



FRESHMEN COURSE SELECTION GUIDE 2017-18

This is a selection of key items for parents, teachers, counselors and administrators to simplify the course selection process for incoming freshmen.

Please refer to the Pinkerton Academy Course Catalog for a complete reference.

What Courses Does a Freshman Take? Core-courses and Levels

Core courses required for all incoming 9th graders include:

- English (1 full credit)
- Math (1 full credit)
- Science (1 full credit)
- American Government (1/2 credit)
- Cultural Geography (1/2 credit)

The staff at Pinkerton Academy put a lot of faith in the recommendation of the eighth grade team teachers and encourages 8th grade core teachers and special educators to engage parents in conversation when there is a disagreement about suggested levels. A full outline of levels is noted below.

A Summary of Freshman Course Levels

In considering the levels to recommend for both required and leveled elective courses, teachers are urged to look at the *student's academic performance, work ethic and testing.*

A Level Courses

- This is an accelerated level.
- Students are assigned homework, expected to conduct research, or study for upcoming tests/quizzes on a nightly basis in most classes.
- Classes are fast-paced with the expectation that all outside class work is completed by deadline and that students are prepared to participate in class discussions, conduct labs, or work on projects based on having completed out of class work. Teachers typically do not go over each homework assignment as a class. Students are encouraged to ask for clarification if needed.
- As students progress, the emphasis is more on long-term projects than nightly assignments.
- It is understood that some questions on tests/quizzes are drawn from independent homework, studying and/or research assignments and not necessarily from direct teacher instruction.
- Often students may be juggling/managing more than one short-term and long-term assignment within the same class.

*Students are expected to be able to read literally and inferentially.

B Level Courses

- This is a college prep level.
- Students are assigned homework, expected to conduct research, or study for upcoming tests/quizzes at minimum several days per week.
- Teachers expect that all outside class work is completed and that students are prepared to discuss out of class assignments, ask for clarification if needed, and participate in activities based on out of class work.
- Teachers forewarn students when items on quizzes/tests will be drawn from independent, out of class work.

B/C combined levels: Freshman Science and Social Studies (Physical Science, American Government and Cultural Geography) have combined B and C levels. C level classes in these three courses no longer exist. The combined course is described as having a curriculum which accommodates both the B and C level student. In order to accommodate their needs, teachers will administer formative assessments, participate in differentiated instruction, parallel teaching, and be mindful of always accommodating the individual students.

C Level Courses - (available only in Algebra 1 and English for freshmen)

- Students are assigned homework, expected to conduct research, or study for upcoming tests/quizzes independently several days a week. When homework is assigned, teachers normally review assignment with class as a whole, prior to moving forward.
- Teachers often allow for time in class to work on assignments. Assignments not completed in class may be sent home with student to complete on an independent basis, with the expectation that students bring completed work to class the next day.
- Teachers develop test/quiz questions based on items that have been directly taught to students.

Exploration Level Courses (permission required through PA Special Education Department)

- These courses are designed for a select group of students who need a smaller setting, built in accommodations, much more attention to organization and strategies for homework completion.
- Much of the class work is completed during structured class time. Homework is typically an extension of what was started and often completed in class, with the aid of both the classroom teacher and any paraprofessional assigned to the group.
- Same expectations as C level, but in a smaller setting.
- Para-Educational Support available via IEP team decision.

THE DEADLINE FOR ANY EXPLORATION LEVEL, READING, & PERSONAL COMMUNICATION ENRICHMENT COURSES: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2017

Accelerated Levels: (Honors Algebra 2, Biology, and Foreign Language 2A)

There are students who may indicate an interest in more accelerated freshman courses—for example, students who wish to take Honors Algebra 2, Biology and the 2nd year of a foreign language. Please be aware of the following regarding these students.

For Honors Algebra 2 selection: The teacher will recommend the highest level the student is capable of (Algebra 1A). If the middle school math teacher feels that the student is capable of Honors Algebra 2, the math teachers at each sending school will send the names of the qualified Honors Algebra 2 students to Jenny Walker, Pinkerton's math chair, who will pass the list of names on to the school counseling department for input into the students' schedules. No call from parent/guardian is needed for this change. If the teacher is uncertain that Honors 2 is appropriate level, he/she should recommend that the student sign up to take the math placement test. Contact Jenny Walker for more information on dates for test administration. *Please be extremely careful on placement; this is a Junior level course.*

For Biology selection: The teacher will recommend the highest level the student is capable of (Physical Science A). If the middle school science teacher feels that the student is capable of Biology A, the science teachers will send the names of the qualified Biology A students to Deb O'Connor, Pinkerton's science chair. Deb will then pass on the list of qualified students to the school counseling department for input into the students' schedules. No call from a parent or middle school will be needed for this change. Students who are recommended for and choosing Biology A should be students with a passion for science and an interest in ultimately enrolling in AP science courses his/her senior year.

Reminder: Students must be enrolled in Honors Algebra 2 to be able to enroll in Biology A. The Honors Algebra 2 and Biology A lists will be cross-referenced to assure that this occurs.

Foreign Language 2A: If the student's current foreign language teacher recommends that the student sign up for the second year of the language (French 2A, Spanish 2A, etc.), the student should have successfully completed a middle school language over a period of two years with an average grade of B or better and be recommended for English A or B level.

Level Changes

We have new deadlines for level changes and dropping and adding classes. This makes it important that the recommendations be well placed as there is less time available to make changes once students are in high school. Level changes and drops are completed within the first month for a semester long course and by the end of term one for a year-long course.

Electives and other required courses – so many choices

Foreign Language:

1 credit in a foreign language—choices are American Sign Language, French, Spanish, German, and Latin. Although Pinkerton does not require that students study a foreign language, most 4-year colleges require 2-4 years of the same language. Most 2-year colleges do not have this requirement. *It is suggested that if students struggle with English they may wish to postpone taking a foreign language until sophomore year.*

American Sign Language is accepted as a foreign language in many colleges, but not all. If a student is uncertain about its acceptance at certain colleges, families are encouraged to call schools to find out.

1A: If the student has successfully completed a middle school language for one year, with an average grade of B or better and has been recommended for A or B level English, the student should be recommended for level 1A of the language.

1B: Generally the 1B level is for student with more limited experience in the targeted language. **See Course Catalog for Latin level requirements. ASL is not leveled.**

Other Typical Freshman Courses:

- Physical Education 1* (1/2 credit)
- Art* (1/2 credit required): Fundamentals of dance, Academy Women’s Choir (girls 9-10 grades or all 4 years), Mixed Chorus (boys, all grades, girls 11-12 grade), Intro to Music Lab, Concert Band. Students may also take only (1) of the following half year introductory classes: Intro to Art- Studio emphasis; Intro to Art- Graphic Design; Intro to Art- Digital Photography; Intro to Art- Ceramics. (see page 76 of Course Catalog)
- Information and Communications Technology* (1/2 credit required): Computer Applications: in Business or Literacy, Desktop Publishing , Introduction to Digital Media, Introduction to Engineering Design, and Introduction to Computer Aided Drafting (CAD). (see page 39 of Course Catalog)
- Introduction to the World of Business can be taken freshman year and it will count as the Economics required course for graduation. Please note that this course is unlevleled.

* These courses fulfill the state requirement for graduation and must be taken before a student graduates from Pinkerton. Though many students decide to take the courses freshman year, many students will postpone them until sophomore year or later.

Elective courses:

There are many elective courses available to freshmen. Students can select from a variety of courses in the Fine Arts department, Career and Technical Education (CTE) department, Foreign Languages, and ROTC.

Postsecondary Planning – All Levels Are the Best Levels!

Parents and guardians frequently ask questions of teachers about what levels of courses to take in preparation for postsecondary planning. Though there is no hard-fast rule regarding leveling, the following guidelines can be considered:

4-year colleges: Generally students are enrolled in A, B, and Honors/AP level courses

2-year colleges: Generally students are enrolled in B and C level courses, however, A level or higher is possible. We have seen an increase in the number of students who attend a 2-year college and later transfer to a 4-year college or university.

The most important advice is that the student should be enrolled in the level where he/she is most capable of learning. If students have an idea of or an interest in a

certain college or university, the best advice we can offer is that they call the admissions office directly to ask questions about specific types of courses or levels required for admission. Every college has a different set of criteria for admission. A few websites that may be helpful for searches are www.collegeboard.org. and www.petersons.com.

Frequently Asked Questions and Other Important Information

How many credits should freshmen take?

It really varies from student to student. Most often, we recommend 6 credits so students have 1 full study and 1 lunch period = 8 periods per day. A study period allows transitioning high school students the opportunity to study, or visit the Media Center, Math Center, Writing Center or Library. Giving them those extra opportunities can help students get better grades and gain confidence. That said, there are some students who are capable of handling 7 full credits, the maximum amount, and some who are more comfortable with 5.5 credits. This is very individual and considering the individual student is the most important factor to remember.

How many credits does a student need to advance to sophomore status?

In order to become a sophomore, a freshman needs to have 5 full credits.

How many credits does a student from the Class of 2021 need to graduate?

All students need to graduate with 22 credits. They need: 4 credits in English, 3 credits in Math/4 Math courses (see below), 3 credits in Science, 1 credit in US History, half-credit in American Government, half-credit in Cultural Geography, half-credit in a Computer technology course, 1 credit in Physical Education, half-credit in Economics, half-credit in Health and half-credit in the arts (total of 15 credits in required courses). Students also must take a minimum of 7 elective courses in order to achieve 22 credits overall.

What are the new math requirements at Pinkerton?

Yes! The NH DOE has created important new graduation requirement regarding Math: while 3 credits of math are necessary for graduation, a math course (or math-related non-math course) must be taken each year a student is enrolled at PA. There is a list of math-related courses on page 92 of the Course Catalog.

What about summer courses before students start freshmen year?

During the summer, for a fee, students can enroll in Credit Advancement courses, typically Physical Education I, Health, Computer Applications and Art. If this is of interest, more information on how to sign up will be forthcoming in the spring. There is also the option of taking courses through Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS). Students must wait until they have graduated from middle school to begin a course through VLACS. Parents and students interested in beginning a VLACS course during the summer between 8th grade and 9th grade may contact Pinkerton Academy school counseling for registration and information.

Will I get all the classes I've chosen in my course selections?

Hopefully! Most students do get the courses they selected. But, the scheduling process can be tricky and sometimes courses will be offered at the same time and won't all fit. There is always a priority for core courses, but it's always a good idea to have an alternative course or two considered.

I've heard about NH Scholars. Should I know something about it as an incoming freshman? (see page ~~42~~³⁴ of Course Catalog)

Definitely! If curriculum is completed as established, you will receive an emblem designation on your diploma, receive a medallion to wear at graduation, an opportunity for application waivers fees from NH private colleges (except for Dartmouth). There is an opportunity to receive NH Scholar Scholarships and to attend the NH State Scholars Convention in May. For more info go to the NH Scholars website: www.nhscholars.org

What about an Honors Diploma? (see page ~~38~~³⁴ of Course Catalog)

Students apply in their Junior Year, but need to begin considering early on. The specifics are spelled out in the Catalog, but there are a number of Honors and AP courses across disciplines that are required to establish high level success in broad curriculum areas.

I'm interested in playing sports in college. Is there anything I need to know?

Yes - the NCAA is a very important resource in determining eligibility to play Division 1 and 2 collegiate sports. They look at specific courses, grades, and levels as well as SAT scores. We recommend exploring the NCAA website and by the end of freshman year enrolling with the NCAA eligibility center. NCAA approved courses are noted by logo in the Course Catalog.

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