

HONORS COURSEWORK GUIDE

Honors coursework represents a meaningful increase in academic rigor beyond standard College Preparatory coursework. Increased rigor may be demonstrated through greater depth and complexity of content, higher-order thinking, independent inquiry, advanced resources, sophisticated assessment, research, problem solving, or substantial academic products. Honors designation should reflect a qualitative increase in academic challenge rather than simply additional assignments, instructional hours, or workload.

HONORS CHARACTERISTICS

Depth & Complexity	Content is studied at a more sophisticated, advanced, or conceptually demanding level.
Higher-Order Thinking	The student regularly analyzes, synthesizes, evaluates, interprets, defends, or independently applies ideas.
Student Independence	The student assumes increased responsibility for inquiry, research, problem solving, or academic decision-making.
Advanced Assessment	Major assessments require substantial analysis, reasoning, research, application, or original work.
Advanced Resources	The student regularly engages with challenging literature, primary sources, scientific materials, data, scholarly resources, or other advanced materials appropriate to the discipline.
Research & Inquiry	The student conducts sustained investigation and evaluates or synthesizes multiple sources or bodies of evidence.
Advanced Application / Problem Solving	The student applies knowledge to unfamiliar, complex, authentic, or interdisciplinary problems.
Substantial Academic Product	The course includes a significant research paper, investigation, laboratory study, portfolio, technical project, presentation, oral defense, or comparable demonstration of advanced learning.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

English	Challenging or unabridged literature; advanced composition; rhetorical/literary analysis; independent research; synthesis of sources.
Mathematics	Greater conceptual depth; nonroutine multistep problems; mathematical reasoning/proof; modeling; advanced applications.
Science	Greater conceptual depth; advanced data analysis; independent experimental design; scientific literature; sophisticated lab reports.

Social Studies	Primary-source analysis; historiography; competing interpretations; research; evidence-based historical or political argument.
World Language	Higher proficiency expectations; authentic texts/media; sustained speaking and writing; literary and cultural analysis.
Computer Science	More sophisticated concepts or algorithms; independent programming; complex debugging and problem solving; substantial original projects.

Honors Laboratory Science: Honors lab work should move beyond simply following prescribed procedures and should provide meaningful opportunities for experimental design, quantitative data analysis, interpretation of results, evaluation of error or limitations, and formal scientific communication.

COURSE LEVELS & GPA WEIGHTING

Level	Code	Max GPA Weight
College Preparatory	CP	4
Honors	H	4.5
Advanced Placement	AP	5
College Level/Dual Enrollment	DE	5

Families determine the appropriate course level for their students. These criteria are provided to promote thoughtful, consistent course designation and strong transcript documentation. A curriculum labeled “Honors” may provide an appropriate foundation, but families should consider the course as a whole—including depth, assignments, assessments, independence, and student expectations—when determining the designation.

College Preparatory Diploma — Honors designation requires a minimum 3.5 weighted cumulative GPA and at least 6 credits of Honors, AP, or Dual Enrollment coursework. At least 4 of the 6 advanced credits must be earned in core academic subjects, and advanced coursework must represent at least 3 academic disciplines. Core academic subjects include English, mathematics, science, social studies, world language, and advanced computer science.