Westmount Charter School Mid-School Course Selection Handbook
Grades 7 & 8
2025-2026

GRADE 7 STUDENTS' COURSE HANDBOOK

A list of all grade 7 courses offered can be found here

GRADE 7 CORE CLASSES (REQUIRED)

SOURCE & Health 7: Every student at Westmount is enrolled in a SOURCE class. The SOURCE program provides meeting times for students to connect with their peers and SOURCE teacher. In grade 7, students will develop IPPs and complete the Health curriculum, as well as ensuring opportunities for character development, DEI, and wellness. SOURCE stands for Sense of Self, Organization, Understanding Relationships, Creative Expression/Career Exploration.

Humanities 7: Humanities 7 offers students an integrated examination of the grade seven Language Arts and Social Studies' curriculum outcomes. Throughout the school year, students will be challenged to consider a variety of perspectives as they examine the numerous peoples who constitute the formation of Canada. In addition, students will examine a variety of literary genres to understand narrative perspective, as they both analyze and create literary works. Typically, students will read poetry, short stories, plays, and novels. Students will participate in a variety of simulations throughout the year, as they try to bring their learning to life.

Mathematics 7: Math 7 students build their mental math and estimation skills to add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals and use percent to solve problems. They develop pre-algebra skills by adding and subtracting fractions and integers using visual models and computation techniques. Students find it interesting to learn to use tables, graphs, and equations to show number patterns, as well as to solve equations by using objects, pictures, numbers, and variables. Math 7 students also study circles, line segments, and angles, and solve problems involving area. Statistics are introduced through finding mean, median and mode, interpreting circle graphs, and comparing data. They connect numbers and shapes to their everyday lives, such as finding the difference in temperature from one day to the next, including using negative numbers and discussing ways in which they might solve a problem. Math 7 students show their math learning in various ways using hands-on manipulatives and labs, projects, visuals, presentations, math contests, and problem-solving proofs.
**Students who are off-level in Math will be manually registered for the appropriate Math class

Science 7: Grade 7 science students are introduced to geology - the kinds of materials and changes that occur on Earth's crust and in the interior of Earth. They apply physical science concepts like heat,

temperature, and forces to analyze, design, and build safe and stable structures and devices that reduce heat loss. Students investigate how organisms interact within ecosystems and how these systems are affected by human activities. They also consider decisions and actions for sustainability of the environment and agricultural industries. They experiment with plants, learn about plant structures and different uses of plants within a variety of growing conditions. Students also learn valuable scientific skills through activities based on experimentation, communication, research, and collaboration.

Health and Physical Education 7: Health and Physical Education contributes to a continuum of wellness by focusing on the three priority wellness outcomes: physical activity, healthy eating, and psychosocial well-being. Students develop an understanding of the balance of the dimensions of wellness and how they can be woven throughout other areas in school and their lives. Students are evaluated based on the general outcomes of Physical Education as outlined by Alberta Education: Activity, Benefits Health, Cooperation, and Do it Daily!, all with a focus on improving physical literacy. Field Trips: Grade 7 & 8 – skiing, cross-country skiing, or snowboarding trip

CORE PROGRAM CHOICES AT GRADE 7

- a survey will be emailed in March to parents to state preferences

Specialist teachers 7: The non-integrated program is run by teachers with subject-specific knowledge and expertise, and follows the school timetable of four 80-minute blocks per day, with a 40-minute SOURCE homeroom class between Blocks 1 and 2 from Monday-Thursday. Language Arts and Social Studies are taught in a blended format by one Humanities teacher, with a different teacher covering Science class, and possibly a third teacher for Math (depending on the student's Math level). Physical Education is taught by members of the Physical Education department and involves mostly on-campus sports and activities. Core Flex class is an opportunity for students to work on assignments, consult with teachers, receive additional supports, and get physical activity on their non-Phys Ed. days; all of which help to reduce stress around their workloads and allow students the time to work on areas of growth. In their classes, students engage in a variety of in-class simulations, demonstrations, labs, and field trips to reinforce class curriculum in a more experiential and hands-on manner to foster their creativity and critical thinking. All classes (except Math) take place with a student's SOURCE homeroom class, which builds and reinforces community all year-long as students learn how to build and maintain healthy, respectful, and fun relationships with their peers.

Peaks 7: is an integrated outdoor education-based program for grade seven students. Steve Paget (teacher) will integrate Math, Science, Humanities, Health, and PE into one program with outdoor education as a focus. Peaks is designed to develop resilience and independence through hands-on learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. Throughout this course, there is a focus on trust and a sense of belonging, which leads to opportunities for greater personal and group challenges. Students participate in several overnight camping trips, as well as many day trips, each with a different focus and learning outcome. This unique classroom structure allows for flexible learning goals, healthy coping strategies, and a tightly-knit social community.
There is a fee for this program.
Slideshow from parent info session: click here

Outsiders 7: is an activity based program taught by Mark Knoll. Mark will teach the core subject disciplines (math, science, social studies, language arts, and physical education) at the grade seven level (with some grade eight math as well). Classes are integrated and while students will do assignments and be assessed on

specific outcomes, the course will change depending on the learning needs of the students. Outsiders utilizes day trips and activities as a means of developing resilience, leadership, and interpersonal skills. Daily outings are a key function of the class, helping students to become better regulated for classroom learning and to foster a sense of adventure. There are no overnight trips in the Outsider's program. There is a fee for this program.
Slideshow from parent info session: click here

GRADE 7 STUDENTS' COMPLEMENTARY COURSES (choose 4-5)

Art 7: This course introduces students to many artistic practices and builds skills in perspective, negative space, sequential drawing, and working with proportion and light and shadow. Students will work with a variety of materials to create sculptures, drawings and paintings. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Band 7: The instrumental music program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with a detailed exploration of music. Music performance, theory, history, composition, research and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn their primary instrument and also begin to perform with second instruments. Activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, master classes (as possible) and concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress. It is strongly recommended that students who are new to band at this level take a summer band workshop. Please note there is a significant fee for this course.

Computers 7: Students interested in computers will have the opportunity to further pursue how computer and information technologies impact us as a society. They will develop an understanding of how to utilize technology to become a more effective learner and communicator and create a project that deepens their understanding and showcases skills learned in the course.

Creative Writing 7: Creative Writing 7 is an introductory course for students who desire to delve into the magical world of writing and sharing stories, comics, and other creative projects. Creative Writing 7 is meant to be a specialized bridge from Humanities, with a special focus on creative writing skills such as dialogue, characterization, mood, tone, and figurative language. To explore these skills, students will experiment with different forms of writing during activities and games throughout the semester. Some examples of unit assignments we have developed to showcase our growth include fairy tales, comics, short stories, poetry, and even rants! Each day, students have dedicated time to write and will receive valuable direct feedback from their teacher and peers. Please note there may be a fee for publishing costs for this course.

Drama 7: Drama 7 is a fun, interactive class introducing students to Drama as an art form and a tool of self-discovery. Through a variety of focused skill building units, students kinaesthetically explore literature, emotions, characters and relationships; that not only apply to the arts but to

everyday living. Drama 7 focuses on nurturing and developing a sense of play, confidence, and a positive self-concept; challenging students to take creative risks in the safety of a supportive classroom community. Students will be introduced to concepts and develop skills in areas of movement, improvisation, theatre history, technical theatre and performance. Each unit will conclude with a performance showcasing and celebrating the skills and theories learned throughout the unit. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Drama (Mainstage) Production (gr 6-9)

Term 2 Only. After school (2-3 times a week) and some lunch time classes/rehearsals

Pre-requisite: Term 1 Audition

*This will replace the current grade 7-9 extracurricular club next year

Have you always wanted to perform on stage? Would you like to re-experience the joy that being part of a creative ensemble and performing has brought you in the past? Well, now you can! The Mid/High Mainstage Drama Production offers students in grades 6-9 an opportunity to audition and be considered for a role in the springtime mainstage production. Through ensemble building and working towards the common goal of 'the show', students will experience and explore their sense of self, creative and critical thinking, creative risk taking skills, focus, mentorship and leadership through performance, while learning and having fun!

Performing experience is not necessary, confidence will develop. Successful students in this course will have exceptional attendance, be committed to taking creative risks throughout the process and shine in the final production.
This course occurs outside the regular school timetable, with classes occurring from 3:30-5:30 (dates TBD) T-TR and some scheduled lunch hours. Interested students will need to register during course selection and will audition during Term 1 (January). The director/instructor will determine show selection, casting, and the class size will be capped accordingly (Registration guarantees audition only, not a spot in the class.) Regardless of casting, every student is an integral part of the team. Audition information will be available to any students who have opted in by the stated deadline. There is a course fee associated with this class.

Parents with an inclination to help support our production, have time, and have talents in building, sewing, painting, sourcing materials, photography, program building, or errand running, are encouraged to reach out. We'd love to welcome you to the team!

French 7: French 7 allows students an opportunity to continue to develop their knowledge of French. By the end of FR 7, students should be able to answer questions in simple sentences about their day-to-day life at school and at home, describing other people and their environment with some support. Throughout the term, students are exposed to texts, videos and other media to acquire new vocabulary as well as to explore grammatical concepts in more depth. Activities in class include speaking challenges, weekly reading, vocabulary games, grammar study, and interactive projects.

Innovations 7: Innovations is an independent, self-directed, project-based course which is focused on process instead of product. Students' use their creativity to design and plan a solution to a real world problem. Working on their own or in a small group, students learn new skills while they work through the design process (the L.A.U.N.C.H. cycle) on their unique projects.

In My Backyard 7: Have you ever wanted to explore the city by train, bus, or bike? How about dropping into Shaw Millennium Park on a skateboard or bike? Have you ever planned a trip to the Glenbow Museum? This locally designed course is set to challenge grade seven students to consider the city they live in, and how to make the most of their emerging freedom as adolescents. Students will be asked to meet several challenges in this course, including navigating their way through the city, budgeting for trips and adventures, and critically analyzing the process. In My Backyard demands that students be ready for adventure, and be ready to explore the city with a whole new perspective. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Photography 7 (level 1): In this course, students will learn the basics of picture taking, camera function, and editing. For example, they will learn about photo composition, but also how to use the settings on Digital SLR cameras such as ISO, shutter speed and aperture to create various effects. Students will create a series of individual digital portfolios of their work. School cameras are available, however, students can bring in their own DSLR equipment for this course with parental approval. No background knowledge in photography is needed to take this class, as this is an introductory-level course. The course culminates with a show of student work. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Spanish 7: Prerequisite: Spanish 6 This course will offer the opportunity to further develop their listening, speaking and comprehension skills in the language. Students will expand their vocabulary: clothing, food, daily activities, and the introduction of action verbs in the present tense. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.

***NEW* ThumpTrek 7:** This course explores the world of percussion, offered to grades 7 and 8. This class offers a unique journey through the rich traditions of hand drumming and percussion from West African, Afro-Cuban, and Brazilian cultures. Students will gain hands-on experience with various percussion instruments, including Djembes, Congas, Bongos, Pandeiros, Agogôs, and stick drums. Students will not only learn to play traditional rhythms but will also be encouraged to compose their drumming pieces.

Collaboration plays a crucial role in the class as students will have numerous opportunities to perform in ensembles of various sizes and learn to synchronize rhythms in a group setting. The course will culminate in a public performance(s), giving students a platform to showcase their skills and compositions to an audience of family, friends, and the school community.

GRADE 8 STUDENTS' REQUIRED COURSES

A list of all grade 8 courses offered can be found here

GRADE 8 CORE CLASSES (REQUIRED)

SOURCE & Health 8: Every student at Westmount is enrolled in a SOURCE class. The SOURCE program provides meeting times for students to connect with their peers and SOURCE teacher. In grade 8, students will develop IPPs and complete the Health curriculum, as well as ensuring opportunities for character development, DEI, and wellness. SOURCE stands for Sense of Self, Organization, Understanding Relationships, Creative Expression/Career Exploration.

Humanities 8: Humanities 8 integrates the outcomes for Language Arts and Social Studies to provide an interdisciplinary look at the broader themes of Worldviews, Perspectives, and Power. These themes allow us the opportunity for rich discussion and exploration based on personal opinions, experiences, and questions. Students should be ready to consider their own view of the world and to begin to understand the views of others, both within their immediate sphere and within the global community. We will read and discuss short pieces of literature such as poems, short stories, and essays, as well as longer literary works.The literature (along with artwork, music, film, and current events) will bring to life the historical periods explored throughout the course.

Mathematics 8: Students will explore square numbers and square roots and solve problems involving percent, ratios, and rates. They will use personal strategies to multiply and divide fractions and integers and will apply mental mathematics and estimation strategies to solve problems. They will be able to create an equation that represents a problem, and then use the equation or its graph to solve the problem. They will also solve problems involving surface area, volume and the Pythagorean theorem. Students will draw different views of 3D objects and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of data presented in graphs. They will connect numbers and shapes to their everyday life and explore and talk about how they might solve a problem.
**Students who are off-level in Math will be manually registered for the appropriate Math class.

Science 8: From machines that use energy, to the transport of solutions, to the functioning of the eye, the students will see first-hand how science affects their daily life, their career and their future. They will investigate the structure of living things, from the smallest cells to the more complex systems in the human body. Students will also examine the interactions among water, land and climate to better understand the distribution and health of living things, and they will learn to appreciate how the knowledge and skills they are applying in class have led to advances in medical and mechanical technologies.

Health and Physical Education 8: Health and Physical Education contributes to a continuum of wellness by focusing on the three priority wellness outcomes: physical activity, healthy eating, and psychosocial well-being. Students develop an understanding of the balance of the dimensions of wellness and how they can be woven throughout other areas in school and their lives. Students are evaluated based on the general outcomes of Physical Education as outlined by Alberta Education: Activity, Benefits Health, Cooperation, and Do it Daily!, all with a focus on improving physical literacy. Field Trips: Grade 7 & 8 – skiing, cross-country skiing/ or snowboarding trip

CORE PROGRAM CHOICES AT GRADE 8

Specialist teachers 8: The non-integrated program is run by teachers with subject-specific knowledge and expertise, and follows the school timetable of four 80-minute blocks per day, with a 40-minute SOURCE homeroom class between Blocks 1 and 2 from Monday-Thursday. Language Arts and Social Studies are taught in a blended format by one Humanities teacher, with a different teacher covering Science class, and possibly a third teacher for Math (depending on the student's Math level). Physical Education is taught by members of the Physical Education department and involves mostly on-campus sports and activities. Core Flex class is an opportunity for students to work on assignments, consult with teachers, receive additional supports, and get physical activity on their non-Phys Ed. days; all of which help to reduce stress around their workloads and allow students the time to work on areas of growth. In their classes, students engage in a variety of in-class simulations, demonstrations, labs, and field trips to reinforce class curriculum in a more experiential and hands-on manner to foster their creativity and critical thinking. All classes (except Math) take place with a student's SOURCE homeroom class, which builds and reinforces community all year-long as students learn how to build and maintain healthy, respectful, and fun relationships with their peers.

Project Earth 8: is an integrated core 8 class that uses a variety of labs and explorations, based on the class interests, to enrich the curriculum (e.g. the arts, the environment, etc.). Cross-curriculum approaches, themes, and units combine language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics into large simulations and labs. Students will get messy, make mistakes, reflect, and work out their solutions. Participants in this class will be in contact with such animals as dogs and/or horses during the year. We integrate cycling into the course, partake in winter excursions, overnight and otherwise. The year finishes with a trip that builds on previous skills.
Slideshow from parent info session: click here

Click here to apply: **Application for Project Earth 8** (will open on March 10, 2025 and close March 21, 2025)

GRADE 8 STUDENTS' COMPLEMENTARY COURSES (choose 4-5)

Art 8: This class allows students to continue to expand their techniques and skills including the use of

pattern and motif, using colour to draw attention, and the use of organic shapes as inspiration for works of art. Students will work with a variety of styles and materials from two-dimensional work to three-dimensional work. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Band 8: The instrumental music program is a year-long course of study that provides each student with an in-depth exploration of music. Music performance, theory, history, composition, research and listening components are foundational to the course. Students learn their primary instrument and also perform with second instruments. Activities such as music workshops with professional musicians, festival performances, band camps, tours, master classes (as possible) and concerts build community and celebrate the ensemble's progress. Please note there is a significant fee for this course.

Creative Writing 8: Ready to take the next step as a creative writer? Creative Writing 8 builds on core literacy skills to explore and develop the different language arts. Students will learn about alternate writing structures, using research to inform writing and special interest genres. Some examples of unit assignments we have developed to showcase our growth include historical fiction, comic books, short stories, and poetry. Each day, students have dedicated time to write and will receive direct feedback from their teacher and peers. If desired, students will also receive support in finding extracurricular writing opportunities, such as writing contests and publishing. Please note there is a fee for this course.

***NEW* Discovering the Past 8**

The present may be a gift, but the past is where the good loot is hidden. History gives answers only to those who know how to ask questions and so in this course, we will ask questions, investigate the answers and enjoy the process of learning. By Discovering the Past students explore ancient civilizations through the lenses of archaeology, geography, and historical research. From the megaliths of Africa to the empires of the Americas, this class celebrates the rich diversity of human history and the enduring contributions of cultures worldwide. With hands-on projects like archaeological analysis, site mapping, and topographical studies students will uncover global perspectives while building critical research skills and drawing connections between the ancient and modern worlds. After all, a generation which ignores history has no future.

Drama 8: Drama 8 is a fun and engaging course that nurtures and develops students' positive self-concept, self-regulation, communication, and an ability to creatively collaborate with others. Specialised focus areas include developmental improv games, special effects make-up, character development, movement, collective creation and performance. Each unit will end with a celebration of the work where students present their skills and show off their creativity. Students who are open to play and challenge themselves in the safety of a supportive classroom environment will find success and enjoy themselves. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Drama (Mainstage) Production (gr 6-9)

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Pre-requisite: Term 1 Audition

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Parents with an inclination to help support our production, have time, and have talents in building, sewing, painting, sourcing materials, photography, program building, or errand running, are encouraged to reach out. We'd love to welcome you to the team!

French 8: Prerequisite: French 7. French 8 allows students an opportunity to focus on the details of the French language. Curriculum includes the study of animals, clothing and foods. By the end of FR 8, students are more comfortable reading and listening, and they can speak and write more independently about the studied themes. Activities in class include speaking challenges, weekly reading, vocabulary games, grammar study, interactive projects, and perhaps even some cooking. Please note there is a minor fee for this course that allows us to do cooking and tasting activities in class.

Innovations 8: Innovations is an independent, self-directed, project-based course which is focused on process instead of product. Students' use their creativity to design and plan a solution to a real world problem. Working on their own or in a small group, students learn new skills while they work through the design process (the L.A.U.N.C.H. cycle) on their unique projects.

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the city they live in, and how to make the most of their emerging freedom as adolescents. Students will be asked to meet a number of challenges in this course, including navigating their way through the city, budgeting for trips and adventures, and critically analyzing the process. In My Backyard demands that students be ready for adventure, and be ready to explore the city with a whole new perspective. Please note there is a fee for this course.

***NEW* Intro to Board Games and Game Design 8:** Do you like solving puzzles, problems, and enjoying the problem-solving inherent to how we play games? This course is an introduction to how we apply creative problem-solving and logical knowledge to novel situations. Games will be played, collaboration will be tested, and a drive to solve will be key aspects of this course that will help introduce the idea of actively reflecting on what makes a game "good." Please note there is a fee for this course.

***NEW* Leadership 8:** Do you enjoy helping others? Are you passionate about making a difference in our Westmount community? If so, this course is for you! Leadership 8 empowers students to take initiative, foster a positive school culture, and contribute meaningfully to Westmount. Through hands-on activities, you'll develop essential leadership skills, including: teamwork, communication, time management, and public speaking. You'll also explore leadership traits and styles while participating in projects that strengthen our school community.

Lego-Botics 8: Lego-Botics gives students the opportunity to learn some of the basics of software, Scratch programming and mechanical engineering in a hands-on, project based course. The course involves minimal instruction and requires students to apply problem solving, research and teamwork to overcome design challenges. Projects will challenge the students to complete a task under strict guidelines, but with little to no guidance in how that task is to be completed. A successful student will demonstrate self-motivation and a willingness to experiment, make mistakes, and always improve.

Outdoor Education 8: The Outdoor Ed 8 course focuses on responsible outdoor recreation and positive group dynamics. This course is intended to introduce middle school students to activities that are on our doorstep. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the environmental impacts, ramifications, and responsibilities associated with outdoor activities and how that transfers to our day-to-day life. In class, half and full-day trip activities will include biking, xc skiing, canoeing, and climbing field trips as well as covering the skills necessary for a multi-day camping excursion backpacking to Elbow Lake in Kananaskis. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Photography 8 (level 2): The course begins with a review of concepts covered in level 1, grade 7. Students then work primarily in manual mode for the duration of the course. Students use a variety of focal lengths while exploring a range of fringe photographic styles: toy, micro/macro, street, candid,

sports, animal, photojournalism, and abstract. Every couple of weeks, a new lab is introduced based on students' interests. The school has cameras for the participants, but students may use a DSLR from home with parental consent. The course culminates with a show of student work. Students in grade 8, who haven't taken level 1, are welcome to join the level 1 course, described in the grade 7 handbook. Please note there is a fee for this course.

Spanish 8: Prerequisite: Spanish 7 This course will continue to expand on grammatical structures in both oral and written communication. There is an emphasis on refining grammatical elements in order to improve communication. Some of the objectives students will learn are possessive adjectives, the conjugation of regular, reflexive, and irregular verbs in the present tense, as well as the use of the imperative and the present progressive tense. Please note there is a field trip fee for this course.

Strength and Flexibility: Empowering Wellness Through Movement 8: The "Strength and Flexibility" course program combines dynamic stretching routines, an introduction to kinesiology, and engaging strength and resistance training to promote overall wellness. Students will discover the principles of body movement, gaining insights into kinesiology that form the basis for personalized fitness plans. Emphasizing proper form and technique, the course empowers students to build strength and flexibility through structured exercises. To fully embrace the active learning experience, students must come prepared to move, so don't forget to bring a change of clothes to active wear!

***NEW* Sustainable Engineering - AKA Cardboard Curiosities:** Using recycled materials students will explore how we can ideate, design, prototype, and test different modes of transportation. Throughout this course, students will utilize recycled and sustainable materials for their alternate construction potential. Projects such as the noble Iditarod where cardboard contraptions zip through the arctic snow, cardboard derby where students design a car that uses gravity to propel it across the finish line and potentially, a cardboard regatta, where an armada of cardboard caravels navigate across the water. Students will learn simple design, experiment with new techniques, and develop their growth mindset through the Art of Failure. Please note there is a fee for this course.

***NEW* ThumpTrek 8:** This course explores the world of percussion, offered to grades 7 and 8. This class offers a unique journey through the rich traditions of hand drumming and percussion from West African, Afro-Cuban, and Brazilian cultures. Students will gain hands-on experience with various percussion instruments, including Djembes, Congas, Bongos, Pandeiros, Agogôs, and stick drums. Students will not only learn to play traditional rhythms but will also be encouraged to compose their drumming pieces.

Collaboration plays a crucial role in the class as students will have numerous opportunities to perform in ensembles of various sizes and learn to synchronize rhythms in a group setting. The course will culminate in a public performance(s), giving students a platform to showcase their skills and compositions to an audience of family, friends, and the school community.