

Canton High School

Course Selection Fact Sheet

For 2010-11 Courses

In order to meet the individual needs of all students, Canton High School offers a variety of courses, some taught at different levels. **All** of our academic courses are college preparatory, designed to build the foundation for future success. Electives provide an outlet for you to experience different subjects, explore new ideas and develop skills in areas of strong interest.

There are many sources of information to help you with the course selection process. This is a summary to get you started. If you have any questions, talk to your counselor.

Important to Remember...

Selecting courses for next year should be a thoughtful process with the ultimate goal to create an appropriately **balanced** educational experience. There are some important things to keep in mind when selecting courses:

- Courses should be challenging but not overwhelming. It is more important to be **successful** in a level than to take the highest one offered.
- Take into account everything you do, remembering that you need to balance homework with sports, extracurricular activities and time to relax with friends and family.
- There are a maximum of 42 periods in the 7-day cycle, but you may benefit from some unscheduled times for study halls and meeting with other support staff.
- Use your best judgment in selecting the right course for you, keeping in mind your teacher's recommendation; while it may be difficult, do not let the classes your friends are in sway you.
- Choose courses that keep you on track for meeting graduation requirements and the recommended years of study for college admissions.

See the Program of Study for details about level designations in general and subject-specific guidelines.

Leveled courses are designated CP2 (College Preparatory 2), CP1 (College Preparatory 1) and H (Honors). In addition, there are a few AP (Advanced Placement) courses offered that are the equivalent of college-level courses; students are encouraged to take the College Board Advanced Placement Examination.

The Process

The steps for selecting courses are fairly simple. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact your counselor.

1. On your course selection form write in the courses you wish to take next year, paying careful attention to levels and credits. Note that you need a minimum of 38 credits.
2. During classes on Course Selection Day, take your course selection form to teachers for level recommendations.
3. The form then gets turned in during last period on course selection day and all selections are input into the computer system. Verification sheets will be mailed home for parental review and approval on approximately April 1st. This is **not** a confirmation that you have been **scheduled** in the courses.
4. If you are considering taking a different course level from the teacher's recommendation, we recommend first discussing it with your parents and then having them contact the teacher in order to get his or her perspective. Your parents **must** then submit a formal request for department head review **by Tuesday, April 13th**.
5. Scheduling is done over the summer. Please note that students do not always get their first choice of electives. Priority is given by grade level, with seniors first. Every attempt will be made to schedule your top priority electives. You must indicate alternate choices on the form.
6. Final schedules are mailed out to students in August.

Turn this sheet over for simple considerations to help in assessing levels.

Teachers are usually the best judge of appropriate levels – based on their experience and knowledge of the curriculum, they make their recommendations. If you choose to override into a higher level, it may not be possible to drop down if the course is too difficult.

Level Selection Considerations

Most CHS students take a mix of levels. It is important to find the best course fit for each of your academic subjects. However, you also need to look at the whole picture to ensure that the load will not be too great. For example, even if your individual teachers each suggest Honors, you may decide that a course load of five Honors classes will be overwhelming and choose to take your least favorite or most difficult class at the CP1 level.

The best means of determining your course level next year is to gauge how you are doing this year.

- If you need instructional support from the teacher, benefit from help with subject organization and concepts, and like a pace that allows you to practice skills, College Preparatory 2 levels may be the best bet.
- If you have effective reading and writing skills, but understand concepts better when teachers provide some structure to help in understanding, College Preparatory 1 levels may be a good fit.
- If you like to learn independently, enjoy open-ended analysis, have strong communication and conceptual skills, are extremely motivated and can organize time well to manage a lot of homework, an Honors course can work for you.
- **But remember**, if the current work has been too hard, you've needed a lot of support of the teacher or a tutor, you have trouble organizing concepts and/or you are struggling to complete homework along with everything else in your day, you might want to consider shifting to a different level.

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the difference between Honors and Advanced Placement courses?

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are bound by a pre-approved college-level curriculum, covering more topics in less depth. Honors classes have more flexibility and can cover fewer topics in greater depth. AP and Honors classes add the same points to the GPA.

How many Honors and AP courses do colleges want?

Colleges want to see challenging coursework yet it is not as simple as counting courses. They want to see a strong, balanced schedule and a successful student.

Isn't it better to select an Honors class now, since I can always move to the CP1 level in the fall?

There are several problems with this strategy. First, you may not be able to change levels if classes are full. Second, if you are able to find an open section, it may require you to change other classes in your schedule, change teachers or drop electives in which you are already enrolled. Third, the grade you earned in the Honors class stays with you and is rolled into the CP1 or CP2 average.

From the colleges' point of view, isn't it better to get a grade of C in Honors than get a B in a CP1 class?

There are consequences for shooting too high. **Taking** a course isn't the same as **succeeding** in a course. In fact, low grades in an Honors classes can hurt your GPA. It is likely that you will achieve greater success in the course level more appropriate for you. We encourage you to make your choices based on what is best and most supportive of your developmental needs. This should be done in consultation with teachers and parents. Colleges want to see you do well **and** maintain balance in your life.

How many years of a language do colleges want?

More is better, but only if you're successful. After two years, look at how you're doing, evaluate your interests and discuss options with your foreign language teacher and with your counselor. Also, counselors may recommend that some freshmen begin their language study in their sophomore year.

If I'm not at the top of the class I won't get into a "good" college.

With over 4,200 colleges in U.S. alone, this isn't the right question. You should not make decisions based on a name. Students at every level at CHS get into the **right** colleges for them, colleges in which they can grow and succeed.

What looks better...

Many students and parents ask questions which start this way. The most important thing to remember when you select courses is that the classes you take should not be based solely on what you think colleges want or what classes your friends are taking. Your courses belong to you, and your goal should be to create a rewarding experience of learning. If you do that, you will do well.