



A Guide to Learning in the Middle School Grades 7 and 8

2020-2021

*Developing innovative, compassionate, and
responsible citizens of the world.*



Students in the Middle School program at LAS are immersed in a tight-knit community of passionate learners and take part in an exciting curriculum supplemented with opportunities for experiential learning and educational field trips.

The Middle School has been designed to provide students in grades 7 and 8 with a safe environment in which they can learn, study, play, and thrive. Classes are not designated by grade level but rather classes based on their language and mathematics proficiency. At times this may also include placement into a Preparatory Years class.

Course Descriptions

Academic Core

The Academic Core is designed to provide students with a strong foundational skill set that will lay the groundwork Middle School students need in order to be successful in later grades.

English Language and Literature

The Middle School English course aims to explore thematic-based topics and concepts through a variety of print and media sources including literary and non-literary texts. Students will develop their reading skills beyond simple comprehension, learning to carefully analyze texts across various media sources which may include visual, written, and multimedia such as film and video. The students will explore a range of vocabulary as they read across different genres and styles. Students will write and speak for diverse audiences and purposes, developing their organizational skills, word choice, voice, and fluency while continuing to encourage the use of proper English language conventions.

ELA Skills

ELA Skills is an English course for speakers of other languages. The course is an introduction to English for academic purposes so that students can communicate, collaborate, and create at an academic level in English. The focus is primarily on writing and reading skills. Throughout the course students develop an awareness of grammatical structures and vocabulary used in formal and informal communication, including a review of basic tenses and developing complex sentence structure. Students will learn how to write academic essays and other text types that include narrating, explaining and arguing, in addition to giving formal presentations. Grammar structures are taught through topics on various global issues. In terms of reading skills, there is a focus on comprehension of informational/nonfiction texts. Students will also learn how to use school and community resources through language-rich and context-based communicative activities. ELA Skills is complemented by ELA Guided Reading.

ELA Guided Reading

The goal of ELA Guided Reading is to improve students' reading ability in English and foster a love of reading. This course focuses on the reading process and the skills needed to become an effective reader including summarizing, inferring, predicting, and analyzing through independent and group reading. The course encourages students, with guidance from the teacher, to choose high-interest books from our vast library collection and to read extensively. This aids student acquisition of English, including vocabulary and grammar structures, but most importantly helps students develop a passion for reading and future academic success.



Pre Algebra

This course will give students the chance to explore the connections between numbers, algebra, and geometry. The course accommodates every student's experiences and abilities. We are especially conscious that fostering curiosity and developing students' investigation and problem solving skills is vital at such a young age and thus we place less emphasis on testing and exam preparation and more on making connections in a mathematical context. Every year students complete at least one investigation that draws on their lesson content and challenges them to investigate and communicate their findings mathematically. Additionally, in grades 7 and 8 students explore mathematics through science and technology.

Algebra I

This course is designed to give students the chance to explore the connections between numbers, algebra, geometry, and data. The focus in Algebra 1 is developing routine skills that can help build a solid mathematical foundation. The specific skills of this course are similar to the Algebra 1 Extended course. However, students in this course will *not* study sets and basic trigonometry until the subsequent course, Algebra II. As with all courses at LAS, it will accommodate all learning experiences and abilities. Furthermore, students will engage in learning experiences that foster problem solving skills. Each year, students in this course will complete at least one investigation that draws on their lesson content and challenges them to investigate and communicate their findings mathematically. This gives students a sense of what it means to write about mathematics which is a crucial communication skill. Additionally, in grades 7 and 8 students explore mathematics through science and technology. Students who take this course in grade 8 will be best suited for Algebra 1 Extended in grade 9.

Social Studies

In Middle School, Social Studies takes on a thematic approach to history as well as aspects of other social sciences including geography, economics, and politics. The course uses an inquiry-based approach with a focus on skills over content. Students will be challenged to use higher-levels of thinking to analyze and evaluate different ideas, events, and sources. The course aims to grow students who are confident in their research skills and ability to present information in a variety of ways.

Integrated Science

Middle School Science is taught with an inquiry-based approach aimed at developing scientific skills, values, and attitudes. Content is delivered and assessed focusing on skills, with the aim of creating inquisitive and innovative scientists. The integrated nature of the course allows students to explore different topics of science including branches in biology, chemistry, and physics. The goal of studying Integrated Science in Middle School is to provide students with a foundation of skills that allow them to be critical thinkers and problem-solvers, who have a solid grasp of scientific concepts that can be applied to future scientific pursuits as well as real-world situations.

Physical and Health Education

The aim of the Physical and Health Education course is to provide an entry-level program that promotes lifelong participation and learning through the medium of sports and activities. The program is built around a strong ethos of participation, with the opportunity to explore a variety of



ways to stay fit for life, whilst embedding roles such as coaching, leading and officiating that enable students to gain the necessary skills to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Academic Electives

Students are able to select two elective courses to supplement the Academic Core.

Beginner French

The Beginner French course aims to develop basic communicative proficiency in the French language and provide an introduction to the study of French-speaking cultures. It assumes that the students have minimal or no prior knowledge of the language and culture. Major topics may include developing communicative skills in the following situations: greetings, daily activities, ordering in restaurants, daily classroom conversation, discussing family relationships, professions and nationalities, shopping, domestic life, and health. Grammar topics may include regular and irregular present tense verbs, negation, definite, indefinite and partitive articles, possessive adjectives, agreement of adjectives, interrogatives, forming questions using inversion, demonstrative articles, comparatives, and imperative verbs forms.

Studio Art and Design

This is an introductory course to Visual Art and Design with an emphasis on learning the elements of Art: line, shape, color, texture, space, and value. Students will be engaged in a variety of techniques including painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media/ceramics, digital media, design, and photography. Students' willingness to take risks in their artwork, their participation in class discussions and art critiques, and their overall responsible behavior within the art room is an asset.

Academic Exploration

Academic Exploration in the Middle School will help students to explore their interests in relation to the diverse offerings at LAS as they continue their education through the course of the LAS Continuum. Components of LAS *edge* will be introduced in order to facilitate students' exposure to this program so that they and their parents are able to make an informed decision should they choose to apply to become an LAS *edge* student in the future. This may include elements of the Young Founder's Incubator, the Da Vinci Lab, the Design and Performing Arts Conservatory, and the Alpine Institute.



Academic Honesty

LAS takes the idea of academic honesty seriously and aims to make expectations clear to students. This is of utmost importance in an international community of different cultures in which intellectual property values are not always the same.

Plagiarism is defined as taking someone else's work or ideas as if they were your own. We understand that there is a difference between intentional dishonesty and accidental plagiarism. Each case of academic dishonesty or plagiarism is handled separately with consequences determined based on the severity of the case. The focus is on growth and learning with a shared responsibility among teachers and students.

Through following academic honesty expectations, students are better prepared to become innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

What Does it Take to be Successful at LAS?

Learning to Challenge Yourself

Support is readily available to students at LAS, from the Academic Deans and their staff to the dormitories and Faculty Families. Students should challenge themselves to push their limits and try new things. In their academics, students will be challenged and meeting that challenge is essential to success.

Finding Interests

Activities and sports at LAS offer a wide variety of opportunities. Making the most of these is essential to students' development as global citizens and in ensuring they have a balanced lifestyle in Leysin.

Making Friends

LAS is a community and lasting friendships between students from many parts of the world are a major part of why alumni return to visit years after they graduate.

Global Awareness

The international community exposes students to cultures and languages from 43 different countries. Cultural and service trips expose students to world issues and the role they play in a global society.

Focus on Earning Strong Qualifications

At LAS, you will be supported in your studies. Your aim should be to make the most of your opportunity. All we ask is that students reach for the stars and make the most of their ability and balance their lives to ensure they are healthy, happy, and doing well in their classes. Strong qualifications will be of great benefit in applications to further education.