



Dear new Harker Eagles – students and parents!

Welcome to Harker! There are some logistics to arrange and a few choices to make now so that you are set to start high school at Harker in the fall. This letter informs you about your options so you can make confident decisions about your course selections. In addition to these subjects, we will place you in English, math, history and your choice of foreign language (if starting at a level higher than level 1) based on a proficiency evaluation and your application materials. Science placement is based on your math placement.

Action items

Make all your choices in the [online form](#) by April 4. The information below will guide you in making these decisions.

- ☐ Confirm your attendance for Proficiency Evaluations on April 19
- ☐ Select a foreign language
- ☐ Select two choices for yearlong Study of the Arts course
- ☐ Choose an Extra Period Option

2025 Proficiency Evaluations Saturday, April 19

Check-in: 8 a.m., ends by 12:30 p.m.

Math

The math proficiency evaluations evaluate a student's knowledge of the topics normally covered in the math course the student is taking this year in eighth grade, to determine the next best math class and level. The evaluation is 1.5 hours. Please see the [list of topics](#) covered on the math proficiency evaluation. You are encouraged to review before the evaluation.

Please note: Our scoring process takes into consideration the fact that students currently enrolled in a course have not completed all the topics in the curriculum.

Modern and Classical Languages

You will need to decide if you are continuing a language you already study or are starting a new language. If you are continuing a language (Spanish, French, Latin, Mandarin or Japanese), you will take the written and oral proficiency evaluation. You may review the [topics covered at each level](#). You will receive an email to schedule the oral part of the evaluations over Zoom during the weeks after April 19 in the 3-5 p.m. time frame. For those starting a language at level 1, please indicate first and second choice of languages because we are only able to guarantee level 1 for Spanish at this time.

English

During the English proficiency evaluation, you will select one of two short pieces of literature. Once you have carefully read the work, you will construct a one-page explanation of its meaning. Your 30-minute paragraph response will be evaluated on the basis of content, style and mechanics.

History

There will be a 30-minute assessment that includes multiple choice and short answer questions designed to evaluate historical analysis and writing. Knowledge of particular historical facts is not tested.

Other Course Selections

Study of the Arts

The "Study of" courses fulfill a graduation and University of California eligibility requirement. There are four options: Study of Dance, Study of Music, Study of Theater Arts or Study of Visual Arts. More detailed descriptions are in the online form. Very simply, choose two courses that sound interesting to you! All of these courses are academic and include "doing" some of the art.

Extra Period Option

The Extra Period Option (EPO) list contains courses that add spice to the more traditional subjects above. With the exception of the P.E. classes and a free period which are ungraded and not for academic credit, your EPO course earns you a half academic credit for the full year. You may choose only one EPO; you will receive a grade for this course, it goes on your transcript, and it counts toward your GPA. You may leave this as a free period (check that box) which allows for more time in the school day to focus on your six academic courses. This can be a good strategy for students who have significant, yearlong after-school activities such as sports or performing arts.

The EPO options are*:

Free Period	Introduction to Journalism
Choir	Lab (Jazz) Band
Principles of Business and Entrepreneurship	Orchestra
Harker Dance Company/Kinetic Krew+	P.E.: Personal Fitness+++
Introduction to Speech & Debate	
Intermediate Speech & Debate++	

The strategy for choosing an Extra Period Option should be to pursue an interest, either new or previously established. When students pursue their interests and build an on-campus community, they report more satisfaction and engagement inside and outside of academic classes. That is why we would like you to take the time and think through your choices now. In the fall, there will be attention paid to creating a four year academic plan through assemblies and meetings. Right now your focus should only be on these grade 9 choices so that you start high school with confidence.

If you have any questions, please start by contacting the admission officers (admissionus@harker.org), who can answer most questions. They can figure out the best person to answer your question if they are unable to do so.

Welcome to Harker, and I hope you are excited to start this next phase of your educational journey! We are excited to see you on our campus soon!

Sincerely,

Kelly Horan, Assistant Upper School Division Head

*Please [contact program directors](#) with any questions about these EPO options.

+ Kinetic Krew and Harker Dance Company are by audition only. Kinetic Krew is our advanced hip hop performance team and its auditions will take place Tues., April 22, 4:15-6 p.m. Harker Dance Company is for advanced technically trained dancers with an emphasis on jazz and contemporary styles and its auditions will take place on Thurs., April 24, 4:15-6 p.m. If you are interested in auditioning this spring, please email Mrs. Haun at rachelle.haun@harker.org for more information.

++ Please contact Ms. Achten (jenny.achten@harker.org) if you have significant middle school debate experience and would like to apply to the intermediate class.

+++ Personal Fitness is offered during the school day for P.E. credit. Sign-ups for after-school P.E. (Fencing, Yoga or Capoeira) occur during the first weeks of school. Students interested in competitive sports will receive information from Dan Molin, athletic director, after May 1.



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