

An Information Session for Students Entering Grades 7 and 8 and Their Parents

Welcome to Middle School 101



Guidance Centre

Agenda

- ✓ Purpose of the Grade 7 and 8 Program
- ✓ Structure of Toronto Prep School
- ✓ What Are We About?
- ✓ Priority Concepts and Skills
- ✓ Developing Study Habits and Study Skills
- ✓ Course Offerings and a Typical Timetable
- ✓ Athletics and Clubs
- ✓ The Role of Parents
- ✓ The Role of Teachers
- ✓ The Role of Students
- ✓ Preparation for Success
- ✓ Questions

Purpose of the Grade 7 and 8 Program

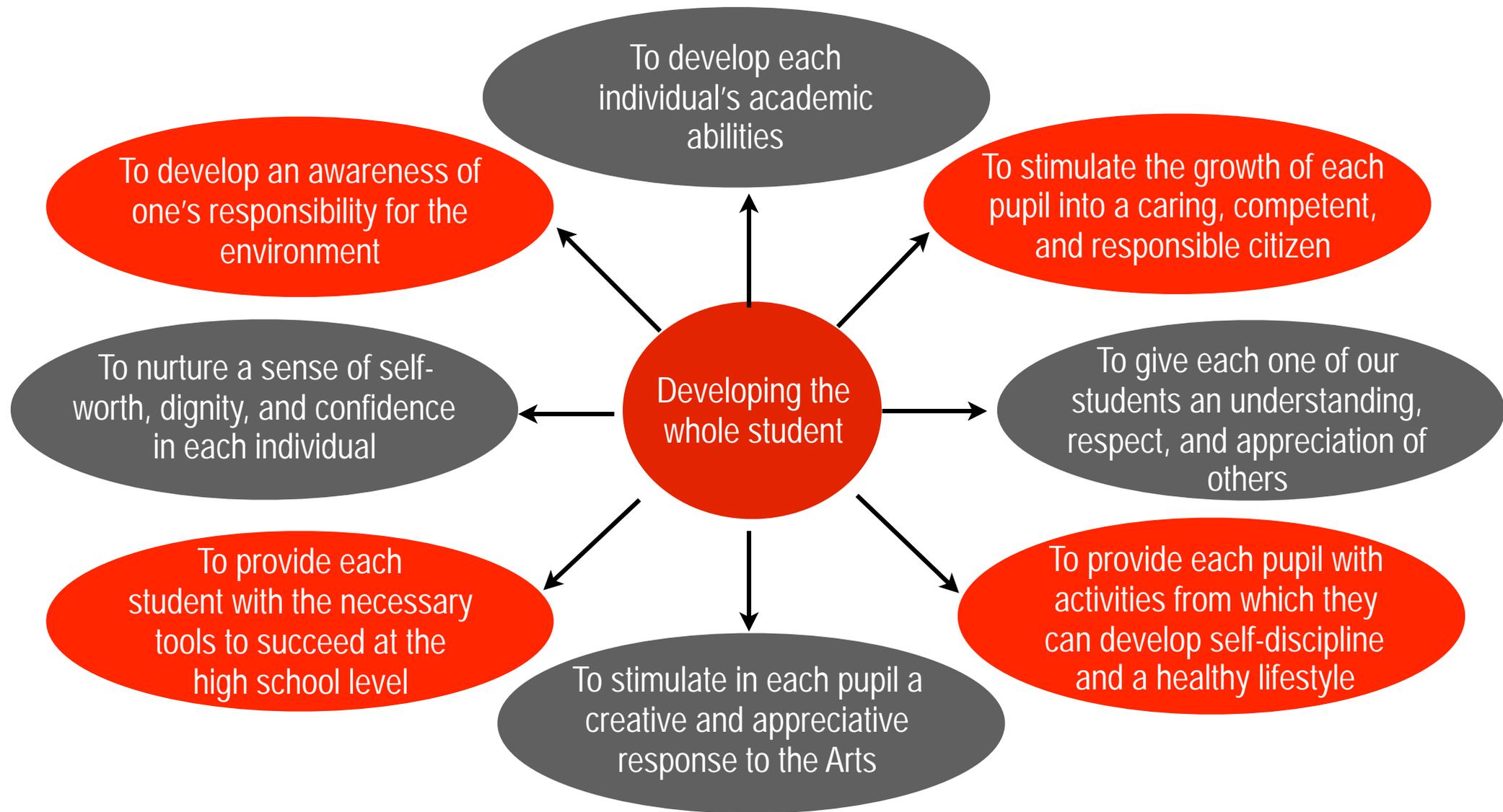
Toronto Prep School's Grade 7 and 8 program is tailored to bridge the gap between elementary and high school.

Our Middle School provides students the opportunity to further their knowledge, understanding, and application in a structured and nurturing environment shaped to advance both academic and social skills.

Toronto Prep School's faculty and staff, as a whole, have the experience and expertise to provide each student with the guidance and instruction needed to succeed.



The Strategy: How Will We Assist



The Goal: To Assist Students in Achieving Their Best

Structure of Toronto Prep School

- We are a university preparatory school
- There are two parts to the school:
 - the middle school, comprised of grades 7 and 8
 - the upper school, comprised of grades 9 to 12
- Classes start at 10:00 AM Monday thru Friday
- School ends at 4:10 PM Monday thru Thursday and at 2:58 PM on Fridays
- Extra-help is available between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM every school day
- The school opens at 7:15 AM and closes at 6:00 PM

Structure of Toronto Prep School

- We are organized on a semester model.
- Two semesters per year.
- Four courses per semester.
- Eight courses over the year.
- Four courses are taken from September to January and another four courses are taken from February to June.
- The four courses are taken daily for the semester, with each period being 81 minutes in length Mondays to Thursdays and 63 minutes in length on Fridays.



The Semester Model

The concept of the semester system is new to most grade 7 and 8 students.

More than likely, they have been in the non-semester, full-year model of education where they take all their courses, usually 8, everyday for the entire school year.

We are different. We have adopted the semester model as we feel that it is the most effective way to help students learn in the present and be prepared for the rigours that await them at the post-secondary school level.

Each model has its proponents and detractors.



Benefits of the Semester Model

- More time for students to learn.
- By effectively doubling the class length, teachers could take more time to explain complex ideas.
- Longer class time also affords teachers more opportunities to work with individual students.
- For students, the reduced number of subjects studied on a daily basis allows them to focus more on the four subjects each semester. Homework time is now spread over half the number of subjects.
- The result has been better grades for students and a better understanding.
- The vast majority of colleges and universities teach their classes using the semester model. Prepares our students for the rigours they will face.

Major Concern Voiced for the Semester Model

In the semester system it is possible for students to go up to a year without re-visiting a particular subject.

For example, a student might take English literature during a September to January semester but not start the next English literature course until the following January.

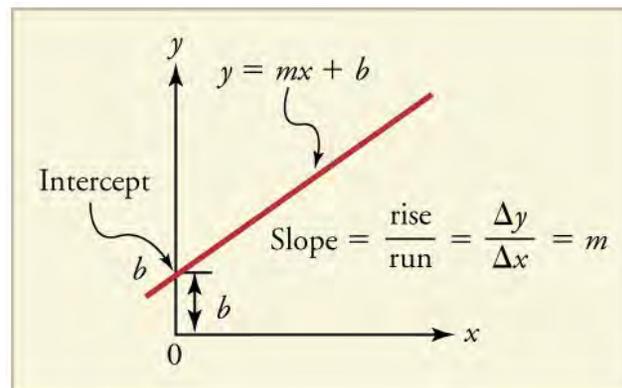
This may be less of a concern for content based courses such as English literature, geography, and history, since these subjects do not necessarily depend on building skill competencies.



But how do you get around math? It requires skill and practice and reasoning. It teaches problem solving and so trains the mind to deal in terms of theory and concepts with precision. And it requires a memory fresh with rigorous, regular exercise.

Is it not odd that students might take math for four months, skip it for four months and then possibly take it eight months later, depending on the schedule of the student?

A whole year might have elapsed between courses, and students are expected to remember what they studied many months before, as if summer happens twice a year now. More chances to forget and as such, are we not setting our students up for failure using this model?



“It is just like riding a bike”



If we have taught concepts properly and our students have learned them properly - meaning that they have understood the concepts rather than just memorized them then it will be “just like riding a bike” when it comes time to revisit them.

A short review at the beginning of each unit will rekindle the students’ understanding irrespective of the passing of time. If on the other hand they never really understood the concepts but they simply memorized them and knew them by rote, they will completely forget them whether they were away for just the summer months, or whether they were away from them for 8 months or a year.

The length of absence will not matter if they were never fully understood in the first place. We aim to address the understanding. How we teach, what we emphasize, and how we expect our students to learn are at the crux of understanding the foundational concepts.

The Final Word on the Semester Model

The main concern voiced about the semester model becomes a moot point if we have addressed learning properly.

The other aspects fall heavily in favour of the semester model.

As noted the semester model is seen as providing students with a better fundamental understanding of the subject matter, teachers give more consideration to teaching, more continuous assessments, students are less academically burdened, it provides a more thorough understanding of the concepts taught, students obtain better marks, and it is the best training for how universities will teach their courses.





What Are We About?



We are about assisting our students gain a mastery over the requisite skill sets that will be valued for success in the coming years

We are about assisting our students become more independent, confident, and enthusiastic learners

We are about cultivating creativity and nurturing our students' curiosity

We are about priming our students to succeed at the high school level and beyond, not only academically but socially

We are about creating a culture that not only accepts striving for better as the expectation, but one which values academic achievement as the norm - it is "cool" to be smart and to value the pursuit of academic excellence

We are about fostering the growth of meaningful relationships between our students and the faculty

We are about exposing our students to diverse academic and co-curricular programs that allow them to discover their passions and talents

We are about helping to make our students confident in their abilities and developing healthy, positive relationships with their peers

We are about the realization that true learning occurs when you are pushed beyond your comfort zone

We are about helping to instil positive lifelong habits

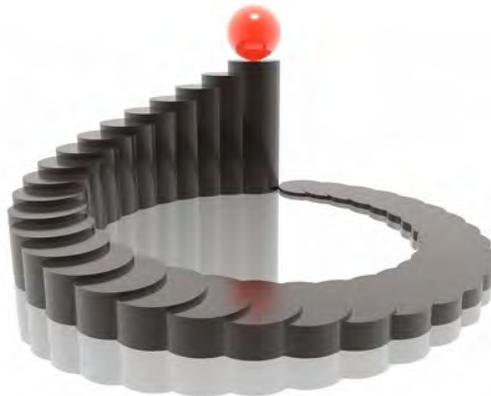


We are about ensuring that each student's learning needs are understood and met within our resource base

We are about instilling life skills - behaving respectfully, acting in an ethical fashion, thinking critically, assuming responsibility, and taking accountability

We are about regular and frequent communication with parents to provide a transparent and effective platform to drive individualized learning

We are about the belief that your work ethic should always exceed your talent and intellect



What is Our Primary Emphasis? Skill Set Acquisition

Learning is no longer content driven but rather resides in acquiring requisite skills and character traits.

- oral and written communication
- presentation skills
- research skills
- critical thinking and analytical skills
- leadership qualities
- collaborative techniques
- ethical questioning
- intellectual curiosity
- comfort with and expertise in the use of technology

Our program places a premium on the pursuit of the aforementioned skills.

We teach the curriculum of the Ministry of Education of the province of Ontario as is mandated for all middle school programs. How we teach it, what we emphasize, and the skills that we highlight in its pursuit is where separation occurs.

Priority Concepts and Skills for Grade 7 and 8

What are the criteria we utilize to identify the most essential concepts and skills to be prioritized?

Endurance - concepts and skills that last beyond one grade or course and will be of value beyond the present.

For example, proficiency in reading informational texts and being able to write effectively for a variety of purposes will endure throughout a student's academic career and work life.



Leverage - the crossover application within the content area and to other content areas.

For example, proficiency in creating and interpreting graphs, diagrams, and charts and then being able to make accurate inferences from them will help students in math, science, social studies, language arts, and other areas. The ability to write an analytical summary or a persuasive essay will similarly help students in any academic discipline.



Readiness - concepts and skills that are necessary for success in the next grade. Are students prepared to tackle the rigours of the following grades and for future success?

For example, grade 8 math includes multi-step word problems that use whole numbers, decimals, fractions and percentages all at once. Have grade 7s experienced all these individual concepts as well as having faced problem-solving in grade 7 math?



The Development of Good Study Habits



Set aside a regular time and place to study



Connect to the TPS Wikispace at main.torontoprepschool.com to verify homework and upcoming assignments or tests and to view daily announcements



Concentrate. Cut out distractions, but take short breaks now and then to renew your focus



Organize and centralize notes and assignments in folders in your MacBook Pro



Utilize your iCalendar and plan out your semester



Use the available technology to acquire additional information



Rewrite the important ideas in your own words and review on a regular basis

Study Skills for Effective Learning



Identifying your learning style (visual, auditory, tactual, logical, social, solitary)



Effective listening



Improve note taking



A strategy for reading textbooks SQ3R



A strategy for solving math word problems SQRQCQ



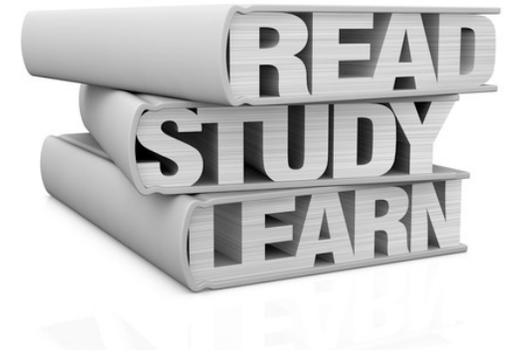
Improving reading comprehension



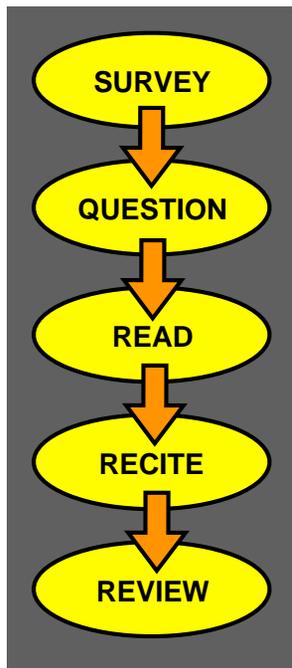
Improving memory and information retention



Dealing with test anxiety



Sample Skill: A Strategy for Reading Textbooks



Get more out of what you read with

S **Q** **3** **R**

SURVEY

Preread.

Scan the material.

Look for titles, subtitles, pictures, diagrams, bold and italic type.

QUESTION

After Surveying ask yourself questions.

Who
What
When
Where
Why
How

READ

Go back to the beginning and read it again. Answer the questions as you read.

RECITE

Cover your answers and try to recite them. Quiz yourself.

REVIEW

Go back over the material. Reread your notes and outline the main points.

The Importance of Developing Good Habits

The earlier a student develops important academically related psychosocial behaviours (such as academic discipline and the pursuit of learning) that contribute to post-secondary school and career readiness, the more likely those behaviours are to become habitual.

And these are also the same behaviours that are conducive to career success. As educators and parents we need to come together to monitor, diagnose, encourage, and improve students' academic discipline during the middle school years if we are to help them succeed.



Helping Students Achieve

Students develop at different paces and, as such, certain students require individualized attention in particular disciplines to bring them in line with the expectations of their grade level.

The integrity of the academic program will not be compromised, however we recognize the need for short-term assistance for some students so as to “ramp” them up to grade specific levels.

It is the intention of Toronto Prep School to improve the academic standing for each and everyone of our students so that they will be prepared and confident entering high school.



Academic Assistance Program

The Academic Assistance Program consists of 3 main facets intended to support all students who wish to improve their understanding and academic standing.

It includes the following:

- Morning Extra-Help between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM Monday to Friday
- The After School Homework Assistance Program between 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM Monday to Thursday
- Saturday Club between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM on Saturdays other than Long Weekends or Holidays

Morning Extra-Help Sessions

All teachers are available for extra-help in their subject areas, between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM, Monday to Friday of school weeks. Students are encouraged to seek out their teachers to make certain that they have a complete understanding of the past day's lesson and homework tasks.



After School Homework Assistance Program

The After School Study Program is a program intended to provide individual subject tutoring, and educational coaching, in a supervised setting with qualified instructors and runs Monday to Thursday between 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM.

It helps to regulate homework for the students who find it challenging to fit homework time due to busy extra-curricular programs or who need added support to initiate and follow through on their homework.

Students who are experiencing difficulty in a subject, are identified early on and will receive mandatory help after school

Teachers and/or parents may place the student in the After School Study Program, or the student may take the initiative to attend on his or her own.



Saturday Club

The Saturday Club has been set up in order to facilitate students who require additional extra help and/or time to complete the required work for their respective classes.

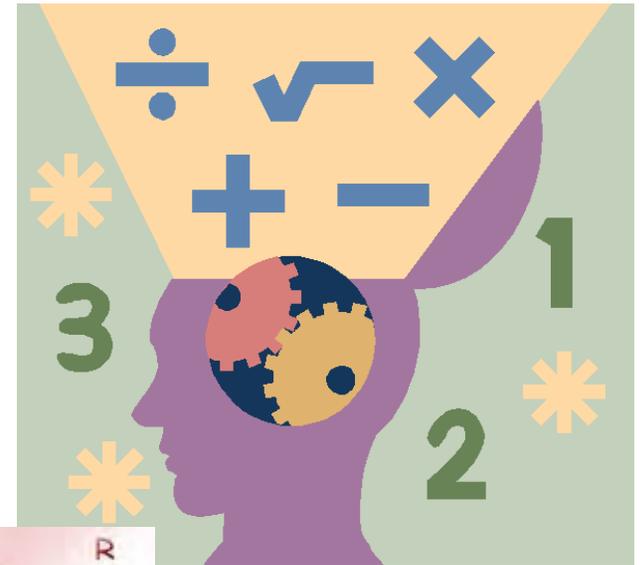
The Saturday Club is a supervised venue for students to come in and complete any outstanding homework or assignment, or simply receive help with a variety of academic skills such as organization, preparation for tests and exams, essay writing and homework.

The Saturday Club provides qualified instructors who are available for tutoring in a variety of disciplines.

Students may volunteer to attend the Saturday Club, or may be placed there by a teacher and/or parent.

Many students utilize the Club on a volunteer basis to receive extra-help or as a quiet place to work on major projects and receive feedback from staff members.

Academics at a Glance



Grade 7 Courses

Students in Grade 7, along with lessons and experiences in the traditional core courses, will be exposed to specific “study skills” in each one of their courses.

The teaching of organizational skills and time management, proper use of a textbook, study skills, listening and note taking skills, research skills, reading for meaning, concentration and distractions, the mechanics of writing and preparing for tests and examinations will be addressed in each course as they apply to each specific discipline. There will also be basic instruction and set up of their MacBook laptop and the use of organizational programs such as the Calendar (iCal), Safari, Address Book, Mail, and the various word documents and applications through the Introduction to Computers course.

- English
- Mathematics
- French / Spelling-Grammar
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies (Geography and History)
- Introduction to Computers
- Fine Arts (Visual Arts and Drama)

Students who have obtained exemption from French will be offered Spelling-Grammar as a substitute.

In grade 7 students spend more time working on using facts and quotes to back up written and spoken summaries of the things they read. They also add to their vocabulary as they read and write more nonfiction.

Doing the following activities helps build language and literacy skills needed for grade 8:

- Analyze how a writer adds meaning (for example, through use of metaphor) and how the plot, characters and setting work together to tell the story.
- Look at how a writer uses different characters to show many points of view.
- Do short research projects by laying out questions to be answered and using many different sources of information to answer them.
- Participate in discussions on various topics by stating ideas clearly and building on other people's ideas.
- Identify the speaker's argument or claims in an essay or debate. Figure out the reasons and facts used to back them up.
- Figure out the meaning of new words by using context clues (from the other words and sentences that are around the new word).
- Write in different styles for different reasons and types of readers.

Typical Grade 7 Timetable

Semester 1

Period 1: Mathematics 7
Period 2: Social Studies 7

LUNCH

Period 3: Art/Drama 7
Period 4: Computers 7

Semester 2

English Literature 7
Science 7

LUNCH

Physical Education 7
French 7 / Spelling-Grammar 7

Grade 8 Courses

Grade 8 continues with the core courses and introduces students to information and communication technology in a business environment, helping to build a foundation of digital literacy skills necessary for success in a technologically driven society.

Students will develop word processing, spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, presentation software, and website design skills. Throughout this course, there is an emphasis on digital literacy, effective electronic research and communication skills, and current issues related to the impact of information and communication technology.

- English
- Mathematics
- French / Spelling-Grammar
- Fine Arts (Visual Arts and Drama)
- Science
- Social Studies (Geography and History)
- Exploring Communications Technology 9
- Healthy Active Living Education 9

Students who have obtained exemption from French will be offered Spelling-Grammar as a substitute.

In grade 8 we emphasize skills to get ready for high school English.

By the time students begin ninth grade, they're expected to know how to be critical readers and decide whether the information makes sense or seems correct. In eighth grade, students learn to do activities like the following to strengthen language skills:

- Identify the exact meaning of something read and what's implied by the word choice, tone and use of language.
- Decide whether a writer's argument has enough good evidence and reasoning to back it up.
- Connect ideas and information in writing in a natural and effective way.
- Analyze why information is presented in one media format over another (interactive maps vs. videos, for example).
- Develop a vocabulary of academic words and phrases to use in writing and discussion.
- Make sense of figures of speech (such as puns or idioms) based on the context in which they are used.

Typical Grade 8 Timetable

Semester 1

Period 1: Mathematics 8
Period 2: Social Studies 8

LUNCH

Period 3: French 8 / Spelling-Grammar 8
Period 4: Physical Education 9

Semester 2

Computer Technology 9
English 8

LUNCH

Visual Arts/Drama 8
Science 8

Reach-Ahead Credits

In Grade 8, opportunities exist to earn reach-ahead credits, which count towards the completion of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Through the expectation of academic excellence in a nurturing environment, students are encouraged to take initiative, challenge themselves and begin to discover their own identity. To this end, students may enrol in two Reach Ahead Credits with parental permission.

The two reach-ahead credits offered to our students are Healthy Active Living Education 9 (PPL10) and Exploring Communications Technology 9 (TGJ10)



Wiki Space Concept: main.torontoprepschool.com

A daily account of what happens in each class. Below is an example fro Social Studies 7

Monday March 27th, 2017

- Today the students finished looking at Flow Resources. They also began to study for their chapter 7 quiz.

 **Chapter 7 Quiz Review.docx**
[Details](#) [Download](#) 66 KB

The students were also given their Unit 2 Assignment, however, they should not be working on it unless they complete the review.

 **Natural Resources Project Template.docx**
[Details](#) [Download](#) 61 KB

 **Natural Resource Assignment.pdf**
[Details](#) [Download](#) 25 KB

Friday March 10th, 2017

- today the students continued to look at natural resources and watched some of The Lorax to supplement this.

Thursday March 9th, 2017

- Today the students looked at renewable energy.

Wednesday March 8th, 2017

- today the students looked at renewable resources and took notes from their textbook

 **Renewable Resources.docx**
[Details](#) [Download](#) 44 KB

. They also completed a worksheet on the different types of

 **Comparison of the Three Types of Loggi...**
[Details](#) [Download](#) 52 KB

logging.

Tuesday March 7th, 2017

- Today the students wrote their Unit 1 Test. Afterwards, they began reading Chapter 7 of their textbook. For homework, they are to read pages 138-142 and define all of the **bolded** terms.

Monday March 6th, 2017

- today the students reviewed for their Unit 1 Test.

Friday March 3rd, 2017

- Today the students continued to review and watched a documentary on the effects of Tides.

Thursday March 2nd, 2017

- Today the students looked at Fair-trade products and specialized agriculture. They were then given a reading and a

 **Fairtrade.docx**

Co-Curricular Activities

Education, no doubt, entails an all-round development. It is not acquired in the classroom alone. We also learn through social interaction. As a result of this, TPS has a number of clubs and societies. Every student is encouraged to belong to at least one club in the school and participate in the House System. Clubs offered will include Photography, Music, Math, Art, Robotics, Chess, Human Rights, Jewish Culture Club, Engineering Design, Anime, Hot Topics, Investors Club, and Reach for the Top, to name a few.



Athletics

The athletic program at Toronto Prep School is student-centred and an integral part of the student's total educational experience. The program is designed to provide positive learning opportunities for each student who participates. Students benefit from the development of physical fitness, leadership, teamwork, social skills, self-discipline, and integrity. Decision-making skills, good citizenship, good sportsmanship, and the promotion of individual maturity should also result from athletic participation. These characteristics assist in the development of individual and team attitudes that are beneficial for success in athletics and in future life. We are members of the Small Schools Athletic Federation (SSAF) and the Toronto District College Athletic Association (TDCAA).



Community Engagement

All grade 7 and 8 students participate in a variety of initiatives throughout the year in support of both local and international causes.

Students gain a sense of responsibility and accomplishment as they make meaningful contributions to the world around them.

One such example is our annual Terry Fox Run - this past year we ranked 14th in Canada amongst all participating schools in fund raising for this most deserving cause.

Others include Liam's Light, Annual Food Drive, Red Door Shelter, and Anti-Bullying Week, to name a few.



Camp Wahonowin

Each school year opens with an orientation at Camp Wahonowin. The entire student body and staff attend. The purpose is provide for a variety of fun events to help orient and welcome both new and returning students.



The bonding and camaraderie that occurs over the three days and two nights is invaluable - it is akin to a minimum of 2 to 3 months in a typical classroom setting. Students familiarize themselves with other students and meet their teachers in a less formal setting.

The Role of Parents

Parents have an important role to play in supporting their child's learning.

Toronto Prep School firmly believes it takes a village to raise a child. We welcome parent/guardian involvement in every aspect of our program. We find, as educators, that open communication not only between child and parent, but faculty/staff and parent, is beneficial for all parties.

Our website allows access to our school calendar, upcoming events, course outlines, and any daily assigned homework.

There are many other ways in which parents can express interest in their child's education.

Participating in parent conferences, joining our Parents' Association, encouraging their child to complete his or her assignments at home, and promoting and attending artistic events at our school are a few examples.

Toronto Prep School Parents' Association



The TPS Parents' Association facilitates a closer liaison between the parents and the staff/ administration, organizes and engages in fundraising activities both in support of student fundraising events and for the benefit of the students, assists in organizing social activities for the school community, and addresses issues of importance to parents and students from the point of view of parents and students.

We look forward to meeting with and working with you in the exciting school year ahead!

The Role of Toronto Prep School Teachers

Our teachers are responsible for developing appropriate instructional strategies at an academic level.

Our teachers address different student needs while bringing forth an enthusiastic element and use a variety of teaching approaches in the classroom as well as experiential learning.

Our teachers persevere in their efforts and make every attempt to ensure good sound learning for every student.

Our teachers are accessible for extra help and/or instruction before and after regular class hours.

Our teachers provide a supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to discover and develop their academic ability and to take pride in their achievements.

Our teachers are mentors, coaches, facilitators and friends.



The Role of Students

Students have responsibilities with regard to their learning, which increase as they advance through elementary and secondary school.

Students who are willing to make the effort required and who are able to apply themselves will soon learn that there is a direct relationship between achievement and hard work, and will be motivated to work as a result.

There will be some students, however, who will find it more difficult to take responsibility for their learning because of special challenges they face. For these students, the attention, patience, and encouragement of Toronto Prep School teachers will be extremely important factors for success.



High school ready students need the skills to think critically about all types of information, including numbers and what they read.

High school reading skills include being able to analyze books, infographics, websites and other forms of writing.

High school math skills include the ability to understand how formulas are related and how they apply in the real world.

High school students should also possess the skills to utilize technology to research and present information and concepts, to critically assess and analyze information, to formulate justifications and defences for their stances on issues, and to collaborate with peers to enhance their learning.

These skills must be mastered in Middle School.



Middle School years are fraught with many outside distractions including peer pressures, the pressures of consumerism and acceptance, and from social media.

Adolescence further complicates the journey.

These years are challenging to say the least.



We hope to help in making them a positive experience and to further the journey for each one of our students along a constructive and progressive path

Our goal is to help your child transition into high school on a positive note, addressing not only their needs and skills on the academic front but also help to transition into adolescence and young adulthood in a positive fashion.

We want to arm our students with the most precious of abilities
- the ability to have choice.

We want our students to be able freely pursue their passion,
whatever it may be, because they have the requisite skill sets
that enable them to do so unencumbered.



Our mission is to prepare our students by equipping them with the academic tools and life skills needed to enter and succeed not only at the post-secondary school level, but ultimately, in their chosen career path.

Given the pace of technological change and the growth of information technologies in all aspects of our lives, it is crucial that students gain mastery over these tools. We are committed to developing students who are confident, responsible, and exhibit the values necessary to become effective communicators, informed and productive thinkers, self-directed learners, collaborative workers, and skilled information processors and problem solvers.

It is a mission and duty we take most seriously and which we commit ourselves fully.



*Welcome to Our
Family ...*

If you have any further queries, please contact the school and we will endeavour to help.



Guidance Centre