

HONORS COURSES & MATH LEVELS

Bloomington Public Schools

Bloomington, Minnesota

Middle School Gifted & Talented program

Honors courses are designed to provide academically advanced students with sophisticated and complex learning experiences in reading (6th) and language arts (7th & 8th). Advanced math students will have opportunities to participate in advanced levels of mathematics. These courses demand the highest level of participation, effort and quality from students. This document contains suggested criteria for participation in Bloomington's Middle School Honors program.

IMPORTANT: Students who successfully meet honors academic expectations may remain in the honors program for the entire school year. Students who are not meeting honors academic expectations may be exited from this program. MAP scores no longer determine continued Honors placement from year to year in middle school. Honors classes require a high level of effort and achievement.

Note: Honors placement in the middle school does not automatically guarantee Honors placement in high school. Honors placement in 9th grade may be determined by a student's MAP tests, MCA scores, EXPLORE test scores, and middle school Grade Point Average (GPA).

Honors courses:

Honors courses provide highly motivated and academically talented students with a differentiated curriculum that includes a wider range and greater depth of subject matter than that of the standard or regular course. Honors courses demand the highest level of participation, effort, and quality from students. Curriculum in an honors course is rigorous, stresses concept development and typically places emphasis on independent study, critical thinking, and student research. Honors classes require students to utilize habits of independent analysis, creativity, collaboration, leadership, and intellectual skills.

HONORS READING (6TH GRADE)

Honors Reading at 6th grade is

- an adventure in the areas of higher level thinking and reading
- an advanced reading class that will read a variety of material at a rapid rate
- focused on various reading strategies that can be utilized to enhance close reading and in-depth comprehension of both fiction and nonfiction text

HONORS READING PLACEMENT

Placement of students into Honors Reading is based on the following considerations:

1. A high reading score on the district's MAP, and
2. Academic Characteristics Checklist, provided by 5th grade reading teachers

HONORS READING STUDENTS

The **Honors Reading** classes are not for all students. These classes are intended for the most advanced reading students. These students generally:

- Possess a greater understanding of the nuances of language
- Have the ability to read beyond their chronological age
- Enjoy reading a wide variety of materials
- Are voracious readers
- Have an advanced vocabulary
- Are insightful readers

HONORS READING COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to:

- Maintain a minimum of a "B-" average,
- Complete all assignments and homework when assigned,
- Fully participate in class discussions and group work, and
- Satisfy any other expectations assigned by the teacher.

HONORS LANGUAGE ARTS (7TH & 8TH GRADE)

In 6th grade, students participate in Honors Reading. The Honors course discipline changes to Language Arts in 7th grade.

HONORS LANGUAGE ARTS COURSES:

- explore a variety of literary genres, such as fiction, nonfiction, and poetry
- focus on advanced writing skills and essay construction
- engage students in substantive discussions involving higher order thinking
- guide students toward upper level analysis and critical interpretation of literature
- move at an accelerated pace

HONORS LANGUAGE ARTS PLACEMENT (7TH & 8TH GRADE)

Placement of students into Honors Language Arts may be based on the following considerations:

1. A grade of “B-“ or above in 6th grade in Honors Reading/Reading and Language Arts; and for 8th grade placement, a grade of “B-” or above in 7th grade Honors LA or an “A” in regular 7th Language Arts
2. Approval by a student’s 6th grade Reading teacher and 6th grade Language Arts teacher for 7th grade Honors Language Arts, or approval by a student’s 7th grade Language Arts teacher for 8th grade Honors Language Arts

HONORS LANGUAGE ARTS STUDENTS

The **Honors Language Arts** classes are not for all students. These classes are intended for the most advanced writers and readers. These students generally:

- Understand the nuances of language and apply that understanding to their writing
- Have an advanced vocabulary
- Are insightful readers
- Possess the capacity to interpret literature at high levels

HONORS LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to:

- Maintain a minimum of a “B-” average,
- Complete all assignments and homework when assigned,
- Fully participate in class discussions and group work, and
- Satisfy any other expectations assigned by the teacher.

IMPORTANT:

If a student is not meeting academic expectations, s/he may be rescheduled into the regular Reading and Language Arts programs.

MATH LEVELS

The Bloomington Math Program consists of math courses taught *at grade level, advanced by one year, advanced by one year at the Honors level, and advanced by two years*. Math courses advanced by one or two years above grade level provide highly motivated and mathematically gifted and talented students with a math curriculum designed to meet their needs. These math courses offer greater depth, complexity and pacing than a regular math course. Students who participate in higher math levels must utilize highly developed *organizational skills, advanced level thinking skills, and sophisticated cognitive learning strategies*.

Important: High School G.P.A. could start in middle school!

Students taking *above grade level* math courses may complete Intermediate Algebra, Honors Intermediate Algebra, and/or Honors Geometry by 8th grade. Both of these courses are official high school courses, and students taking them will receive high school grade and credit. Therefore, the official high school Grade Point Average (GPA) for math begins with grades earned in these courses.

MATH PLACEMENT (*advanced by one year*)

Placement of students into a math course advanced by one year could be made using the following suggested criteria:

1. A math score of 85% or better on the district's MAP test, and
2. Past math performance places the student in the top range of his/her class; s/he is highly motivated to succeed.

MATH PLACEMENT (*advanced by one year, Honors level*)

Placement of students into a math course advanced by one year at the Honors level could be made using the following suggested criteria:

1. A math score of 95% or better on the district's MAP test, and
2. Past math performance consistently places the student in the extreme top range of his/her class; s/he is highly motivated and driven to succeed.

Typical characteristics of math students advanced by one year generally include:

- Mastery of basic skills (addition, subtraction, multiplication, & division)
- Ability to problem solve in different ways
- Ability to work with mathematical concepts in fluent, flexible, and creative ways
- Energy and persistence in solving difficult problems

MATH PLACEMENT (*advanced by two years, Honors level*)

Placement of students into a math course advanced by two years at the Honors level could be made using the following suggested criteria:

1. A history of math scores of 99% on the district's MAP test, and
2. Past math performance consistently places the student in the extreme top range of his/her class; s/he is highly motivated and driven to succeed.

Typical characteristics of these math students generally include all of the characteristics of those advanced by one year, as well as the following:

- Ability to perceive, visualize, and generalize patterns and relationships
- Ability to reason analytically, deductively, and inductively
- Formulates mathematical questions, doesn't just answer them
- Ability to organize and work with data in a variety of ways
- Ability to disregard irrelevant data

MATH COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Students are expected to:

- Maintain a minimum of a "B-" average,
- Complete all assignments and homework when assigned,
- Fully participate in class discussions and group work, and
- Satisfy any other expectations assigned by the teacher.

IMPORTANT:

If a student is not meeting academic expectations, s/he may be rescheduled into another math class, per the discretion of the school's principal.

Bloomington Math Program

GRADE	COURSE TITLE <i>regular math</i>	COURSE TITLE <i>advanced by 1 year</i> <i>85%-94%</i>	COURSE TITLE <i>advanced by 1 year</i> <i>95% & above</i>	COURSE TITLE <i>advanced by 2 years</i> <i>History of 99%</i>
6th Grade	Math 6	Math 7	Honors Math 7	Hnrs. Algebra 8
7th Grade	Math 7	Algebra 8	Honors Algebra 8	Hnrs. Int. Algebra +HS GRADE +HS CREDIT
8th Grade	Algebra 8	Intermediate Algebra +HS GRADE +HS CREDIT	Honors Int. Algebra +HS GRADE +HS CREDIT	Hnrs. Geometry +HS GRADE +HS CREDIT

+ Students receive high school grade and credit for this course, which will impact the students' future High School Grade Point Average (GPA).