

The Ideal High School Curriculum

9th Grade

- English
- Biology (laboratory course)
- History (ancient, world, or European)
- Mathematics (algebra or plane geometry)
- Language (1st or 2nd year for those who had a 7th/8th grade course)

10th Grade

- English
- Chemistry (laboratory course)
- Mathematics (plane geometry or algebra II)
- Language (2nd or 3rd year)
- Social Science (history, economics, psychology, etc.)
- Elective (art, music, drama, computer science)

11th Grade

- English
- Physics (laboratory course)
- Mathematics (algebra II or precalculus)
- Language (3rd or 4th year)
- Language (1st year for certain students)
- United States History (regular or Advanced Placement)
- Elective (computer science recommended)

12th Grade

- English
- Mathematics (precalculus, calculus, or probability and statistics)
- Language (4th year or 5th year)
- Language (2nd year for certain students)
- Science (Advanced Placement biology, physics, or chemistry if science-oriented)
- Social Studies (Advanced Placement U.S. or World History, Economics, Government, or Psychology, if humanities- or social sciences-oriented)
- Advanced music, art, drama, computer science, etc.

Your Curriculum

9th Grade

10th Grade

11th Grade

12th Grade

This curriculum does not include other possible electives. Admissions officers recognize that students like to pursue their special interests in high school, so such courses as economics, psychology, anthropology, drawing, architecture, drama, photography, and computer science that appear on the academic transcript are respected, particularly if you are praised in a teacher’s recommendation for work in a subject that absorbs you. We like to encourage students to demonstrate their interests to the admissions committees by their choice of elective courses and particular advanced-level core subjects.

You do not have to take advanced level courses in all subjects. It is best to stretch yourself in those fields where you are strong and have serious interest. The senior year provides you with the opportunity to “make a statement” to the committee by electing to take the most advanced courses your high school offers in the areas of your expressed interest and potential major in college. Colleges are interested in how you took advantage of the resources available to you in high school, so if your school does not offer many advanced courses or electives, take what you can, and then look to community colleges or summer programs as other places to enrich your curriculum.

Advanced Placement Courses

The Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered by the College Board at high schools around the world have become a standardized mark of academic rigor. Some demanding high schools do not offer AP courses, considering their own classes more challenging or appropriate for their students. Some schools offer an International Baccalaureate (IB) program as an alternative highly demanding curriculum. Other high schools do not have the resources to offer APs. However, any student may take an AP exam—offered in May—to show course knowledge and mastery and perhaps to gain college credit or placement.

Here is the list of AP courses from the College Board (www.collegeboard.org).		
Art History	European History	Psychology
Biology	French	Spanish
Calculus AB and BC	German	Statistics
Chemistry	Government and Politics	Studio Art
Computer Science	Human Geography	U.S. History
Economics	Latin	World History
English	Music Theory	
Environmental Science	Physics	