Program of Studies Guide

2026–2027 Academic Year

Think. Aspire. Achieve.

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INTRODUCTION

The CRIA Program of Studies Guide is designed to help students and families understand the academic opportunities available at Costa Rica International Academy and make thoughtful choices for the year ahead.

As a U.S. and Costa Rican accredited college-preparatory school, CRIA offers a rigorous, well-rounded academic program that prepares students for success in university and beyond. Our courses are intentionally sequenced to build strong foundations in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social sciences, Spanish, the arts, physical education, and enrichment electives. Students also have opportunities to pursue advanced coursework, including Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, and independent study options when appropriate.

At CRIA, academic success is built through high expectations, strong teaching, student effort, and meaningful support. Our program emphasizes critical thinking, clear communication, problem-solving, creativity, personal responsibility, and the habits of mind students need to thrive in college and in life.

This guide is intended to support conversations among students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators. Families are encouraged to use it as a planning tool when considering course selections, graduation requirements, university goals, and each student's individual strengths and interests.

Course availability may vary from year to year based on enrollment, staffing, scheduling, and program needs.

MISSION

Costa Rica International Academy is a U.S. and Costa Rica accredited college-preparatory school serving both Costa Rican and international families. We inspire a passion for learning and provide students with the skills, values, and courage to become responsible leaders in their communities and the world.

VISION

CRIA aspires to be a world-class international school with a culture of high expectations, high performance, and accountability. We are committed to continuous growth, improvement, and student success.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CRIA's academic program is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in core academic disciplines while offering opportunities for advanced study, enrichment, creativity, physical development, and personal growth.

Students progress through a carefully sequenced program in English, social sciences, mathematics, science, Spanish, fine arts, physical education, health, and electives. In high school, students may also pursue Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment opportunities, and independent study options when appropriate.

Academic planning is individualized. Students and families are encouraged to consider each student's strengths, interests, university goals, language background, and readiness for advanced coursework.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

CRIA students must earn a minimum of **24 credits** to graduate.

Subject Area	Credits Required	Course Options / Notes
English	4	English 9, English 10 or AP Seminar, English 11, English 12 or AP English Language and Composition
Social Sciences	3	Early World History, Modern World History, Contemporary World Issues, AP Macroeconomics, AP Human Geography, AP Comparative Government & Politics, AP Research, Personal Finance
Mathematics	3	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, AP Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Statistics
Science	3	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Ocean Science, AP Physics 1, AP Environmental Science. Two science credits must include lab-based coursework.
Languages	3	Spanish is required in Grades 9–11. Options include Spanish I–IV, AP Spanish Language and Culture, or approved foreign language coursework. Grade 11 students must complete 0.5 credits of FARO.
Fine Arts	1	Art, Music, or approved fine arts coursework
Physical Education / Health	1	Physical Education and Health courses
Core Electives	6	Elective credits may be selected from approved courses, enrichment electives, online providers, dual enrollment, or additional core academic courses.
Total	**24**	

CRIA typically accepts up to **7 credits** for a Grade 9 transfer student and up to **6 credits** for Grade 10–11 transfer students, subject to transcript review and administrative approval.

Several colleges and universities require four years of mathematics and/or science. Families should review university admission requirements carefully when planning a student's course sequence.

COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

Students must complete community service as part of CRIA's graduation expectations. A minimum of **10 hours of community service per year** is required.

The end-of-year CRIA report card and transcript will indicate whether the student has successfully completed the required community service hours.

Families should refer to the CRIA Community Service Policy for detailed expectations, approved activities, documentation requirements, and deadlines.

HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT EARNED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Students may earn one high school mathematics credit if they successfully complete **Algebra I in Grade 8**.

CRIA does not offer other high school credit courses in middle school. The school will accept a maximum of one high school mathematics credit earned during Grade 8.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

Advanced Placement courses are rigorous, college-level courses intended for students who have demonstrated readiness for advanced academic work. AP courses require strong study habits, independence, organization, and the ability to manage a demanding workload.

Prerequisites are required for most AP courses and are listed in the course descriptions. Placement in AP courses may depend on prior grades, teacher recommendation, PSAT or MAP scores, and demonstrated academic readiness.

Many universities and colleges grant advanced standing or college credit based on AP exam performance. Families should check individual university policies for AP credit recognition.

MEP REQUIREMENTS

All CRIA students in Grades 6 and 11 are required to sit for the applicable Ministerio de Educación Pública exams near the end of the school year. See the "FARO" section of this Guide for details.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Graduation Requirement: 4 credits

Students must complete four years of English in high school.

Typical sequence:

Grade	Course
Grade 9	World Literature
Grade 10	World Literature or AP Seminar
Grade 11	American Literature or AP English Language and Composition
Grade 12	British Literature or AP English Language and Composition

Language and literature are central to a strong education. They help students understand themselves and others, preserve cultural traditions, consider different perspectives, communicate effectively, and participate meaningfully in the world.

CRIA's English program develops students' skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, research, and critical thinking. Students read texts from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods. Texts are selected for their complexity, literary merit, and relevance to student learning.

Through the English program, students develop their voices as writers and speakers, strengthen their analytical skills, and prepare for the reading and writing demands of university and professional life.

ENGLISH COURSE PATHWAY

Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
ELA	ELA	ELA	World Literature	World Literature or AP Seminar	American Literature or AP English Language and Composition	British Literature or AP English Language and Composition

ENGLISH 6

Prerequisite: English 5

In Grade 6 English, students continue to build the reading, writing, speaking, listening, and research skills developed in elementary school. Students compare fiction and nonfiction texts, identify narrative structure, analyze theme, and study figurative language.

Students also strengthen nonfiction reading skills by creating objective summaries and drawing inferences supported by textual evidence. Vocabulary development, word origins, and academic language are emphasized.

Writing instruction focuses on planning, drafting, revising, and editing in a variety of forms, with particular attention to narrative and reflective writing. Students also deliver presentations, work collaboratively, interpret information from multiple media formats, and complete research using primary and secondary sources. Ethical research practices and the consequences of plagiarism are emphasized.

ENGLISH 7

Prerequisite: English 6

Grade 7 English builds on prior literacy skills with an increased emphasis on analysis, author's style, nonfiction reading, and purposeful writing. Students study a variety of genres and examine how authors use language, structure, and point of view to communicate meaning.

Students identify source, point of view, and purpose in nonfiction texts. Vocabulary instruction includes word origins, roots, and connotations.

Writing instruction emphasizes expository and persuasive writing. Students develop and refine a central idea, tone, voice, audience awareness, and purpose. They continue to give presentations, interpret media, collaborate with classmates, and apply research techniques such as quoting, summarizing, paraphrasing, and properly citing sources.

ENGLISH 8

Prerequisite: English 7

Grade 8 English prepares students for high school-level reading, writing, and analysis. Students compare fiction and nonfiction texts, explain the development of themes, and compare authors' styles.

Students analyze nonfiction texts by evaluating authors' qualifications, point of view, and style. Vocabulary instruction includes roots, connotations, and denotations.

Writing instruction focuses on expository and persuasive writing. Students compose thesis statements, defend positions with reasons and evidence, and evaluate media messages. They create multimodal presentations, collaborate with peers, analyze information from diverse sources, identify bias or misconceptions, and cite sources using MLA format.

ENGLISH 9: WORLD LITERATURE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: English 8

English 9 introduces students to high school-level literary and nonfiction analysis. Students study fiction and nonfiction texts from a variety of genres and cultures, applying literary terminology and analyzing how authors create meaning.

Students strengthen their ability to make inferences, draw conclusions, and support ideas with textual evidence. Vocabulary study includes roots, affixes, and complex word structures.

Writing focuses on analysis and persuasion. Students develop claims, address counterclaims, and use credible evidence to support their arguments. Students also analyze media messages, create presentations, conduct research, evaluate sources, identify bias, and cite quoted and paraphrased information using MLA style.

ENGLISH 10: WORLD LITERATURE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: English 9

English 10 deepens students' study of literature, nonfiction, writing, research, and communication. Students analyze cultural and social themes in fiction from different cultures and synthesize information from nonfiction texts to solve problems, answer questions, and build new knowledge.

Vocabulary development includes connotation, idioms, classical allusions, and figurative language. Writing instruction emphasizes persuasion and analysis, with a focus on relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence.

Students also create and evaluate media messages, analyze the relationship between media coverage and public opinion, develop presentations, and conduct research using MLA style. The course supports students in becoming skilled communicators who can work independently and collaboratively.

AP SEMINAR: ENGLISH 10

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: English 9; 85% or higher in English 9; teacher recommendation; supporting PSAT score

AP Seminar is a foundational AP course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations about complex academic and real-world topics. Students examine issues from multiple perspectives and learn to evaluate evidence, synthesize sources, and communicate arguments clearly.

Using an inquiry-based framework, students read and analyze articles, research studies, literary and philosophical texts, speeches, broadcasts, personal accounts, and artistic works. They develop written essays, oral presentations, and visual presentations both individually and as part of a team.

AP Seminar is the first required course in the AP Capstone Diploma pathway. A score of 3 or higher on the AP Seminar exam is required to remain eligible for the AP Capstone Diploma.

ENGLISH 11: AMERICAN LITERATURE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: English 10

English 11 focuses on American literature, nonfiction analysis, research, and advanced writing. Students conduct comparative analyses of texts addressing similar topics and evaluate how authors reach similar or different conclusions.

Students examine works by American authors and consider how literature reflects history, culture, identity, and major themes in American society. Vocabulary study continues with attention to connotation, idioms, classical allusions, and figurative language.

Writing instruction emphasizes argumentation, organization, coherence, audience, and purpose. Students create persuasive presentations, address alternative perspectives, and produce research products that synthesize information from primary and secondary sources while following ethical and legal guidelines.

ENGLISH 12: BRITISH LITERATURE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: English 11

English 12 prepares students for university-level reading, writing, and communication. Students study British literature and analyze how authors use literary elements to develop meaning across texts.

Students evaluate resources, make decisions, solve problems, and strengthen their ability to read complex fiction and nonfiction. Writing instruction emphasizes persuasive and argumentative writing for multiple purposes and audiences.

Students are expected to write at a standard appropriate for postsecondary education and the workplace. They create presentations, synthesize research from primary and secondary sources, and continue to develop collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills.

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: 88% or higher in English 10 or English 11; teacher recommendation; supporting PSAT score

AP English Language and Composition focuses on evidence-based analytical and argumentative writing, rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the choices writers make as they compose and revise.

Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support arguments. They analyze rhetorical elements and their effects in nonfiction texts, including images and visual texts, across a range of disciplines and historical periods.

This course is equivalent to an introductory college-level rhetoric and composition course.

Note: The literature focus for Grades 10, 11, and 12 may vary by year. World, American, and British literature may be taught in different high school grades depending on program needs.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Graduation Requirement: 3 credits

CRIA's Social Sciences program develops critical thinking, cultural awareness, civic responsibility, and global understanding. Students learn to analyze history, geography, economics, political systems, cultures, and contemporary issues.

As an international college-preparatory school, CRIA encourages students to examine diverse perspectives and understand their role in an interconnected world. Students engage with primary sources, data, maps, case studies, current events, and research-based inquiry.

SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSE PATHWAY

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
World Geography and Cultures	The American Journey	The American Journey / Civics and Economics transition	Early World History	Modern World History	Contemporary World Issues / AP Options	AP Options / Electives

Beginning in the 2026–2027 academic year, the Middle School Social Studies sequence will begin a transition. As part of this adjustment, Grade 8 Social Studies will become **Civics and Economics** beginning in 2027–2028.

This transition ensures that current Grade 8 students continue to receive meaningful exposure to U.S. history while future Grade 8 students develop a deeper foundation in civics and economics.

WORLD GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURES 6

Prerequisite: Grade 5 Humanities

This course explores world regions by examining the relationship between people, places, and environments. Students analyze culture, landforms, economic development, migration patterns, and human interaction with the environment.

Students use geographic tools such as maps, satellite imagery, and data research to develop spatial thinking, inquiry, and technology skills. The course helps students understand global patterns and make informed decisions about geographic issues.

THE AMERICAN JOURNEY 7

Prerequisite: Grade 6 Humanities

This accelerated survey course explores United States history from 1865 to the present. Students examine the nation's development into a global industrial and technological power.

The course is organized around major themes, including Reconstruction, westward expansion, industrialization, the World Wars, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and globalization. Students strengthen geographic and inquiry skills by analyzing primary sources, digital media, and historical evidence. The course emphasizes understanding the causes and consequences of major societal changes.

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THE AMERICAN JOURNEY 8

Prerequisite: Grade 7 Humanities

This course continues the study of United States history from 1865 to the present, helping students deepen their understanding of major historical developments and their impact on the modern world.

Students study Reconstruction, westward expansion, industrialization, global conflict, the Cold War, civil rights, and globalization. They analyze primary sources, evaluate historical evidence, and develop research and critical thinking skills needed for high school social studies.

EARLY WORLD HISTORY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Grade 8 Humanities

Early World History explores the development of people, places, civilizations, and patterns of life from ancient times through approximately 1500 C.E., with attention to their influence on Western civilization and the wider world.

Students study significant historical events, ideas, societies, and individuals while developing historical thinking skills. They learn to ask questions, evaluate evidence, analyze sources, interpret historical developments, and explain cause-and-effect relationships.

MODERN WORLD HISTORY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Grade 9 Humanities

Modern World History examines history and geography from approximately 1500 C.E. to the present. Students study the development of the modern world, including political, economic, scientific, technological, and social changes.

The course emphasizes the impact of geography, the development of nations, revolutions, industrialization, global conflict, and the connections between historical events and contemporary issues.

CONTEMPORARY WORLD ISSUES

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Grade 10 Humanities

Contemporary World Issues challenges students to examine major global problems and current events. Topics may include media literacy, war, terrorism, global economics, world religions, political systems, science and technology, the environment, natural disasters, health, the United Nations, leadership, and social change.

Students apply critical thinking, research, data interpretation, and communication skills to define problems, examine causes, evaluate perspectives, and consider possible solutions.

AP MACROECONOMICS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: 85% or higher in previous Social Science course

AP Macroeconomics is an introductory college-level course focused on the principles that apply to an economic system as a whole. Students study economic measurements, markets, national income, price determination, financial sectors, stabilization policies, economic growth, and international trade.

Students use economic models, graphs, charts, and data to describe economic situations, predict outcomes, and explain policy choices. This course is especially valuable for students interested in business, economics, finance, public policy, or international relations.

AP COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: 85% or higher in previous Social Science course

AP Comparative Government and Politics introduces students to political systems outside the United States. Students compare the political structures, policies, institutions, and challenges of selected countries, including China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and Russia.

Students analyze data, compare political systems, apply political concepts, and develop evidence-based arguments. The course builds a strong foundation for students interested in government, law, international relations, economics, and global affairs.

AP RESEARCH

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: 85% or higher in previous Social Science course. Priority is given to students who have completed AP Seminar.

AP Research is the second course in the AP Capstone experience. Students deeply investigate an academic topic, problem, issue, or idea of personal interest.

Students design, plan, and complete a yearlong research project. They learn research methodology, practice ethical research, analyze sources, synthesize information, and document their process through a portfolio.

The course culminates in an academic paper of approximately 4,000–5,000 words and a presentation with an oral defense. Completion of AP Seminar and its required assessments is strongly recommended for success in AP Research.

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Grade 10 Humanities with an 85% final grade

AP Human Geography introduces students to college-level human geography. The course examines how people, cultures, economies, political systems, and urban environments are organized across space.

Students study topics such as population, migration, culture, political geography, agriculture, development, industry, cities, globalization, colonialism, and human-environment relationships.

The course develops geographic thinking, map analysis, data interpretation, critical reading, and understanding of cultural landscapes. AP Human Geography helps students become more informed global citizens and better prepared to analyze contemporary world issues.

MATHEMATICS

Graduation Requirement: 3 credits

CRIA students must complete Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II or equivalent coursework. After completing these foundational courses, students may pursue advanced mathematics options such as Pre-Calculus, AP Precalculus, AP Calculus AB, and AP Statistics.

The appropriate mathematics pathway should be selected based on the student's readiness, performance, goals, teacher recommendation, and assessment data.

To move from Grade 7 Mathematics to the Advanced Pathway, students must typically earn a 90% or higher in Math 7, receive teacher recommendation, and demonstrate readiness through MAP mathematics scores.

MATHEMATICS COURSE PATHWAYS

Pathway	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Standard Pathway	Math 6	Math 7	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus or AP Pre-Calculus
Advanced Pathway	Math 6	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I Honors	Geometry Honors	Algebra II Honors	Pre-Calculus or AP Pre-Calculus	AP Calculus AB and/or AP Statistics

Pre-Calculus is required for most students planning to pursue calculus or selective university programs.

MATH 6

Prerequisite: Math 5

Grade 6 Mathematics provides a transition from elementary arithmetic to foundational algebra. Students work with rational numbers, ratios, decimals, fractions, percentages, integers, area, perimeter, coordinate planes, measures of center, equations, inequalities, and proportional relationships.

Students use mathematical vocabulary, problem-solving strategies, concrete materials, and appropriate technology to support understanding. Technology is used as a learning tool, but it does not replace conceptual understanding or computational fluency.

MATH 7

Prerequisite: Math 6

Grade 7 Mathematics continues to build foundations for algebra. Students deepen their understanding of rational numbers, proportional reasoning, volume, surface area, quadrilaterals, probability, equations, inequalities, slope, and relationships between variables.

Students develop problem-solving skills and mathematical communication. Technology, manipulatives, and real-world applications support learning while students continue to build fluency with core mathematical concepts.

PRE-ALGEBRA 7

Prerequisites: Math 6 with 90% or higher; teacher recommendation; supporting Math MAP score. Transfer students must complete a placement assessment.

Pre-Algebra 7 is an accelerated course for students ready for advanced middle school mathematics. Students study real numbers, proportional reasoning, three-dimensional geometry, transformations, the Pythagorean Theorem, data analysis, algebraic expressions, multistep equations and inequalities, and linear functions.

The course prepares students for Algebra I and supports the development of abstract reasoning, problem-solving, and mathematical communication.

PRE-ALGEBRA 8

Prerequisite: Math 7

Pre-Algebra 8 prepares students for Algebra I by strengthening their understanding of real numbers, proportional reasoning, geometry, transformations, the Pythagorean Theorem, data representation, algebraic expressions, equations, inequalities, and linear functions.

Students continue to build mathematical vocabulary, problem-solving strategies, and confidence in applying mathematics to real-world situations.

ALGEBRA I

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Math 7 with 90% or higher, teacher recommendation, supporting Math MAP score, or successful completion of Math 8. Transfer students must complete a placement assessment.

Algebra I is a foundational high school mathematics course. Students learn to represent and solve practical problems using algebraic models, equations, inequalities, tables, graphs, and functions.

The course emphasizes patterns, generalization, proportional reasoning, symbolic representation, and connections among algebra, geometry, and statistics. Students use technology to visualize, analyze, and verify solutions while developing strong conceptual understanding.

GEOMETRY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Algebra I

Geometry develops students' reasoning and problem-solving skills through the study of geometric figures, properties, relationships, transformations, coordinate geometry, trigonometry, and proof.

Students learn to use deductive reasoning, logic, definitions, postulates, theorems, and algebraic justifications. Technology and dynamic geometry tools support exploration and understanding.

ALGEBRA II

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Algebra I and Geometry

Algebra II extends students' understanding of algebra through the study of functions, equations, inequalities, systems, polynomials, rational and radical expressions, complex numbers, sequences, and series.

Students apply algebra to practical situations and mathematical models. The course emphasizes oral and written communication, interpretation of results, and the relationship between symbolic and graphical representations.

PRE-CALCULUS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Algebra II

Pre-Calculus prepares students for advanced mathematics and calculus. The course reviews key algebraic concepts and moves into the study of functions, including polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions.

Students also study matrices, vectors, probability, and statistics. Successful completion of Pre-Calculus prepares students for AP Calculus AB or other advanced mathematics courses.

AP PRE-CALCULUS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Algebra II with 90% or higher; supporting PSAT score

AP Pre-Calculus is designed to be equivalent to a first-semester college pre-calculus course. Students study college algebra, trigonometry, and additional topics that prepare them for further college-level mathematics.

The course explores polynomial, rational, exponential, logarithmic, trigonometric, polar, parametric, vector-valued, implicitly defined, and linear transformation functions using matrices.

Students develop procedural fluency, symbolic reasoning, multiple representations, mathematical modeling, and communication skills.

AP STATISTICS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Algebra II with 85% or higher; supporting PSAT score

AP Statistics is an introductory college-level course in data analysis and statistical reasoning. Students learn to collect, analyze, and draw conclusions from data.

Topics include variation, distribution, patterns, uncertainty, predictions, decisions, and statistical inference. Students use technology, investigations, problem-solving, and written explanations throughout the course.

This course is equivalent to many first-year university statistics courses.

AP CALCULUS AB

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Pre-Calculus with 88% or higher; supporting PSAT score

AP Calculus AB is equivalent to a first-semester college calculus course. Students study differential and integral calculus, including limits, derivatives, integrals, and applications.

Students develop conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and problem-solving skills while applying calculus to mathematical and real-world situations.

SCIENCE

Graduation Requirement: 3 credits

Students must complete Biology, Chemistry, and Physics or approved equivalent science coursework. Two science credits must include laboratory experiences.

CRIA's science program develops scientific literacy, critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, and evidence-based reasoning. Students learn that scientific explanations are based on observation, experimentation, models, evidence, and logical analysis.

Science courses are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and emphasize laboratory work, collaboration, communication, and real-world applications.

SCIENCE COURSE PATHWAY

Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Gr. 9	Gr. 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Science 6	Science 7	Science 8	Biology	Chemistry	Physics, AP Physics 1, or Ocean Science	AP Environmental Science or Ocean Science

SCIENCE 6

Prerequisite: Science 5

Science 6 is a yearlong inquiry-based integrated science course. Students explore earth science, physical science, life science, and engineering concepts aligned with NGSS standards.

Topics include weather, climate, natural hazards, thermal energy, the water cycle, geology, tectonic plates, light, waves, and cells. Laboratory experiments and projects help students apply scientific ideas and develop inquiry skills.

SCIENCE 7

Prerequisite: Science 6

Science 7 is a yearlong integrated science course focused on the relationship between natural processes and human activity. Students explore how energy flows and matter cycles through Earth's systems.

Topics include matter, chemical reactions, metabolic reactions, ecosystems, biodiversity, and human impacts on the environment. Laboratory experiments and individual or group projects reinforce course learning.

SCIENCE 8

Prerequisite: Science 7

Science 8 is a yearlong inquiry-based course that explores astronomy, physics, biology, and engineering. Students study space, the solar system, forces, motion, light and sound waves, and the electromagnetic spectrum.

Laboratory experiments and projects help students apply scientific practices, analyze evidence, and communicate findings.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR

The middle school science department sponsors a science fair that gives students the opportunity to investigate a topic of interest and apply the scientific method.

Students conduct independent research, present their findings, and participate in a school-wide exhibition. The science fair encourages curiosity, creativity, scientific reasoning, and communication.

BIOLOGY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Science 8

Biology is a yearlong high school science course that explores life, living organisms, and the practical applications of biology and biochemistry.

Topics include biochemistry, cell biology, genetics, evolution, taxonomy, and ecology. Aligned with NGSS standards, the course develops content knowledge as well as communication, collaboration, inquiry, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Laboratory experiments and projects are included throughout the course.

CHEMISTRY

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Biology

Chemistry is a yearlong introductory course focused on the fundamental concepts and practices of chemistry. Students study matter and its properties, atoms, elements, compounds, chemical reactions, thermochemistry, solution chemistry, and nuclear chemistry.

Hands-on laboratory experiments and collaborative projects help students develop observation, data analysis, scientific communication, and problem-solving skills.

PHYSICS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

Physics builds on middle school science concepts and helps students explain phenomena central to physical science, life science, earth science, and engineering.

Students study forces, motion, energy, waves, systems, models, and scientific practices. They plan investigations, analyze data, use mathematical and computational thinking, construct explanations, and evaluate designs.

The course emphasizes usable knowledge, problem-solving, and the application of science to real-world situations.

AP PHYSICS 1

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Algebra II with 85% or higher; supporting PSAT mathematics score

AP Physics 1 is an algebra-based, introductory college-level physics course. Students study systems, fields, force interactions, change, conservation, and waves.

The course includes classroom study, in-class activities, and hands-on inquiry-based laboratory work. Students are encouraged to retain laboratory notebooks, reports, and materials because some colleges may require them when granting credit.

AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

AP Environmental Science is a college-level science course that examines the natural world and the relationships among living and nonliving systems.

Students identify and analyze natural and human-made environmental problems, evaluate risks, and consider possible solutions. The course is interdisciplinary and includes concepts from geology, biology, environmental science, chemistry, geography, and environmental studies.

OCEAN SCIENCE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisites: Biology and Chemistry

Ocean Science explores the physical, chemical, geological, and biological components of the ocean. Students study ocean floors, currents, climate regulation, marine food webs, sustainable fishing practices, and ocean stewardship.

Students also learn about the technology and scientific methods used to understand marine systems. The course may include field trips, hands-on learning, and guest speakers from marine-related fields.

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Graduation Requirement: 3 credits

Spanish is required in Grades 9–11 and is optional in Grade 12, unless needed for graduation or university preparation.

Spanish placement is determined by the Spanish Department based on language background, proficiency, prior coursework, and student readiness.

The study of Spanish helps students communicate across cultures, understand diverse communities, and participate more fully in Costa Rican and global society.

SPANISH COURSE PATHWAY

Level	Course
Spanish 1	Beginning Spanish
Spanish 2	Developing Spanish
Spanish 3	Intermediate Spanish
Spanish 4	Advanced Spanish / MEP
AP Spanish Language and Culture	Advanced Placement option

SPANISH 1

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: None

Spanish 1 introduces students to communication in Spanish and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Students begin developing interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills.

Students learn to communicate in real-life contexts about topics meaningful to them. The course emphasizes Spanish use in the classroom, authentic materials, vocabulary development, grammar in context, and cultural understanding.

SPANISH 2

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Spanish 1

Spanish 2 continues the development of communicative and cultural competence. Students interact orally and in writing, understand spoken and written messages, and make presentations in Spanish.

Students build accuracy with basic language structures and begin working with more complex features of the language. The course emphasizes communication about daily life, familiar topics, and authentic cultural materials.

SPANISH 3

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Spanish 2

Spanish 3 strengthens students' ability to communicate in Spanish across a wider range of topics. Students use more complex structures and begin moving from concrete topics to more abstract ideas in different time frames.

Students read and listen to authentic materials, identify main ideas and details, sustain conversations, and discuss historical and contemporary issues. The course continues to emphasize Spanish use in the classroom and cultural understanding.

SPANISH 4 / MEP

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Spanish 3

Spanish 4 develops advanced reading, oral communication, writing, grammar, and literary analysis skills. The course supports students in using Spanish accurately and effectively in academic and real-world contexts.

Students study language structure, syntax, phonetics, written expression, oral expression, and literary works from different authors, genres, and historical periods.

Students are expected to develop skills in:

- Accurate use of language
- Appropriate communication for audience and purpose
- Textual cohesion and coherence
- Sentence structure and organization
- Literary reading and analysis
- Communication strategies for oral expression
- Interpretation of denotative and connotative meaning

AP SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: Spanish 3 or Spanish 4 with 85% or higher

AP Spanish Language and Culture emphasizes communication in real-life situations. Students develop interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills while strengthening vocabulary, language control, communication strategies, and cultural awareness.

The course is taught almost exclusively in Spanish and engages students in the study of contemporary and historical cultural contexts. Students examine cultural products, practices, and perspectives.

This course is equivalent to many first-year university Spanish courses and follows College Board requirements.

FINE ARTS

Graduation Requirement: 1 credit

Fine Arts courses give students opportunities to learn, explore, create, and express ideas through visual and performing arts. Students develop creativity, technical skills, critical thinking, and appreciation for the role of the arts in society.

ART 6–8

Prerequisite: None

Art 6–8 helps students apply and synthesize previously learned concepts while developing more complex technical skills. Students work with the elements of art, including color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value, as well as the principles of design, including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, proportion, rhythm, unity, and variety.

Students develop observational drawing, value drawing, color study, visual language, and artistic technique through a variety of media. Creative problem-solving and experimentation are emphasized.

ART 9–12

Credit: 0.5
Prerequisite: None

Art 9–12 introduces students to a wide range of media and techniques, which may include drawing, printmaking, painting, ceramics, textiles, and sculpture.

Students explore traditional and modern artistic approaches while developing individual responses to artistic concepts. The course includes both studio practice and academic study, with research into art movements and artists integrated into art production.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Graduation Requirement: 1 credit

Physical Education and Health courses support the development of the whole child by connecting physical activity, health knowledge, social interaction, and lifelong wellness.

Students develop movement skills, fitness knowledge, personal responsibility, teamwork, decision-making, and respect for others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 6–8

Prerequisite: None

Middle school physical education helps students develop competence in modified games, sports, recreational activities, rhythmic movement, and fitness activities.

Students learn to analyze skill performance, apply principles of movement, understand personal fitness, and make connections between physical activity and health. Topics include fitness planning, stress management, responsible behavior, conflict resolution, etiquette, and respect for others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH 9–12

Credit: 0.5
Prerequisite: None

High school Physical Education and Health develops students' movement skills, fitness knowledge, and understanding of healthy choices. Students demonstrate skills in selected physical activities and apply rules, strategies, and concepts related to movement and fitness.

Health topics are included as part of the PE program. Students may participate in a variety of activity areas, such as:

- Aerobic fitness
- Water sports
- Individual sports
- Lifelong physical activities
- Outdoor activities
- Team sports

FARO

This FARO course serves as a **guided support space** (distinct from a formal instructional course) designed to help students apply their knowledge in **Spanish, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Civics**. Conducted in Spanish, the program provides structured preparation specifically tailored for the **National Standardized Tests** administered by the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) of Costa Rica.

To ensure exam readiness, students will complete **official practice tests provided by the MEP** at various intervals throughout the school year. The class follows a **project-based** methodology, prioritizing active participation and **in-class assignments**.

- **Comprehensive Review:** Covers Spanish, Science, Math, Social Studies, and **Civics**.
- **Exam Simulation:** Frequent use of **official MEP practice exams** to build familiarity and confidence.
- **Practical Approach:** Learning is driven by projects and hands-on classwork rather than traditional lectures.
- **Goal-Oriented:** Specifically designed to meet the requirements of Costa Rican standardized testing.

ENRICHMENT ELECTIVES

Enrichment electives provide students with opportunities to explore interests, build practical skills, and extend learning beyond required academic courses.

Elective offerings may vary from year to year based on student interest, staffing, scheduling, and program priorities. These courses are designed to support creativity, independence, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and preparation for life beyond school.

HEALTH 6–10

Prerequisite: None

Health helps students build knowledge and skills for lifelong well-being. Students study nutrition, healthy eating, personal safety, online safety, bullying prevention, harassment prevention, stress management, mental health, substance-use prevention, healthy relationships, human development, and responsible decision-making.

The course emphasizes practical skills that help students make informed choices, care for themselves and others, and contribute positively to their communities.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Credit: 0.5
Prerequisite: None

Personal Finance helps students understand the impact of individual financial choices on future goals and opportunities. Topics include income, money management, budgeting, spending, credit, saving, investing, insurance, taxes, and debt management.

Students practice designing personal and household budgets, using checking and savings accounts, evaluating financial decisions, and understanding responsible money management.

The course concludes with the WISE Financial Literacy certification upon successful completion of the external exam.

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE PRINCIPLES

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: None

AP Computer Science Principles is an introductory college-level computing course that introduces students to the breadth of computer science.

Students design and evaluate solutions, develop algorithms and programs, use abstraction, work with data, and examine computing innovations. They also study how computing systems and the internet work, consider the impact of technology, and contribute to a collaborative and ethical computing culture.

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: None

Introduction to Business introduces students to essential business concepts and skills. Topics include types of businesses, ownership structures, entrepreneurship, marketing, consumer behavior, leadership, management, human resources, stock market basics, investing, business law, and international trade.

Students participate in interactive activities, case studies, projects, and assessments. For example, students may design a product for the local market, research competitors, create branding, set pricing, and develop a marketing strategy.

The course helps students develop soft skills, business planning skills, and awareness of business-related careers.

AP BUSINESS WITH PERSONAL FINANCE

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: None

AP Business with Personal Finance introduces students to the world of business while helping them build practical financial skills.

Students study entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, accounting, management, budgeting, investing, and decision-making through real-world projects and case studies. The course helps students understand how businesses operate and how individuals can make informed financial choices.

This course is equivalent to an introductory college-level business course.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Credit: 1.0
Prerequisite: None

Social Media and Digital Marketing introduces students to the fast-changing world of digital marketing, branding, and modern entrepreneurship.

Students develop practical skills in professional communication, content creation, branding, digital storytelling, social media marketing, digital advertising, SEO, e-commerce, and audience engagement.

The course emphasizes real-world application and data-driven decision-making. Students analyze engagement metrics, evaluate campaign performance, identify target audiences, and refine strategies based on feedback.

Students also strengthen leadership, collaboration, project management, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The course culminates in a comprehensive marketing project and digital portfolio.

This course is ideal for students interested in business, media, technology, marketing, communications, or entrepreneurship.

INDEPENDENT STUDY: DUAL ENROLLMENT

Credit: 0.5
Prerequisite: Depends on course selection. Additional cost is paid by the student's family.

Qualified students in Grades 11 and 12 may apply to take university-level coursework through Arizona State University or another approved dual enrollment provider.

Dual enrollment courses allow students to earn university credit that may be transferable to colleges and universities. Students must consult with the College Counselor before enrolling.

Families should note that dual enrollment courses may involve additional fees. Current estimated cost is approximately $425 per course, depending on the course and provider.

INDEPENDENT STUDY: EDYNAMIC LEARNING

Credit: 0.5
Prerequisite: Depends on elective choice

Independent Study courses through eDynamic Learning allow juniors and seniors to explore areas of interest, meet elective requirements, or further challenge themselves academically.

Available courses may include Animation, Forensics, Criminology, Introduction to Cybersecurity, and many others. These courses are self-paced and available online.

Students may take a maximum of one 0.5-credit eDynamic Learning independent study course free of charge in Grades 11 or 12, subject to approval.

Not all online courses are accepted for CRIA credit. Students must receive pre-approval from the College Counselor before enrolling.

ACADEMIC PLANNING NOTES FOR FAMILIES

Course selection should be thoughtful and realistic. Students are encouraged to pursue challenge, but they should also consider balance, workload, extracurricular commitments, university goals, and overall well-being.

When selecting courses, families should consider:

- Graduation requirements
- University entrance requirements
- Student strengths and interests
- Readiness for advanced or AP coursework
- Teacher recommendations
- MAP, PSAT, and other assessment data
- Balance across academic and extracurricular commitments

CRIA's faculty, counselors, and administration are available to support students and families in making appropriate academic decisions.

CLOSING STATEMENT

CRIA's Program of Studies reflects our commitment to academic excellence, personal growth, and college preparation. Through a balanced program of core academics, advanced coursework, language learning, arts, physical education, and enrichment opportunities, students are prepared to think critically, communicate effectively, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world.