

Freshman Course Selection FAQs

How are my student's placements determined in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language?

All incoming freshmen are required to take the CTP5 placement test in November. Course and level placements are based on the results of these tests, input from eighth-grade teachers, the student profile completed by a parent, the student self-assessment, and the student's writing sample.

What is the typical course load for a freshman student?

Freshmen typically choose five core academic courses and one elective course. Students can also choose four core academic courses and two elective courses. Students who take a resource class will need to consider taking 4 core classes or delaying an elective. All students are required to take Kinetic Wellness, which includes an option of Kinetic Wellness 1/Freshman Dance. Lunch and study hall will be added to student schedules by New Trier. When creating a student's program, parents need to be sensitive to the other demands on the student during the freshman year including athletic, extra-curricular, social, and emotional. Please keep in mind a student's total school commitment when choosing courses.

How is an elective course different from a core academic course?

Students receive one credit per year for an elective course and one credit per year for a core academic course. An elective course may require some preparation outside of class but varies by course. Courses taken as an elective are not included in a student's weighted GPA. **Elective courses taken at the Northfield Campus may not be taken for core academic credit.**

How much homework can my student expect each day?

A core academic course requires study and preparation outside of class. However, the amount of time that an individual student spends on homework varies by day and course. In addition, a student's study skills and appropriate level placement determine the amount of time spent on homework. For more information, please refer to the homework section in the Program of Studies.

What factors should I consider when choosing a Science course?

Please review the "Frequently Asked Questions about Science" document included in this Academic Life Packet.

Can a student take more than one foreign language at a time? When is a good time to try a new language?

A student may take more than one language in freshman year, but it limits other academic or elective choices. Freshman year is the time to take a new foreign language unless the student is willing to commute from the Winnetka campus to the Northfield campus during sophomore year.

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If my student is interested in the team taught, interdisciplinary World Studies course, what should they choose in Power School? Do these courses fulfill the same requirements as the separate courses in English and History?

Students who are interested in the World Studies course should choose World Studies: English *and* World Studies: History at the appropriate level. The World Studies: English/History course generally appeals to students who are independent learners and are comfortable working collaboratively and participating in class discussions. The number of students in the class will be significantly larger than a typical English or History class because it is a combined course with two teachers in the classroom. The World Studies course focuses on the same critical thinking skills emphasized in the separate English and World History courses. In addition, the course fulfills the English and World History requirements for freshman year.

If my student selects Freshman Jazz Ensemble as an elective course, is it true that they must also enroll in either Freshman Band or Orchestra concurrently?

***New for the Class of 2029: Yes, students who select Jazz Ensemble need to register for Freshman Band or Orchestra, but this will be offered three days per week opposite their science lab. They no longer need to save space for two electives. Pianists and electric six-string guitar players are exempt from this requirement. For more information, see the Program of Studies or log on to www.ntjazz.com*

How do we learn about extra-curricular activities?

On May 6, 2025, we will host an event titled “**After the Academics.**” This is our open house/activities fair. Information on all extracurricular activities can be found on the New Trier home page under the [Extracurricular](#) tab.

What is a 9-level class?

A 9-level Course accommodates the needs of students at all academic levels and is taught with expectations for learning that are most appropriately weighted at level 3. Courses with 9-level designations are computed as level 3 courses in the weighted grade point average.

Are there opportunities to change levels in classes after freshman year?

An appropriate level placement matches the student’s academic ability, maturity, motivation, and interests with the course that provides the greatest opportunity to achieve academic success. When choosing courses after freshman year, students will consult with their teachers, adviser, and family to choose classes and levels that are appropriately challenging for them. Students will have the opportunity to adjust levels in classes if needed.