

Important Events

- **Parent Event:** College Admissions: Understanding Today's System (Sept. 25, 2023)
- **Student & Parent Event:** Grade 9 Academic Planning (Oct. 5, 2023)
- **Student Event:** Grade 9 LIFE session with Kelly Horan (Nov. 2, 2023)
- **Parent Event:** Grade 9 & 10 College Night & Course Selection (Jan. 23, 2024)

Frequently asked questions

Should my student take four years of a modern or classical language?

At Harker, students taking classes of interest is our priority. A few colleges recommend that applicants have four years of the same foreign language on their high school transcript, which is interpreted as study of a non-native language through level four. Since Harker's graduation requirement is completion through level three with one year at the upper school, continuing in the same language is a personal decision for the student.

What does the school advise concerning self-study AP® exams?

The Harker School believes strongly in the strength of our curriculum and the value of learning on our campus with our teachers. Therefore, we do not encourage a student to take AP exams in which the student did not take the corresponding AP course (referred to as "Self-Study exams.") If a student chooses to self-study, the student may not take the corresponding AP course after sitting for the AP exam in the subject. Please see page 12 of the student handbook for more information.

What is included on Harker's transcript?

The information on Harker's transcripts includes the courses each student completes at Harker and has planned during the academic year as well as the overall grade earned for completed classes. Yearly GPA and cumulative GPA are also included. Transcripts are updated at the end of each semester, and unofficial transcripts are available in Infinite Campus. The Harker transcript does not include scores from standardized tests (PSAT/SAT/ACT/AP) nor course work that is completed outside of Harker.

Can my child drop a class?

While it is highly unlikely that a ninth grader would want to drop a class, students wishing to change their schedules should consult with their advisor and academic counselor. The upper school division head must approve all such proposed changes after the first two weeks of a semester. Student-initiated class level changes or class drops will not be considered after Nov. 1 for semester 1 or April 1 for semester 2 classes.

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The Harker School

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OfC: 9/18/23 (RM) 200

Academic Planning & College Counseling Guidance

GRADE 9



HARKER
Est. 1893 · K-12 College Prep

College Counseling & Four-Year Academic Planning:

During ninth grade, students focus on successfully transitioning to the upper school and learning about the multitude of available opportunities. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to attend an academic planning meeting in which they examine Harker's graduation requirements and begin to draft their four-year plans. This educational session will provide families with all the information needed to develop an educated plan for high school. If more information is desired, parents and students can visit the Academic Planning tile on the parent and student portals. With a four-year plan draft, students will have questions answered at the November LIFE session by Ms. Horan. Individual planning meetings can be requested as needed.

Extracurricular activities

Participating in extracurricular activities is a critical component of the high school experience. Harker offers a plethora of options including programs, athletics and clubs. During grade 9, we encourage students to try new activities that may not have been offered or of interest at a younger age. These opportunities can prove to be as impactful for adolescent development as academic courses. In their exploration, we encourage students to be realistic about the time commitments in all areas of their lives.

Course selection: January 2024

Course selection is the process by which students select their academic classes for the following academic year. We begin this process as a school in early January, and the school will use students' saved selections in the Academic Plan of Infinite Campus as the starting point for their classes the following year. Creating a four-year plan helps in this process as students have investigated options and deliberately chosen the next classes they want to take.

Sophomores must take classes that satisfy the English 2, math, chemistry and World History 2 requirements. Language, if three years has not been completed, is also a must. Students have freedom in choosing electives for grade 10. While many questions are answered on the academic planning site, academic counselors, advisors and subject teachers are also excellent resources when students have questions.

Summer

Students are encouraged to explore ways to pursue their interests that align with how the family would like to allocate resources. There is no one correct way to spend a summer, and many options exist. Here are some points to consider:

- For students who qualify for and would like to take AP Chemistry in grade 10, the Summer Institute four-week course is required. The Summer Institute also offers other interesting for-credit as well as enrichment classes. Registration for Summer Institute classes will open at the end of January with a priority window for current Harker families.
- When researching summer programs/opportunities, we encourage families to be savvy consumers. While many programs are housed on university campuses, very few of those programs have any impact on college admissions.
- Should a summer program require a teacher recommendation, the student should follow Harker's process and ask the teacher no less than four weeks in advance following the process outlined in Schoology. It is helpful for our teachers' workloads if a student asks as few teachers as possible.

Standardized tests

- **PSAT:** Students will take the PSAT at Harker in October of grades 10 and 11. Harker oversees the registration process.
- **SAT or ACT:** Students are encouraged to sit for the SAT or ACT at least once by the end of grade 11. This will allow a student to take another standardized test in the fall of grade 12, if so desired. Students will be most successful on the math section of either test once they have completed an Algebra 2 course.
- **Advanced Placement Exams:** Students who are currently taking an Advanced Placement course are required, as part of the course curriculum, to sit for the AP exam in May. The school oversees the registration process for these exams. AP scores are never factored into the grades students earn in their coursework.

Harker Graduation Requirement Progress Check (Grade 9)

- Complete classes that satisfy the World History 1, English 1, physics, math, language and art requirements.
- Earn at least 6 academic credits this year.
- Begin to earn P.E. credits (2.0 credits are needed to graduate). Students should contact Mr. Alfredo Alves at alfredo.alves@harker.org with any questions.
- Work toward earning 30 Community Service hours by spring break of grade 11.