



The Taft School

Most middlers' (class of 2021) academic programs should include:

English: EN220 or EN230

Math: the course in which you believe you should be placed based on your performance in whatever level math you are currently taking (we will make any needed changes after your placement test is assessed)

History: HI240, GS720 or HI840

Science: PH110 / PH120 / PH130 (depending largely on your math placement) if you've already taken a full year of high school Biology; CH210 / CH220 / CH230 (depending on your math placement) if you've already taken a full year of high school Physics

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

Department-specific information:

English: There are just two sections of Honors Mid English (EN230) and one of EN510 Honors Mid English: Introduction to Comparative Literature, so the vast majority of mids will take EN220. If you feel you are an unusually strong reader and writer and you are deeply interested in English, you may register for EN230 or EN510; the English department will review the Taft applications (essays, teacher recommendations, grades and standardized test scores) of the aspirants for honors English 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: HI240 (World History II: Revolutions), GS720 (AP Human Geography) and HI840 (AP European History) are the History offerings for mids. Only those taking two foreign languages (see "*Two languages*" below) may opt not to take one of these courses. Please read the course descriptions for HI240, GS720 and HI740 closely. The default option is to take HI240. But if you are intensely interested in European History, a strong reader, and an exceptionally capable History student you should consider AP European History. If you would prefer an AP level course that looks at people and culture through the lens of geography you should consider AP Human Geography.

Science: Taft's basic Science sequence is Physics, Chemistry, Biology (in that order). We recognize that many schools teach Biology to ninth graders, so many incoming mids should take some level of Physics. Only if you have already completed a full year high school Physics course (not the case for the majority of you) should you select CH210, CH220 or CH230. Most students



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should take CH220. If you are a strong math and science student, enroll in CH230. CH210 placements are determined by the department and usually reserved for students with weaker math and science preparation.

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 abilities. Chinese takers should sign up for the course level they think best suited to their experience.

Two languages: In rare cases, students may elect to take two foreign languages instead of History. (This does not replace any portion of the 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 students 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

Credit for past courses: Except in the Arts, virtually all of the courses you passed in your previous secondary school(s) will count toward Taft graduation requirements. Ultimately, your academic record from your high school years before you entered Taft will appear on your transcript together with the record of your Taft work.

Placement test completion: **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.