

2021-2022 Hingham Middle School Guidelines for Recommendations

ELA

All teachers in grades 6-8 are asked to make course level recommendations in March. These recommendations reflect the current teacher's assessment of the most appropriate placement for each student for the next year. Appropriate placement is intended to maximize the ability of each student to be productively engaged, motivated, organized, and successful.

In addition to considering a student's overall performance in class and on standardized/state assessments, teachers use the following guidelines in making their recommendations:

	Reading	Writing/Language	Speaking/Listening
Level 2	<p>Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical reading and thinking• Inferential reasoning• Pace, fluency	<p>Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure, logic, and development of ideas• Mechanics• Expression	<p>Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal articulation of ideas• Analysis/synthesis of ideas
Level 3	<p>Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical reading and thinking• Inferential reasoning• Pace, fluency	<p>Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure, logic, and development of ideas• Mechanics• Expression	<p>Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal articulation of ideas• Analysis/synthesis of ideas

Level 4	<p>Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reading and thinking • Inferential reasoning • Pace, fluency 	<p>Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, logic, and development of ideas • Mechanics • Expression 	<p>Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal articulation of ideas • Analysis/synthesis of ideas
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Descriptions of each course at each level may be found in the current Program of Studies, which is available on the school website.

Parents with questions about a particular recommendation should contact their child's English teacher.

SOCIAL STUDIES

All teachers in Grades 6-11 are asked to make course level recommendations. These recommendations reflect the current teacher's assessment of the most appropriate placement for each student for the next year. Appropriate placement is intended to maximize the ability of each student to be productively engaged, motivated, organized, and successful.

	Reading	Writing	Historical Thinking
Level 1 HHS Only: Advanced Placement	<p>Superior ability; high level of independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical reading and thinking • Inferential reasoning • Pace, vocabulary 	<p>Superior ability; high level of independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure, logic, and development of ideas • Mechanics • Expression 	<p>Superior ability; high level of independence in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causation, comparison and contextualization • Analysis/synthesis of historical evidence

Level 2 HHS: Honors HMS: Advanced	Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical reading and thinking ● Inferential reasoning ● Pace, vocabulary 	Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure, logic, and development of ideas ● Mechanics ● Expression 	Excellent ability; demonstrates independence in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Causation, comparison and contextualization ● Analysis/synthesis of historical evidence
Level 3 HHS: College Prep HMS: Upper Standard	Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical reading and thinking ● Inferential reasoning ● Pace, vocabulary 	Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure, logic, and development of ideas ● Mechanic ● Expression 	Above average to average ability; needs some support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Causation, comparison and contextualization ● Analysis/synthesis of historical evidence
Level 4 Standard	Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critical reading and thinking ● Inferential reasoning ● Pace, vocabulary 	Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure, logic, and development of ideas ● Mechanics ● Expression 	Average to below average ability; needs ongoing support in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Causation, comparison and contextualization ● Analysis/synthesis of historical evidence

SCIENCE

All students at Hingham Middle School pursue an engaging and rigorous course of scientific study through participation in our hands-on, standards-based science program. Grade 6 science classes are heterogeneously grouped (unlevelled); in Grades 7 and 8 science classes are leveled, as described in the HMS Program of Studies. Science teachers consider a variety of factors in determining their recommendations, including assessment of a student's verbal, analytical, quantitative and study skills. Multiple data points are also considered, including science and math course grades, test averages and standardized test scores, when available. Appropriate placement is intended to maximize the ability of each student to be productively engaged and successful.

Criteria for Success	Level 2 <i>Advanced</i>	Level 3 <i>Upper Standard</i>	Level 4 <i>Standard</i>
<p>Verbal/Analytical Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Ability to read, interpret and analyze complex informational science text.· Ability to decode and master complex scientific vocabulary.· Ability to write lab reports and science essays with appropriate structure, logic, and coherence.· Ability to coherently articulate scientific principles and processes in class discussion.	Student independently meets all criteria.	Student meets criteria with some support.	Student requires significant support to meet criteria.

<p>Quantitative Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to generate tables and graphs from experimental data. Ability to interpret and articulate trends in scientific data sets. Ability to manipulate equations (e.g.—chemical equations; motion equations). Ability to apply mathematical skills to “real world” science case studies (e.g.—Punnett Squares). 	Student independently meets all criteria.	Student meets criteria with some support.	Student requires significant support to meet criteria.
<p>Study Skills/Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student is self-motivated and takes ownership of learning. Student independently organizes class materials, maintains agenda book of assignments, and exercises appropriate time management. Projects and homework are completed thoroughly and promptly, without reminders. Student studies effectively for tests, independently identifies areas of confusion, and seeks help without prompting. 	Student independently meets all criteria.	Student meets criteria with some support.	Student requires significant support to meet criteria.

MATH **MIDDLE SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION GUIDELINES**

Our fundamental goal is to place children in classes where the pace and rigor meets the student at their current development. We want students to enjoy math class and to develop confidence in their abilities. We have expanded our offerings to create a multitude of options that focus on students’ current academic needs while ensuring that doors remain open for future growth. **In particular, students who are not in Level 2 (honors) Pre-Algebra in grade 7 have multiple opportunities to work their way to the honors sequence by high school if it is deemed appropriate.**

We recognize that the process of making recommendations is an imperfect system. There will always be students in gray areas where teachers have to make their best judgment. In general, it is easier to switch from Level 2 to Level 3 than the other way around. (Please see the

Differences Between L2 and L3 at the end of this document.) However, our model is built on growth over time so that students who develop later have opportunities at 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grade to move to a different sequence of courses. Placing students where they will feel comfortable and can build confidence with new material is our first priority.

In general, the following guidelines are traditionally used within the math department for making recommendations. Please note that we are in a unique year where grades do not tell the full picture of a student. In order to help engage students in hybrid learning this year, there has been a shift to providing more credit for classwork and homework completion. We felt this was an appropriate action to take, but in regards to recommendations this means that simply meeting a “target grade” does not mean that we will recommend a student forward. However, we also felt that it was important to leave our “traditional” standards in place so that we have a guidepost for these decisions and for conversations with parents. The HMS math department will have multiple professional development times dedicated to discussing/making recommendations and also ensuring a smooth transition to the high school.

(Note for clarification: There is no Level 1 at HMS. It is reserved for AP classes at HHS)

From Grade 6: There are many reasons that students could be successful in grade 6 math that may not necessarily make them as successful in grade 7. A high grade in 6th grade does not always correlate to having the independence, math acuity, computational speed, math intuition, and problem solving skills to be successful in the grade 7 Pre-Algebra courses. Grade 6 teachers take these traits into account and also consider multiple data points when making their recommendation, including: Semester 1 Grade, a skills benchmark test, the Chapter 5 test, and grade 5 MCAS.

In a very broad generalization, students with strong A grades will be recommended for L2 Pre-Algebra. Students with grades that range from B+ to A- will typically be recommended for L3 Pre-Algebra. Students below a B+ will be recommended for Math 7. These grades are a generalization and teachers need to consider the impact of test and quiz corrections on a student's overall performance.

From Math 7: Students who have earned an A in Math 7 typically take Math 8 with Algebra. Students who earn below an A typically take Math 8. In both instances, teachers must take into account a student's ability to work independently and whether the student's grade reflects significant extra help with or revision of tests and quizzes.

From L3 Pre-Algebra: Students in this course who have earned a strong B+ or better will typically be recommended for L3 Algebra 1 - Quadratic Emphasis. Students who have not completely mastered the material of this course will take L3 Math 8 with Algebra in grade 8 to ensure that they have learned the most important foundational skills before proceeding to a full Algebra 1 course during their freshman year.

From L2 Pre-Algebra: Students with strong B+ averages or better are considered, in conjunction with their math acuity and computational speed for L2 Algebra 1. Students with B to high C averages will be recommended for Algebra 1 – Quadratic Emphasis. Other students are recommended for Math 8 with Algebra. **Students who earn below a C- are not allowed to remain in the honors curriculum for next year.**

From Math 8: Most students will be recommended for Algebra 1 – Linear Emphasis. Students with strong A grades (who achieve that grade with a high level of independence) may be recommended for Algebra 1 – Quadratic Emphasis.

From Math 8 with Algebra: Students who earn a B or better are recommended for Algebra 1 – Quadratic Emphasis. Students who earn below a B should take Algebra 1- Linear Emphasis.

From 8th grade Algebra 1 – Quadratic Emphasis: The majority of students will be recommended for L3 Geometry – Quadratic Emphasis. Students with strong A averages may be considered for L2 Geometry. Students who earn grades in the low B range or below will be recommended to repeat Algebra 1 - Quadratic Emphasis as a freshman to ensure success in future Algebra based courses at HHS. Our data has shown that students in this grade range who do not repeat the course to solidify their Algebra 1 knowledge struggle significantly in high school. **Students who do not earn a C- must repeat Algebra 1** and will be recommended for Algebra 1 – Linear Emphasis.

From L2 Algebra 1: Students with B- or better are considered in conjunction with their math acuity and computational speed for L2 Geometry. Students who earn a C+ or below are recommended for L3 Geometry. **Students who earn below a C- are not allowed to remain in the honors curriculum and should be recommended for Algebra 1- Quadratic Emphasis.**

Summary of the Differences between Levels 2 and 3 in Mathematics

1. Level 2 pacing is much faster than Level 3. In Level 3 good teaching requires substantial re-teaching and practice in both skills and concepts. This is done much less in Level 2.
2. The teacher needs to make fewer explicit connections at higher levels. In Level 2, we often outline solutions to problems and expect students to be competent at the symbol manipulation and computation on their own. In Level 3, we are much less likely to do this.
3. All students need a variety of activities, changes of pace, and opportunities to work by themselves, with partners, and in small groups. However, lectures are efficient ways of developing ideas in Level 2 and short lectures will be used more in Level 2 than in Level 3.
4. Level 2 students will study and do activities simply to learn the material. Level 3 students are much more likely to require extrinsic motivation.
5. In Level 2, it is easier to tell if students understand. They are more likely to tell us if they don't. We must work much harder to determine understanding on the part of Level 3 students.
6. Level 2 students can learn on their own. They benefit from reading the solutions of others. They will constructively struggle with problems and persevere to construct their own understanding. Level 2 students are taught to use a textbook and expected to learn from it and use it as a resource for learning. Level 3 students vary widely in their ability in this area, both because of motivational and/or readiness issues.
7. Level 2 assignments and tests are longer and more difficult than Level 3. We need to teach skills, concepts, and broad multi-step problems at all levels. However, we will provide more scaffolding for Level 3 students.
8. In Level 2, we teach to the top half of the class. In Level 3, we teach to the middle of the class.