

Perry Middle School Talented and Gifted

Syllabus

**Goal:** *To provide an appropriate level of challenge to advanced students through differentiated coursework.*

**Overview:**

Here at Perry Middle School, we offer enriched sections of regular classes, where coursework is more rigorous than it would be in a regular section of the class. Currently, we offer these sections in math, reading, and science, and we’re working on offering them in all core subjects. In addition, these sections include the support of the TAG instructor through regular co-teaching of more challenging lessons.

We also offer an advisory period, specially tailored to meet the needs of our advanced learners. This period is solely taught by the TAG instructor, and it is additional time that students are challenged every day. This is offered to students that excel in all three of our current TAG subjects.

Finally, those in the enrichment sections can choose to participate in academic extracurricular activities offered through the TAG department. These are optional, but they are good choices to get involved in when a student is interested in more academics each school day. Currently, we offer Battle of the Books (a reading competition), LEGO League (a math and science competition), and drama.

For any additional information about anything detailed in this syllabus, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us here at Perry Middle School. We’re always happy to help!

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**Challenging/Accelerated Coursework in Enriched Sections:**

**6th Grade Math:**

In this class, students are allowed to work on their own pace through the material, which allows them to show mastery of topics more quickly than normal. Explanations by the teacher are cut shorter, as these students need les instruction for comprehension. Students are then allowed to participate in challenging enrichment lessons which provide real-world applications. These work in the area that students have been learning about.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Calculating and creating a giant map of the United States while working on scale factors
* Using Excel to create scatter plots and draw a line of best fit while working on graphs
* Calculating how much paint would be needed to paint the columns of the Lincoln Memorial while working on surface area of cylinders

**6th Grade Science:**

In this class, students are given a variety of activities that go above and beyond the normal curriculum. Lessons that would be skipped are covered, as the pace of instruction is faster. The class delves much deeper into the science concepts covered and learn aspects of the material that are much above grade level.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Creating a working model of the human eye with flashlights and notecards while working with parts of the eye
* Testing the range of human hearing and comparing that to how animals can hear while working with sound waves
* Calculating energy usage at their own homes and learning how different kinds of power plants work while learning about energy
* Figuring out where gemstones are formed and how they’re formed while learning about the rock cycle
* Creating a 100 yard human model of the solar system

**6th Grade Reading:**

In this class, students are expected to read much more challenging material than a normal class and are given a choice of what to read. Instruction goes much deeper into what makes up each genre as students read them. Students are held to a higher standard of work than is expected in a normal class as well.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Translating a fairy tale story into a narrative play with all the action acted out by a partner
* Discussing biases found in texts and in the world
* Explaining both perspectives of a piece of historical fiction to a group of peers
* Connecting a piece of science fiction back to what they know about the present day

**7th Grade Math:**

In this class, students are allowed to work at their own pace through the material, which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge so they can move on to a topic they have not yet mastered. Teacher explanations are cut short to allow maximum time for students to work. Those students that have repeatedly shown easy mastery are given challenging lessons that deal with either higher-level thinking or more complex problems.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Solving complex proportions through determining your age on different planets in the solar system
* Determining whether functions are linear or nonlinear through a given chart of numbers
* Finding angles on a clock’s hands at given times
* Solving systems of linear equations through the substitution method

**7th Grade Science:**

In this class, students are given less guidance and more time to work on their more challenging assignments. Students are then able to take part in many different experimental assignments, which stretch their knowledge to needing to apply it as well. Some very advanced students are pulled for extra enrichment.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Completing complex Punnett squares and discussing human genetics
* Researching a genetic disorder of interest and presenting it to the class
* Plotting different land biomes on a map and researching one biome of interest
* Growing a plant of their own and identifying all parts of the plant

**7th Grade Reading:**

In this class, students read through the assigned novels at their own pace, which allows them to read ahead and be ready to go for the next assignment. There are a myriad of different enrichment activities planned to go along with each novel read in class, which expand on the reading and make it more complex. Those students that are even more advanced work on special enrichment activities with the TAG instructor.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Discussing different dystopian characteristics found in dystopian novels and applying it more broadly to different stories
* Holding a student-led debate about events with questionable motives in *The Outsiders*
* Reading a high school level *Mythology* book that goes over all the Greek myths in great detail
* Discussing as a group all the intricacies and connections that go along with Greek gods and heroes

**Algebra and Geometry:**

In these classes, students have been accelerated at least one full year ahead in the math curriculum. Students are expected to do well on the high school level material while still in middle school.

Students receive high school credit upon successful completion of these courses and their final grade goes on their high school transcript.

**8th Grade Science:**

In this class, material is presented in a condensed fashion. This allows for much more time to accomplish the myriad of hands-on lab work assigned. The lab work in this class is designed to give students a more real view of exactly how all the concepts taught in the book affect the world.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Creating their own virtual models of several types of atoms and compounds
* Completing simulations on the experimental half-lives of elements
* Completing simulations on how fluids flow around and move
* Creating a working model of a roller coaster which demonstrates Newton’s Laws

**8th Grade Reading:**

In this class, difficult reading material is selected for students to read. Students are also tasked with assignments that make them delve deeper and think more critically about what they’ve read. In addition, higher-level concepts like theme and symbolism are taught.

Examples of challenging lessons include:

* Determining character relationships between the top 20 characters in *Nothing But the Truth*
* Reading *The House of the Scorpion*, a book that has students thinking about the real world and how to stop some of the bad things that happen in it
* Completing choice assignments, where students get to choose to research things like labor laws or governmental corruption
* Identifying and elaborating on what exactly makes up a Hemingway Hero

**Challenging Coursework Presented in the TAG advisory:**

TAG advisory placement is determined by a student having very high Iowa Assessment scores in all three TAG subject areas. This advisory is different from others, as we use the time for extra enrichment for students that need it. We rotate through enrichment activities in all subjects, as well as having independent study time, where students research an area of passion.

Some enrichment activities that we’ve done this year include:

* Translating Shakespearean speech into more modern speech
* Challenge Math, which tasks students with using problem solving to answer math problems
* Identifying tropes and characteristics in dystopian fiction
* Creative writing prompts, intended to enhance creativity
* Playing the Stock Market Game, a game where students invest pretend money into the NYSE
* Speech games designed to improve public speaking skills

**Explanation of Academic Extracurricular Activities offered:**

Any identified TAG student is welcome to join us in the extracurricular activities that are provided through the TAG department. We currently offer 3 activities, though we’re always looking to add more and expand.

Offered currently are:

* Battle of the Books – a reading competition where groups read through a booklist and meet up periodically to discuss what they’ve read, eventually taking a short quiz about the books at the end
* LEGO League – a robotics competition that has students building and programming their own LEGO robot to complete various tasks on a game board
* Drama – a play is selected annually that is fully staged and acted by only students