



**TALAWANDA MIDDLE SCHOOL  
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS  
2025-2026**

**Contact the TMS School Counseling office with questions:**

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## **Grade 6 - Course Descriptions**

### **English/Language Arts (ELA)**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

Students are given a variety of opportunities, both individually and through teamwork, to demonstrate their literacy and to develop an appreciation of our language. Grammar skills are emphasized as students are taught to proofread, edit and use appropriate grammar in their own writing. Students learn research skills and strategies. Students will encounter a multitude of genres as they read for a variety of purposes. Students read both teacher and student selected material at their interest and reading level and interact with other readers to share and discuss texts and improve their reading strategies. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### **Social Studies**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

Master the five themes of geography and apply that knowledge as you explore ancient world civilizations. Answer the question, "What does it mean to be civilized?" Embark upon archeological adventures from prehistoric times to the river civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India. Finally, discover the wonders of the Maya, Inca, Aztec, and Mississippians.

### **Math**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

This 6<sup>th</sup> grade inquiry-based mathematics course will give students the opportunity to learn math concepts through a problem-centered approach. The mathematical highlights in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade include fraction, decimal, and percent equivalents and performing operations, 2-dimensional geometry and measurement concepts, solving simple algebraic equations, and simplifying expressions.

### **Science**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

Scientific Inquiry and Ways of Knowing guide sixth graders as they move through an exciting hands-on series of investigations that include rocks and minerals and natural resources, cells and heredity, chemical/physical changes and the nature of matter, and last but not least - technology. Projects abound, but robot building is a real favorite.

### **Tech Exploration**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

Technology Explorations will allow students to become tech-fluent individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to apply 21st Century Learning skills to future technological experiences. Students will engage with the following themes and topics: keyboarding and Google Suite basics, additions to their Brave Bag, digital citizenship involving evaluations of websites and sources, as well as a collection of STEM-based projects.

### **Physical Education 6**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 6**

**REQUIRED**

Students develop knowledge and skills about lifetime sports and recreational activities. Students also will recognize the contribution of leisure time activities to a healthy life. Some 6<sup>th</sup> grade activities include Ultimate Frisbee, Physical Fitness Test, Dance & Rhythm, Floor Hockey, Volleyball, and Basketball.

### **Musical Studies**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 6**

Musical Studies is a class for those students not wishing to be in a performance-based class. Students will explore music in different cultures from around the world including Africa, Egypt, Cuba, and India. We will also listen, learn, and complete projects involving Jazz, Country, Rock and Roll, and Rap. Lastly, students will learn how to play a variety of instruments including African drumming, guitar, and other percussion instruments.

**Band 6 – Woodwinds or Brass/Percussion (Year Long)****Grade 6**

Beginning band students will have fun learning to perform music on Brass, Woodwind, or Percussion instruments with a range of different kinds of music. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade band is open to all students who wish to learn new skills in music! Best of all, no previous experience is required! *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

**Orchestra 6****(Year Long)****Grade 6**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra is the class for those students beginning instruction on one of the bowed string instruments: violin, viola, cello, or bass. Basic performance and music reading skills are taught. Students perform several concerts throughout the year. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

**Chorus 6****(Year Long)****Grade 6**

In this performance-based course, students will learn basic music fundamentals to read music. Students will also learn the mechanics of the voice as well as the proper way to sing. Students will sing a variety of songs including classical, foreign language, Broadway medleys, rounds, a cappella, etc. Vocal concerts will be presented throughout the year. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

## **Grade 6 -Accelerated and Intervention Services\***

*\*Students who qualify for enrichment, gifted, and/or intervention services will be notified and given the opportunity to be placed in the proper courses by their counselor. For a student to qualify for a gifted course, they must score in the 95th percentile or higher on a nationally normed assessment.*

### ***Accelerated English/Language Arts 6\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 6***

Students are given a variety of opportunities, both individually and through teamwork, to demonstrate their literacy and to develop an appreciation of our language. Grammar skills are emphasized as students are taught to proofread, edit and use appropriate grammar in their own writing. Students learn research skills and strategies. Students will encounter a multitude of genres as they read for a variety of purposes. Students read both teacher and student selected material at their interest and reading level and interact with other readers to share and discuss texts and improve their reading strategies. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### ***Reading Literacy Lab 6\****

***(1-2 Semesters)***

***Grade 6***

This course will be offered in addition to the regular 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class. Reading Literacy Lab enables students struggling with reading to improve their reading skills and enhance higher-level comprehension skills. The goal is for the student to produce reading that feels comfortable and natural, and therefore, results in the understanding of the author's message. Through this unique approach, students work in a small-group setting to improve their reading and critical thinking skills in a relatively brief amount of time.

### ***Accelerated Math 6\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 6***

The goal of this course will be to provide a rigorous math challenge to those students who have demonstrated high achievement in the math area. It will cover the regular math course of study, and in addition provide enrichment and extensions.

### ***ET/EH\****

***(1-2 Semesters)***

***Grade 6***

Extra Time / Extra Help (ET/EH) provides a tutoring service for selected students. This service focuses on the completion of schoolwork and improved study habits and is flexible to meet the individual needs of these students.

## **Grade 7 - Course Descriptions**

### **English/Language Arts (ELA)**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 7**

**REQUIRED**

English/Language Arts 7 emphasizes revision and the six traits of writing. Several pieces are written and revised with focus traits in mind, and much attention is also given to crafting prompted responses. Daily Grammar Practice rounds out the program. Students will continue to practice fluency, reading strategies, and reading independently. This course includes two novel studies, and during the second semester, an emphasis on reading for information. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### **Social Studies**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 7**

**REQUIRED**

Fight the Minotaur and witness the battle of ancient Troy! Ride your chariot to victory in the Roman Coliseum! Sit with the Knights of the Round Table and defend your castle against a medieval siege! Find out if you have what it takes to be a Renaissance person! Sail with the great explorers to new lands! This required course will take all seventh graders from the Ancient Greeks through the Age of Exploration. But it's not just History. Students will also learn Geography, Government, Economics, and Citizenship.

### **Math**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 7**

**REQUIRED**

This inquiry-based mathematics course will give students the opportunity to understand math concepts through a problem-solving approach. During the year, students will investigate proportional reasoning, volume and surface area, linear relationships, and probability.

### **Science**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 7**

**REQUIRED**

7<sup>th</sup> grade Science is an exploration through the biosphere. We look at the living and nonliving aspects of our world and how they work together to support life. You will study ecosystems, biomes, weather, water and the impact that humans have in each of those areas. To top it all off we take a look at energy transformations and how energy is used.

### **Health**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 7**

**REQUIRED**

Do you want to live to be 100 years old? The information you learn in health class will help you. Students will learn about wellness, communication, character education, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, the decision-making process, goal setting, growth and development, and sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Engineering Fundamentals**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 7/8**

Engineering Technology is a course designed to introduce and encourage students to explore career pathways in the fields of engineering and technology. By allowing students to develop problem-solving skills and helping them to become more technologically literate they will be more prepared to meet the challenges of their future educational and career-related endeavors. Projects include Rube Goldberg Machines, Solid Modeling, Computer Animation, Civil Engineering & Bridge Design, CO<sub>2</sub> Car Design & Data Analysis.

### **Life Skills**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 7/8**

Do you want to be able to survive on your own? In Life Skills, you will prepare for independence by learning to select and prepare nutritious foods and learn to use a sewing machine.

### **Principles of Food**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 7/8**

In this course, you will gain knowledge about food selection and preparation methods to promote a healthy lifestyle. Students will apply cooking methods, ingredient selection, and nutritional information for selected food dishes in food labs. Basic food safety and sanitation will be emphasized during food labs.

Prerequisite: Life Skills

**Art** (1 Semester) **Grade 7/8**  
Students will explore and create in the world of Art! Have fun using your imagination by developing your ideas, improving your observation skills, learning about artists, art history, and the cultures of the world! Make your art experience exciting! Students are able to take this class during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. The same material will not be covered.

**Physical Education 7/8** (1 Semester) **Grade 7/8**  
Students will learn the importance of living a healthy lifestyle through exercise and movement. They will learn to participate in team sports including Soccer, Floor Hockey, Volleyball, Softball, Physical Fitness tests, Basketball, Flag Football, Kickball, Aerobics, and Weightlifting. Students will also learn to be fit for life with fitness activities, such as aerobics, using weights, and exercise bands.

**World Cultures** (1 Semester) **Grades 7/8**  
Students are introduced to what culture is before discussing Spanish- and French-speaking countries around the world. Students will learn simple Spanish and French words, phrases, and sentences along with geography and other cultural aspects, including social organization, customs, traditions, values, religion, government, economies, and the arts. Students will also immerse themselves in other countries, developing a deeper appreciation for and knowledge of the variety of cultures around the world.

**Digital Media** (1 Semester) **Grades 7/8**  
This course will explore various methods of creating and manipulating digital imagery. Students will get to create their own digital animation, learn how to manipulate photographs, and learn the basics of video production.

**Band 7** (Year Long) **Grade 7**  
Continue the journey with the second level of Band at TMS! This group offers a more advanced and creative level of music for students' enjoyment and progress as they continue to develop their musical skills. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

**Orchestra 7** (Year Long) **Grades 7**  
The 7<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra builds on skills learned in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and prepares students for the THS Orchestra. Students perform several concerts and attend contests throughout the year. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

**Chorus 7** (Year Long) **Grade 7**  
In this performance-based course, students will learn basic music fundamentals to read music. Students will also learn the mechanics of the voice as well as the proper way to sing. Students will sing a variety of songs including classical, foreign language, Broadway medleys, rounds, a cappella, etc. Vocal concerts will be presented throughout the year. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

## **Grade 7 – Accelerated and Intervention Services\***

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### ***Accelerated English/Language Arts 7\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 7***

English/Language Arts 7 emphasizes revision and the six traits of writing. Several pieces are written and revised with focus traits in mind, and much attention is also given to crafting prompted responses. Daily Grammar Practice rounds out the program. Students will continue to practice fluency, reading strategies, and reading independently. This course includes two novel studies, and during the second semester, an emphasis on reading for information. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### ***Reading Literacy Lab 7\****

***(1-2 Semesters)***

***Grade 7***

This course will be offered in addition to the regular 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class. Reading Literacy Lab enables students struggling with reading to improve their reading skills and enhance higher-level comprehension skills. The goal is for the student to produce reading that feels comfortable and natural, and therefore, results in the understanding of the author's message. Through this unique approach, students work in a small-group setting to improve their reading and critical thinking skills in a relatively brief amount of time.

### ***Math 7 Pre-Algebra\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 7***

This advanced math experience is inquiry-based, giving students the opportunity to understand mathematics on a deeper level. Students will investigate linear relationships, proportional reasoning, volume and surface area of prisms, cones, pyramids, and spheres, the Pythagorean Theorem, and probability.

### ***ET/EH\****

***(1-2 Semester)***

***Grade 7/8***

Extra Time/Extra Help (ET/EH) provides a tutoring service for selected students. This service focuses on the completion of schoolwork and improved study habits and is flexible to meet the individual needs of these students.

## **Grade 8 – Course Descriptions**

### **English/Language Arts**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 8**

**REQUIRED**

English/Language Arts 8 emphasizes effort on long-term projects while practicing the six traits of writing. Two multi-genre projects are included, one in the fall and one in the spring. A major research paper, an I-Search paper on a career selected by the student, is the winter project. This includes real-life experiences - interviewing people who work in the selected career and a day of job shadowing. Daily Grammar Practice rounds out the program. Students will continue to practice fluency, reading strategies, and reading independently. Emphasis is placed on reading for information and inspiration for writing. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### **Social Studies**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 8**

**REQUIRED**

American History is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies class. This class will cover the events that led to the creation of the United States through the American Civil War and beyond. Students will specifically study topics such as the Thirteen Colonies, French and Indian War, American Revolution, Creation of the Constitution, First Presidents, War of 1812, Jacksonian Democracy, Westward Expansion, Manifest Destiny, Causes of the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

### **Math**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 8**

**REQUIRED**

This pre-algebra math experience will give students the opportunity to become engaged listeners and confident responders as they interact with algebraic content for the first time. Students will investigate linear, exponential, and quadratic relationships, discover the Pythagorean Theorem, and understand how to interpret data using a variety of graphic representations.

### **Science**

**(Year Long)**

**Grade 8**

**REQUIRED**

Prepare to think BIG in 8th grade science! The course takes a "physics first" approach beginning with the concepts of motion, light, and sound, and their applications to the study of earth and beyond. Large-scale topics and events are included such as astronomy, space exploration, plate tectonics and mountain building. Highlights include model rocketry, GPS geocaching, and a wide variety of scientific experimentation designed to help students enlarge their understanding of the earth in the universe.

### **Personal Finance**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 8**

**REQUIRED**

Financial Literacy is introducing age-appropriate personal finance concepts to young learners. Students explore their money values, learn the basics of banking, saving, and budgeting, and start thinking ahead to high school and their financial futures.

### **Digital Media**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grades 7/8**

This course will explore various methods of creating and manipulating digital imagery. Students will get to create their own digital animation, learn how to manipulate photographs, and learn the basics of video production.

### **Life Skills**

**(1 Semester)**

**Grade 7/8**

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Prerequisite: Life Skills



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**Global Explorations** (Year Long) **Grade 8 High School Credit**  
**1 High School Credit**  
This is an elective Social Studies class for high school credit that allows students to explore the world around them. After spending time on topics related to respect, diversity, microaggressions, and stereotypes, students will discuss what makes up culture. Students will develop a deeper understanding of people and perspectives around the world through language acquisition, literature, and student-led activities and projects.  
Prerequisites: Consistent attendance, B average, no disciplinary concerns.

**Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources** (Year Long) **Grade 8 High School Credit**  
**1 High School Credit**  
This is an introduction course to Agricultural and Environmental Systems. Students will examine principles of food science, natural resource management, animal science & management, plant & horticultural science, power technology, and bioscience. Students will be introduced to the FFA organization and will begin their required Supervised Agricultural Experience project. Throughout the course, students will develop communication, leadership and business skills essential to career success. Fees: \$25 FFA dues.  
Prerequisites: Consistent attendance, B average, no disciplinary concerns.

**Band 8** (Year Long) **Grade 8**  
The most advanced level Band at TMS! The focus of this band is excellence in musical performance and enjoyment! While students continue to develop a lasting enjoyment of music-making, they also can prepare for their future as music students at THS! *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

**Orchestra 8** (Year Long) **Grade 8**  
The 8th grade orchestra builds on skills learned in 7th grade and prepares students for the THS Orchestra. Students perform several concerts and attend contests throughout the year. *This is a performance-based course and students are required to attend all performances.*

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### ***Accelerated English/Language Arts 8\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 8***

English/Language Arts 8 emphasizes effort on long-term projects while practicing the six traits of writing. Two multi-genre projects are included, one in the fall and one in the spring. A major research paper, an I-Search paper on a career selected by the student, is the winter project. This includes real-life experiences - interviewing people who work in the selected career and a day of job shadowing. Daily Grammar Practice rounds out the program. Students will continue to practice fluency, reading strategies, and reading independently. Emphasis is placed on reading for information and inspiration for writing. In-class study of the school-wide vocabulary program, Power Words, builds vocabulary skills.

### ***Reading Literacy Lab 8\****

***(1-2 Semesters)***

***Grade 8***

This course will be offered in addition to the regular 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class. Reading Literacy Lab enables students struggling with reading to improve their reading skills and enhance higher-level comprehension skills. The goal is for the student to produce reading that feels comfortable and natural, and therefore, results in the understanding of the author's message. Through this unique approach, students work in a small-group setting to improve their reading and critical thinking skills in a relatively brief amount of time.

### ***Algebra I (HS credit)\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 8***

This advanced 8<sup>th</sup> grade math experience will give students the opportunity to become engaged listeners and confident responders as they interact with algebraic content on a deeper level. Students will investigate inverse, linear, exponential, and quadratic relationships, interpret data through a variety of means, master the Pythagorean Theorem, and be challenged to derive many basic algebraic formulas.

### ***Geometry (HS credit)\****

***(Year Long)***

***Grade 8***

Geometry prepares the student for further mathematical activity by introducing the ideas of geometric constructions, proof writing, logic, and inductive and deductive thinking. It also provides a method for students to learn skills such as organization of facts and logical thinking and helps students to develop problem-solving and reasoning power, which can be used in any career.

Prerequisite: successful completion of both semesters of Algebra I.

### ***ET/EH\****

***(1-2 Semesters)***

***Grade 7/8***

Extra Time/Extra Help (ET/EH) provides a tutoring service for selected students. This service focuses on the completion of schoolwork and improved study habits and is flexible to meet the individual needs of these students.