

Oak Crest Middle School

Honors English Program: A Guide for Parents and Students

At Oak Crest, each teacher wants every child to achieve his or her personal best, and this is more likely to happen if the child is placed into classes appropriate to the child's needs, abilities, and interests. Parents have often asked if Honors English is the right placement for their child. It's a difficult decision for a parent and child to make without having the information necessary to make an informed decision. Please use this guide to help you determine if honors English is the best placement for your child.

1. Students in the honors program must display **motivation** and **critical thinking ability**.
 - Students in an honors course must be self-starters, have a desire to go above and beyond, and possess a willingness to seek help when needed. Motivation is the most important quality of an honors student.
 - Students in an honors course should expect **nightly homework**, and the homework typically requires students to think critically and synthesize the material that they learned in class that day. As a result, some assignments may take longer than others, so students **must** be able to time manage.
2. Students in the honors program should demonstrate strength in **at least two** of the following areas:
 - **Analytical writing:** response to literature, persuasive, evaluation
 - **Reading:** Honors students are most successful if they are at or above grade level in reading
 - **Critical thinking ability:** ability to deep dig, go beyond the obvious, and make connections between class material and historical events, real world events, literature, or personal experiences.
 - **Grammar:** a working knowledge of the eight parts of speech is highly recommended.

Prerequisite Knowledge:

When students enter an honors English class, they are expected to know the following:

7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to write a well-developed, insightful paragraph• Basic 5-paragraph essay structure• Basic 8 parts of speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-paragraph essay structure• How to identify 8 parts of speech in sentences• How to define and identify literary devices

Students at the honors level are able to demonstrate the following skills:

7 th Grade	8 th Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go beyond the surface of the text to discover a deeper meaning rather than to simply summarize• Discover theme in a passage• Identify figurative language in a passage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance beyond summary and analyze the deeper meaning of a passage by making connections between a passage and historical events, current events, and personal experiences.• Discover theme in a passage• Find and define an author's style

College Prep English or Honors English?

Since they cover the same writing types, core works (with exceptions based on teacher choice), and standards, **both courses provide outstanding preparation for high school English.** *The main difference between a college prep course and honors is the pacing, the level of thought, and the writing expectation.*

College Prep English Student:	Honors English Student:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="284 541 706 632">❑ May be strong academically in English.<li data-bbox="284 701 773 737">❑ Is hard working and self-motivated.<li data-bbox="284 806 764 896">❑ Appreciates thorough presentation and practice of new concepts.<li data-bbox="284 966 786 1163">❑ May enjoy challenges, but also needs some assistance and practice with complex, critical-thinking and non-routine strategies.<li data-bbox="284 1232 768 1323">❑ Needs or prefers guidance to learn, apply, and extend new concepts.<li data-bbox="284 1392 792 1428">❑ Participates in classroom discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="875 541 1325 632">❑ English is one of his/her gifts or passions.<li data-bbox="875 701 1377 842">❑ Has an exceptional work ethic, is highly self-motivated, and works well independently.<li data-bbox="875 911 1338 1001">❑ Masters concepts quickly; requires faster-paced, rigorous curriculum.<li data-bbox="875 1071 1349 1268">❑ Loves the challenges of complex, critical-thinking opportunities; can achieve this without assistance and often takes ideas to a higher level.<li data-bbox="875 1337 1349 1478">❑ Is inquiry-driven; asks “Why?” and “What if...?” Recognizes the figurative as well as the literal<li data-bbox="875 1547 1370 1638">❑ Seeks out and actively contributes to classroom discussions

Course Expectations for English 7 & 8:

The curriculum at both grade levels includes study of short stories, novels, drama, poetry, expository texts, and grammar. Students participate in meaningful class discussions, creative projects, speeches and theater arts. With an understanding of the fundamentals of literary analysis, students will be able to construct a multi-paragraph essay, as well as experiment with a variety of writing types.

The course curriculum is based on the California State Standards for Language Arts available at:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/cdepress/standards-pdfs/english-language-arts.pdf>

Works typically read in 7th grade English:

College Prep English:	Honors English:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Holt Anthology (short stories, poetry, expository selections)➤ <i>The Giver</i>, Lowry➤ <i>Animal Farm</i>, Orwell➤ <i>The Outsiders</i>, Hinton➤ An introduction to Shakespeare through the play <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Holt Anthology (short stories, poetry, expository selections)➤ <i>Animal Farm</i>, Orwell➤ <i>The Giver</i>, Lowry➤ <i>The Children's Story</i>, Clavell➤ <i>King of Shadows</i>, Cooper➤ <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, Shakespeare

In order to achieve the one million words per year reading goal recommended in the California Language Arts Standards, students will self-select and read outside reading works as follows:

College Prep English: 4-6 self-selected novels

Honors English: 6-8 self-selected novels

Writing types covered in 7th grade English:

College Prep English:	Honors English:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Introduction to Research Report (with bibliography)➤ Personal and/or Fictional Narrative➤ Response to Literature➤ Persuasive Essay➤ Summary	The same writing types as College Prep English with greater depth and complexity and more independence. Written arguments may be longer, more sophisticated and/or better researched.

Works typically read in 8th grade English:

College Prep English:	Honors English:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Holt Anthology (short stories, poetry, expository selections) ➤ “Flowers for Algernon,” Keyes ➤ “I Have a Dream” speech, King ➤ <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, Lee ➤ <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> (the play by Goodrich and Hackett) ➤ <i>The Martian Chronicles</i>, Bradbury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Holt Anthology (short stories, poetry, expository selections) ➤ “Flowers for Algernon,” Keyes ➤ “I Have a Dream” speech, King ➤ <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, Lee ➤ <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> (the play by Goodrich and Hackett) ➤ World War /Holocaust outside reading selection ➤ <i>The Twelfth Night</i>, Shakespeare ➤ Edgar Allan Poe author study

Writing types covered in 8th grade English:

College Prep English:	Honors English:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research Report (with bibliography) ➤ Narrative ➤ Response to Literature ➤ Persuasive Essay and debate ➤ Career Documents ➤ Persuasive “I Have a Dream” speech 	<p>Many of the same writing types as College Prep English with greater depth and complexity and more independence. Written arguments will be longer, more sophisticated and/or better researched. Students are expected to integrate more sentence variety and style into their writing, and in some cases, are expected to emulate an author’s style. There is also a greater emphasis on speaking standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research-based analytical essay (with parenthetical citations and a works cited page). ➤ Narrative: (A short story in which students emulate Edgar Allan Poe.) ➤ Response to Literature: A book-talk on an outside reading book and the theme analysis. Both are presented to the class. ➤ Persuasive Essay and Debate ➤ Persuasive “I Have a Dream” speech ➤ Business letter