

Westwood Middle School Honors and Accelerated Classes

What Are the Traits of a Successful Honors Student?

Successful honors students will almost always display these traits.

Language Arts	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading achievement scores above the 85th percentile
<i>Reading Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads above grade level • Thinks critically and creatively • Makes logical inferences • Grasps underlying principles
<i>Writing Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes ideas when writing • Writes clearly and precisely • Provides details to support ideas • Uses rich vocabulary • Revises and edits
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows sustained effort • Completes work on time • Is self motivated

Social Studies	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading achievement scores above the 85th percentile in total reading and the informational comprehension strand.
<i>Social Studies Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in Social Studies is evident in the quality of questions • Reads avidly; reads across many topics and/or is singularly focused on one topic • Reads above grade level • Possesses a comfort in working with unfamiliar words and content • Makes logical inferences from ideas details in content • Connects ideas, themes, and issues related to Social Studies
<i>General Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employs a rich vocabulary • Possesses a keen memory • Is able to connect ideas across disciplines and/or time • Demonstrates the ability to think critically and abstractly • Demonstrates commitment to producing exemplary work • Works collaboratively and efficiently in groups

Science	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent reading and math achievement scores above the 85th percentile
<i>Science and general ability characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a keen interest in Science • Thinks critically • Thinks abstractly • Does well with problem solving • Connects ideas across disciplines
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays sustained effort • Completes work on time • Displays a positive attitude • Works well in groups

All Accelerated Math Classes	
<i>Mathematics characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks abstractly and logically • Connects concepts from different areas of mathematics • Understands and uses symbols to replace concepts, operations, ideas, and relationships • Isolates what they understand and what they don't • Formulates strategies and approaches to unique problems • Computes flexibly, accurately and efficiently • Extends their thinking
<i>Other characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays the willingness and persistence to practice (homework) to reinforce and solidify their thinking and skills. • Completes work on time
Algebra 1 (linear + exponential) in 7th grade; Algebra 2 (quadratic + rational) in 8th grade	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent math NWEA MAP achievement scores above the 85th percentile • Meets the criteria on the Problem Solving Assessment • Meets the criteria on the Iowa Algebra Readiness assessment
<i>Course requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completes previous required course with an average of B or better
Pre-Algebra in 6th grade; Algebra 1 & 2 in 7th grade; Geometry in 8th grade	
<i>Achievement tests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent math NWEA MAP achievement scores above the 95th percentile • Meets the criteria on the Problem Solving Assessment • Meets the criteria on the Iowa Algebra Readiness assessment
<i>Course requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully completes previous required course with an average of B or better

* In the regular math classes, teachers utilize personalization (a district initiative) and flexible grouping to challenge and support students.

What is an Honors Class?

An honors class parallels the curriculum offered in the corresponding regular class, but it provides more rigor and challenge to a range of students who are intellectually gifted and/or academically talented to maximize student achievement. As with a regular class, a teacher of an honors class develops and implements effective high-quality curriculum and instruction which recognizes the variance in learner needs.

How is an honors class different? Characteristics include:

Content:

1. Learning targets have expectations that are more complex, rigorous, and require deeper levels of cognition than a regular class.
2. Students apply knowledge, understandings and skills to contexts that are unfamiliar and dissimilar from those in a regular class.
3. Advanced/Alternative resources are matched to the learning targets.
4. Teaching and learning is focused on big ideas, themes, principles and issues.
5. Increased depth and breadth of connections between and/or within disciplines are evident.

Teaching and Learning:

1. Pace of teaching and learning is accelerated.
2. Consistent use of advanced levels of communication in oral and written form reflects the practices of the discipline.
3. Focus on complex thinking is ongoing and includes: deep levels of critical and creative thinking, multifaceted problem solving and meta-cognitive processes.
4. Greater levels of self directed learning and behavior, as well as, increased use of research strategies are present.
5. Assessments are linked to the more complex levels of teaching and learning.