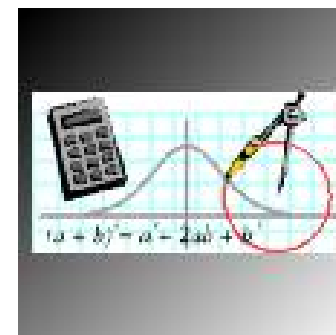


Honors Algebra I Guidelines 2011-2012



I. Overview of the Program

All students at St. Gabriel take Algebra I in their 8th grade year. However, we offer two levels of Algebra. Students in the Honors Algebra I level, take a rigorous, complete, high school level Algebra I course, recognized and endorsed by the Archdiocese of Louisville, and designed for students in the eighth grade with exceptional math ability and a strong work ethic. Successful completion of this course will be recognized by local high schools, enabling those students to "skip" Algebra I their freshman year and be placed in higher level Geometry and/or Algebra II programs. **Completion of this course does not earn students any high school math credit, average into their high school GPA, nor enable them to take fewer years of high school math.** Rather, the intent of this program is to offer mathematically gifted students the opportunity to take more advanced math sooner, enabling them to take higher leveled math in high school.

The Honors Algebra I Program is approached as an active "hands-on" class, with lots of practice, and is not a note taking experience. Therefore all sample problems and class instruction, which is delivered on the Smart Board each class day, will be available on the web page in pdf format, for student review each evening. Students will use dry erase boards and graphing calculators extensively in class.

This Honors Algebra class is comparable to an "Advanced" or the highest level high school Algebra I class. The rigorous curriculum cannot be changed to move at a slower pace, nor at an easier level, or expected core content material cannot be covered. Should a student have difficulty keeping up with this pace they will be asked to return to the regular Algebra class.

The book currently being used is Prentice Hall, Algebra I, copyright 2011.

Students have access to a complete Algebra I math course offering on the computer in a program entitled "Success Maker". All Algebra I students will be enrolled in this networked software and can use this program anywhere in the building anytime during the school day. Students can work at their own speed on the algebra topics they so choose.

Students must maintain a reasonable average to be in good standing in the program. They must complete all tests including a mid-term and final exam administered online in May. At the end of the first quarter, and continuing throughout the rest of the year, any student whose overall average falls below the expected minimum may be asked to return to the regular Algebra program. Grades will be based on homework, quiz and test scores, and class preparedness.

Students are expected to behave at all times. Due to the pace of this class, needless interruptions will not be tolerated. While this can be a relaxed and fun class, it cannot be chaotic. Any student who chooses to continually disrupt class will be asked to return to regular eighth grade math.

The Honors Algebra I class will be students first exposure to a truly “leveled” class, a class in which all the students are of a high caliber. This is a great introduction to what these students will most likely experience in the high school years ahead. Students may experience some discomfort at not being the top dog in the class, as they may be accustomed to. They may also have to adjust to the pace of the class, as they may be used to a slower paced class adapted for all learners.

II. Class Procedures and Expectations:

Class Procedure – Students are placed in the same homeroom and meet in the open loft area in the junior high building for class each day. Students are expected to arrive on time and in an orderly manner and settle quickly, in preparation to begin class (get out books, homework, pencils, graphing calculators, etc.). **Consistent attendance is imperative!**

Homework/Class Preparedness

Homework is an integral part of the mathematics learning process. I am a firm believer that students don't realize what they don't comprehend / fully understand until they try to do it on their own. It always makes perfect sense and looks easier when the teacher is demonstrating the process in class. Later, the students will find that individual practice will definitely point out any errors and misconceptions they may have. Homework is the only opportunity afforded students to make errors and learn from their mistakes, that does not impact their grade in a negative way.

- A. Writing Utensils, graphing calculator and the written homework itself are all considered a part of the homework /class preparedness grade. Failure to have any of these items will result in a grade reduction with partial or no credit.
- B. As a rule, students and parents should expect that homework will be assigned nightly, including many weekends.
- C. Homework will be reviewed / corrected daily and accepted based on completeness and effort demonstrated by the student, not the accuracy of the answers.
- D. All homework must be legible. All work should be shown - answers only will only be accepted in a one step problem; all others will be considered incomplete. Answers should be circled to aid in quick and easy classroom correction.
- E. Homework/Class Preparedness counts as 2 points per day, and 10% of the quarter grade. Missing assignments will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. Homework produced late will receive no credit. Incomplete homework will be given no credit or partial credit (1 point), at the teacher's discretion. Failure to come to class prepared, with a graphing calculator and necessary writing utensil will result in a partial credit grade for the day.
- F. No homework grades are ever dropped.

Quizzes

- A. Multiple quizzes will be given each chapter (normally 5-10, depending on the length of the chapter), worth *10-20* points each (depending on the length and difficulty of the quiz). On occasion quizzes may be given on a take-home basis.
- B. Quizzes equal 30% of the quarter grade.
- C. Quiz material will be similar to core content material contained in notes and corrected homework.
- D. Students are allowed to use calculators on most quizzes.
- E. For partial credit (where applicable), all work must be shown.
- F. Quizzes are not announced prior to their taking. Students should prepare nightly. The class will average two to three quizzes per week.
- G. At least one quiz score will be dropped for each student each quarter.

Notes

A. Chapter notes and homework assignments will be posted online.

B. Daily class notes and step by step examples and their solutions as given daily by the teacher throughout each chapter are also posted daily online.

C. Notes should be reviewed nightly for homework and quiz preparation for the next day.

Tests

- A. Tests count as 60% of the quarter grade. (Standard high school procedure for Honors level classes)
- B. One test is given per chapter, unless it is an exceptionally long chapter or one which will be interrupted by long class breaks (Christmas, Spring Break, Washington).
- C. Two exams - one midterm (January) and one final (May) are given. The midterm and final exam grades are averaged into the quarter grade like a chapter test would be.
- D. In testing, the focus is on process rather than solution. Therefore students are expected to show their work on all problems. Students who show all their work will receive partial credit for their solution, even if the answer is incorrect. Students who give incorrect answers with no work shown, will receive no credit. Students who give answers only, except in one-step solutions, will receive no or only partial credit

E. In the event a problem or an entire test results in low class scores, consideration will be given to dropping the problem / score, counting as a Bonus problem / score, or giving a replacement / retest.

F. Students may prepare one index card with notes for use on all chapter tests and the mid-term exam.

G. Unless otherwise stated, students may use calculators on all tests, except the final exit exam.

H. Students may complete the chapter test in the book, prior to taking the actual chapter test for bonus points on the test (0-5 pts).

Class Participation

A. Students are expected to actively listen and record/solve examples of material covered in class on their dry erase boards, and work in groups, alone or with me to solve problems.

B. Genuine questions are **strongly encouraged**.

C. Disruptive/distracting behavior will not be tolerated. Students are expected to abide by all school policies outlined in the school handbook. Repeated disruption of class by any student(s) may result in permanent removal from this class.

D. Class participation is imperative to success. Failing to come to class prepared (with calculator, homework, etc.), disruptive behavior or inattentiveness is unacceptable.

Outside Help

A. Computer Assisted Instruction – Success Maker is available for use at school during or after school hours (provided prior arrangements are made with parents and teacher, for scheduling and transportation).

B. Outside help from Instructor – “Occasional” assistance from instructor is available anytime before or after school, provided prior arrangements are made with parents and teacher, for scheduling and transportation, if necessary.

Absence

- A. Student is responsible for all missed content.**
- B. Student must make up any missed test within a few days of an absence.
- C. **Within reason**, a student is not required to make up missed homework (assigned during absence) or quizzes (given day of or return from absence) (Examples: SHINE, occasional illness, etc.)
- D. Frequent absence is extremely detrimental to student performance.**

Grading

- A. Homework/Class Preparedness - 10% of quarter grade
- B. Quizzes - 30% of quarter grade (at least one score is dropped)
- C. Tests - 60% of quarter grade

Grade Requirements

- A. To remain in Algebra I, students are expected to have a 90% average or above at the end of the first quarter.
 - B. To remain in class the remainder of the year, students are expected to maintain an overall "B" average for the year.
 - C. Students failing to meet criteria A & B above may be returned to a regular 8th grade Algebra class, at anytime during or at the completion of the current quarter.
 - D. The decision to return to the regular 8th grade Algebra program may be made by either the teacher or the student and their parents.
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- A. Students who have a "C" or lower average for the year will not be recommended for advanced mathematical placement in high school, and may be required to retake Algebra I as a freshman.

Materials Needed

- A. Calculator- TI-84-Plus SE Graphing Calculator (by Texas Instruments; @\$125)
- B. Writing Utensils - pens, pencils
- C. Binder with loose leaf or spiral notebook for homework
- D. Cover for Algebra I book.
- E. One dry erase eraser; “dry erase” markers