



The Taft School

Most lower middle schoolers' (class of 2022) academic programs should include:

English: EN120 or EN130

Math: MA120 or more advanced as determined by placement test

History: HI120

Science: PH110 or PH120 or PH130 (depending largely on your math placement)

Modern language/Latin: the Spanish, French, Chinese or Latin course in which you believe you should be placed (if this is beyond first year Spanish, French or Latin, we will make any needed changes after your placement test is assessed)

Arts: an introductory, one semester-long course -- or a full-year course (such as Intermediate Painting and Drawing or Chamber Ensemble) if you're an experienced artist

Department-specific information:

English: There is just one section of Honors Lower Middle English (EN130), so the vast majority of lower middle schoolers will take EN120. If you feel you are an unusually strong reader and writer and you are deeply interested in English, register for EN130; the English department will review your Taft admissions application (essays, teacher recommendations, grades and standardized test scores) and you will know if you have been placed in that course when you receive your academic program in July.

Math placement: Unless you are going into Algebra I, please take the Mathematics placement test on PowerSchool. **This test is the most reliable tool we have to place you properly in math at Taft, so take it seriously.** While you may certainly review whatever math you have taken before sitting for the placement test, no one should assist you as you take the test, and you should take it in a quiet, test-friendly atmosphere.

History: HI120 (World History I: Foundations) is the sole History department offering for lower middle schoolers. Only those taking two languages (see “*Two languages*” below) may opt not to take this course.

Science: Taft's basic Science sequence is Physics, Chemistry, Biology (in that order). Most 9th graders should plan to take PH 120, “Accelerated Physics”, our standard level physics course. Only if you have already completed a full year, high school Physics course (in other words, only if next year will be your second year in the ninth grade and you are finishing up a Physics course this spring) should you select CH210, CH220 (the course appropriate for most) or CH230. Students with an especially strong background in science and math should select PH130, Honors Physics. Placement into PH110 is determined by the department and is generally based on a low math placement score.

Modern Language/Latin placement: If you choose to take Spanish, French, or Latin at Taft, unless you are a beginner, you should complete the placement exam in that language but still sign up for the course level you think best suited to your experience. Chinese takers should sign up for the course level they think best suited to their abilities.



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Two languages: In rare cases, lower mids may elect to take two foreign languages instead of History. (This does not replace any portion of the two-year History requirement, it merely postpones it.) We recommend such a program only for students who are already studying two foreign languages or those who have a particularly strong interest in languages.

Arts: We encourage lower middleers to register for at least one Arts course. But please be aware that numerical limits and/or scheduling difficulties mean that you may not be placed into the course(s) you select.

Other information:

Placement test returns: **Please complete all placement tests by Saturday, June 2.**

Honors Courses: If you think you are qualified for the Honors section of a particular course, please choose that course when you register. Ultimately, the relevant department head, together with members of the department, will determine which students will be best served by Honors courses. We make these determinations carefully, and if you are not placed in an Honors section this year, you may still be considered for an Honors course at a later point. We re-evaluate our placement decisions regularly, recognizing that new students are often best served in non-Honors sections of courses, but advance rapidly once they adjust to Taft's academic rigor. Also, it is not necessary to take Honors courses in order to eventually take Advanced Placement courses. Students who maintain strong grades in their classes and demonstrate a keen interest in a discipline or disciplines are encouraged to select appropriate Advanced Placement courses in their upper school years (and earlier in some instances).

Cognitive testing: If you have completed any cognitive testing that was not included with your application, it is important that you send a copy to Jon Willson, Director of the Moorhead Academic Center, so that he can work with you when you arrive, as well as help your teachers better understand your learning style.