



Curriculum Guide



Western Academy at a Glance

Classrooms that open to wooded areas; teachers leading a nature walk or a football game; students sorted into houses under a great oak—the Sorting Tree; boys catching insects, climbing trees, reciting poems in a towering hall, sitting around a fire listening to ghostly Halloween tales, competing for their houses in Capture the Flag—welcome to Western Academy!

Our beautiful campus lies in a broad grassy and wooded setting which complements our handsome classrooms, which are furnished with hand-made wooden desks and tastefully decorated with real, wall mounted animal heads. The campus includes several open fields for play, an outdoor basketball court, an elevated gazebo, a majestic live oak that boys are allowed to climb, a timbered hall for assemblies, as well as a wrestling hall. These facilities help us give shape to an integrated and interactive educational experience that is the hallmark of Western Academy. For example, the boys explore the woods and learn of the various trees and birds on the campus. Students gather at the gazebo for classes, stories, and poetry competitions. Our magnificent live oak boasts a sense of strength and adventure that can attract boys to the educational experience. Our spacious campus also has many niches, locations for the quiet, calm observation that are necessary for a whole education. Western Academy is an ideal setting for stirring the latent capacities of appreciation, contemplation, and intuition.

The students are placed in small homeroom classes and are led by one principal homeroom teacher. Small class sizes and a homeroom setting have many advantages in the education of young boys who are increasingly looking for male mentoring, encouragement, and example. Western Academy teachers provide models for cultured manhood: men who play sports, are friends, work diligently, and are genuinely interested in the world and ideas. Such examples are especially important for young, developing boys who are increasingly open to a

vibrant engagement of the world. The homeroom setting enables the teachers to not only provide an ongoing personal touch, but also gives him the ability to promptly grasp an individual understanding of each boy. Working in a cooperative relationship with parents and remembering the trials and triumphs of his own boyhood experience, teachers at Western Academy instruct with a keen eye toward deepening our knowledge and appreciation of each of our students. Notable aspects of the Western Academy experience include the number of recesses and amount of time allocated for physical exercise, as well as the freedom the boys are given. There are two recesses per day: a short recess in the morning and a longer recess after lunch for play. Each grade also has a separate P.E. period. Recess and physical education are necessary breaks in the intense academic routine and are also necessary for development of the virtues taught through sports - such as courage, discipline, working for a team goal, and good judgment. They also provide healthy occasions for less formal exploration or more imaginative play.

Freedom is a vital component of the play and overall tone of the education at Western Academy. This freedom may include climbing trees, building wood forts, playing tackle football, or enjoying exploration of the wooded areas. Freedom is necessary not only to develop authentic moral virtues, but also for establishing real intellectual habits. We find that good behavior should not merely consist of exterior manners that please adults, but should connect with the interior, the heart of the person who truly desires to do good things. Similarly, learning is not a game of grades and getting ahead, but should involve genuine interest, wonder, and a search for truth and wisdom. Western Academy places an emphasis on the personal responsibility and mutual respect inherent in the genuine freedom the boys are allowed to enjoy.

Curriculum Overview

The Western Academy curriculum has four defining characteristics: it is detailed, connected, integrated, and alive. Details and little things are aspects usually loathed by boys, yet necessary for their education. Great emphasis is placed on the details of academics: grammar, handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, drawing, scientific classification, math skills and drills, historical and geographical data, and thoroughly completed homework assignments. Attention to detail is also evident in orderly classrooms, well planned lessons, composure of classroom dynamics, and neatness of dress. Detailed study becomes even more complete when connections are revealed; for example, the relations of birds, insects, weather, and animals are connected to the life of trees and the life that trees support. Similarly, the study of falcons is enhanced with writing a poem about them, and the study of live oaks is enhanced when they are connected historically with their use in frigates such as “Old Ironsides”.

Beyond connecting matters within a subject, and subjects with other subjects, we foster a sincere effort to connect learning with present living and the self—this

includes connecting emotions and reason, the heart and mind. This type of connection can better be termed "integration" as it strives to integrate what one learns of the world and history, with how one lives in and perceives the world and reality. Furthermore, through quiet and humble observation the boy can experience awe and wonder at the mystery and power of creation—proper responses of the heart to the created world.

Efforts toward true integration necessarily involve action as a student applies lessons to his life—virtues don't become virtues unless one acts on what he sees as the right thing to do—whether this involves daring to reach out in friendships, or doing our work on time, or acting with compassion. Together these aspects of connection and integration, in perception and action, encourage the boy to be more creative, to be more “alive”, whereby true personalities can grow and a deep goodness can take firmer root. The goal of a Western Academy education is a man fully alive.

Education comes to life when it is connected to the world around us and genuine interests are fostered. The importance of the imagination for this end of helping the education come alive is clearly understood at Western Academy. Examples include studying poetry in natural history and literature classes, summer reading and journaling assignments, our creative writing contests every spring, our Competition of the Bard, and imagining oneself in the mysterious scenes of Christ's life presented in the rosary. The connection between choice, action, and well-being is especially present in literature, as characters' choices can be seen along with their consequences for others and themselves. Western Academy's small class size and homeroom teacher relationship enables this connection as the teachers get to know each student more personally and can observe the boys in many different settings, from quiet academic situations to more vibrant and competitive ones. Our teachers have an eye for details and the skills to develop study skills, use narrative across the curriculum, and teach in the field, which includes nature walks and a variety of field trips.

Our subjects of study are derived from the liberal arts: at Western Academy they include religion, natural history and science, math, literature and poetry, language arts and Latin, history, music, art, physical education, and various selective courses.

On average, homework should take from 30 minutes to two hours per night. Assignments are given to supplement and prepare for classes, but are limited so as not to detract from healthy hobbies and family relationships.

Grades indicate performance and not behavior. Interest, engagement, and academic habits are of importance; grades, especially at younger ages, are less important.

Language Arts, Latin, & Writing

At Western Academy students study Latin alongside Language Arts. The study of Latin gives the student a strong education in grammar, the structure of language. In Latin, grammar is the organizing principle, rather than a vestige, as in most modern languages. Students who learn English grammar by comparison and contrast with Latin grammar develop an understanding of language far superior to anything that can be achieved by the study of modern languages alone. Correspondingly, studying a disciplined, organized language like Latin helps students learn to think and write in a more disciplined, organized way.

In addition to Latin, Lower School Language Arts includes handwriting, spelling, and the mechanics of grammar and writing. Middle School Language Arts features a more rigorous Latin curriculum with attention to applied grammar. The text we use for English language arts is *Fix-It! Grammar* which helps students learn correct syntax by editing grammatical errors in a classic story.

Writing at Western Academy is taught using the *Institute for Excellence in Writing* (IEW) program. IEW's unique approach provides the structure that students need to develop confidence in the writing process, while gradually guiding them toward greater independence and creativity. They learn nine structural models (note taking, writing paragraphs, stories, simple reports, writing from pictures, research reports, creative writing, essays, and critiques) to help them organize any type of composition. Additionally, stylistic techniques (strong verbs, quality adjectives, sentence openers, and more) are taught incrementally to gently move students from the basics into more sophisticated writing.

Grade 3

Texts: *Simply Grammar* by Karen Andreola, *Handwriting Book 2 & 3* by Zaner-Bloser

Grade 4

Texts: *Handwriting* by Zaner-Bloser, *Fix-It! Grammar* by IEW, and *Latina Christiana* by Memoria Press

Grade 5

Texts: *Handwriting* Zaner-Bloser, *Fix-It! Grammar* by IEW, and *First Form Latin* by Memoria Press

Grade 6

Texts: *Fix-It! Grammar* by IEW and *Second Form Latin* by Memoria Press

Grade 7

Texts: *Fix-It! Grammar* by IEW and *Third Form Latin* by Memoria Press

Grade 8

Texts: *Fix-It! Grammar* by IEW and *Latin: An Intensive Course* by Moreland and Fleischer

Math

Western Academy employs a traditional classroom instructional model for teaching math. The class meets daily and we primarily teach from Saxon and McDougal-Littel math texts. Students are placed under the guidance of an individual teacher grouped for math by homeroom, unless they are in a different book, in which case they are placed in an appropriate level class. In the traditional math setting the teachers instruct the class and model the problem solving, giving students individual attention as they solve the practice problems. Students are regularly assigned problems from the lesson to complete for homework.

Math 54 by Saxon

Topics covered include addition, place value and other skills are reviewed, as well as new concepts such as fractions, decimals, Roman Numerals and working with triple-digit numbers.

Math 65 by Saxon

Topics covered include advanced divisibility concepts, multiplication, integers, prime and composite numbers, powers, roots, probability, statistics, patterns and geometry.

Math 76 by Saxon

Topics covered include compound interest, functions and coordinate graphing, integers, exponential expressions, divisibility concepts, prime factorization, ratios and more.

Math Course 1 by McDougal-Littel

Topics: Number sense; algebraic thinking; measurement and statistics; number patterns and fractions; ratio; proportion; percent; geometric figures; integers; equations and functions; probability.

Pre-Algebra by McDougal Littell

Topics covered include variables, expressions and integers, solving equations, factors, fractions and exponents, rational numbers, ratio, proportion and

probability, percents, real numbers and right triangles, measurement area and volume, data analysis and probability and angle relationships and transformations.

Algebra: Structure and Method, Book 1 by McDougal Littell

Topics covered include expressions, equations and functions, properties of real numbers, linear equations and systems of linear equations, exponents and exponential functions, quadratics, radicals, probability and data analysis. The emphasis in this course is connecting algebra through multiple representations, particularly viewing equations both algebraically and graphically.

Geometry by McDougal-Littell

Topics: Geometric functions such as angles, perimeters, and proportional segments; geometric proofs and theorems related to properties of various shapes; area and volume formulae; coordinate geometry; transformations.

History

In the 3rd and 4th Grades our history curriculum focuses on ancient and medieval history by employing a strong narrative method. We use *The Story of the World*, by Susan Wise Bauer, as a base text and several other resource texts that help the boys enter into the roots of our culture and meet the figures who have shaped our history. In the 5th Grade we pivot towards United States history and geography by using the *Sea to Shining Sea* textbook from the *Catholic Textbook Project*. The study of American history not only focuses on the English colonies but also the Spanish missions and the French settlements in the South and Canada.

In the Middle School, the 6th Grade returns to a study of the ancient through medieval periods and completes a survey of those cultures by using *All Ye Lands* from the *Catholic Textbook Project*. Texas history enjoys a special emphasis in the 7th Grade along with US History from the Jacksonian era up through the Civil War. Western Civilization is studied in the 8th Grade using *Light to the Nations* from the *Catholic Textbook Project*. At Western we also use biographical and historical novels to help bring to life the characters of the past, such as *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes, or *Shiloh* by Shelby Foote.

Grade 3 (Ancient and Early American History)

Text: *Story of the World Volume I: Ancient Times* by Susan Wise Bauer, and *A Child's First Book of American History* by Earl Schenck Miers

Topics include the ancient times of the earliest nomads to the last Roman Emperor, as well as an introduction to American historical figures.

Grade 4 (Medieval History, George Washington, and Sam Houston)

Text: *Story of the World Volume II: The Middle Ages* by Susan Wise Bower, and *George Washington's World* by Genevieve Foster

Topics include the fall of Rome to the rise of the Renaissance, with several special units on figures such as George Washington and Sam Houston.

Grade 5 (American History)

Texts: *From Sea to Shining Sea: The Story of America* by Christopher Zehnder (Chapters 1-10), *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes, *St. Isaac and the Indians* by Milton Lomask

Topics include the story of North America from the Indian nations, European colonization, and the founding and history of the United States up to the Jacksonian Era.

Grade 6 (Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome)

Text: *Famous Men of Greece* by John Haaren, and *Famous Men of Rome* by John Haaren

Topics cover the history and figures of the two cultures that form the foundation of Western Civilization, Greece and Rome.

Grade 7 (American and Texas History)

Texts: *From Sea to Shining Sea: The Story of America* by Christopher Zehnder (Chapters 11-17), *The Blood of Heroes* by James Donovan, and *A Short History of the Civil War* by James L. Stokesbury

Topics American history from the Jacksonian Era through the Civil War, with a special emphasis on Texas history.

Grade 8 (Western Civilization)

Texts: *Light to the Nations, Part I: Development of Christian Civilization* by Rollin Lasseter and Christopher Zehnder

Topics include the Ancient Roman World and the shaping of the Western Christian tradition, from the coming of Jesus Christ through the achievements of medieval Christendom, to the threshold of the Enlightenment projects of the 18th century.

Literature and Poetry

The study of literature plays an important role in realizing Western Academy's educational vision. Recognizing that it is as important to cultivate the imagination as it is to cultivate the will or the intelligence, Western Academy literature teachers share a common love for the beauty of the written word and have a deep appreciation for the wisdom, moral vision, and truth that literature can convey.

Literature includes the reading, aloud and silently, of poems, short stories, folk tales, and novels. Notable aspects of our approach to literature include the pleasure of the spoken word, as well as an examination of literature's refined and figurative use of language. Moreover, our selection of stories places emphasis on themes such as heroism and the formation of the moral imagination, pointing out the connections between choice, action and well-being. We strive to tap the natural capacities for wonder in boys, especially through folk or "wonder" tales, such as those collected by the Grimm brothers.

The study of poetry brings a reflective, yet spirited tone to the literature curriculum, as well as an added level of festivity to the overall life of the school. The literature teacher periodically assigns his students poems to be memorized and recited for a grade. Students are strongly encouraged to enter the festival day recitation competition, since it is through this pursuit that they may distinguish themselves and earn points for their house. The dynamic literary culture at Western Academy can be seen not only on festival days, but also in various dramatic productions. Elements such as grammar, diction, and usage can come alive in the context of a poem, especially when that poem is learned by heart. (The following list is a sampling; books and poems may vary slightly.)

Grade 3

Texts: *The Great Quillow* by James Thurber, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, *The Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White, *The Tales of Uncle Remus* by Joel Chandler Harris (as told by Julius Lester), *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*, by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire

Poetry selections taken from Wordsworth, Longfellow and others.

Grade 4

Texts: *The Horse and His Boy* by C.S. Lewis, *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry, *The Jungle Books* by Rudyard Kipling, *A Wonder Book* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Poetry selections taken from Frost, Tennyson and others.

Grade 5

Texts: *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Children's Homer* by Padraic Colum, *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame

Poetry selections taken from Poe, Emerson and others.

Grade 6

Texts: *Souder* by William H. Armstrong, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, *The Story of Rolf and the Viking Bow* by Allen French, *The Princess and Curdie*, by George MacDonald

Poetry selections taken from Eliot, Dickinson and others.

Grade 7

Texts: *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway, *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, *Beowulf* translated by Burton Raffel, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* translated by J.R.R. Tolkien, *Shiloh*, by Shelby Foote.

Poetry selections taken from Keats, Hopkins and others.

Grade 8

Texts: *Iliad* by Homer, *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, *The Lilies of the Field*, by William E. Barrett, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, "Leaf by Niggle" by J.R.R. Tolkien, *Cato* by Joseph Addison, *Everyman*, the Medieval Mystery play.

Poetry selections taken from Punkett, Heaney and others.

Religion

Religion is an essential aspect of our Western Academy curriculum and school ethos. Religion class is mandatory for Catholic students, and an option for non-Catholics. Classes are supplemented with interesting narratives from the Old and New Testaments, weekly attendance at Mass, as well as monthly chapel services and occasional devotional practices such as the recital of the rosary, which includes an imaginative and meditative exploration of the various mysteries. Themes that pervade the religion curriculum include the recognition and effort to live as a loved child of God, a more personal knowledge of Jesus, and an understanding of religion and worship as just and proper responses to the Creator.

Western Academy Lower School students study the Faith and Life Series published by Ignatius Press. Student textbook lessons incorporate the four principal components of catechesis: the Creed, the Commandments, the Sacraments and Liturgy, Prayer and Scripture. In addition to giving a clear and comprehensive presentation of our faith, the student textbooks are rich in artwork, both original and classical.

Western Academy Middle School students study passages and stories from the Old Testament, with a particular emphasis on the Ten Commandments. They also study the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospels and the New Testament, with a particular emphasis on the sacramental life of the Church. Finally, students in the Middle School become familiar with sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to help illuminate the life of Faith.

Religious Education Note

Opus Dei, a personal prelature of the Catholic Church founded by St. Josemaría Escrivá, provides a chaplain who in turn administers the sacraments on a daily basis and oversees the religious education program.

We are very grateful for the permission granted by Cardinal DiNardo to offer religious education to our Catholic students, to offer daily Mass and Confession, and to be able to have the Blessed Sacrament with us throughout the week.

One of our goals is to help our students to freely and truly become souls of prayer—young men who can experience “silent listening” deep within their heart and conscience. As the great thinker, Josef Pieper, reminds us: “...the world reveals itself to the silent listener and only to him; the more silently he listens, the more purely is he able to perceive reality.”

We are deeply aware of and in debt to the great traditions and benefits of Catholic education. We are a school started, owned, and operated by laymen. For this reason, we are and wish to be a private independent school accepting the full responsibility of our endeavor. While together the appointed chaplain and lay educators feel the responsibility of living and reflecting a Catholic Spirit throughout our school, professional laymen are responsible for the education and administration of the school, and the chaplain is particularly responsible for the religious education program.

Western Academy is not a Catholic School, and is not under the supervision of the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office of Galveston-Houston. It has been accredited by a private independent schools association, AdvancED Accreditation Commission, and is independently funded.

Lower School Natural History

Natural history, a key component to the Lower School education, stirs a boy's appreciation for the order and wonder of the created world. Through natural history, boys are trained to hone and trust their powers of observation. Active engagement in the natural surroundings is obtained through field trips, either on

campus or at nearby locations. Instruction in the art and science of detailed notation and classification is taught through the keeping of a nature journal. Stories from Greek mythology, its heroes and constellations, support a student's regard for the mystery and wonder found in our dynamic and mysterious cosmos.

Grade 3

Resource Texts: *Field Guide to Common Texas Insects* by Bastiaan Drees, *Golden Guide to Trees*, *Golden Guide to Insects*, *Golden Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians*, *Birds of Eastern and Central North America* and *Birds of Texas* by R.T. Peterson

Grade 4

Resource Texts: *The Thirteen Moons* series by Jean Craighead George, *Oak: The Frame of Civilization*, by William Bryant Logan, and *Horns and Antlers*, *Beetles*, *The Wonder World of Ants*, and *Grasshopper Book*, all by Wilfred S. Bronson

Grade 5

Resource Texts: *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth* by William Bryant Logan, *Birds of Texas*, *Trees of Texas*, *Mammals of Texas*, *Wild Flowers of Texas*, all by Stan Tekiela, *Berlandier: A French Naturalist on The Texas Frontier* by James Kaye

Middle School Science

The Middle School builds on the Natural History program by introducing Earth Science, Life Science, and Physical Science. Having learned how to rely on powers of observation, the students are instructed in empirical investigation. This scientific experimentation utilizes up-to-date lab equipment and fosters critical thinking skills. At the same time, boys learn the parameters of science by becoming familiar with important philosophical concepts, such as Aristotle's Four Causes. Scientific theories are brought to life as boys learn the history of science, or by reading about ancient scientists, like Archimedes.

Grade 6 (Earth Science)

Texts: *Earth Science* published by Novare Press, and *Archimedes and the Door of Science* by Jeanne Bendick

Topics include an introduction to the geological sciences and a preparation for chemistry.

Grade 7 (Life Science)

Texts: *Exploring Life Science* by Prentice Hall.

Topics include environmental science and human biology.

Grade 8 (Physical Science)

Texts: *Physical Science* by John Mays

Topics include physics and chemistry and a wide survey of the laws of motion and matter.

Lower School Music

Engagement in the art of music contributes to the intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical development of our young men. Diverse musical works are drawn from classical pieces, traditional folk songs, sacred hymnody, medieval chant, modern popular music, and original music composed and arranged by our faculty. At the lower levels, curriculum is designed to help students grow a personal love for music and art while physically playing and exploring a range of instruments. At the higher levels curriculum aims to give depth, range, and subtlety to a formed habit of musicianship and expression.

To put it succinctly, our students love to play and sing music. The act of physically making music becomes a doorway into the understanding of the vocabulary and mechanics of the art, as well as the broader understanding of the world and culture that creates each style of music. This engages the heart and opens the person to a beauty and wonder that is co-experienced with practice and dedication. Music theory, ear training, sight singing, and music appreciation dovetail a program designed to spark a love of music through playing a variety of instruments and singing in a choir. Finally, the gift of music is shared with the community at different family and school events throughout the year.

Middle School Libertas Selectives:

Students in the Middle School, in consultation with their parents, choose a combination of courses that meet on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, or Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year. These Libertas Selectives provide for a wide range of interests amongst our students, and open up various avenues for greater wonder and exploration.

3 Day Selectives (Mond/Wed/Fri)**Advanced Band (7th and 8th Grade)**

Building upon the fundamentals of ensemble music learned in the previous year, students in Advanced Band will continue to perfect their instrumental capabilities while playing at various events during the school year. The Advanced Band will strive to reach a level of cohesion and professional demeanor through hard work and attention to detail, while at the same time having fun playing music together.

The two key performances for the Advanced Band during the year are the Christmas and Spring Concerts.

Art & Craftsmanship (6th Grade)

The basic skill developed throughout the Art & Craftsmanship class is that of drawing. 6th grade students learn to draw basic three-dimensional shapes and move to more difficult assignments such as drawing the human person, the use of perspective, etc. Other projects include learning about and coloring heraldic shields with a special regard to understanding the color wheel. There will also be some light craft projects connected with various feasts throughout the year.

Advanced Art & Craftsmanship (7th and 8th Grade)

In Advanced Art & Craftsmanship, students continue to refine their artistic skills while expanding their horizons. Although drawing still forms the heart of this class, students will also begin to explore other mediums such as paint, clay, leatherwork, etc. Different techniques will be explored as students attempt to define their own styles and discover their creative sensibilities.

Advanced Acoustic Guitar (7th and 8th Grade only)

Designed for guitarists that have already taken '6th Grade Guitar', this course seeks to further the development of guitarists that currently have a basic grasp of reading music, open position chords, song performance, and beginning music theory. As students continue studying the acoustic guitar, the class will include a richer exploration of applied Western music styles including jazz, country blues, modern pop/rock, and the guitar's historical roots in the medieval, baroque, classical, and romantic era arts. While the course is primarily open to all students who have successfully completed the '6th Grade Guitar' class, openings may be available by audition. Students are asked to provide their own guitar, clip-on tuner, guitar picks, and 3 sets of guitar strings. The anticipated expense is about \$140 per student for all needed items including the instrument.

Speech & Debate

Speech and Debate affords students the opportunity to hone their speaking and critical thinking skills. For the speech portion of the course, students will select, interpret, and perform prose, poetry, drama, biblical passages, historical speeches, and Reader's Theater with constructive criticism from their teacher and peers. For the debate component, students will learn the fundamentals of logic, research, case writing, flowing, cross-examination, and rebuttals within the context of the Public Forum Debate model. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to put their talents to the test in a few local middle school speech and debate tournaments.

2 Day Selectives (Tues/Thurs)

Acoustic Guitar (6th Grade)

In this introductory course to acoustic guitar, students will learn to read, play, and perform on their instrument from a Western perspective. While drawing from the traditional roots of European harmony and African rhythm, the students will learn guitar basics in the context of American musical styles uniquely born in this country. Within the scope of a class designed for beginners, lessons will cover styles that span the blues, jazz, folk, sacred, classical and rock genres. Course content is aimed at achieving a basic proficiency on the instrument while fostering the skills of group performance, ear training, and reading standard notation. Students are asked to provide their own guitar, clip-on tuner, guitar picks, and 3 sets of guitar strings. The anticipated expense is about \$140 per student for all needed items including the instrument.

Band (6th Grade)

6th grade students will apply lower school music theory to learn the essential elements of playing a wind instrument. Instruction will focus on developing good tone quality, pitch, and the ability to play music in an ensemble. The 6th Grade Band will perform at various points during the school year, including the Christmas Concert in December and the Spring Concert in May.

Introduction to Art History (8th Grade)

This class is an introduction into the history of art, tailored to 8th grade boys who are mature enough to really appreciate form and beauty. The class will begin with establishing a basic definition for art and then proceed to cover the major movements in art history, highlighting individuals who were leaders of those same movements. Students will learn what events and ideas surrounded the birth of these movements. Though the class is learning, primarily, about Western art, students will be given some exposure to the art of other major world cultures. Students should leave the class with a basic knowledge of major movements and artists, as well as having the cultural literacy to identify individual works.

Logic (7th and 8th Grade)

Whether a general in battle, a lawyer in courtroom, a quarterback on the field, or a statesmen in the assembly, success in action or persuasion depends on clear and logical thinking. In Logic, students will develop and hone the logical and strategic thinking necessary to navigate the many complex, fluid situations of life. Along with grammar and rhetoric, logic is a pillar of the liberal arts trivium. In this class students in the 7th and 8th grade have an opportunity to strengthen their logical thinking, which will improve their writing and communication skills immensely. Students will also have fun solving logical puzzles and playing challenging strategy games.

Silent Study

The Silent Study period is designed for students who would benefit from a period of intense work that is proctored by a teacher. Students may do homework, study for tests, work on projects, or perform any other school related activity during this period. The Silent Study period is split into three different grade level classrooms with a teacher available in each room to answer questions about school work.

Theater

Building upon the bard tradition of Western Academy's festival days, Theater offers students a rich immersion in the history of theater as they mature in their acting craft and hone their public speaking skills. Throughout the first semester students will learn various acting techniques and perform them through different scenes on stage. At the end of the semester in early January, the entire class will produce a one act play, replete with set building, costumes, props, playbills, etc. During the second semester theater students will be given the first opportunity to audition for Western's Spring Show – Sherlock Holmes. They will also take part in the preparation for that show while continuing to refine their acting skills in the classroom.

Woodworking (7th and 8th Grade)

Woodworking is both an art and a craft which requires an incredible attention to detail. When done well, woodworking is truly a marvel to behold. In Woodworking class, 7th and 8th grade boys will carefully hand-craft a variety of wooden objects. With prudence, diligence, and precision, both wood and virtue will be carved out in what is sure to be a popular selective.

Yearbook (8th Grade)

From start to finish, Western Academy 8th grade students will complete the production of the current year's Yearbook. Although it requires a lot of effort, this is an extremely rewarding endeavor that will result in a finished product for the entire school community. In the Yearbook class, students can expect to get a lot of hands-on technological training. They will gain a greater proficiency with typing, become fluent with the Lucidpress software we use to create the yearbook, improve their writing and editing skills, and learn the fundamentals of photography and videography.

****Other Selectives***

Middle School Choir

The Middle School Choir class meets before school from 7:45-8:15am on

Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Middle School Choir remains a Libertas Selective class and will be included on all report cards and transcripts of those enrolled. It is essentially a 3rd selective for those students. This class continues the study of choral music developed in the lower school grades. The focus is on developing a healthy vocal technique, choral score reading and ensemble performance. The boys will learn to sing a variety of music (sacred, classical, folk, show tunes, etc.) and will also learn to sing in harmony with each other. The Middle School Choir will perform in various shows throughout the year, including the Christmas Concert, the Spring Show, and the Spring Concert. They will also make a few special field trips during the year to sing.

Physical Education

Physical Education is taught four to five days a week and involves training in the skills, strategy, and overall development of common team sports. The understanding of sportsmanship is emphasized.

Middle School students can participate in interscholastic sports in place of the normal PE class.

Field Trips

Field trips and overnight camping trips are important ingredients for the curriculum. Boys are guided to appreciate nature as a classroom, and take field trips to enhance learning in a variety of subjects. These trips can incorporate outdoor adventure, community service, and field learning — from learning about geography and the nature of a specific landscape to visiting historical places, art museums, and nursing homes. All field trips are opportunities for boys to grow in character.