

## Elective Choices

### Art

This dynamic course designed to ignite creativity and foster artistic exploration! This class introduces students to a variety of mediums, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media, as they develop fundamental skills in composition and technique. Emphasizing individual expression and collaboration, this course encourages students to think critically, problem-solve creatively, and appreciate the rich tapestry of global artistic traditions.

### Introduction to Choir

This co-curricular performance based class is a chance to explore and perform vocal music in a safe, gratifying and uplifting environment. We perform and explore multiple genres, eras and settings. As a group we perform four times a year, explore music in various ways and work towards building confidence in and out of the classroom.

### Robotics

Students are introduced to robotic systems, including how robots use sensors to “see” the world around them, analyze and process this information with a computer brain, and then modify their behavior based on that information. Students learn how to build, program, and troubleshoot robots. From navigation using dead reckoning, building race cars, to sumobots and AI. Robotics not only teaches students to think for themselves, but program a robot to do the same.

### Spanish

Students develop skills to communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes. Students interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, or written conversations to share information, reactions, and feelings. They will interact with cultural competency and understanding therefore being able to participate in multilingual communities at home and abroad. 8th graders may take this course for high school credit.

### Music Appreciation/Life Skills

This two part class begins with the importance of music throughout all cultures, times and people. This will include listening, studying and becoming familiar with multiple genres of music as we explore through experiences. Second semester the class explores the character traits of self control, tolerance, and confidence along with home skills, finance and child development in a project based learning environment.

### Band

Students learn to play a wind or percussion instrument. Winds include: flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, and tuba. Percussion includes: mallets like xylophone, bells, chimes, and drums; snare, bass, and tenor drums. Percussion also includes a large variety of other instruments that are struck to make sound. Percussion students learn a variety of these instruments. Students learn to play in individual and group settings and perform once a quarter as a class. Students at all levels are welcome.

### Orchestra

A choice of violin, viola, cello, or bass and their musical instrument choice. Students will gain new skills and understanding of music through the exploration of classical style music on their instrument. Orchestra members learn to play their instrument independently and also as part of a larger group. This class performs in concert every quarter.

### Ukulele

This class offers students a chance to learn to play chords, tablature and a little standard notation. Students will gain new skills and understanding of music through the exploration of different styles of music on their instrument. Ukulele members learn to play their instrument independently and also as part of a larger group. This class performs in concert every quarter.

### Percussion

Drums, mallet instruments, and the accessory percussion. While not easy, this class can be a fun outlet in the school day. The percussion class most often performs with the band, but will also explore drumline music and other percussion ensemble styles.

### TA/Peer Tutor-(8th Grade only)

Students eligible for this course must have a 90% average, have a teacher recommendation and able to take direction. Duties include: answering phones, filing, making copies, grading papers, assisting peers with tutoring support and other office-type duties. Students must maintain the highest level of confidentiality, be responsible and respectful. Limited space for this course and students are assigned to the TMS office or a teacher at TMS or TES.

### Resource-(By Invitation only)

This course is for students who have an IEP and a Resource teacher recommendation. If you are assigned to this course in the 7th grade, this is your elective. If you are in 8th grade, you have 1 elective choice.

### PE Boys or Girls (8th grade elective)

Not required in 8th grade. See 7th grade requirements for course description.

Thatcher Middle School



School Year 2024/2025

Course Descriptions

“A Great Place for Kids to Learn”

This brochure contains **brief** course descriptions of what to expect during your TMS experience. It includes **REQUIRED** courses for each grade level and **ELECTIVES\*** (classes that are not required, but are chosen by the student.)

*\*Elective choices are subject to change based on availability. Students are **not** guaranteed their elective choices-it is based on factors such as scheduling, classroom seating and student/teacher ratios.*

## 7th Grade Required Courses

### **English 7**

In 7th grade English Language Arts, students will develop stronger reading and writing skills. Students are encouraged to think outside the box and use their artistic skills to create imaginative stories and thought-provoking essays. There are a total of 6 units in this course, each covering a different topic. These topics range from space exploration to becoming an agent for change. By the end of the year, students will have the ability to independently write an informative, argumentative, and narrative essay.

### **Strategic Reading Tech**

This introductory computer class is focused on Reading standards with an emphasis to improve comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Daily reading/vocabulary lessons increase stamina and speed and allow for practice in use of language and reasoning. Technology lessons include typing, digital citizenship, and Google Apps such as: Drive, Email, Docs, Sheets, Slides & Forms and more! Project based learning modules accompany each quarter.

### **General Math**

This course is designed to teach the student the fundamentals of basic general mathematical concepts through instruction, class work, homework, and tests. This course provides the foundation for more advanced mathematics courses and develops the skills needed to solve mathematical problems. Study includes integers, rational numbers, ratios and proportions, linear expressions, equations, functions, probabilities, and statistics.

### **Science 7**

In 7th grade science, students will be exposed to a variety of science concepts. These will include: earth science, basic physics, basic biology, and the engineering design process. These topics align with the standards set forth by the Arizona Department of Education. Students will have opportunities to learn lab skills, as well as strengthen their ability to take notes. Students will be able to analyze a scientific text, draw conclusions based on their reading, and find evidence in the text to support their conclusions. Students will have ample opportunity to practice both hands on science skills and study skills. They will be expected to participate in group activities, and to work independently.

### **Social Studies 7**

In 7th grade social studies we will be studying a variety of topics based on standards mapped out by the Arizona Department of Education in the subjects of American History, Economics, Civics, and Geography. Some skills students will develop in this class include critical thinking and writing skills, gathering evidence, examining primary and secondary sources, and developing and defending evidence based arguments through debates. Some of our topics include American Colonization, The American Revolution, WWI & WWII, The Great Depression, economic systems, the justice system, citizenship and the law, and many more!

### **PE Boys and PE Girls (separate courses)**

Middle School Physical Education is a course dedicated to cultivating a foundation of lifelong health, endurance, and sportsmanship. Students will participate in a variety of activities designed to enhance cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and overall well-being. From invigorating workouts that promote endurance to team sports emphasizing cooperation and fair play, students will develop not only their physical abilities but also essential life skills. The curriculum integrates health education, emphasizing the importance of making informed decisions for a healthy lifestyle. Our aim is to inspire a genuine appreciation for physical activity, instill values of sportsmanship, and empower students to make choices that contribute to their well-rounded health and fitness.

## 8th Grade Required Courses

### **English 8**

This course focuses on strengthening the reading and writing skills of the students. We will strive to dig deeper into the texts by analyzing, interpreting, and making everyday connections with the materials. There are 6 units that each concentrate on a topic to use as a springboard for research and discussion. Topics include the fight for freedom, the places we call home, and finding your path. By the end of the year, students will be able to independently demonstrate the ability to write narrative, informative, and argumentative essays.

### **Computers**

In this course, we will center our attention on developing keyboarding skills and mastering Microsoft Office applications, including Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Additionally, each week, you'll engage in Reading Plus assignments, emphasizing vocabulary enhancement. Throughout the term, we'll also delve into the fundamentals of computer coding as time permits. Adequate class time is allocated to ensure the completion of all assignments.

### **Computers (Yearbook/Leadership)-By invitation only**

Specialized computer class that meets the 8th grade computer course requirement. This course develops students' skills in yearbook production and design. Students learn basic principles of yearbook production and increase skills such as writing copy, digital photography and using appropriate technology tools for media production. Students will increase their leadership abilities through classroom activities to build decision making and critical thinking skills.

### **Pre-Algebra**

This course is designed to teach the student the fundamentals of basic Algebra through instruction, class work, homework, and tests. This course provides the foundation for more advanced mathematics courses and develops the skills needed to solve mathematical problems. Study includes integers, rational numbers, powers and roots, ratios and proportions, linear expressions, equations, linear functions, and statistics.

### **Algebra 1 (A & B)\***

Algebra 1 introduces students to variables, algebraic expressions, equations, inequalities, functions, and all their multiple representations. In this class, students will develop the ability to explore and solve real-world application problems, and communicate mathematical ideas clearly. This course lays the foundation for mathematical literacy that will help students be successful in every subsequent course in mathematics.

\*This course is offered based on availability. Students must meet a ***proficiency level on the Algebra 1 Readiness Test at the end of 7th grade to qualify for placement.***

### **Science 8**

Arizona Science Standards for 8th grade provide the opportunity to develop study habits and strengthen other valuable skills that we use everyday. Keeping an accurate and up-to-date interactive science notebook is a year-long project. Each unit ends with a project-based summative assessment where students get to work collaboratively to show off what they have learned. Students will experience the benefits of a strong routine but also be rewarded for time invested in catching up when the routine is broken.

### **Social Studies 8**

The focus of this course is citizenship and civic engagement in today's society. Students in 8th grade will take the ***Arizona Civics Assessment*** at the end of the course, which is a requirement to graduate high school. The studies include the foundations of the U.S. government, including historical events such as the American Revolution and Civil War. The students will study U.S. formal institutions, the the Constitution, Civil Rights and social movements, human rights, environmental issues, and they will study how terrorism influences citizens' safety and rights.