class and written tests. To be considered, students should be able to sing two and three part rounds and at least two-part homophonic songs and demonstrate good behavior and ability to work in large groups. There are four mandatory performances throughout the year. In addition, students must purchase a choir shirt.

Band - Year Course

The eighth grade band continues the course of study begun in the elementary and seventh grade bands. While enrollment is open to all students, it is suggested that those who did not participate in fifth to seventh grades sign up for private lessons so they are on the same level as other band members. Band meets every day during school and gives 4-5 performances each year. This band will also perform at one high school football game with the marching band.

Jazz Ensemble—Year Course or Semester Course

Jazz Ensemble is offered to any student who signs up for band as well. This group will perform as a combined 7/8 ensemble, but will rehearse as a seventh grade and eighth grade unit alone. Any instrument is eligible to participate including brass players, pianist and guitarists. This is a great opportunity for students to pick up another instrument or excel even further on their band instrument! Jazz Ensemble performs 4-5 concerts a year. Eighth grade students may take Jazz Ensemble for one semester or all year.

Today’s Music—Semester Course

Eighth grade “Today’s Music” is a journey of the roots of American Pop Music. The course begins with the Revolutionary War and travels through Spirituals, Ragtime, Dixieland, Big Band, Blues, Rock and Roll, the British Invasion, Disco, Heavy Metal, RAP, Hip-Hop and music of today! This is not a vocal performance class.

GRADING POLICY

We believe that the purpose of the report card is to communicate the student’s level of achievement to parents, students, and others. In order to reflect the achievement of Ohio Academic Content Standards, the student’s grade should consist of those items directly reflecting their knowledge of material. Assessments of achievement will represent 90% of the student’s grade. Those items not directly correlated to achievement should count no more than 10% of a student’s final grade. Below are some guidelines and examples that may help clarify the types of assignments which should be included in each category.

Assessments of Achievement (90% of grade)

Any assignment, test, quiz or project that assesses student knowledge of the standard which is to be mastered.

These items may include but are not limited to tests, quizzes, labs, projects, written essays and presentations.

Items not directly reflecting student achievement (10% of grade)

Any assignment that allows students to practice a skill/concept learned in class, prepares students for an upcoming lesson or offers an enrichment opportunity to challenge students’ thinking. Items in this category may also include measures of student behavior such as class participation.

These items may include but are not limited to homework, supply checks and participation grades.

Grading Scale

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Below-60%	F