Innovations Middle School

Accessing Tech Support

If you're experiencing technical difficulties and your Support or Online Teacher is not able to provide the tech answers you need, please contact our Tech Support department using this email address: **tickets@onlineschool.ca**. Our Tech department aims to respond to your requests within 24 hours.

Additional Fees for Grade 5-9 Courses

Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Courses

These are the amounts deducted from student curriculum accounts for the following synchronous and asynchronous courses. The true costs for these online courses are subsidized by HCOS in order that student curriculum accounts are minimally impacted.

Course	**Amount Deducted from PO Funds**
Orientation to Online Courses 05-09	Free
Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 05-09 • Design Thinking Through Minecraft • Food Studies • Leveled Coding in Tynker	$35
English 05-09	$75
Languages 05-09	$75
Mathematics 05-09	$75
Science 05-09	$75
Social Studies 05-09	$75
TechLAB 07-09	$250(3 courses @ $75 each plus a $25 shipping fee)

Refunds

Please note that if dropping an Online Asynchronous or Online Synchronous course and the student has been **active** for 30 days or more, course fees are not eligible for refund.

Community Connections and Community Connections Plus

Additional costs for Community Connections and Community Connections Plus courses are posted on the application link on the **Learning Groups website**. For further information, please contact **Dawn Denham**, Learning Groups Administrative Assistant.

Costs for Additional Online Courses

Taking additional courses beyond a regular course load (e.g., French 07 and Spanish 07 in the same school year) will incur a cost of $200 on top of the usual $75 online course fee ($275 total per additional course). This cost can be paid using curriculum funds, if available.

> This is a significantly discounted rate from the regular full course cost of $650 for non-funded students.

Homeschool Registered Students Taking Online Courses

Homeschooled registered students have a cost of $250 per online course, and $83 per ADST module.

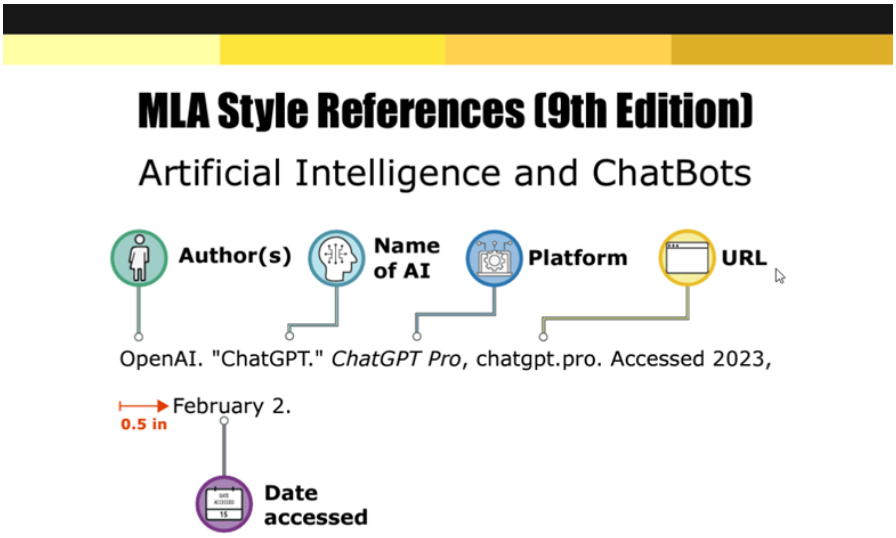
Citing Artificial Intelligence

As we continue to navigate the rapidly changing landscape of artificial intelligence and technology, it is important to model and teach our students effective research skills and ethical citation practices. The **MLA style** and **APA style** guides have recently developed resources to guide students in citing artificial intelligence using correct formatting. Students can bookmark these pages for easy reference as they continue their learning journey through high school. Most HCOS grad courses will require either MLA or APA style citations. Students should check with their instructor to determine the required style for a specific course. Additionally, students can refer to the following examples and infographics developed by the **University of Waterloo Library research guide** (2023):

Outline of an MLA Citation for AI:
Author/Creator. "Name of chatbot." Title of platform where accessed, Full URL, Date Accessed (optional).

> **Formatting:** Double-space your reference list and use a 0.5 inch hanging indent for each entry's second and subsequent lines.

Real-World Example:
OpenAI. "ChatGPT." ChatGPT Pro, **chatgpt.pro/**, February 2, 2023.

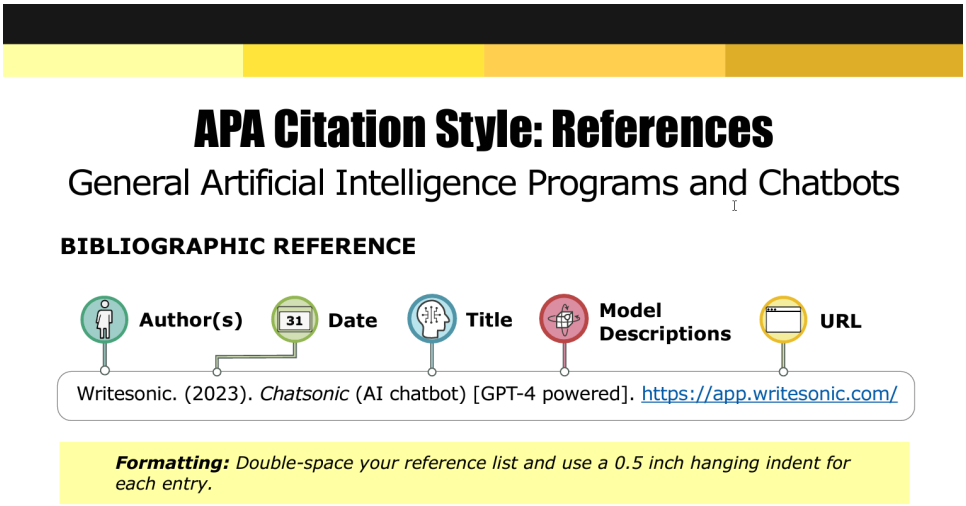


Formatting: *Double-space your Works Cited page and use a 0.5 inch hanging indent for each entry.*

Outline of an APA Citation for General Artificial Intelligence Programs and Chatbots:
Name of Company/creator of generative AI Tool. (Year). *Name of the generative AI program* (model of program) [Large language
model]. URL.

> **Formatting:** Double-space your reference list and use a 0.5 inch hanging indent for each entry's second and subsequent lines.

Real-World Example:
Perplexity. (2023). *Perplexity.ai* (AI Chatbot) [Large language model]. **https://www.perplexity.ai/**



Course Extension or Retention Process

Intent

It is our intent to:

- Meet students where they are at and provide adaptations to promote academic success.
- Increase transparency and accuracy in the recording and reporting of a student's ability level.
- Celebrate progress and make space for students to develop at their own pace.
- Encourage families to view slowed course pacing as a way to support unique learning needs.

Guideline

When a student works behind in a subject or when progress in a course is insufficient to warrant a passing grade, the student can be given additional time and support to reach academic success.

Subject Specific Retention Process: Individualized K-9 Students

1. When a student falls behind, the Support Teacher needs to initiate processes laid out on the **Incomplete Grades and Assigning Fs - K-12** page.
2. If the student is unsuccessful in meeting minimal standards, Learning Services (LS) should get involved to discuss student support strategies.
3. As the school year draws to a close, a conversation between the parent, teacher, Learning Services Consultant (LSC), and student needs to take place. Various options would be discussed, including:
   a. Moving the subject forward on pace with the other courses
   b. A subject specific grade retention
   c. Remediation options
   d. Having the student receive a failing grade and close the course
4. The student, parent, teacher, LSC agree on the best course of action.
5. The teacher will inform their K-9 Regional Administrator (RA) and the LS RA of their recommendation.
6. The RA and LS RA come to agreement and request an exemption from their Divisional Director who consults the Head of Schools for final approval.
7. A pinned log entry will be added to the student's file if subject retention is the final decision.
8. The course is closed and reopened the following year.

Subject Specific Retention Process: Online Courses Grades 5-12

Grade 5-12 online course students are provided with 12 months to complete a course. Most students complete a course during a semester term or over the September-June school year. If the student does not meet grade level expectations, they are required to either repeat the course or resubmit assignments until their level of understanding is at the minimally meeting standard.

> Cross-enrolled Grade 8 and 9 online courses should have the 12-month timeline noted in their course introductions so that students are aware that they have a full calendar year to complete their course work.

Process

1. When a student falls behind, the Online Course Teacher needs to initiate processes to get the student caught up during that school year. This includes contacting the student and parent, communicating with the Individualized Support Teacher and Director of Middle School Instruction (Grades 5-9) or Academic Advisor (AA) (Grades 10-12).
2. If the student is unsuccessful in meeting minimal standards, Learning Services (LS) should get involved to discuss student support strategies.
3. As the term draws to a close, a conversation between the parent, teacher, Learning Services Consultant (LSC), and student needs to take place. Various options would be discussed including:
    a. Assigning a passing grade and moving the subject forward on pace with the other courses
    b. Extending the time for the student to complete that subject
    c. Other remediation and completion options
    d. Assigning a failing grade and closing the course
    e. Requiring the student to repeat the course
4. The student, parent, teacher, and LSC agree on the course of action. The teacher will inform their Support Teacher or AA and the LS RA of their recommendation.
5. The RA or AA and LS RA come to agreement and request an exemption from their Director who consults the Head of Schools for final approval.
6. A pinned log entry will be added to the student’s file if subject retention is the decision.
7. The course is closed and the student can apply again following two reporting periods.

French and Spanish Online Courses

Overview

HCOS French and Spanish online courses are designed to help students develop their second language communication skills and knowledge while exploring diverse opportunities and interacting with the world around them. Each course is broken down into three units each spanning 10 weeks and covering a variety of curricular themes and learning activities. Starting at Grade 7, students will read a simple novel in either French or Spanish. These books are designed for second language learners and contain repetitive vocabulary and sentence structure to help students build their confidence in reading and communicating in another language.

Throughout the courses, students will have the opportunity to explore and derive meaning from a variety of texts, recognize connections between language and culture, and develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary and sentence structures. Students will have the opportunity to practice their second language skills by participating in engaging learning activities and meeting 1:1 with their teacher at the end of each unit.

Time Commitment

- Middle School (Grades 5-9): 30 minutes of independent study twice a week, plus 30 minutes of synchronous meeting time if enrolled in the synchronous cohort

- Grad (Grades 10-12): 45 minutes of independent study twice a week, plus 60 minutes of synchronous meeting time if enrolled in the synchronous cohort

Required Materials

- Computer with webcam and microphone
- Internet access
- Microphone
- French 10 and French 11 students will need to purchase or borrow the novel from the HCOS Learning Commons during Unit 3. Novels are available within the course for French 5-9 and all Spanish courses.

> Visit our **Courses Library** for more information.

Grade 5-9 Synchronous Courses

Description

Synchronous courses offer the same program of study as an online course, with the added benefit of weekly meetings with a teacher and working alongside a cohort of your peers. Synchronous courses provide overall structure for students, with the expectation that they will work to keep up with the schedule set by the teacher for assignments and assessments. The accountability of the weekly meeting is designed to support learning of challenging concepts and content, encourage student interaction and community building, and provide a natural place for students to ask questions and develop deeper understanding.

Benefits

Synchronous courses provide regular touchpoints where students meet with their teacher and classmates on a weekly basis. Regularly scheduled times set by the instructor allow students to connect with teachers to receive instruction, clarify assignments, and ask questions in a group setting. Synchronous course options allow students the opportunity to connect with their teachers and other students in a more typical classroom style, providing the chance for students to be known and feel more accountable for completing their work. Teachers may use weekly meetings to answer common questions, clarify assignments, discuss complex topics, and build community through interactive discussions and review activities.

How Synchronous Courses Function

- The teacher and students meet via Zoom at a regularly scheduled time every week.
- Weekly meetings create a rhythm and maintain a high level of contact.
- Students are expected to work through course assignments and assessments on their own time between weekly synchronous sessions.
- At the Grade 5-9 level, Zoom classes are 30 minutes in length and begin in the third week of September.
- Students are welcome to book office hours for 1:1 support from their teacher as needed.

> Take a look at this year's **synchronous cohort schedule** for specific days and times.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

- Students commit to attend weekly meeting with teacher and other students in their synchronous cohort.
- Students commit to working independently on weekly lessons and assignments, according to the schedule set by the teacher.
- Students commit to staying on pace with the cohort, completing lesson activities and submitting assignments in a timely manner.

- Students commit to respectful and appropriate behaviour during weekly meetings. This includes both appropriate language and appropriate attire.
- Students are expected to participate in class discussions, breakout rooms, and community building activities with their cameras on, using the microphone and chatbox as invited by the teacher. Students do not have the option to simply “listen in” with their cameras off, as this makes it very difficult to foster a sense of class community.
- Students who feel uncomfortable engaging over Zoom may be better suited to an asynchronous learning format.
- Students who fall significantly behind schedule may be reassigned to an asynchronous course.

Teacher Responsibilities and Expectations

- The teacher will decide on a set class meeting day and time well in advance of the start of the school year to allow students to view synchronous course schedules as they enroll.
- The teacher will create a yearlong schedule that outlines the pace for lesson completion, assignment submissions, and assessment dates.
- The teacher will prepare for and host 30 minute weekly meetings with content and activities that are relevant to the course and/or lesson being addressed.
- The teacher will host with both audio and video functions on, so students can see their teacher.
- The teacher will mark assignments and assessments in a timely manner, providing relevant formative and summative assessment for students.
- The teacher will initiate contact with any students who have fallen behind or become inactive, to determine the best course of action going forward.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does it cost any more to enroll in a synchronous course compared to an asynchronous course?
    - No, the cost to the student is the same for a synchronous course as it is for any other online course enrollment.
2. What if I have to miss a meeting for an appointment or other unforeseen conflict?
    - This should be communicated to your teacher. Students should arrange activities such as regular piano lessons or sports practices at a time that does not conflict with scheduled class meetings. It is understood that conflicts come up, but please communicate with your teacher well in advance.
3. Can my student take just one synchronized cohort for an online course or do they have to take all across their grade level?
    - Absolutely - they can take just one or multiple synchronous options! Figure out what works best for your child’s learning style, level of independence and degree of desired flexibility.
4. How does the course schedule work?
    - The meeting times for each synchronous cohort will be posted in SOPHIE. Your K-9 support teacher can also let you know when specific classes are meeting. When planning the schedule, our team takes care to avoid overlap between class time for

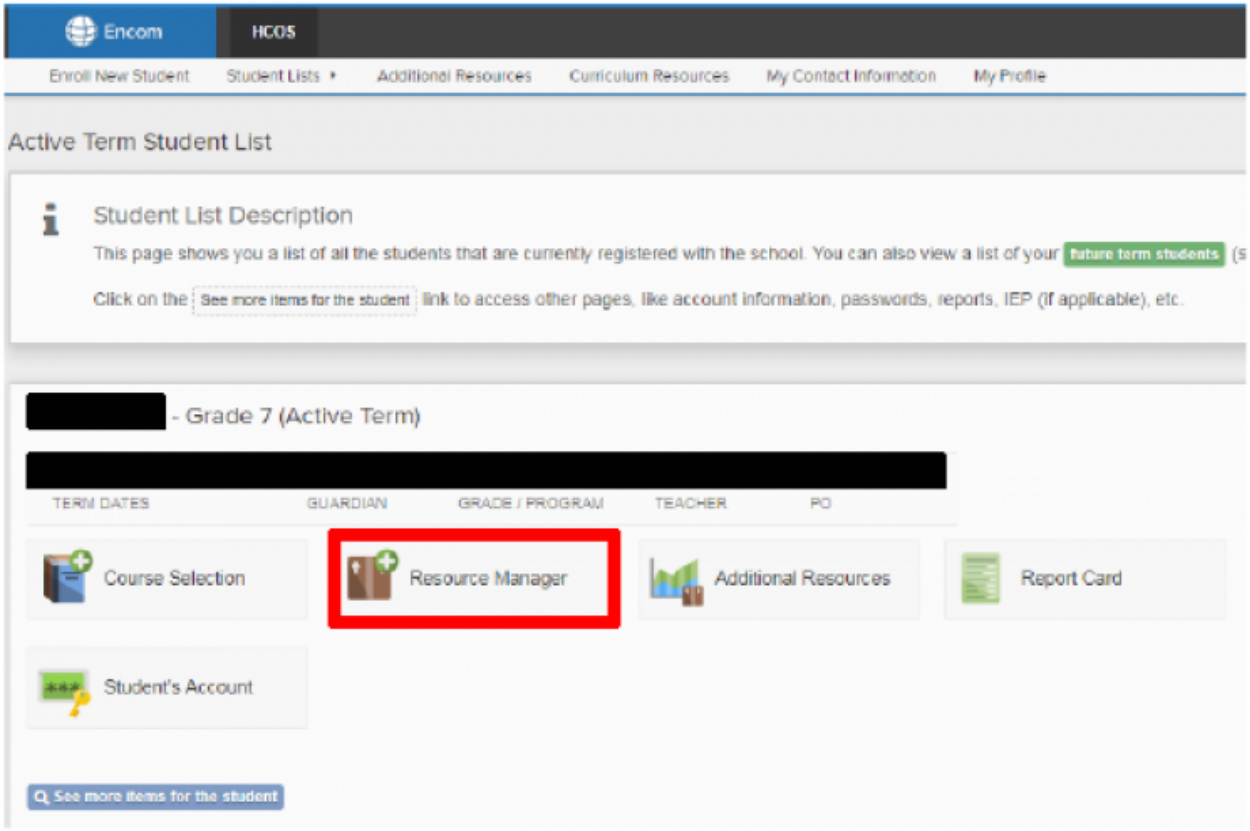
the different subjects across the same grade level. This allows students to take all synchronous offerings if they so choose.

5. How long are the synchronous classes?
    - At the Grade 5-9 level, Zoom classes are 30 minutes in length.
6. What happens if my student falls behind?
    - Just like in any classroom environment, things happen. Students are encouraged to keep attending the class and to work with their teacher to catch up. Teachers are prepared to support students when things don’t go as planned.
7. Are teachers available outside of the posted class times?
    - Absolutely. Teachers will have office hours times posted in their Moodle, or Brightspace.
8. Are students required to have cameras and audio on?
    - Yes, this is a basic expectation of a synchronous class. One of the goals of these classes is building community and students are expected to participate in this way.
9. Are the courses semester or linear pacing?
    - Courses are held over the school year in a linear fashion. Classes start in the third week of September and run until mid-June.
10. Do I have to attend the live meetings?
    - Yes! This is the main part of a synchronous class. Of course, there are absences that you cannot avoid, like sickness or appointments. Please communicate with your teacher. Synchronous class sessions are not recorded for later viewing.
11. Is there a minimum enrollment necessary in order to have a synchronous course happen? Also, is there a maximum number?
    - Building community is important to synchronous classes so we will require that a minimal number of students enroll. If we do not get the minimum number of students, the ones that are enrolled will automatically be moved to asynchronous. As far as a maximum number, we realize that an online Zoom class can reach a maximum practical size, so if this happens, we will open up a second weekly meeting time to accommodate more students.
12. What if I want to take a class that is only offered synchronously (e.g., French and Spanish 5-7) but I can't attend the weekly meetings?
    - Students enrolled in a synchronous class who cannot attend weekly meetings need to follow the weekly class schedule and submit activities to stay on pace. While non-attending students will, in essence, be asynchronous students, the due dates for assignments will be the same as for synchronous students.

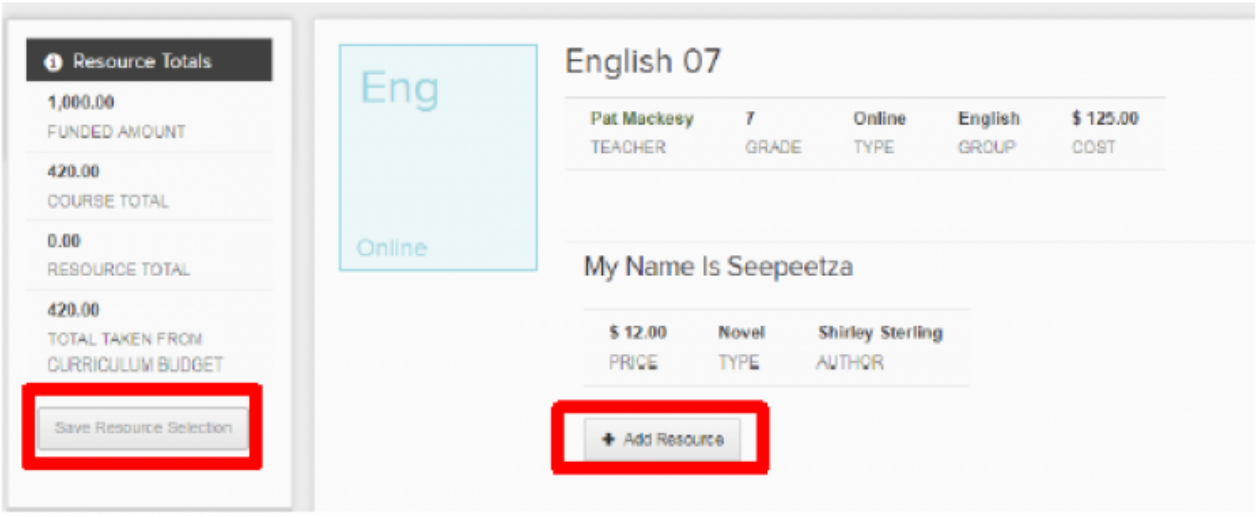
How to Order a Resource for an Online Course

How to Order a Resource

1. **Sign into Encom**
2. **Click Resource Manager under students name**



3. **Click +Add Resource button to select the required resource**
4. **Click Save Resource Selection (This is very important as order will not go through unless it is saved)**



Individualized Course Planning Guidelines for Grades 7 to 9

The information shared on this page is intended to set an end goal of where students should aim to be when entering Grade 10. The skills listed here are meant to be developed over a few years, not all at once. These suggestions are meant to give a guideline for typical skills and knowledge to aim for when building Student Learning Plans in Grades 7 to 9. This is not an exhaustive list.

General

Students should:

- Take the free **Orientation to Online Courses module** before taking an online course
- Take at least one online course before Grade 10
- Think about their own learning processes by reflecting on their learning styles
- Show initiative in connecting with teachers and completing work
- Show determination by reviewing teacher feedback and report card comments and applying feedback to future work
- Show diligence in keeping up on course schedules
- Show courage to take chances in their work
- Clearly state their opinion and understand how to support it with solid facts, details, and logic
- Have experience in note and test taking skills
- Know how to create bibliographies
- Outline both sides of an issue comprehensively
- Engage in respectful debate debate with support, research, read between lines, and summarize
- Build stamina to manage a heavier workload and busier schedule
  - Often this includes extra curricular activities, part-time jobs, and other commitments
  - Students should be prepared to set aside a block of time each day/week to consistently work on each class, and learn to take advantage of school holidays and slow times in their schedule

Parents should:

- Actively work with their suppor teacher to increase rigor and workload gradually over Grades 7 to 9 in preparation for Grade 10
- Familiarize themselves with the **HCOS Academic Integrity Policy**

- Explore the **Student Success Centre** resources, including workshop recordings and slide decks

Work Habits

Students should:

- Show initiative with consistent work effort
- Use an organizational system (e.g., day planner, course pacing schedule, calendar)
- Set goals for course completion
- Contact teachers regularly in order to stay on schedule and meet deadlines
- Reach out with questions as needed and know that teachers welcome questions and are keen to help
- Read instructions and discern how much information or detail is being asked for or required
- Apply teacher feedback on future work submissions
- Book appointments with Education Assistants in the **Student Success Centre** for additional support

Communication & Technology Skills

Students should:

- Sign up for HCOS student accounts on the following platforms:
  - **Google Workspace**
  - **Canva for Education**
  - **Read&Write**
  - **Grammarly**
  - **Adobe Creative Cloud**
- Learn how to use **Zoom**
- Understand file management (e.g., uploading, downloading, creating a .zip folder, scanning documents)
- Learn appropriate email writing skills
- Communicate directly with their teachers through email and/or Zoom

Parents should:

- Learn how to navigate **Encom**
- Explore resources in the **HCOS Learning Commons**
- Contact tech support (**tickets@onlineschool.ca**) when technical issues arise

ADST

Students should:

- Explore their own areas of interest (e.g., rebuild a small engine, make a quilt)
- Learn to use at least two new tools at each grade level to better understand personal preferences (e.g., woodworking, textiles, computers, foods, metalwork, marketing, entrepreneurship, robotics, drafting, electronics, coding, media arts)
- Work through the Applied Design process: Understanding, Defining, Ideating, Prototyping, Testing, Making, Sharing

Arts Education

Students should:

- Explore the four arts disciplines: visual arts, drama, dance, music
  - students can select a single discipline to focus on for their Arts Education in K-9
- Use a variety of media types in visual arts (e.g., pencil, charcoal, paints, wood, plaster, digital)
- Show basic understanding of the elements and principles of design
- Explore art history to learn about contributions of artists across genres, communities, times, and places
- Attend in-person or virtual performances to experience arts and culture in a variety of settings

Career Education

Students should:

- Explore money management: interest rates, mortgages, investing, bank accounts
- Learn to use physical and digital time management tools
- Prepare for the term visits and present independently
- Set daily, weekly, and monthly goals for academic and holistic development
- Do at least one “personal inventory” online assessment to learn more about themselves
- Attend Grad Orientation Week in March
- Research volunteer opportunities in their community to prepare for volunteer hours needed for graduation

Christian Studies

Students should:

- Explore the **HCOS Christian Studies Curriculum website** for resources
- Work on individual Bible study activities and programs (e.g., independently, with family members, at church youth group)
- Complete a variety of spiritual growth activities:
  - Journal responses that include reflections on own faith and choices
  - Book studies
  - Volunteer logs (e.g., church ministry teams, community service)
  - Reflections on experiences
  - Acts of service

English Language Arts

Students should:

- Have an understanding of proofreading, grammar, and sentence structure
- Write well developed paragraphs and essays
  - Construct a unified paragraph with a strong topic sentence, well-researched supporting details, and a concluding sentence
  - Write a five paragraph essay with an introduction, thesis statement, three supporting paragraphs, and conclusion
- Develop communication skills (e.g., face-to-face conversations, email and Zoom etiquette)
- Share ideas through writing, talk-to-text, and/or audio recording
- Build capacity to explore issues, themes, and deeper meanings beyond the surface of a plot
- Cite resources in-text and on a bibliography page using a standard citation format (e.g., MLA)
- Use appropriate **digital citation practices**
- Develop digital citizenship and ethics, including appropriate use of AI and other digital tools
- Understand **plagiarism** and the impact of using other people's work as their own

Mathematics

Students should:

- Read a grade level text (e.g., basic word problems and convert into math equations to solve a question)
- Show their mathematical thinking on paper in an organized way (e.g., show steps to solve equations)
- Plan and complete a math project
- Have experience answering math questions from different resources
- Be familiar with the following topics before Grade 10:
    - Add/subtract/multiply/divide fractions, decimals, and integers - with and without a calculator
    - Percentages
    - Work with variables and to solve for unknowns in an equation
    - Integer exponents
    - Order of operations (e.g., BEDMAS)
    - Area and perimeter of 2D and 3D shapes
    - The coordinate plane (e.g., plot points, x-axis, y-axis)

> Students who use an American textbook in Math 9 should supplement their learning with **Theory and Problems for Mathematics 9 - Third Edition** by Crescent Beach Publication. Students can also use this workbook to learn about non-algebra Math 9 concepts (e.g., Finance, Logical Reasoning, Probability, Scale Factors).

Physical and Health Education

Students should:

- Understand the needs for consistent physical activity
- Set up a plan for physical activity and implement it on a regular basis
- Record physical activity in a regular log by writing out activity descriptions, durations, and physical exertion levels
- Participate in a variety of physical activities (e.g., individual/dual, locomotor/non-locomotor, throwing/catching/kicking, hand-eye coordination sports)
- Try new individual and team sports and activities (e.g., badminton, dance, ping pong, tennis, golf, baseball, pickle ball)
- Engage in health learning (e.g., nutrition, personal safety, personal identity, mental well-being, physical, emotional, and social changes)

Science

Students should:

- Write formal lab reports, including a testable hypothesis

- Use collected data to support a claim
- Apply mathematical formulas (e.g., substituting values and solving)
- Create original, labeled diagrams
- Know chemical formulas and names of chemical compounds
- Explain the process of cell division (e.g., mitosis and meiosis)
- Understand the idea that energy comes in many forms and can be transformed into different types of energy

> By the end of Grade 9, students should have covered all the big ideas each of the four science domains: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Earth Science. Many of the building blocks for Science 10 are taught in Grades 7 to 9 and students who do not explore all areas required by the BC curriculum are at a significant disadvantage in their high school years. Learn more by visiting the **Science 7-9 Assessment, Resources, Planning** page.

Second Languages

Students should:

- Have foundational knowledge of verb conjugation, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation
- Experience speaking the language with a native speaker
- Research arts and cultural experiences of countries where the language is spoken
- Read simple stories and answer basic reading comprehension questions

> Second language learning requires knowledge of verb conjugation, vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation. To help develop confidence and fluency, students should focus on one language in their middle school years, and refrain from moving between multiple languages before entering Grade 10.

Social Studies

Students should:

- Write well developed paragraphs and essays
  - Construct a unified paragraph with a strong topic sentence, well-researched supporting details, and a concluding sentence
  - Write a five paragraph essay with an introduction, thesis statement, three supporting paragraphs, and conclusion

- Conduct research using academic search engines (e.g., **Explora Canada**, **Gale Databases**), not just Google and Wikipedia
- Study Canadian history prior to World War 1
- Develop skills in reflection, analysis and investigation
  - Formulate and support an argument, and to be able to anticipate counter points or arguments)
  - Be mindful of audience as writers
  - Understand that learning is just about knowing content, but making meaning
- Reflect on how their faith tradition informs their historical understanding of the world
- Build capacity to explore issues, themes, and deeper meanings beyond the surface of a question
  - Students who have only been exposed to curricula that emphasizes reading comprehension with multiple choice and fill in the blanks assessments will struggle in Grade 10
- Cite resources in-text and on a bibliography page using a standard citation format (e.g., MLA)

Middle School Online FAQ

Teachers

Who is my child's teacher for the year?

All middle school online courses are taught by subject specialists who will connect with your child regularly throughout the school year. A detailed list of teachers is found in SOPHIE **here**.

Course Information

How many online courses should my child take in a year?

Taking online courses is an important part of building executive functioning skills, growing in responsibility and independence as students progress throughout their middle school years. It is strongly recommended that beginning online students start with the **Skills for Online Success ADST module** to learn about digital platforms and build the necessary skills for learning in the virtual environment. First year online students generally start with one core academic course (e.g., English, Math, Science, Social Studies) plus one non-core academic course (e.g., ADST, Foreign Language). As students progress with their online learning, they can add more online courses to their load.

What is the difference between asynchronous classes and synchronous classes?

Asynchronous courses are best suited to students who study well independently and wish to work on curriculum on their own schedule. The course is overseen by a subject specialist teacher who communicates and provides feedback through the LMS and email. Synchronous courses offer the same program of study as asynchronous online courses with the added benefit of weekly meetings with a teacher and working alongside a cohort of your peers. Synchronous courses provide overall structure for students, with the expectation that they will work to keep up with the schedule set by the teacher for assignments and assessments. The accountability of the weekly meeting is designed to support learning of challenging concepts and content, encourage student interaction and community building**,** and provide a natural place for students to ask questions and develop deeper understanding. More information about our synchronous program can be found in SOPHIE **here**.

When do synchronous classes meet?

Middle school synchronous classes meet for 30 minutes each week from late September to early June. The schedule can be found in SOPHIE **here**.

Second Languages

What online options are available for my child to study a second language?

We offer both asynchronous and synchronous second language courses in our middle school online program. Students should enroll in their grade level; however, Middle school students often come to HCOS with varying levels of prior experience in foreign language courses and it can be difficult to determine the appropriate grade level. Whenever possible, it is our hope for students to enroll in their grade level course and work under an alternate pacing guide to complete the necessary content to prepare for the following grade level. Students with substantial prior learning can be assessed by one of our second language teachers to determine whether placement in a different grade level is appropriate. Asynchronous and synchronous courses use the same curriculum, but synchronous courses offer the additional feature of weekly conversation practice and community building opportunities with their peers.

Online Course Preview - Guest Pass

If a family would like to preview an online course before committing to it as a part of their education plan, they can send an email to **office@onlineschool.ca** to request access. The office will send them a username and password for a guest login pass.

Online Course Technical Requirements

Students in online courses use Brightspace and StudyForge to engage with course material. Synchronous students are also required to use Zoom for weekly synchronous meetings. HCOS students are encouraged to request a Google Workspace account to gain access to Google apps (e.g., Docs, Slides, Drawings) to collaborate and share their learning. Students interested in using Chromebooks should set up a profile using their HCOS Google Workspace account for easy integration with Google apps.

> Visit our **Google Workspace for Education** page to learn more and request an HCOS Google Workspace account.

We highly encourage students to use a desktop or laptop to engage with their online courses. The best computers for middle school online courses are typically lightweight laptops that balance performance, portability, and affordability. These devices should have a reliable processor (like an Intel Core i3 or i5), at least 8GB of RAM for smooth multitasking, and sufficient storage (128GB or more) for files and apps. A good battery life (8+ hours) is essential for all-day use. Additionally, they should have a webcam and microphone for video conferencing, and a screen size between 11 to 14 inches for comfortable viewing.

> Cell phones, iPads, and tablets are **not** adequate devices to fulfill the requirements of online course completion.

Our online courses are designed to work on most popular operating systems and in most browsers.

Operating Systems:	Web Browsers:	Office Suites:
• Chrome OS • Linux • macOS • Windows	• Apple Safari • Google Chrome • Microsoft Edge • Mozilla Firefox	• Apple iWork Apps • Google Workspace Apps • LibreOffice • Microsoft Office

Orientation to Online Courses

ADST: Orientation to Online Courses

> Note: This module was formerly titled "Skills for Online Success." Students who previously completed “Skills for Online Success” are not eligible to complete “Orientation to Online Courses,” as it is the same course with a different title.

https://player.vimeo.com/video/705418067?title=0&byline=0

> For more information, visit our **Course Library**

Course Overview

This ADST Module introduces students to many of the tools they will need to use to be successful in HCOS online courses. Topics covered include Brightspace, Zoom, email, file management, screenshots, screen recording, online communication guidelines, scanning and digitizing documents, presentation programs, recording video presentations, and more. This module culminates in a final presentation.

Time Commitment

This module satisfies ⅓ of the ADST requirements for students in grades 6-9. There are 17 lessons which take between 15-45 minutes. Many of the lessons are short and practical, introducing skills that students will practice and further develop in their future studies. Most of the lessons end with review questions or a short assignment. The final project may take several hours to complete.

This module can be taken at any point in grades 5-9, which is why you will see it offered at each grade level, but please note it is the same module offered at each grade, so it can only be taken once.

Tools Required

- Computer with webcam and microphone

- Digital Camera
- Scanner or smartphone for uploading content.

Major Units and Topics

Google Workspace (Drive, Docs, Slides), Email, Brightspace, Zoom, File Management, Screenshots, Screen Capturing, Digitizing Your Work, Cameras & Scanners, Recording Yourself, and Digital Presentations.

Tips for Middle School Online Success

Navigating online courses can be challenging for first time students. Here are a few tips to help your child find success in their online courses.

No one ever sets out to fail!

We know students want to succeed in their online course.

1. Role of Online Teachers

We are here to provide a great course and a positive learning experience with a teacher who is ready to support your student and give feedback to their work. Online teachers care about each student. We can only respond to students who show up, submit work, and communicate with their teachers. If your student is struggling, please contact the teacher involved.

2. Role of Students

Students are responsible for showing up, consistently, throughout the school year. That means being active in their course and being “present” with their teacher through assignment responses, Skype, email. Teachers are teachers because they love working WITH students. They are there to answer questions, to get to know your student as a person and to support your learning, but you must initiate the conversation. Smart kids ask questions, get help when they need it, and recognize that teachers are people too. Greet your teacher by name in emails and Skype, encourage your teacher by responding to emails, and say “thank you!”.

3. Role of Parents

Parents are an essential part of the learning process. The course and the Online Teacher are there to provide a great learning experience, but you must be involved throughout the school year. Your student needs your encouragement and interest. Plan to sit down together at the computer **every week**, click on the "GRADES" button and review progress. You will see when the latest assignment was handed in and what the teacher’s response was. Just asking, “Are you done?’ is not enough. It’s easy for a student to say “Yes, Mom” when they are not done at all. It happens all the time.

> You are your student’s supervisor and advocate, don't be afraid to ask questions of your student or their teacher.

4. Getting Started: The Course Home Page

The course home page is your GPS.

There you will find:

- Your teacher's name and contact information
- An overview of the course
- Resources
- Grades - Both parents and students are expected to check grades weekly
- The lessons and assignments. Different courses are set up in different ways. If you are taking more than one course, both parents and students need to understand how each course is designed
- Middle School courses are intended to be completed in the regular school year September till June. Please look over your course and set goals for yourself.

  > Complete the Manage Your Schedule file found on the course home page (**REQUIRED!)**.

  For example, English five has 30 weeks. Plan to be finished the first week of June. Where should you be by Christmas break? Spring Break? Be accountable for showing up! Consider creating a calendar with the due dates clearly labelled, post that by your computer, then have a weekly meeting to make sure the student is on track.
- Daily "class time": Develop a good work ethic. Students who attend brick and mortar schools are in their desks from 9 – 3. The freedom we enjoy in home school is a privilege to honour. You don't have to show up at 9, you don't have to be dressed, but you do have to put in an hour of work on a subject. If you read slowly, if you get distracted by younger siblings, if you start playing a game, that's not part of your learning hour. Parents and students need to design an effective learning environment. Headphones with music (no lyrics!!) help to block distractions. Ten minute cardio break before you start a new subject helps the brain to focus. Set a timer and be accountable for what you accomplish in that time.

5. Communication: It's all About Communication

- Most teachers prefer Zoom for all communication. You will get an answer much faster in Zoom than in an email.
- Use good manners. If you were in a classroom face-to-face, you would address your teacher by names. Please start all communication with a polite greeting.
- Teachers are committed to answering promptly. Please respect the fact that I may be unable to answer right away.
- Parents are encouraged to respond to grading comments, to report card comments and to communicate with the course teacher if the student is experiencing problems. The teacher only knows what you tell them.
- If you find you or your child is becoming overwhelmed by work load, or struggling due to a learning need, remember every course can be adapted to suit your child's learning needs – a conversation is all it takes to develop a plan for your student. Let's work together to provide the best possible learning experience.
- Teachers are human. Mistakes are possible. If your student has an assignment that has not been marked within a few days and the student cannot do the next assignment because of that, students are encouraged to contact the teacher and ask if they could

check on that assignment. Occasionally, an email notification my not be sent. The teacher may not even know the assignment is sitting there. A polite request is always welcome and shows initiative.

HCOS cares about your family's online experience. If you are thrilled with your experience, We would love to hear from you. Likewise, if you feel you are not being well served, please contact Sherie Seddon, Innovations Assistant Director **sherie.seddon@onlineschool.ca**

TechLAB 7-9

What is TechLAB?

The name TechLAB stands for the three subjects that are covered by this hybrid program: Tech stands for the ADST portion (Applied Design, Skills, and Technology). The LA in LAB stands for Language Arts. The B stands for Bible. Put those together, and you get TechLAB.

Technology is a major focus of TechLAB, with students learning about coding, robotics, electronics, and the engineering Design Process. While many students think that is awesome, what's even better is that students will also complete English Language Arts and Christian Studies at the same time, while creating hands-on projects, following technical instructions, making video presentations, reading a tech-themed novel, discussing digital ethics, and wrestling with local and global issues related to technology.

Who Teaches TechLAB?

Mr. Mark Lamden has been teaching with HCOS since 2015. He wrote the first version of TechLAB in 2016 and has been making annual updates since then. Before joining HCOS, Mark was a pastor at Evangel Church in Powell River. Mark and Melanie have three teenagers who began their educational journey with HCOS. Mark loves the outdoors, sports, and music. He teaches some other courses in addition to TechLAB, including the **Adventure Discipleship Program** for Grades 10-12 students.

What Makes TechLAB Unique?

Here are some of the many unique aspects of the TechLAB 7-9 program:

- Students engage in learning about robots using hands-on equipment (Lego in Grades 7-8, Arduino in Grade 9).
- Students complete Tynker coding lessons and make their own program or game.
- Students make several ADST projects each year, sharing them with their classmates through live or recorded video presentations.
- Much of the course content and discussions are focused on technology, innovation, and creativity.

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous: What's the Difference?

Since TechLAB covers three full subjects in one course and there are several of ongoing lessons and projects, students are typically more successful if they attend the weekly synchronous meetings where they can ask questions, receive additional instructions and clarification, make friends and form study groups, and be reminded of the importance of staying on pace.

Synchronous students often report back that the synchronous meetings were the highlight of their years in TechLAB. Mr. Lamden also really enjoys getting to know students better through the weekly meetings.

While some students may lean towards doing online courses asynchronously, Mr. Lamden strongly encourages students to sign up for the synchronous TechLAB option and give it a try first. If it turns out not to be a good fit, students can switch to asynchronous.

Synchronous Meeting Format

> As of the 2026-2027 school year, TechLAB 7-9 synchronous classes will meet in an updated format.

Mr. Lamden will host two synchronous meetings per week for each grade of TechLAB. Students will be assigned to a cohort with one required 40 minute meeting time, and will be encouraged to join the other weekly meeting for the final 20 minutes. Students can request to be in either Cohort A or Cohort B to fit around other commitments like CC+.

> Visit **this SOPHIE page** to learn more about Grade 5-9 synchronous classes and to find the link for cohort schedules.

The first 20 minutes of each class will be for one cohort of students to meet together. Lessons will be introduced, and there will be time for small group discussions in the first half of the class. The final 20 minutes will be for both cohorts to join together for games, demonstrations, fun activities, questions, and large group discussions.

While synchronous students will be assigned to only one cohort meeting per week, they are strongly encouraged to attend the second half of the other cohort meeting.

>

> Example: You are in Grade 7 TechLAB and are assigned to Cohort A, which meets on Monday mornings at 10:30 am. Every week, you will attend that class for 40 minutes. For the first 20 minutes of class, Mr. Lamden will open with prayer, talk about the week's assignments, and you might have a small group discussion. At 10:50 am, students from the other TechLAB 7 cohort will join for games, activities, discussions, and to ask questions. Cohort B meets on Tuesdays at 11:20. You are welcome to join that cohort at 11:40 for 20 minutes of games, activities, discussions, and to ask questions, which is different from what you experienced in Cohort A. You are not required to attend this second weekly meeting; however, you probably won't want to miss it!

How to Enroll in TechLAB

Parents or teachers can sign students up for TechLAB in Encom. If you cannot see TechLAB offered in Encom, it may be that the course is already full. Please **email Mr. Lamden** to join the waitlist.

> When enrolling in TechLAB, students must sign up for all three courses: TechLAB ADST, TechLAB Christian Studies, and TechLAB English Language Arts. We are unable to accommodate students who wish to take ADST, Christian Studies, or English Language Arts in other formats outside of TechLAB.

FAQs

What is the cost?

The cost for middle school online courses is $75. Since TechLAB covers three courses, the cost is $225.

Do I need to buy anything for TechLAB?

Here is a detailed list of required resources:

- Students may need to buy the novel if they cannot find one at a local library or reserve a copy from our HCOS Learning Commons.
- Students do not need to buy or reserve a Lego Robotics Kit. The Learning Commons will loan kits to TechLAB 7-8 students.
- Students in Grade 9 will have the option of purchasing the Arduino Starter Kit (approximately $170) or using the free online TynkerCAD Arduino option.
- Students will be set up with a Tynker account at no extra cost.
- Students in middle school online courses require a computer, webcam, microphone and high-speed internet connection. A tablet is not a sufficient device to successfully complete online courses.

Is there a waitlist for next year?

Space is limited in TechLAB, so please sign up early. If you want to go on a waitlist for the following year in order to save a space, you are welcome to **email Mr. Lamden**.