

# EXPLORE KNOWLEDGE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS, 2008-2009

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Required Courses

Sixth grade students are required to enroll in the following courses of study:

**English  
Science**

**Mathematics  
Computers/P.E. (one semester each)**

**Reading  
Explorations**

Every sixth grade student will be enrolled in four CORE classes (English, mathematics, reading, and science). Physical Education, computer literacy, and an elective will also be required. Students will be placed in classes according to teacher recommendations and their most recent achievement test results. Daily practice in the form of homework and/or home study may be required each night in each subject and should be expected. Teachers are available on a daily basis before and/or after school to assist students.

### **English 6**

This one-year required course will develop students' writing, reading, speaking, listening, research and critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English Language Arts Standards. Grammar and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Selections from literature will be used as models for writing and as a means of developing critical thinking.

### **English 6 Accelerated**

This one-year course will develop students' writing, reading, speaking, listening, research and critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English/Language Arts Content Standards. Grammar, usage, and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Selections from literature will be used as models for writing and as a means of developing critical thinking. This is a required course for all sixth grade students.

### **Reading 6**

This one-year required course for all sixth grade students reinforces the development of strategic reading behaviors. This course emphasizes an interactive approach in which students construct meaning from text. The course focus is on utilizing vocabulary, thought processes, and strategies to become independent readers and learners.

### **Reading Accelerated 6**

This one-year required course for all sixth grade students reinforces the development of strategic reading behaviors. This course emphasizes an interactive approach in which students construct meaning from text. The course focus is on utilizing vocabulary, thought processes, and strategies to become independent readers and learners.

### **Science 6**

This one-year course for sixth-grade students focuses on understanding the living systems on Earth. Students will use scientific processes, protocols, and tools, including inquiry, to

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build understandings of living things and the interactions between living and non-living things. Critical thinking, collaboration, accuracy, and communication skills will be used as students develop a foundation for scientific literacy in life, earth, and physical science content. Technology, history and nature of science and career information will be integral components of this course. This course is required for sixth-grade students.

### **Mathematics 6**

This one-year course builds on previously learned concepts in developing new skills and mathematical fluency with decimals, fractions, percents, ratios, measurement, geometry, data analysis, probability, spatial relationships, and patterns. Problem solving, connections, reasoning, and communication are integrated throughout this course. The use of manipulatives, mathematical tools, and technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral part of this course. This course fulfills the mathematics requirement for sixth-grade students.

### **Mathematics Accelerated 6**

This one-year course is designed to increase mathematical fluency in problem solving, logic, reasoning, and effective communication. This course develops a deeper understanding of decimal and fraction operations, ratios, percents, measurement, and geometric concepts. In accelerated studies, students expand their work to include integers, and algebraic concepts. The use of manipulatives, mathematical tools, and technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral part of this course. This course fulfills the mathematics requirement for sixth-grade students.

### **Computer Literacy 6 (one semester)**

This **one-semester** course is designed to familiarize sixth grade students with computer terminology, keyboarding, and the use of the computer. Students will experience hands-on instruction in keyboarding, word processing, spreadsheet, database management, and multimedia presentations. Other aspects of the computer field that will be explored are computer ethics and computer-related career opportunities. This course will meet the computer literacy requirement for high school graduation.

### **Physical Education 6 (one semester)**

This **one-semester** course, required in grade six focuses on the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of the individual in cooperative and competitive settings. The student is provided with experiences in psychomotor skills, movement, and lifetime health-related fitness knowledge, skills, and values. The goals of this course are accomplished through participation in movement experiences and application of movement principles found in team sports, individual/dual sports, fitness and wellness activities, dance/rhythms, and lifetime recreational activities. Rules, strategies, and safety are emphasized in relation to active participation and development of knowledge spectators. Self-esteem is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum as is the exploration of career opportunities in related fields. This is a required course for all sixth grade students.

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Required Courses

Seventh grade students are required to enroll in the following courses of study:

**English**  
Reading/PE (one semester each)

**Mathematics**  
U.S./Nevada History

**Science 7**  
Explorations

To plan for student success, students will be placed in English, Mathematics, Reading, History, and Science classes according to teacher recommendations and their most recent achievement test results. Daily practice in the form of homework and/or home study may be required each night in each subject. Teachers are available on a daily basis before and/or after school to assist students.

### **English 7**

This one-year course will expand students' writing abilities and strengthen critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English Language Arts Standards. Grammar and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Selections from literature will be used as models for writing and as a means of developing critical thinking skills. All seventh-grade students are required to take an English course.

### **Accelerated English 7**

This one-year course will expand students' writing abilities and strengthen critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English Language Arts Standards. Grammar and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Selections from literature will be used as models for writing and as a means of developing critical thinking skills. This is a required course for all seventh grade students.

### **Reading 7**

This one-year required course for all seventh grade students reinforces the development of strategic reading behaviors. This course emphasizes an interactive approach in which students construct meaning from text. The course focus is on utilizing vocabulary, thought processes, and strategies to become independent readers and learners.

### **Accelerated Reading 7**

This one-year required course for all seventh grade students reinforces the development of strategic reading behaviors. This course emphasizes an interactive approach in which students construct meaning from text. The course focus is on utilizing vocabulary, thought processes, and strategies to become independent readers and learners.

### **Physical Education 7 (one semester)**

This **one-semester** course, required in grade seven focuses on the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of the individual in cooperative and competitive settings. The student is provided with experiences in psychomotor skills, movement, and lifetime health-related fitness knowledge, skills, and values. The goals of this course are accomplished

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through participation in movement experiences and application of movement principles found in team sports, individual/dual sports, fitness and wellness activities, dance/rhythms, and lifetime recreational activities. Rules, strategies, and safety are emphasized in relation to active participation and development of knowledge spectators. Self-esteem is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum as is the exploration of career opportunities in related fields. This is a required course for all seventh grade students.

### **United States History/Nevada History 7**

This one-year course is a study of American history from the time of the early North American inhabitants to the present. Students will be introduced to the people and events that contributed to the development of our nation as they explore the impact of economic, political, social, and technological ideas. The history of Nevada will be integrated throughout the year. This is a required course for all seventh grade students.

### **Mathematics 7**

This one-year course is designed to increase mathematical fluency in problem solving, logic, reasoning, and effective communication. This course builds on the concepts of number operations with integers, decimals, and rational numbers, problem solving and reasoning skills, data analysis, probability, geometry, measurement, spatial relationships, patterns, and algebraic concepts. The use of technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral part of this course. This course fulfills the mathematics requirement for seventh-grade students.

### **Accelerated Mathematics 7**

This one-year course is designed to increase mathematical fluency in problem solving, logic, reasoning, and effective communication. This course builds on algebraic and geometric relationships, as well as problem solving, communication, reasoning, and connections. It focuses on the concepts of number operations with integers, rational numbers, data analysis, probability, geometry, measurement, patterns, and algebraic concepts. The use of technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral part of this course. This course fulfills the mathematics requirement for seventh-grade students.

### **Science 7**

This one-year course for seventh-grade students focuses on understanding Earth and Space science systems. Students will use scientific processes, protocols, and tools, including inquiry, to build understanding of Earth's structure and place in the Solar System, atmospheric processes, and composition of matter. Critical thinking, collaboration, accuracy, and communication skills will be practiced as students extend their scientific literacy. This course is required for seventh-grade students.

### **Accelerated Science 7**

This one-year course for seventh-grade students focuses on understanding Earth and Space science systems. Students will use scientific processes, protocols, and tools, including inquiry, to build understanding of Earth's structure and place in the Solar System, atmospheric processes, and composition of matter. Critical thinking, collaboration,

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accuracy, and communication skills will be practiced as students extend their scientific literacy.

## 8th Grade Required Courses

Eighth grade students are required to enroll in the following courses of study:

<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science 8</b>
<b>World Geography</b>	<b>Health &amp; Fitness/P.E. (one semester each)</b>	
<b>Explorations or Spanish I</b>		

To plan for student success, students will be placed in English, Mathematics, World Geography, and Science classes according to teacher recommendations and their most recent achievement test results. Daily practice in the form of homework and/or home study may be required each night in each subject. Teachers are available on a daily basis before and/or after school to assist students.

### **Math 8**

This one-year course is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to be prepared for Algebra. It is intended to increase mathematical fluency in problem solving, logic, reasoning, and effective communication. This course builds on the concepts of number operations with integers, decimals, rational numbers, data analysis, probability, geometry, measurement, spatial relationships, patterns, and algebraic concepts. The use of technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral part of this course. This course fulfills the mathematics requirement for eighth-grade students.

### **Pre-Algebra 8**

This one-year course is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully complete algebra and geometry. This course builds on the concepts of number operations with integers, decimals, and rational numbers, word problems and reasoning skills, data analysis, probability, geometry, measurement, spatial sense, patterns, and beginning algebra. Problem solving using a graphing calculator as an instructional tool is an integral part of this course.

### **Algebra I/Algebra I Honors**

This one-year course is designed for highly motivated students committed to challenging coursework. It is intended to increase mathematical fluency in problem solving, logic, reasoning, and effective communication in the study of patterns, functions, and algebra. This course builds on the concepts of rational and irrational numbers, data analysis, probability, geometry, measurement, spatial relationships, patterns, and algebraic concepts. Emphasis will be placed on abstract algebraic methods and strategies for solving complex problems. The use of technology, including calculators and computer software, is an integral

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part of this course. This course will fulfill the algebra requirement and one of the mathematics credits required for high school graduation.

### **English 8**

This one-year course will expand students' writing, reading, speaking, listening, and research skills, and will strengthen critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English Language Arts Standards. Grammar and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Literature selections will also serve as models for writing. All eighth grade students are required to complete a full year of English.

### **Accelerated English 8**

This one-year course will expand students' writing, reading, speaking, listening, and research skills, and will strengthen critical thinking skills. All lessons will relate to the Nevada State English Language Arts Standards. Grammar and mechanics will be taught as essential elements of writing as a process. Literature selections will also serve as models for writing. This is a required course for all eighth grade students.

### **World Geography and Cultures 8**

This one-year course will examine both the physical and human aspects of geography. Students will explore earth's physical systems in a global context and its human systems in a regional one. Students will utilize the geographic skills of acquiring, organizing, and analyzing information to both ask and answer geographic questions. Four unique and diverse perspectives will be used as a frame of reference: the spatial, the ecological, the historical, and the economic. Students will come to understand concepts, patterns, and interdependent relationships that shape our increasingly diverse world. This is a required course for all eighth grade students.

### **Science 8**

This year-long course for eighth-grade students provides the physical science explanations that extend understandings developed in previous science courses. Students will use scientific processes, protocols, and tools, including inquiry, to build understanding of structures, patterns, and relationships explained through the physical sciences. Critical thinking, collaboration, accuracy, and communication skills will be emphasized as students refine their scientific literacy. This course is required for eighth-grade students.

### **Accelerated Science 8**

This year-long course for eighth-grade students provides the physical science explanations that extend understandings developed in previous science courses. Students will use scientific processes, protocols, and tools, including inquiry, to build understanding of structures, patterns, and relationships explained through the physical sciences. Critical thinking, collaboration, accuracy, and communication skills will be emphasized as students refine their scientific literacy.

### **Health 8 (one semester)**

This **one-semester** course is designed to introduce students to the mental, physical, social, emotional, and environmental aspects of human wellness. The course will include concepts

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for achieving a healthy body and healthy mental attitudes. Other topics studied are body systems, health hazards, diseases, safety, and first aid. Human sexuality and sexually transmitted infectious disease education, within established guidelines, will be an integral part of this course. This is a required course for all eighth-grade students.

### **Physical Education 8 (one semester)**

This **one-semester** course, required in grade eight, focuses on the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of the individual in cooperative and competitive settings. The student is provided with experiences in psychomotor skills, movement, and lifetime health-related fitness knowledge, skills, and values. The goals of this course are accomplished through participation in movement experiences and application of movement principles found in team sports, individual/dual sports, fitness and wellness activities, dance/rhythms, and lifetime recreational activities. Rules, strategies, and safety are emphasized in relation to active participation and development of knowledge spectators. Self-esteem is incorporated into all areas of the curriculum as is the exploration of career opportunities in related fields. This is a required course for all eighth grade students.

### **Explorations/Electives**

When selecting an exploration class or elective, students should make choices, in order of preference, because it is not always possible to ensure that all students will receive the first subject they selected. Students will remain in the selected elective for the duration of the course (semester or year). All exploration class and elective class placements are based upon staff allocation.

### ***Fine Arts***

#### **Art**

##### **Beginning Art (6-8)**

This is a one-year discipline-based course designed to develop essential basic skills of expression in visual art. It offers opportunities to expand knowledge of historical and cultural developments to define aesthetics and art criticism. A variety of media are used to foster visually literate and creative students. This is an elective course for Middle School beginning art students. The fee for this course is \$10.00 per semester.

##### **Intermediate Art (6-8)**

This one-year course is designed to develop essential basic skills of expression and understanding in art. All art experiences are an extension of the elementary discipline-based art program and stress exploratory and experimental approaches in understanding, creating, and responding to art. The fee for this class is \$15.00.

##### **Advanced Art (7-8)**

This one-year, discipline-based art course is designed to develop and expand visual art knowledge and skills in order to express ideas imaginatively. It offers continuing opportunities to expand knowledge of historical and cultural developments to provide a basis for aesthetic judgments. Experiences are general in nature. A variety of media are used to

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foster visual, literate and creative students. This is an elective course for eighth grade students. The fee for this course is \$20.00.

## ***General Electives***

### **Aide Positions**

#### **Student Aides 8**

This **one-semester** course is designed to allow students to assist teachers in classroom management. Under the direction of a supervising teacher, students will gain experience in clerical duties, laboratory assistance, working with faculty members, and following directions. Students are assigned supervising teachers by a formal application process. This is an elective course for eighth grade students.

### **Computers**

#### **Introductory Web Design (6-8)**

This one-year course is designed to introduce students to the use of technology as a creative tool. Students will gain a working knowledge of computers and acquire a basic knowledge of hypertext markup language (HTML), site design, and layout theory. Students will be introduced to techniques using graphics, audio, and video to enhance their web designs. This elective course will not meet the computer competency requirement for high school graduation.

#### **Cybertech (7-8)**

This one-year course is an introduction to the maintenance of computer systems and is designed to prepare seventh-grade and eighth-grade students with the skills needed to maintain computer systems and prepare them for the equivalent high school course in CyberCorps. This course will provide students with opportunities to work with teachers to resolve networking problems using a systematic troubleshooting approach. This course may be repeated.

#### **WebTech (6-8)**

This one-year hands-on course is designed to further develop students' knowledge of web design and multimedia software; it provides students with advanced skills necessary to assist teachers with web- and non-web-based applications and with basic troubleshooting of software and hardware problems. Students will receive intensive instruction in web design applications, presentations, graphics, publications, and utility software. Students must have successfully mastered the skills in Introduction to Web Design as a prerequisite for this course. This elective course will not meet the computer competency requirement for high school graduation.

#### **Introductory Multimedia (6-8)**

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This one-year course is designed to introduce students to the use of technology as a creative tool. Students will gain a working knowledge of computers, as well as acquire a basic knowledge of graphic design to create attractive designs and layouts, multimedia presentations and computerized publications. Students will be introduced to various forms of software in graphics, audio, video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web page software. This elective course will not meet the computer competency requirement for high school graduation.

### **Computer Literacy 8**

This **semester course** is designed to expand the eighth grader's knowledge of the computer. Personal computer applications, career opportunities, and ethics of computer use will be studied. The course will include study in the use of word processing, information management, and electronic spreadsheets. Computer programming, desktop publishing, and multimedia will be explored. This eighth grade elective course will meet the computer literacy requirement for high school graduation.

### **Drama**

#### **Introduction to Drama 6**

This one-year course is designed to introduce middle school magnet students to the theatre by providing a basic study in the fundamentals of oral and dramatic communication, as well as theatre content to include: intent, structure, effectiveness, and value. Class work will focus on student performance and participation through demonstration of various acting skills with an emphasis on types and techniques that utilize the vocal, physical, and emotional aspects of acting. Group dynamics, body movement, pantomime, vocal techniques, monologues, theatre history, scenes, and performance skills will be covered. This course is a prerequisite for Intermediate Acting. This is an elective course for sixth grade students. There is a \$10.00 fee for this course.

#### **Intermediate Acting (7-8)**

This one-year course is designed for middle school magnet students who have successfully completed the Introductory Drama 6 class or experienced in-depth school-related performance or community theatre exposure. Students will improve and demonstrate acting skills through reading, writing, interpreting, rehearsing, and performing. Development and refinement of acting skills will be enhanced through continued work in body movement, vocal techniques, characters, script production and analysis, monologue, and script performance. Group interaction will be emphasized to provide cooperation and appreciation for individual differences. Continuous emphasis will be placed on awareness and creative self-expression in order to increase knowledge of the theatre arts concept and encourage social adjustment. Participation in theatre production will be required. The prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Drama. This is an elective course for seventh grade students. There is a \$10.00 fee for this course.

#### **Drama 8**

This one-year course is designed to provide a basic study in the fundamentals of oral and dramatic communication. The course will emphasize the various types and techniques of

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public speaking as well as the vocal, physical, and emotional aspects of acting. This is an elective course for eighth grade students. There is a \$10.00 fee for this course.

### Foreign Language

#### **Spanish I (8)**

This one-year course is designed to acquaint students with the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing Spanish within a limited scope. The focus is communication in Spanish, incorporating understanding of Hispanic cultures, connecting with other disciplines, comparing native language to Spanish, and participating in multicultural communities. The course provides practice in correct use of basic vocabulary and language structures to enable students to function effectively within realistic settings. This course will fulfill one of the elective credits required for graduation. **The grade earned in this course is recorded on the student's high school transcript and is calculated into his/her high school grade point average.**

### Humanities

#### **Introduction to Humanities 6**

This **one-semester** survey course is designed to introduce middle school students to the historical and aesthetic value of literature, drama, music, and art. An early appreciation is integral to the students' sensitivity to other cultures which will be developed in future courses. This is an elective course. Optional extension activities are provided to allow for this course to be offered for one semester.

#### **Introduction to Humanities 7**

This **one-semester** survey course is designed to introduce seventh graders to both the historical and aesthetic values of literature, drama, music, and art. An early appreciation of these arts is integral to the students' understanding of other cultures which will be developed in future course work in the humanities. The course content will be thematically based with both a historical and modern approach. This course is one of the explorations' optional components for seventh grade students.

#### **Cultural Awareness (6-8)**

This **one-semester** explorations course is designed to assist seventh grade students in enhancing academic achievement by recognizing their own cultural identities and exploring issues of racism, immigration, and shared heritage. The course provides theme-based, structured learning activities which instill an understanding of the importance of positive communication, respect for ethnic heritage, and appreciation for the cultural diversity within the community, nation, and world.

### Journalism/Communications

#### **Publications 7**

This one-year course is designed as an introduction to journalism and layout design. In schools where applicable, concepts of journalism will be applied through publication of the

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school newspaper and school yearbook. This is an elective course for seventh grade students.

### **Publications 8**

This one-year course is designed as an introduction to journalism and layout design. In schools where applicable, concepts of journalism will be applied through publication of the school newspaper and school yearbook. This is an elective course for eighth grade students.

### **Leadership (7-8)**

The one-year course will provide middle school students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Time will be used in and out of class for students to implement projects associated with their responsibilities.

### **Study Skills**

#### **Study Skills 7**

This **one-semester** course is designed to give seventh grade students insights on how they learn and how they can take control of their own learning to improve their grades. Students will receive instruction to strengthen their understanding and integration of ideas and skill contained in content lessons. This course is one of the explorations' optional components for seventh grade students.

#### **Study Skills 8**

This **one-semester** course is designed to give eighth grade students insights on how they learn school-related skills and how they can improve their grades. Students will receive instruction to enhance the understanding and integration of ideas and skills contained in content lessons. This is an elective course for eighth grade students.