

Honors Course Guide

“No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” ~Calvin Coolidge

Description of Honors Program

Honors courses require students to engage in activities that develop personal character while also serving their community or beyond. These activities are at a higher level of learning per Bloom’s taxonomy: analyze, evaluate, and/or create¹. Activities should be completed conscientiously as a demonstration of the student’s best work.

A student can complete a single project or a series of projects, worth a total of 15-20 hours of work. Honors projects should directly relate to the course material in some way, but be an opportunity to learn at a greater depth or to expand upon a course concept. Honors project plans are developed by the student, with the guidance of his or her Educational Facilitator and course instructor; the plan must be approved by both the EF and the course instructor.

The Student Learning Plan should indicate that the course is an honors course by prefixing the course title with the word “Honors” and by selecting honors from the Course Attribute box in Report Writer when adding the curriculum to the student’s learning plan. See course catalog for courses eligible for honors designation. Upon enrollment, a student should preview the course to begin developing ideas for his or her project(s), and the sooner a student develops a project plan, the more likely some course assignments done along the way can be integrated into that plan. The EF and instructor have the final say regarding the plan proposal due date, but it is encouraged that students aim to have an approved honors project plan by the mid-way point in their course.

Examples of Honors Projects

Interview senior citizens to create an oral histories collection, and videotape these histories, editing them into a format for sharing. These can be stand-alone mini-documentaries or part of one larger documentary, depending on the focus of this project. Additional historical information, such as providing a voice-over with a photo or map, can be added to provide additional context. In addition to the item being turned in for course credit, it is also copied and distributed to places such as a historical society, local library, or even the Library of Congress.

Create a short class to offer to a group of homeschool students in the community, coordinating with the local library or homeschool cooperative.

Volunteer time engaged in activities related to course concepts can include organizations such as the Forest Service, museums, historical society, humane society, or other service-orientated groups. One can also volunteer time helping local community members.

¹ http://www.apa.org/ed/new_blooms.html

These are just a few examples to help generate some ideas. Students can engage in one of the above activities, modified as needed to fit their specific course requirements. They can also view the resources below for additional examples and ideas. Students are also encouraged to create their own unique proposals for their honors projects.

Resources

Book: The Kid's Guide to Service Projects

Describes the steps to launching a community service project and provides a collection project ideas for each of the following topics; animals, community beautification, crime fighting, the environment, friendship, health, holidays, homeless people, hunger, literacy, people with special needs, politics and government, safety, senior citizens, and transportation.

CNN Programs

- Heroes: www.cnn.com/heroes
- Impact Your World: <http://www.cnn.com/impact/>
- Be the Change: www.cnn.com/bethechange

USA Freedom Corps: www.usafreedomcorpskids.gov

Kids Are Heroes: <http://www.kidsareheroes.com/>

PBS Media Smart Teen Heroes: <http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/whatyoucando/teenheroes.html>

Amazing Kids: <http://www.amazing-kids.org/kids.html>

Proposal Components

Basic Information: Student's first and last name, grade level, school, EF name, course instructor name

Course Title: name of the honors course for which the proposal is being made

Project Description: describe plan in detail, including timeline, and include the following:

- Bloom's Taxonomy: explain how the project meets higher level learning.
- Personal Development: explain how this will develop the student's personal character.
- Community Service: how will this serve the student's community or beyond?
- Documentation: How will the project be presented to the instructor, including documentation/evidence of project completion? ⁱ

ⁱ Parent confirmation alone does not suffice for purposes of honors project documentation. Students are encouraged to provide a presentation, report, or final product that thoroughly demonstrates completion of the project.