Middle School Honors Program

**Program overview**

The Middle School Honors Program is designed to prepare middle school students for the demands of advanced and AP high school courses. Courses begin in 5th grade with our Pre-Honors classes, and expand through 8th grade. Monte Cassino teachers of Honors classes have completed coursework through the College Board and utilize innovative instructional strategies recommended by them.

The guiding principles of our Honors Program are based on the expectation that all students can perform at rigorous academic levels, and that students should be continuously challenged to expand their knowledge and skills to the next level.

The emphasis with Honors courses is that the students make the commitment to the additional effort required, so this is essentially a contract made by the child, with parental knowledge and support.

**Honors classes are characterized by**

- Greater demands for analytical thinking, creativity, and problem solving
- Strong emphasis on writing
- A rapid pace
- Frequent, demanding homework and more outside reading
- Willingness to participate freely in classroom discussion and group projects
Application process—grades 6 through 8

There are 3 parts to the Honors Program application process for grades 6 through 8: the application form, teacher recommendations, and the writing prompts. Each part is guided by the concern that the student is prepared for the greater demands of an Honors class, to assure the greatest benefit for the student.

Acceptance into the Honors program is based on recommendations from two of the student’s current year teachers (one in the subject area of the class selected), and a successfully completed writing prompt for the class selected.

Writing prompts will be evaluated by the teacher of the Honors class selected to assure the student is prepared for the more demanding writing requirements of our Honors classes.

Program commitment

Students enrolled in the program, who decide they are not ready to make the commitment to the Honors program, can transfer to a Core Curriculum class during the 1st quarter of the school year. After the 1st quarter, students remaining in Honors classes have committed to the program for the school year.

Deadline for Honors Program Application Form grade 6-8: Friday, April 5th

Applications will be available as a PDF download on the Monte Cassino School website on March 14th. Applications will be accepted in the Middle School Library until Monday, Friday, April 5th.

The student is responsible for selecting the teachers to complete the recommendation forms, and reporting to the library to complete the required writing prompts for the classes they select.

Students will be notified of acceptance to the Honors Program by May 15th.
MONTE CASSINO MIDDLE SCHOOL HONORS COURSES

5th grade

  Pre-Honors English/Language Arts
  Pre-Honors Math

6th grade

  Honors English/Language Arts
  Math:  Honors 6th gr. Math
         Honors Pre-Algebra

7th grade

  Honors English/Language Arts
  Math:  Honors Pre-Algebra
         Honors Algebra I

  Honors Social Studies

8th grade

  Honors English/Language Arts
  Math:  Honors Algebra I
         Honors Geometry

  Honors Social Studies
5TH GRADE PRE-HONORS PROGRAM

For the 2013-14 school year, 5th grade Pre-Honors classes will be offered in English/Language Arts, and Math. The 5th grade Pre-Honors program will operate somewhat differently than the Honors Program for 6th-8th grade Middle School students, taking into account the developmental appropriateness of the process for younger students.

Eligibility for 5th grade Pre-Honors classes is based on official recommendation by current 4th grade teachers. There is no application form for the student to complete.

Students in 5th grade Pre-Honors English/Language Arts can expect more reading, more in-depth writing, so these will be those students who are ready for greater challenge.

All current 4th grade elementary students will complete a simple writing prompt in their 4th grade classrooms. All students, whether they are eligible for Pre-Honors or not will complete the writing prompt. The writing prompts will be evaluated by the 5th grade English/Language Arts teacher, and the Honors Committee.

Students who are not ready in 5th grade for Pre-Honors are always free to apply for 6th grade Honors classes in the coming year. There is no prerequisite for Honors classes at any level, except for Math, due to the sequential nature of math skills required especially as students advance to higher levels. A student may not be ready for the additional work in 5th or 6th grade, but may be ready to tackle it by 7th.
MONTE CASSINO MIDDLE SCHOOL HONORS PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

If your child is interested in enrolling in an Honors class for next year, discuss this with your child’s current-year teacher, and see if the teacher feels your child is ready for the demands of the Honors program.

The teachers of our Honors classes would be happy to discuss with you their approaches to the curriculum and address any questions you might have about the best experience for your child.

Most importantly, discuss this with your child to assist them in deciding if he or she is ready to make the commitment to the additional demands of an Honors class.

Remember, Monte Cassino’s Core Curriculum is considered “advanced” and challenging as it is, so you and your child can be assured that regardless of choice, they will be very well prepared for the academic challenges of high school and beyond.