

## 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 highly selective 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 at Harker (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.

### ***How does my student access transcripts?***

To request official transcripts, students must use Parchment, a third party service provider. For students who have not already created their Parchment accounts, they should create their free account, which is used for all official transcript requests not related to college applications and will also be the vehicle for any requests your child makes as an alum. Unofficial transcripts can also be accessed through Parchment or through Infinite Campus.

### ***Should my student take the SAT or ACT?***

Deciding to take the SAT, the ACT or both is a personal decision. In order to make this choice, it is recommended that students take a diagnostic test for both. The PSAT serves as a diagnostic for the SAT. Students can also take an ACT diagnostic to see which test best suits their testing style and strengths.

### ***Can my child drop a class?***

Students wishing to change their schedules should consult with their advisor or academic counselor; the upper school 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.

AP® and Advanced Placement® are registered trademarks of the College Board. Used with permission.

## **The Harker School**

**Upper School** | 500 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose, CA 95129 | 408.249.2510

# Academic Planning & College Counseling Guidance

---

GRADE 10

---



## Extracurricular activities

It is important that students strike a balance between course load and extracurricular activities. In grade 9, students might have dabbled in many different activities; we encourage tenth graders to cull those activities for which they have waning interest. As academic expectations increase, students should dedicate their time to activities outside of the classroom for which they are most passionate.

## Standardized tests

- **PSAT:** Students took the PSAT at Harker on Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2023. This administration of the PSAT offers tenth graders an opportunity to gain experience taking a standardized test. While this score will be included on their College Board account, the scores are not shared with colleges or universities. The grade 10 PSAT can provide a true baseline understanding of the student's performance.
- **SAT or ACT:** Students are encouraged to sit for the SAT or ACT at least once by the end of eleventh grade (June is not too late). 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 if they have completed an Algebra 2 course.

## College Counseling:

After transitioning in grade 9, tenth graders have more space to begin to think about their futures. Important during this time is for students to focus on investigating their own interests, aptitudes and preferences. Students are encouraged to build a list of qualities they would like in a college or university. Qualities to consider include size, location, public or private, and more. These efforts will narrow students' search parameters and assist them in identifying institutions and programs of interest when individualized college counseling begins in grade 11.

## Course selection: January 2024

As tenth graders, students can function more independently on course selection than in ninth grade. Course selection happens through the Infinite Campus Academic Planning Module; the school uses the saved selections as the starting point for their classes the following year.

During grade 11, students must take classes that satisfy the English 3, math, biology, and U.S. history requirements. Language, if three years has not been completed, is also required. Students have freedom in choosing electives for grade 11. Teachers, advisors and academic counselors are excellent resources for students who have questions about prospective courses and course loads. Should students wish to revisit their four-year plan, they can schedule an appointment with Kelly Horan by contacting Eric Lee.

## 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:

- When researching summer programs/opportunities, we encourage families to be savvy consumers. While many programs are housed on university campuses, it is rare for those programs to impact that college's 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. It is helpful for our teachers' workloads if a student asks as few teachers as possible.
- For students who qualify for and would like to take AP Biology in grade 11, the Summer Institute four-week summer course is required. The Summer Institute also offers other interesting for-credit as well as enrichment classes.

## Important Events

- **Parent Event:** College Admissions: Understanding Today's System (Sept. 25, 2023)
- **Student Event:** PSAT (Oct. 11, 2023)
- **Parent event:** Grade 9 & 10 College Night & Course Selection (Jan. 23, 2024)

## Harker Graduation Requirement Progress Check (Grade 10)

- Complete classes that satisfy the World History 2, English 2, chemistry and math requirements.
- Earn at least 5 academic credits this year.
- Continue to earn PE. credits (2.0 credits are needed to graduate). Students should contact Mr. Alfredo Alves at [alfredo.alves@harker.org](mailto:alfredo.alves@harker.org) with any questions.
- Work toward earning 30 Community Service hours by spring break of grade 11.