



# Palo Alto Senior High School

50 Embarcadero Rd. Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 329-3701 Fax: (650) 329-3753

Dr. Jacqueline McEvoy  
Principal

Welcome to the  
**Palo Alto High School Open House  
for the Class of 2013!**

February 4, 2009  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Haymarket Theater

Please take a handout (attached)  
for this evening's program

In this packet you will find:  
Student FAQ's  
English Department materials  
Math Department materials  
Science Department materials  
Contact Information &  
Important Dates to Remember

Tonight's presentation can be found online at [www.paly.net/guidance](http://www.paly.net/guidance)

## **Most Frequently Asked Questions your children had about Paly!**

Listed below are the most commonly asked questions that were asked of our Counselors when they visited the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms this week:

### **1. Does Paly have an Open Campus?**

Yes. The Paly campus is an open campus. Students frequent the Town and Country establishments during the lunch hour and are permitted to leave the campus during prep periods. That said, Paly employs three full-time campus supervisors. The campus supervisors keep a close eye on your student's safety and make sure all visitors to our campus sign-in at the main office. Paly is a very safe campus.

### **2. What is the attendance policy?**

All absences from school must be explained by a phone call from the parent/guardian to the 24-hour office number (650-329-3711). If attendance office personnel do not answer, leave a message on the answering machine, clearly stating your student's name, grade, time/day(s) of absence, and briefly, the reason for the absence. Absences must be cleared within 48 hours of the student's return to class. Failure to do so will result in the student receiving a cut for the class, and the possible loss of the opportunity to make-up work or tests and/or being dropped from the class. The school does not accept notes for the reporting of absences and does not issue passes to class. Please see the student handbook for more information regarding our attendance policy at [www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf](http://www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf)

### **3. Is there a dress code?**

Appearance and dress must be within the limits of decency, cleanliness, and appropriateness for school, and shall not interfere with teaching and learning. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times. Any clothing advertising or displaying alcohol, illegal substances or activities and all gang-related apparel are strictly prohibited.

### **4. Are phones and iPods allowed at Paly?**

Yes, but in the classrooms, cell phones need to be turned off and put away. Failure to turn off your phone during class will result in the phone being confiscated by the teacher and turned into the Assistant Principal for pick-up at the end of the day. Individual listening devices (iPods) may not be used in any classroom or building without express permission from a teacher or staff member. As with all valuables, we encourage students to keep a close eye on their belongings. Theft, vandalism and all incidents involving tampering with personal or school property should be reported to the main office.

### **5. What is "0" period PE?**

"0" period PE is a class that runs in the morning before school starts, typically 4 days per week from 6:50 – 7:45 am. Freshman who take "0" period PE will have a prep period scheduled in their school day (freshmen are not permitted to take 8 classes). Once students sign up for "0" period PE, they are required to remain in the class for the entire semester. This is a serious commitment.

## **Most Frequently Asked Questions your children had about Paly! (continued)**

### **6. We heard a rumor that Paly is going to have a 4 year PE requirement. Is this true?**

Not true. Paly has a 2 year PE requirement.

### **7. What is contract PE?**

Contract PE information is available through the Physical Education Instructional Supervisor. Typically, students need to be a nationally-ranked athlete in his/her individual sport to qualify for contract PE. As you can imagine, there are very few students who qualify for contract PE given this condition. Please contact Peter Diepenbrock at [pdiepenbrock@pausd.org](mailto:pdiepenbrock@pausd.org) for more info.

### **8. Do I need to register for PE if I play a sport and will get a prep?**

Yes, all freshmen will be registered for PE and it will appear as one of your seven classes in your schedule. All freshmen attend the first three weeks of PE class before being released for their prep if they place a fall sport. When your season is over, students must return to their PE class. Athletes are strongly encourage to use this prep period to work on homework or study in the library!

### **9. How does World Language placement work if I'm fluent in another language?**

Please contact World Language Instructional Supervisor Norm Masuda at [nmasuda@pausd.org](mailto:nmasuda@pausd.org) to arrange placement testing. For some students, taking the SAT II subject test might be an appropriate option for receiving college credit, depending on the language. For information regarding the SAT II subject test, please contact the College and Career Center.

### **10. How does World Language placement work if I study another language at an outside language school?**

Outside coursework must be completed at schools that are WASC accredited in order to be granted credit on the Paly transcript. Pre-approval of such coursework must be obtained by the Instructional Supervisor and Assistant Principal of Guidance. Please contact World Language Instructional Supervisor Norm Masuda at [nmasuda@pausd.org](mailto:nmasuda@pausd.org) for more information.

### **11. What is the policy regarding backpacks and lockers at Paly?**

Backpacks are permitted inside the classroom. Students who wish to use a locker must purchase a Paly lock (\$5.00) from the ASB auditor. All non-Paly locks placed on school lockers will be cut-off. Students may share lockers. The locker cages are open Monday-Friday from 7:30 am – 7:30 pm. If students wish to change lockers for any reason they should speak directly to the ASB auditor. Lockers can be renewed at the end of the school year. Valuables should not be left in lockers. The school is not responsible for theft, damaged or vandalized personal property.

### **12. Does having a prep really mean I can hang out at Town and Country every day?**

Not really....students have the option of attending Town and Country during lunch, but it is strongly recommended that students use the library or Academic Resource Center facilities during their prep period to complete homework instead.

\*\*\*\* For more information about all of Paly's policies and school rules, please see our Student Handbook which can be found online at [www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf](http://www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf)

# FROM THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

PAHS students are required to take and pass with a “D” grade or higher, 8 semesters (40 units) of English to graduate. All four-year colleges require 8 semesters (40 units), usually with a “C” grade or higher for eligibility.

## From the 2009-2010 PAHS Course Catalog

- For the freshman and sophomore years, the Palo Alto High School program offers two levels of English, both college preparatory. One level is accelerated and the other is normally paced for college preparation.
- For juniors and seniors, the department offers two levels (college-preparatory or accelerated) of the required semester course and both college-preparatory and accelerated *electives*.
- At all grade levels, students may select their own level of courses on an open enrollment basis, with some important exceptions. In the tenth grade, teachers will recommend students for appropriate courses as juniors. To enroll in Humanities, which earns a weighted grade for U.C. and C.S.U, students should receive the recommendation of their sophomore teachers. Juniors wishing to enroll in College English AP as seniors must submit a portfolio to the department Honors Selection Committee in order to be admitted to the course. **Students should consider their eighth, ninth and tenth grade teachers' recommendations seriously, since it is possible but difficult to change levels mid-semester.**

All freshmen are required to take one full year of English. Freshmen have two choices for fulfilling the 9<sup>th</sup> grade English Requirement: Exploratory Thinking I and Critical Thinking I.

- Both courses are college preparatory
- Both courses satisfy the UC and CSU English “b” requirement
- Both cover the same district core works: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.
- Students who enroll in TEAM self-determine their level of study (Exploratory or Critical) and read the same core works as the other sections.

### Exploratory Thinking I

This course is the *standard* college preparatory course for freshman English. Students will develop their writing, vocabulary, and reading and literary analysis skills in the context of literature. Through discussion, oral presentations, and expository writing, students will demonstrate their reading comprehension and understanding of key concepts. Vocabulary and grammar study is integrated into all units of study. Some reading and writing will be done in class. *Most course reading is assigned as homework, with nightly assignments typically ranging from 10-20 pages. Extended pieces of revised and edited writing are assigned every 2-4 weeks, and average 2-3 pages per assignment. Shorter pieces of writing may be assigned more frequently, or completed in class.*

### Critical Thinking I (Advanced)

This course is the *accelerated* college preparatory course for freshman English. Students will develop their writing, vocabulary, and reading and literary analysis skills in the context of literature. Through discussion, oral presentations, and expository writing, students will demonstrate their understanding of key concepts and critical thinking skills. Vocabulary and grammar study is integrated into all units of study. Students are expected to work independently at home and be self-motivated. *Papers are graded more rigorously than in Exploratory Thinking I. Most course reading is assigned as homework, with nightly assignments typically ranging from 20-30 pages. Extended pieces of revised and edited writing are assigned every 2-4 weeks, and average 2-4 pages per assignment. Shorter pieces of writing may be assigned more frequently, or completed in class.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: How can my student determine which course is best suited for her/him?*

A: Students should follow the recommendation of their eighth grade English teacher. Students who opt into the accelerated course should love reading and writing for its own sake and should be comfortable working independently on assignments. For example, in the college-preparatory section, students can expect to work in class and with greater teacher supervision from brainstorm to thesis to outline to multiple drafts before a final paper is submitted to the teacher for final grading. In the accelerated section, students will be expected to do much of the drafting process independently prior to submitting the final paper. Also, in the accelerated section, students are expected to read and analyze literature independently.

*Q: What kinds of adjustments to the high school English classroom should my student expect?*

A: Incoming freshman are sometimes surprised by the rigor of grading standards, especially on writing assignments. Students should expect that effort alone will not guarantee a high mark. The work must also meet the standards set for the assignment.

*Q: How much homework a night should my student expect?*

A: While each student works at his or her own rate, all students should expect to have nightly homework, as well as work over the weekend, especially in Critical Thinking. In general, students in Critical Thinking I should expect to have significantly more homework than students in Exploratory Thinking I.

The English Department's complete reading list is available at:  
<http://www.paly.net/academics/english/readinglist.php>

Further Questions? Email Instructional Supervisor, Trinity Klein: [tklein@pausd.org](mailto:tklein@pausd.org)

# *English Department Course Offerings 2009-2010*

Exploratory Thinking/Writing I	<b>9<sup>th</sup> grade year-long options</b> <i>or</i>	Critical Thinking/Writing I <i>(accelerated)</i>
Exploratory Thinking/Writing II [“Facing History and Ourselves” option]	<b>10<sup>th</sup> grade year-long options</b> <i>or</i>	Critical Thinking/Writing II <i>(accelerated)</i> [“FHAO” option]
American Literature 11	<b>11<sup>th</sup> grade required semester</b> <i>or</i>	American Classics 11H <i>(accelerated)</i>
World Literature 11	<b>12<sup>th</sup> grade required semester</b> <i>or</i>	World Classics 11H <i>(accelerated)</i>

## **11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Semester Electives**

American Writers of Color	Analysis of the Writer’s Craft	College English AP <i>(year-long, UC weighted, fulfills World Classics 11H requirement)</i>
Film Composition and Literature	Humanities H <i>(accelerated, UC weighted)</i>	Literature of Sport
Reading Between the Lines: Expository Reading and Writing	Shakespeare and Chaucer	Women Writers
World Classics 12H <i>(accelerated)</i>		

## **Journalism Electives**

Beginning Journalism <i>(semester-long, grade 10/11, UC “g” elective credit)</i>	Advanced Journalism: Broadcast ( <i>In Focus</i> )** or Newspaper ( <i>Campanile</i> )** or News Magazine ( <i>Verde</i> )** or Sports Magazine ( <i>The Viking</i> )** or Web ( <i>The Paly Voice</i> )** **(UC “g” elective credit)
---	---

*Electives with fewer than 60 sign-ups may not be offered this year. If a first-choice elective is not offered, students will be assigned to their second choice of literature elective.*



Middle school teachers have done a great job of preparing students for Science at Paly! Entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders are better able to do creative problem solving and remember many of the principles and processes studied in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science. Many students arrive with advanced technology skills and use these to design powerful oral presentations that communicate and illustrate ideas. We, at the high school, want you to know how much we appreciate the work that the middle school teachers have done. The information below are guidelines that we have put together to help middle school teachers to determine the best placement of entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: How can my student determine which course is best suited for him/her?*

A: Students should follow the recommendation of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher. In general,

**The Paly Science Department recommends that Bio 1A students should:**

- **Have strong Math skills.** This means that as 9<sup>th</sup> graders they should be enrolled/enrolling in Algebra 1 or 1-A and receiving grades of “A”, “B”, or “C”. (Students who are enrolled in Algebra 1.1 in the ninth grade will be placed in Integrated Science).
- **Have strong reading and note taking skills. Students can show a thorough** understanding of a chapter or a class discussion as a whole and can consistently make inferences and draw insightful conclusions. They can understand the purpose of the text in which they are reading, and consistently distinguish fact from opinion. They can use classroom discussions and labs to deepen their understanding of the text. Students should be trained in some note-taking methods. English grades should be “A’s, B’s or C’s”.
- **Be prepared to submit homework assignments that increase in difficulty and frequency.** The average amount of homework assigned in core subjects on a daily basis is 30 minutes per subject. Honors or advanced level course will have more homework. Most projects and papers are assigned at least two weeks in advance. All Biology teachers provide at least a weekly, and in some instances a monthly, advance assignments calendar. Teachers may post the calendars in the classroom, provide handouts or post them on InClass.
- **Demonstrate excellent attendance.** A student who has frequent absence may not be recommended for Biology 1A, even if considered “a good student”.
- **Take the initiative to seek out his or her teacher for help** inside or outside of class in order to make up missed work. Late work is generally not accepted in Bio 1A.
- **Know that there are not “retakes” of tests** at any level.

If you have any questions about placement in Science, please email the Instructional Supervisor, Katherine Lawrence: [klawrence@pausd.org](mailto:klawrence@pausd.org)

# FROM THE MATH DEPARTMENT

Mathematics courses are offered in college preparatory sequences. Students typically take one of the following five sequences of courses that lead to readiness for college mathematics:

1. Algebra 1.1, Algebra 1.2, Geometry, Algebra 2. Homework average is 2-3 hrs/week.
2. Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus. Homework average is 2-3 hrs/week.
3. Algebra 1A, Geometry A, Algebra 2-Trig H, IAC. Homework averages 3-5hrs/week.
4. Algebra1A/Geometry A, Algebra 2-Trig H, IAC, AB Calculus AP. Homework averages 3-5 hrs/week.
5. Geometry/Algebra 2A, Trigonometry/Analytical Geometry A, Analysis H, BC Calculus AP. Homework averages 4-6 hrs/week.

Students can switch between sequences based on performance, teacher recommendation and potential summer work. All changes between courses must take place before the end of the first quarter. Due to the cumulative nature of the subject, passing first semester is required for enrolling in the second semester of any math class. Mathematics electives are any courses taken beyond the 2-year district graduation requirement.

Based on the state framework and content standards, all the ESLRs are addressed in the Mathematics curriculum, with particular emphasis on using critical and creative thinking to solve problems, demonstrating discipline knowledge, written mathematical communication, integrating knowledge among disciplines and the effective use of technology.

## **COURSE SIGN-UPS**

- It is our goal in the Palo Alto High Mathematics Department to place students in courses that provide the appropriate level of challenge. When placed appropriately, a committed student who puts in the amount of work required should be able to master the content of that course. Due to the sequential nature of the subject, students who have not mastered a particular course have little chance of success in the course that follows in that sequence.
- For PAUSD students, readiness for a particular course is determined by the present teacher, who knows both the PAUSD curriculum and the student's preparedness level and makes a careful, informed recommendation for placement with the student's best interest in mind. Eighth grade teachers at our middle schools in the district place incoming freshman in one of six different courses: Alg 1.1, Alg 1, Alg 1A, Alg1A/GeoA, Geom/Alg2A or Trig/Anlt.
- For students transferring into the PAUSD, readiness for one of these courses is determined by the student's score on one or more placement tests. These are administered at the beginning of May. If transferring in, please contact Jenny Stone in the Guidance Department @ 329-3712, [jstone@pausd.org](mailto:jstone@pausd.org) to schedule a placement test.

## **CHANGING LANES/TEACHERS**

- Students or parents can request a lane change during the first quarter or at the semester break, by speaking directly to the instructor. Changes require teacher and IS approval. If granted, the student carries the HW grade over.
- Issues we consider when recommending/approving lane changes:
  - *Does the student exhibit effort by scoring 80% or better on homework?* If not, the student has not worked hard enough on being successful in the course and a lane change is inappropriate.
  - *Is the student putting in an unusual amount of time on the homework and studying (on his or her own) with no discernable gain on assessments?* If yes, a lane change may be appropriate.
  - *Has the student sought additional help from his/her teacher and/or a tutor?*
  - *What is the student's schedule? Has the student done any extra summer work?*
  - We do not move students to a course if they will not be challenged at all. They would distract those students who were appropriately placed in the course.
- The most selective colleges may not consider applicants with grades of C on their transcript. As a consequence, hard working students who earn Cs in a course can request to switch down a lane if there is space available.
- We cannot accommodate any change of teacher requests based on preference, teaching or learning style for obvious reasons: with 1700 students in the school, if we would, we'd never be able to set up a feasible schedule.
- Rare teacher changes occur for serious disciplinary reasons only. They must be approved by both teachers and are based on a strict behavior contract enforced by the Assistant Principal.

## **HOMEWORK BY COURSE/LANE**

- All math classes assign homework daily.
- In Regular Level Courses the total weekly average is 2-3 hrs.
- In A-Lane Courses the total weekly average is 3-5 hrs.
- In Honors-Lane and AP the total weekly average is 4-6 hrs.

## **PROGRESSION TO NEXT LEVEL**

- To automatically continue to the next level math course, students need a C- or better both semesters. Students earning a D in S1 in the advanced or honors lane must score at least a B- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester to stay in the same lane the following year. If not, they have the option to repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> semester the following year and stay in the lane, or drop to the lane below and continue without repeating the D semester.
- Due to the sequential nature of the subject, passing 1<sup>st</sup> sem is a pre-requisite for enrolling in the 2<sup>nd</sup> in math courses.
- Students earning a D in S1 in the regular lane and at least a C in S2 *may* be able to continue in that lane the following year with the teacher's recommendation.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

- Even the best summer school courses are crash courses that are not comparable in depth or breadth to the course work in our Honors or Advanced lane. Consequently, all summer courses earn just regular lane credit.
- The typical summer course offered by PAUSD is Alg.1, S2. Based on enrollment, Geom. S2 may too be offered.
- Students who are interested in taking summer school courses at accredited schools in the area for credit (including community colleges like Canada, Foothill, De Anza, if they are 16 or older), must obtain pre-approval from the Dept IS and the Assistant Principal of Instruction.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What courses are available to 9th grade students in math?*

A: Algebra 1.1, Algebra 1, Algebra 1A, Algebra 1A/Geometry A, Geometry/Alg 2A, Trig/Analytical Geometry A

Q: *My child comes from Jordan/ Terman/ JLS. What course should he take at Paly?*

A: PAUSD students are placed in one of these courses by their 8th grade math teacher, who best knows the students' ability level, motivation and potential, the district curriculum and the group of peers.

Q: *My child comes from a private school/another district. What course should he/she take?*

A: Students entering the district are placed in one of the courses above based on their performance on one or more readiness test. These are administered at the beginning of May. Please contact Jenny Stone (329-3712, or [jstone@pausd.org](mailto:jstone@pausd.org)) to schedule an appointment.

Q: *What will be the most advanced math course my student will take at Paly, if he/she starts in one of the courses above? What electives do you offer in math?*

A: They typical lanes are shown in the attached PAUSD flowchart. Transferring between lanes is possible from year to year based on student performance, teacher recommendation, and potential summer mathematics coursework.

Q: *How many years of math should my student take at Paly?*

A: The graduation requirement in PAUSD is presently 2 years. However, since the CSU/UC networks require 3 years of math for admission and recommend 4 years, we strongly believe that in order to be college ready and successful after high school, our students should take 4 years of math.

Q: *My student has never been good at math. What kind of help can he get at Paly?*

A: We have a solid support structure for struggling students. All our teachers are available for extra help during their prep periods. We have an after school drop-in tutoring program 4 days a week. Students can schedule a free peer tutor in the Academic Resource Center. We also make available lists of paid peer and adult tutors.

Q: *My student is gifted in mathematics and enjoys participating in competitions. What venues can Paly offer her?*

A: We offer twice a week in the afternoons two different Problem Solving classes specifically designed for advanced students at all grade levels interested in participating in math contests. We also have a math club that meets once a week.

If you have any questions about Math, please email the Instructional Supervisor, Radu Toma, at [rtoma@pausd.org](mailto:rtoma@pausd.org)

**If you have any questions following this evening's presentation, please feel free to contact any of the following individuals and/or attend one of the Parent Information Workshops on Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 1:00 pm or 6:30-7:30 pm in the ERC (library):**

Student Activities	Allye Mullins	<a href="mailto:amullins@pausd.org">amullins@pausd.org</a>
Athletics	Earl Hansen	<a href="mailto:ehansen@pausd.org">ehansen@pausd.org</a>
Freshman Counselor	Paige Johnson	<a href="mailto:pjohnson@pausd.org">pjohnson@pausd.org</a>
English	Trinity Klein	<a href="mailto:tklein@pausd.org">tklein@pausd.org</a>
Math	Radu Toma	<a href="mailto:rtoma@pausd.org">rtoma@pausd.org</a>
Science	Katherine Lawrence	<a href="mailto:klawrence@pausd.org">klawrence@pausd.org</a>
History & Social Science	Eric Bloom	<a href="mailto:ebloom@pausd.org">ebloom@pausd.org</a>
World Languages	Norm Masuda	<a href="mailto:nmasuda@pausd.org">nmasuda@pausd.org</a>
Career Tech Ed	Pat O'Hara	<a href="mailto:pohara@pausd.org">pohara@pausd.org</a>
Visual & Performing Arts	Ron Williamson	<a href="mailto:rwilliamson@pausd.org">rwilliamson@pausd.org</a>
Physical Education	Peter Diepenbrock	<a href="mailto:pdiepenbrock@pausd.org">pdiepenbrock@pausd.org</a>
Special Education	Todd Feinberg	<a href="mailto:tfeinberg@pausd.org">tfeinberg@pausd.org</a>
AVID	Liz Brimhall	<a href="mailto:ebrimhall@pausd.org">ebrimhall@pausd.org</a>
Focus on Success	Paige Johnson	<a href="mailto:pjohnson@pausd.org">pjohnson@pausd.org</a>
Guidance Office	Jenny Stone	<a href="mailto:jstone@pausd.org">jstone@pausd.org</a>
Library	Rachel Kellerman	<a href="mailto:rkellerman@pausd.org">rkellerman@pausd.org</a>

### **Important Dates to Remember...**

- ▶ Parent Information Workshops - February 5<sup>th</sup>, 12 -1pm or 6:30 – 7:30 pm in the ERC (library)
- ▶ Paly Campus Tours - Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 11am - meet outside the Student Center
- ▶ Course selection forms due February 10<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Counselors available to meet with families new to the district – March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009
- ▶ First Day of School – August 25, 2009

**Thanks for attending tonight's presentation and on behalf of the entire staff, welcome to Paly!!!**