

# Characteristics of Effective Learners

(adapted from Skip Downing's *On Course*)

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Students:** Review this list of characteristics of effective learners. Check how each one describes you.

Effective Learners...	Usually	Some-times	Seldom
<b>DISPLAY A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN</b> , taking information taught and applying it in ways that are meaningful to them; expanding upon the information to make it fit into their interests and surroundings.			
<b>SET GOALS</b> , knowing what they want to achieve, identifying they have to work on, seeing their progress toward each goal, and taking pride in achieving each goal.			
<b>ACCEPT SELF-RESPONSIBILITY</b> , seeing themselves as the primary cause of their outcomes and experiences.			
<b>DISCOVER SELF-MOTIVATION</b> , finding purpose in their lives by discovering personally meaningful goals and dreams.			
<b>MASTER SELF-MANAGEMENT</b> , consistently planning and taking purposeful actions in pursuit of their goals and dreams.			
<b>EMPLOY INTERDEPENDENCE</b> , building mutually supportive relationships that help them achieve their goals and dreams (while helping others to do the same).			
<b>DISPLAY INDEPENDENCE</b> , feeling comfortable in a learning environment that places emphasis on individuals taking responsibility for their learning process.			
<b>GAIN SELF-AWARENESS</b> , consciously employing behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that keep them on course.			
<b>SELF-ADVOCATE AND COMMUNICATE</b> , taking responsibility for their learning by asking questions and voicing their confusion, frustration, concerns, absences, etc.			
<b>ASK QUESTIONS</b> , willing to ask for and accept assistance; realizing that there is always more to know.			
<b>DO NOT FRUSTRATE EASILY</b> , showing perseverance, resilience, and a willingness to work hard, make mistakes, and even fail; learning from setbacks.			
<b>ADOPT LIFE-LONG LEARNING</b> , finding valuable lessons and wisdom in nearly every experience they have.			
<b>DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</b> , effectively managing their emotions in support of their goals and dreams.			
<b>BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES</b> , seeing themselves capable, lovable, and unconditionally worthy as human beings.			
<b>MEET DEADLINES</b> , turning in assignments on time and taking time to produce work that looks good and shows pride in their work.			

<b>INTEREST IN ADVANCED WORK (Circle One)</b> Low Medium High
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<b>COURSE REQUESTING (Circle One)</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Advanced Social Studies
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Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Advanced Social Studies Pathway

*\*Alternative pathways exist, but students must fulfill graduation requirements).*

8th: Advanced Social Studies

9th: AP Human Geography

10th-12th: AP European History, AP World, AP Psychology, **AP US History, AP Government, AP MacroEconomics**

### Directions for Staff:

1. Provide each student a hard copy of the learning characteristics document with the Advanced Social Studies course description on the back. Request that this document be returned during the first week after Winter break with their decision as to take Advanced Social Studies or not.
  - a. **Does this need to be integrated into any registration documents or timeline?**
2. Review all requests to screen for “misguided efforts”
  - a. Example: Students who are academically struggling wanting to take the advanced course.
  - b. Discuss with team any students who you will need to have further conversations about advanced placement.
3. Provide student selections to counselor.

<b>Advanced Social Studies</b>	<b>SOC842</b> This course will have similar content base compared to the regular section of 8th grade social studies (1500s – 1870s US History), but will take a more intense look at the history through a variety of different methods. Students will have the opportunity to debate historical issues, study and compare work of historians, analyze primary resources, apply historical learning in a modern setting and explore problem based learning. Students will be asked to read and write at a high level in promotion of higher order thinking skills related to the content.	Deciding to take an advanced class is a challenging and exciting decision to make. Most often the best decisions are made when they are well informed and considerate of as many sources of information as possible. Prospective students are encouraged to consider input from their parents/guardians, current and former teachers, counselors, and administration. Please consider the following when weighing a decision to take an advanced class.  Students should anticipate that Advanced courses are often conducted at a quicker pace with compacted learning experiences. Students should expect a rigorous learning environment.  <b>Key Learner Characteristics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● High interest in learning academic subject at an advanced level</li><li>● Positive attitude about engaging in challenging academic work both at school and outside of school</li><li>● Successful managers of their time (able to multitask, to prioritize activities, to make deadlines, and to balance academic &amp; extracurricular activities well)</li></ul> <b>Enrollment Considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A pattern of strong classroom performance</li></ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supportive assessment performance Examples: Iowa Assessments, Cognitive Abilities Test, Belin-Blank, Summative Assessment Tools (Final Course Exams)</li> <li>● Student ability to self-advocate</li> </ul>
<p><b>AP Human Geography</b></p>	<p><b>AP Human Geography</b> introduces students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interpret maps and analyze geospatial data.</li> <li>2. Understand and explain the implications of associations and networks among phenomena in places.</li> <li>3. Recognize and interpret the relationships among patterns and processes at different scales of analysis.</li> <li>4. Define regions and evaluate the regionalization process.</li> <li>5. Characterize and analyze changing interconnections among places.</li> </ol>	<p>Deciding to take an advanced class is a challenging and exciting decision to make. Most often the best decisions are made when they are well informed and considerate of as many sources of information as possible. Prospective students are encouraged to consider input from their parents/guardians, current and former teachers, counselors, and administration. Please consider the following when weighing a decision to take an advanced class.</p> <p>Students should anticipate that Advanced courses are often conducted at a quicker pace with compacted learning experiences. Students should expect a rigorous learning environment.</p> <p><b>Key Learner Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High interest in learning academic subject at an advanced level</li> <li>● Positive attitude about engaging in challenging academic work both at school and outside of school</li> <li>● Successful managers of their time (able to multitask, to prioritize activities, to make deadlines, and to balance academic &amp; extracurricular activities well)</li> </ul> <p><b>Enrollment Considerations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A pattern of strong classroom performance</li> <li>● Supportive assessment performance Examples: Iowa Assessments, Cognitive Abilities Test, Belin-Blank, Summative Assessment Tools (Final Course Exams)</li> <li>● Student ability to self-advocate</li> </ul>

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### Frequently Asked Questions:

- Q1: Is the teacher making the final decision on students being placed in Advanced Social Studies?
  - A1: No- The final decision is in the hands of the parent and child. Teachers are to assist in providing evidence relative to predicting student success.
  - Reference page 2 of Self-Assessment tool.
  
- Q2: Can you still be in the Honors Program if you do not take Advanced Social Studies in the 8th grade.
  - Q2: Yes, you would either have to double up at VHS, or take AP Human Geography in 9th
    - You must have 8 Social Studies credits\*.
  - Traditional Pathway
    - 8th Grade Social Studies
    - 9th Grade- GCS
    - 10th Grade- World Civilizations, Sociology, Psychology, Current Issues
    - 11th Grade- US History/American Heritage or AP US History
    - 12th Grade- Government / Econ (AP Options)
  - Advanced Pathway
    - 8th Grade - Advanced Social Studies
    - 9th Grade- AP Human Geography
    - 10th Grade- AP European History or AP World History
    - 11th Grade - AP US History
    - 12th Grade - AP US Government and Politics / AP Macroeconomics
  
- Q3: What are the Social Studies Scholars Pathway requirements?
  - A3: Must take at least four years (8 credits) of social studies in grades 9-12 at Valley/Valley Southwoods; complete AP U.S. History, AP American Government, and AP Macroeconomics AND select **one** class from either AP European History, AP World History, or AP Psychology (AP Human Geography is now also one of the classes that will fulfill this requirement); maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.5; maintain a GPA of 4.0 in all social studies courses; take the semester exams in all social studies courses without Pass/No Pass; take the AP exams; exhibit a “Capstone” experience.
  
- Q4: Does Advanced Social Studies count towards their high school transcript?
  - A4: No the course will NOT be calculated in their high school GPA. Student's performance will need to be closely monitored to ensure appropriate placement.

Video Link [VHS Class offerings](#)