



Welcome to
our classroom.

High School

Ninth - Twelfth Grade

Academic Rigor

AGES 14 TO 18

In Giffthill School's high school classes, academic rigor means equipping students with the tools and training they need to frame their own questions, to seek their own answers, and to critically evaluate information they encounter.

Students may choose to take core courses (math, English, social studies, science, and Spanish) for standard, honors, or AP credit. Graduation requirements specify that students must also earn credits through a variety of fine and performing arts, academic, career, and technology electives, as well as performing 100 hours of community service. Weekly academic showcases offer high school students the opportunity to polish their public speaking skills as they present recent topics of learning to their peers.



A one-to-one technology model is continued at the high school level and students are given support as they use technology, especially the applications available as part of the google education suite, as critical tools for learning and collaboration with peers and teachers.

Academic tasks across all disciplines emphasize the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and in the professional world, and the importance of developing a sense of social and environmental responsibility as a global citizen.





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In our classrooms rigor looks like:

High school English classes provide in-depth literature studies and frequent opportunities for students to practice each stage of the writing process including a ten page research paper requirement in 11th grade. In addition to traditional testing and essays, students engage in socratic seminars, oral presentations, and peer teaching to demonstrate their mastery of concepts.

Each year students also have the opportunity to work with faculty from the New England Youth Theater, who offer minimester workshops ranging from full scale musical productions, to improvisation cabarets, to intensive Shakespeare immersion.

Mathematics offerings at GHS include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus, as well as applied classes such as Personal Finance, Introduction to Logic, SAT workshop, and Math for Entrepreneurs. Instruction in all math courses follows an inquiry based learning model, and emphasizes students' ability to solve problems in diverse ways, and confidently explain their process to peers and teachers.

Our focus on STEAM education means that high school science offerings are lab-driven courses which emphasize the application of scientific thinking, experimental design, and engineering principles to solve problems facing local, regional, national, and global communities. In addition to the traditional offerings of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics, Giffthill School also offers students full credit lab science courses in topics including: Marine Biology, Environmental Science, Engineering for Us All (E4USA), and Island Ecology and Sustainability. All high school students participate in a school-wide science fair, and each year one high school student is selected to represent the Virgin Islands at the Bourlag International World Food Prize Student Symposium which focuses on food security issues around the globe.

Extensive elective offerings give high school students a chance to explore new interests or dive deeper into areas of personal interest through classes like: Farm to Table, Baking, Catering, International Cuisines, Music Engineering and Production, Jam Band, Textiles, Sculpture, Painting I/II, Drawing I/II, Character Study, Robotics, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Yearbook, and more.

Health and PE classes provide students with the tools they need to maintain a healthy mind and body, and teach team-building, sportsmanship, and a healthy approach to physical activity. The Giffthill School Athletic Department also provides a number of competitive team sports including: soccer, volleyball, basketball, and cross-country at the JV and Varsity level. Swimming is offered as a club sport in the spring.

Students have many opportunities to develop the habits and skills of future leaders through extra-curricular clubs, activities, and special events. Giffthill School has an active student government, National Honor Society chapter, and hosts a variety of special events and service opportunities including: International Day of the Girl Potluck Brunch, a half day workshop focusing on gender equality and the role of educating girls in a society's long term economic success; GHS Gives Back Day, a school-wide day of service in our local community led by student organizers; Parents Night Out, a low-cost babysitting option for local families; and International Service Learning Trips, abroad to places like Uganda where our students work in local schools to give back. Week-long "minimester" and "STEAM Week" experiences give students the opportunity to select from a variety of immersion learning opportunities facilitated by a combination of GHS faculty and guest teachers from around the nation.