

EIGHTH GRADE ELECTIVES 2026-2027

Please note that all electives are subject to funding, and may be impacted by the district-level reductions. Please ensure that alternate courses are chosen based on an understanding that individual electives may not all be offered.

ART085A/B BEGINNING ORCHESTRA (Year Long):

Designed for the beginning student who wants to learn the violin, viola, cello or string bass. Students will learn and perform a variety of music styles. There are several concerts and fun activities/field trips that enhance learning and support good developmental musicianship skills. Piano students are encouraged to sign up for this class as they are great candidates for being successful string players with their keyboarding and note reading background. Three to four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade.

ART086A/B INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA (Year Long):

Designed for the experienced student (1-2 years of classroom or private instruction) who plays the violin, viola, cello or string bass. Students will learn and perform a variety of music styles. There are several concerts and fun activities/field trips that enhance learning and support good developmental musicianship skills. Three to four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade. Students who are new to Thomas Jefferson may be asked to audition for proper placement.

ART088A/B BEGINNING BAND (Year Long):

This class is open to any student at Thomas Jefferson who is interested in learning a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument (guitar is not offered). All grades are welcome! At the beginning of the school year, students can choose between flute, clarinet, trumpet, baritone, trombone, or percussion. You will learn how to read music and how to play an instrument. We will perform at evening concerts, the Hazel Dell Parade, and even go on a couple field trips! In December, you will have the option to switch to oboe, saxophone, low brass, and more. This class is great for anyone who wants to make immediate friends, have fun, and learn how to play an instrument! Instruments are available for students and families in financial need. *Three to Four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade.*

ART089A/B INTERMEDIATE BAND (Year Long):

This class is for band students who have had at least one year of instruction on a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. Students must have completed Beginning Band before signing up for this class. Students will continue to extend their music theory and playing instruction. We will perform at assemblies, evening concerts, the Hazel Dell Parade, and even go on a couple field trips! Other instrument options will be explored in this class. This class is great for musicians who want to make immediate friends, have fun, and play music for the TJ community. Students who are new to Thomas Jefferson may be asked to audition for proper placement. Instruments are available for students and families in financial need. *Three to Four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade.*

ART091A/B CHOIR (Year Long):

This class is for the beginning vocalists who enjoy singing and want to develop their musical knowledge. Students will target musicianship skills in a fun and supportive ensemble atmosphere to improve their abilities as performers. Singers will explore and present varied literature during concerts and community outreach opportunities throughout the year. Three to four evening performances are required as part of the students' grades. This choir is mainly for 6th and 7th graders, but 8th graders are welcome too!

CTE073A/B VIDEO TECHNOLOGY (Year Long):

Students will learn basic skills using video cameras and related equipment. In addition, students will cover the more artistic side of film production including the different ways to frame shots using horizontal and vertical angles, as well as how subject size can be used as a tool. Film has become a dominant medium to present ideas over the past century, so students will learn film history and the applications it has in today's society. Video Tech will teach what it takes to be successful in the production of a video, from pre-production to production. They will be able to demonstrate the effective use of oral, written, and visual communication. All will learn professionalism and to work as a group, as well as gain trouble-shooting skills that often accompany the making of a video. Finally, students will learn the last phase in the creation of a video, post-production. Students will learn how to use computers and Adobe Premiere to edit video footage in such a way to achieve the overarching goal of the project.

ART098A/B VISUAL ART (Semester Class):

Visual Art is for students who enjoy art and wish to develop their skills and creativity with a variety of media and techniques. Studio experiences in the classroom will give students opportunities to experience a variety of media (may include pencil, pen, ink, charcoal, pastel, watercolor, acrylic/tempera paint, clay, glass, printmaking, batik, packing tape, paper mache, and wire) while developing student's individual style and creative problem solving skills. Students will demonstrate their ability to respond, to analyze and to interpret their own artwork and the work of others through discussions, critiques, and self-reflections. This course may be repeated, different projects are produced every year.

CTE077A/B CTE STEM EXPLORATION LAB (Semester Class): Rotations between various units, each on a flexible (approx.) 10-day schedule, with **self-guided instruction accessed on laptops and/or desktop computers**. Units include hands-on projects and experiences. Students work in teams of 2-3 to complete each unit, finishing with career exploration in the particular field. **Some of the topics covered include:** Culinary Arts, Cosmetology and Barbering, Sports Medicine, Veterinary Technology, Dentistry, 3D Printing, Home Maintenance Systems, Introduction to Child Development, as well as many other STEM topics.

ART093A/B WOODSHOP/ TECH ED (Semester Class): Tech. Ed. is a project-based class. Students will learn how to build projects using the design process. Students will develop problem-solving skills while enjoying creative, hands-on building experiences. Students will also learn how to use hand tools. Examples of possible projects include: building scale model bridges, wood dragsters, rockets, towers and egg drop containers. If you like being creative and building this is the class for you!

REQUIRING APPLICATION, TEACHER APPROVAL, AND/OR PRE-REQUISITE

ART090A/B CONCERT BAND (Year Long): *This is the top performing band for students with two or more years of playing experience.* Students will be placed into Advanced Band based on teacher recommendation and instrument ability. The Concert Band will perform at assemblies, concerts, festivals, elementary schools, the Hazel Dell Parade, and community events. Concert Band is for students who want to get deeper into learning instrument technique and we will study advanced rhythm, conducting, ensemble playing and marching. This class will prepare students to go into a high school ensemble after 8th grade. Concert Band represents the TJ community through performance and is a great place to dive deeper into learning music. Students who are new to Thomas Jefferson may be asked to audition for proper placement. Instruments are available for students and families in financial need. *Three to four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade.*

ART092A/B CONCERT CHOIR (Year Long): Concert Choir is for singers who would like to improve their musicianship by learning more difficult music and harmonies. There is an extra level of commitment inherent in the advanced choir due to the higher volume of performance opportunities than those that are required of the beginning choir. This group goes to festivals, performs at assemblies, and is the core for our February elementary school tour. A high level of focus, desire, and commitment to learn is required. Three to four evening performances are required as part of the student's grades. Concert Choir is mainly for 7th and 8th grade students. **Entrance into the class requires teacher permission.**

ART097A/B ADVANCED ORCHESTRA (Year Long): Designed for the most accomplished string players at our school with two or more years of playing experience. This is our top performing ensemble and will perform for special events including assemblies and district-level, community and school-related events. This class will prepare students to go into a high school ensemble after 8th grade. Often the advanced string students assume leadership roles as well as several performing opportunities in small group settings. Students will learn and perform a variety of music styles and will dive deeper into advanced techniques like shifting, vibrato, and advanced rhythms. Students in this ensemble are selected based on teacher recommendation. Students who are new to the school may be asked to audition for proper placement. Three to four evening performances are required as part of the student's grade.

WL080 A/B SPANISH 1 (Year Long):

This class is offered to students who have successfully completed the first year of Spanish (C or higher in 7th grade Spanish). Students will continue to engage with academic Spanish language, exploring elements of various cultures in the Spanish-speaking world through listening, reading, writing, and speaking. This class is designed to be a safe space for students to develop communicative skills in a meaningful, cultural context using Comprehensible Input (CI) that focuses on the acquisition of high frequency structures. **Students who successfully complete both Spanish 1A and Spanish 1B can forecast for 2nd year Spanish in High School therefore fulfilling one year of High School World Language requirement.**

ENG096A/B JOURNALISM (Year Long):

Students will learn the basics of journalism including photography, writing, editing and advertising skills. The main project is creating the Thomas Jefferson yearbook. A school newspaper will also be published. Prerequisites: Strong writing skills, ability to work well independently, and in small groups, and have fun while you learn, then journalism is for you. There are a limited number of seats for this class. **Application process required.**

MSC065A/B LEADERSHIP (Year Long):

Leadership develops interpersonal and group process skills such as critical thinking, communication, listening and observation skills, public speaking skills, setting and achieving goals, managing tasks and overseeing group responsibilities as well as a commitment to public service projects. Students are expected to work with a variety of students, be trusted to complete tasks on their own, support and advocate for others, problem solve and be intrinsically self motivated. **Application process required.**

AVID08A/B AVID 8 (Year Long):

AVID stands for *Advancement Via Individual Determination*. The AVID program is for students who want to go to college and are willing to work hard to get there. Students learn strategies for note-taking, studying, goal-setting and organization. Students learn study group skills to help themselves and one another to be as successful as possible in all of their courses. AVID students also visit college campuses to learn more about the choices available after high school.. **Application process required.**

CTE073A/B ADVANCED VIDEO (Year Long):

Are you interested in continuing video at the next level? If so, then this class is for you! Students who are in this section will oversee the video studio, plan and shoot daily school news announcements, and create content for the show. Focus will also center upon Studio 300, the school based podcast production using state-of-the-art equipment. Students will use the Adobe Suite to edit videos in Premiere Pro, as well as learn photography using new DSLR cameras and the photo editing software Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom. Preference is given to returning eighth grade students who have displayed previous success and have a keen interest in the subject. Seventh graders who have a background in video or are very interested in being involved in announcements and podcasting are also welcome to apply. A short application is required to become eligible for the class.

Choice Science Class Options:

SCI100A/B ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE: High School Credit/Grade, choice junior year as to whether middle school grade stays on transcript. Project and Research-Based. Fewer labs, fast pace. Ideal for students of a curious and independent nature toward science. Topics: Bias and Data, Biodiversity, Energy, Economics, and Society, pollution. Paced similar to 9th grade. Advanced science class that requires motivated students.

SCI082A/B PHYSICAL SCIENCE: Middle School Credit, excellent preparation for High School Chemistry and Physics. Labs and hands-on activities. Paced similar to 6th/7th grade. Topics: Matter and its Interactions, Motion and Stability, Energy, Waves and their Applications.