

JUNIOR COURSE SELECTION FAQs

What questions should I ask before choosing my courses?

How much time do I spend on homework in my current courses?
How much sleep do I get given the demands of my current courses?
How much time do I commit to my extracurricular activities outside of class?
What are my social commitments outside of academics and my activities?
How much will moving up a level in a class increase the demands of the course and consequently my ability to be successful?
If I am really struggling in a current course, should I consider moving down a level?
What graduation requirements do I still need to complete next year?
Have I fulfilled the Civics, Consumer Education and 1 year of fine/applied art?

I have heard that taking an AP class will get me into a good college. Is that true?

Depending on the program/major, most colleges evaluate applications "holistically", or based upon a variety of factors. While one Advanced Placement course may demonstrate a desire to learn more about a subject, the grade earned within that course as well as your academic record prior to senior year more fully demonstrate your performance in high school.

How much math should I take?

New Trier requires students to take three years of math in high school in order to graduate. There are a handful of colleges that will require four years of math (Missouri, Purdue, Minnesota, Indiana (3.5), for example) and many that would highly recommend it. If you are interested in STEM fields such as engineering or a possible business major, then you will most likely need four years of math.

I have completed two years of history or science and have met the New Trier graduation requirement. Do I need to take history or science senior year?

You may have met our graduation requirements, but the majority of colleges recommend/require students complete (minimally) three years of both history and science in order to be strongly considered for admission.

I only want to take three core academic courses as a senior. I have been told that I can double up on electives and still graduate. Should I do this?

If that is where your interest truly lies, go for it. As the PHSC office works to keep every door open for students, students who have managed four core academic courses within our nine period day have demonstrated a solid core academic record. Keep in mind, 65% of New Trier students took 19 core academic credits over four years.

I can level up in each of my core academic subjects. Is this a good idea?

Prior to considering levelling up, be honest with the amount of time and energy you can devote to a subject next year. Do you hope to take part in extracurricular activities? Did the pace, rigor and expectations of your current course level challenge you? Although it may appear that levelling up is encouraged, PHSC asks students to realistically consider how they find a healthy balance. Senior year, college applications will make it feel as if you're taking an additional elective during first quarter due to the amount of time required to complete applications.

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Any of the senior social studies elective courses will fit the bill...

If you are considering business as a potential major in college, attempting economics (either at the 9 level or AP) can give you a good introduction to that subject. As business majors must take economics in college, attempting this social studies elective can make your academic life easier in college.

I want a senior English class where I do not have to read AND write. Which would you suggest?

Despite their titles, each of the senior English courses requires reading AND writing.

Does the state university system of California require a visual or performing art?

Yes, if you anticipate applying to a college in the University of California system or in the Cal State system, you will need one year of the same visual or performing art to be eligible for admissions. Courses that would fulfill this requirement: art, music, dance, theatre, photography, etc. For additional clarification, please discuss with your post-high school counselor as the requirements vary from school to school.

Should I consider taking elective courses?

Absolutely! Practically speaking in order to graduate from New Trier you need one year of a fine or practical art, and a consumer education course. However, it is fun to think beyond just what is required and think about what you are interested in and what you might be good at. New Trier has such a rich variety of elective offerings with opportunities to explore areas of interest that you might not otherwise have a chance to explore: art, music, dance, theatre, architecture, engineering, photography, cooking, automotives, to name a few. Each elective course can demonstrate your interests beyond the core academic course work and show a glimpse of talent and experiences that you could bring to a campus community and perhaps provide exposure to a possible career path.

I am thinking about stopping my foreign language, but should I continue to the next year?

While New Trier does not have a graduation requirement for modern or classical languages, it is strongly encouraged students complete at least two years of the same language to be eligible for admission at many colleges. To be competitive for admission, however, we suggest students consider completing at least 3-4 years of a modern or classical language. Students who complete 4 or more years of MCL are considered to have maximized the subject area. Some students with learning differences will have 1 or no years of language depending upon the individual parameters of their IEP and that is perfectly appropriate. Some students will choose to take 2, 3, 4, 5 or even 6 years of a language, depending on their individual circumstance. How many years you choose may depend on personal preference, aptitude, interest and the balance of your other core academics.

I'm considering playing college athletics. Are there specific guidelines I need to follow to make sure I'm NCAA eligible?

For a complete listing of high school eligibility requirements, visit the NCAA Eligibility Center. A direct link to their core course requirements is linked [here](#).