



OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**VMA Philosophy of Student Placement:**  
**Placement for Success!**

Villa Maria Academy High School prides itself on its reputation as an academically rigorous college preparatory academy setting. Our philosophy of student placement is rooted in our belief that students should enter VMAHS postured for success and build from there. It is our goal that Villa Maria students meet the high standards of our curricular demands, while also experiencing the rich extracurricular tradition fundamental to our mission.

This general placement outline will serve as a guide for any student considering admission to VMAHS.

**Students in the Grade 9 year are typically scheduled for the following subjects<sup>1</sup>:**

**Math**  
**Biology/Physical Science**  
**Theology**  
**World Language (French, Latin, Spanish)<sup>2</sup>**  
**World History 1**  
**English 1**  
**Requirements in Freshman Guidance, Art, Music, Technology**

**Of the courses listed, the only Honors or Advanced Placement level courses are Math, Biology, English and World History<sup>3</sup>. To some so-identified students, coursework at the Advanced Placement level is open to freshmen. Several factors are considered in a student's course placement, including:**

- **The HSPT score (and specific subtest scores as noted)**
- **8<sup>th</sup> grade performance**
- **VMAHS placement test performance**
- **Previous standardized testing**
- **The recommendation of the sending teacher**

**General Placement Guidelines for Math and Science<sup>4</sup>:**

---

<sup>1</sup> The 2017-18 Academic Catalog and Scope and Sequence of Curriculum is available at [www.vmahs.org](http://www.vmahs.org) under the "Academics" link.

<sup>2</sup> Students who have taken a full year world language course at their sending school are qualified to sit for our world language placement exam. Students must attain a minimum passing score of 70 in order to be considered recommended for the next level of world language.

<sup>3</sup> So-identified students will be recommended to pursue AP World History as their continuation of their World History sequence.

<sup>4</sup> Students demonstrating relative weakness in either or both the Reading or Quantitative Subtests of the HSPT may not be considered appropriate for Honors Science Placement.

**In general:**

- College Prep Algebra 1 is the standard Math placement
- A student must pass a math placement exam with a score of  $x \geq 70$  to be considered for placement in courses other than Algebra 1 or Honors Algebra 1
- The 8th grade teacher recommendations and all subtests of the HSPT scores are taken into account when considering student placement

**1. CP Algebra 1/Course 512:** The student in this course has never had algebra and/or demonstrates systemic weakness in her algebra-readiness skills. This is the standard 9<sup>th</sup> grade placement.

The Math -> Science Track for the CP Algebra 1 student will look as follows:

<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
Alg 1/CPBio or Physical Science <sup>5</sup>	CP Alg 2/CP Chemistry	CP Geom/ CP Physics	CP Pre-calc or CP Trig/Stat/Science Electives as requested

**2. Honors Algebra 1/Course 511:** Two types of students fall into the range of those placed in Hon Alg 1. One is a student who took a full year Algebra 1 course and who did not demonstrate consistent mastery of all topics on our placement test. One is a student who has not taken Algebra but has a HSPT Quantitative and Math score of  $60 \leq x \leq 80$ . This student may or may not have sat for the VMAHS Algebra 1 placement test.

The Math -> Science Track for the Honors Algebra 1 student will look as follows:

<b>Grade 9</b>	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
Hon Alg 1/CP or Hon Bio	Hon Alg 2/Hon Chem	Hon Geom/CP or Honors Physics	Hon Pre-calc/Science Electives as requested

**3. Honors Algebra 2/Course 531:** A student placed here has taken a full year Algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, taken the VMA Algebra placement test and scored  $x \geq 70$ . That student will typically also have an HSPT score  $x \geq 90$  in both the Quantitative and Math sections and outstanding and unqualified teacher recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Students electing to start their science sequence with Physical Science may only take Physical Science in Grade 9. The sequence goes: Physical Science->Biology->Chemistry. Physical Science can fulfill the Physics requirement when taken in this sequence; however, in most cases, Physics is highly recommended.

<sup>6</sup>Students following a different math sequence may likewise place out of their current course by demonstrating mastery with a score of 70 or higher on the placement exam. Please see the Academic Catalog found under the "Academics" link at [www.vmahs.org](http://www.vmahs.org) for more specific scope and sequence details for junior and senior year study options

The Math -> Science Track for the Honors Algebra 2 student will typically look as follows:

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Hon Alg 2/Hon Bio	Hon Geom/Hon Chem	Hon Pre-calc/Hon Physics (and potentially AP Chem)	Hon Calc or AP Calc/ Science Electives as requested

**NOTE:** Students whose HSPT scores indicate superior mastery may be invited to take Advanced Placement Biology in Freshman Year.

**General Guidelines for English/World History<sup>7</sup> Placements:**

Students will be invited to sit for a timed writing prompt to determine the Honors English 1 placement and / or Honors World History 1/PreAP World History placement. Students need to score a 4 or higher (on a 1-5 scale) on the writing prompt to be recommended for placement in Honors English 1 and Honors World History. Students must score a 5 on the World History writing prompt to be recommended for the PreAP World History track. HSPT and Subtest scores in addition to teacher recommendations and sending school 8<sup>th</sup> grade final grades are also considered.

Honors English 1/Honors World History/PreAP World History: Qualities of a Learner/Basis for Evaluation	College Prep English 1/World History: Qualities of a Learner/Basis for Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Superior evidence of reading and communication (written and verbal) skills</li> <li>● Superior evidence of problem solving ability and critical thinking skills</li> <li>● Very high engagement in the learning process</li> <li>● Specific evidence of passion for the topic</li> <li>● Exceptional ability to work independently and collaboratively</li> <li>● Well above grade-level performance on classroom assessments as proven by the submittal of a graded timed writing sample (as required)</li> <li>● Exceptional HSPT and Reading/Verbal Subtest scores</li> <li>● Exhibits a love of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strong reading and communication (written and verbal) skills</li> <li>● Strong problem solving ability and critical thinking skills</li> <li>● High engagement in the learning process</li> <li>● Interest in topic</li> <li>● Ability to work independently and with groups</li> <li>● Frequently at or above grade-level performance on classroom assessments as proven by the submittal of a required graded writing sample</li> <li>● HSPT Reading Subtest scores of <math>x &lt; 70</math></li> </ul>

---

<sup>7</sup> Certain so-identified students in PreAP World History 1 will be invited to continue their coursework in Sophomore year in AP World History.

**General Expectations of Performance by Levels Available for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Placement:**

<b>College Prep</b>	<b>Honors</b>	<b>Advanced Placement</b>
<p><b>College Preparatory.</b> College Prep courses are offered for students whose command of skills enables them to accelerate at the pace required of a college preparatory curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Honors.</b> Honors level courses are offered for academically competent students who are able to pursue in-depth study and who are willing to spend extra time outside of class working independently. These courses require additional reading and writing assignments. Entrance into these classes requires department approval. The nightly independent workload for Honors courses may vary between subject area, but generally will be between 3-5 hours / week of work. Students are expected to manage their time to meet nightly and long-term deadlines. Summer work may be required.</p>	<p><b>Advanced Placement:</b> 20 AP courses are offered to qualified students who wish to earn college level credits while still in secondary school. Students in these courses must demonstrate motivation and previous academic achievement and be ready to take responsibility for extensive reading and writing assignments as independent study. Generally, students in AP courses do upwards of 1 hour of work/evening per course and may be required to complete summer work. All students enrolled in AP courses are required to take the AP exams for those courses in May of that year.</p>

**Supported Learning Curriculum:**

Students who show promise of success in fulfilling the Villa Maria Academy High School curriculum and who identify as having learning differences may have an alternative program, depending on the needs of the individual. The philosophy of our supported learning program is to empower and not to enable. Thus, students who are accepted to this band must follow the specific curricular recommendations set forth by the Academic Team, which includes a commitment to summer readiness work, with the end goal that all will meet the curricular requirements of the Villa Maria diploma. Students whose testing and application submissions show the capability of fulfilling the VMAHS curriculum and who are identified with learning differences may have an alternative program, depending on their specific needs.

**Placement Timeline:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
February 2017	2017-18 Academic Catalog of course offerings available. Incoming students receive placement information. Students will make a world language choice and a choice between music appreciation or instructional music lessons. Students seeking advanced standing in Math, English, and World Language will indicate choice of placement test dates.
March 2017	Students return all placement information. Course selection choices of students in current grades 9-10-11 are being made.
April 2017	Course offerings for 2017-18 school year are determined based on student course selections.
May 2017	Incoming Class of 2021 sits for English/World History, Math, World Language placement exams.
June 2017	Incoming Class of 2021 notified of placement decisions.
August 2017	Students notified of course schedule for 2017-18 school year.