



Alpha High School Curriculum Guide

2021-2022



Alpha High School Curriculum Guide

Introduction

The Curriculum Guide is intended to provide information to students and families about the individualized academic pathways available through Alpha. We strive for simplicity and student ownership over academic choices as well as outcomes. No single publication can reliably describe every situation that may arise in the course of a student's time at Alpha. Therefore, students and families are encouraged to use this Curriculum Guide as a resource and communicate with the Alpha High School Guides throughout their time at Alpha.

The Curriculum Guide was developed in collaboration with Alpha Guides, leaders and parents. It is important that everyone in the community reviews the content and familiarizes themselves with how Alpha works.

About Alpha

Alpha High School

612 W 4th St
Austin, Texas 78701
512-595-0801

Alpha was founded in 2016 as a private day school located in Austin, Texas, serving students from kindergarten through high school. In 2021, Alpha expanded to locations across Texas. Alpha was founded on three pillars that form the basis of our educational philosophy:

- **Students love school.**
Students succeed when they love school. Everything else (learning, creativity, risk-taking, hard work) follows from love of school. Ultimately, love of school comes from the self-agency and engagement students feel when they truly invest in their school experience.
- **Students learn two times (2x) faster.**
Alpha utilizes adaptive technology, an innovative schedule, and the self-agency of each student to create an environment where students complete the same amount of content in half the time.
- **Students learn life skills.**
Alpha students learn practical life skills, such as public speaking, focus and intensity, giving and receiving feedback, personal finance, and entrepreneurship. During workshops, students tackle projects as individuals or with a group of their peers.

The 9th through 12th grade program at Alpha has historically been referred to as "Level 4." In Spring 2022, to better encapsulate the unique nature and structure of Alpha's high school program, "Level 4" will be replaced with "Alpha High School." As part of this transition, a new logo and new website (i.e., alphahigh.school) will become part of the program's identity.

Academic Program Overview

Autonomy, accountability and ingenuity are central to Alpha High School. Guides mentor students as they work independently with adaptive apps to advance through their required courses. Students earn the



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same or more credits compared to traditional high schools, but do so more quickly, leaving time for their true passion – a 4-year AlphaX Masterpiece that ties together multiple disciplines.

Alpha's adaptive learning environment includes Masterpiece projects, highly engaging group workshops that take our students all over the city, and personalized college counseling. While Alpha's high school experience is anything but traditional, our students are bolstered with in-depth curriculum support, ensuring that core requirements are fulfilled, while deeper interests are explored.

Student-Driven Learning and Contract

Alpha is building an exceptional school. Through self-directed learning and governance, Alpha students have full ownership of their school. To make sure that students understand their responsibilities relative to their education, we ask them to sign a contract each year. The contract is made up of five articles, the most critical articles being the following:

Article I

I am personally accountable for my actions, my time and my work. This means that my school and my parents are not responsible for my education - I own my education. Coming to Alpha is MY choice.

Article III

I will do the hard work required to own my education and accomplish my goals. I will fail sometimes, but I will take setbacks as temporary and bounce back quickly.

Article IV

I have the opportunity to do something real in high school. I will use my time in high school to complete an ambitious, bold and extraordinary project that excites me.

Graduation Requirements

To qualify for an Alpha diploma, a student must earn a minimum of 24 credits. The academic breakdown of credits is as follows:

English	4 credits
Math	4 credits
Science	4 credits *
Social Science	2 credits **
World Languages	2 credits
Student-Driven Electives	3 credits
AlphaX	5 credits

* Includes 1 credit of Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science

** Includes US History



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GPA

Alpha does not rank its students. A student's GPA is calculated by multiplying the academic year grade by the weight of the course. Courses are designated as college preparatory or Advanced Placement (AP). The weighted GPA is calculated as follows: +1.0 for AP.

Grading Scale

A+	98 - 100	B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	D+	67 - 69	F	0 - 59
A	93 - 97	B	83 - 86	C	73 - 76	D	63 - 66		
A-	90 - 92	B-	80 - 82	C-	70 - 72	D-	60 - 62		

Quality Points

A+	4.3	B+	3.3	C+	2.3	D+	1.3	F	0
A	4.0	B	3.0	C	2.0	D	1.0		
A-	3.7	B-	2.7	C-	1.7	D-	0.7		

College Counseling

Alpha's goal is to maximize opportunities for each student. While we expect some of our graduates to opt into unique opportunities, like the Thiel Fellowship, acceptance to a top tier university is one way to optimize opportunity.

How do we do this? By creating a clear pathway where the only delta in outcome is based on the input or work ethic of a student.

College Counseling Goals Mirror Alpha Promises:

1. Love your college
2. Attend the best college *for you*
3. Learn life skills through the admissions process

Alpha maintains a college readiness timeline that is updated annually. The timeline includes a series of information sessions, independent meetings and objectives that allow Alpha to provide resources, tools and serve the needs of each student. The college admissions process is completely opt-in for students and families.

Alpha Anywhere

Alpha Anywhere is available to students who will be traveling for at least one week after the start of the school year or are home due to illness. While in Alpha Anywhere, students will have the opportunity to meet with their Guide daily to set their academic goals and discuss their app progress.



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To sign up for Alpha Anywhere, parents and students may contact the Campus Coordinator and Lead Guide to make arrangements. Guides will be working with students both on-campus and online. To ensure both groups of students have productive time together, we ask families to adhere to a student's daily check-in call time. Guides will set up a daily Zoom call to meet with students and discuss their app work and goals. Alpha will provide computers, headphones, and other relevant materials for Alpha Anywhere participants.

Planning a Course of Study

Students meet with their advisor at the start of their Alpha career. Together, the advisor and the student create a pathway to graduation. The plan may be altered at any time, based on the student's interest. As the student travels through the AlphaX learning plan, courses that complement their passion are added to the pathway to graduation.

AP Testing

Alpha High School provides students with the opportunity to register for and take AP Exams in various subjects of their choosing. AP Exams are standardized exams offered by the College Board. They are designed to measure how well students have mastered advanced high school content in each applicable subject. Scoring well on these exams is beneficial for students' admission to college and students may receive college credit for passing scores. If a student registers for an AP Exam in a particular subject, the student is enrolled in advanced placement coursework within their adaptive learning applications for that subject, and receives additional adaptive learning applications as resources for their AP Exam.

How do students determine which AP Exams to take?

Students may elect to register for AP Exams in the subjects of their choice. This election process occurs at the beginning of the school year. Following conversations with their academic advisor, students indicate which AP Exams they are electing to register for by notifying their advisor. From there, Alpha High School handles student registration and payment for AP tests. Registered students will receive a confirmation email from CollegeBoard. If a student registers for an AP Exam in a particular subject, the expectation is that the student remains current with their coursework in their applications for that subject.

AlphaX

AlphaX, short for Alpha Expertise, is a multi-year program that every high school student must complete before graduating from Alpha. The mission of the program is to give students the time, structure, and resources to develop expertise and pursue a bold, valuable project in an area of personal interest. As a requirement of AlphaX, each student sets an ambitious, long-term goal. We call this goal a Masterpiece. The name is intentional – the historical definition of a Masterpiece is a work of a high standard produced in order to graduate from apprentice to master.

During each year of high school, students take courses associated with the AlphaX program, which are outlined in the graphic below. These courses include the following:



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- In students' first year at Alpha High School, students take (i) AlphaX Fundamentals, in which students master the fundamental skills they need to plan for and execute a successful Masterpiece; (ii) AlphaX Passion & Purpose, in which students explore the concepts of passion and purpose, their personal passion and purpose, and define their Masterpiece topic; and (iii) AlphaX Lift-Off, in which students strengthen their Masterpiece topic and align it to the Alpha standard. Students' first year of AlphaX culminates in the Masterpiece Defense, during which students defend their Masterpiece topic and their plan for execution of that Masterpiece topic to a panel.
- In students' second year at Alpha High School, students complete the AlphaX Sprint, during which students design an ambitious, 6-8 week plan to transform their Masterpiece idea into concrete, real-world action. Following the Sprint, students enter the Orbit phase of AlphaX, during which students execute their Masterpiece through a goal-setting and goal-execution process that aligns with their Masterpiece timeline. Students also take a Project Management course during their second year of high school, where they learn the fundamentals necessary to manage a long-term, difficult project.
- In students' third and fourth years at Alpha High School, students remain in Orbit, during which they continue to execute their Masterpiece according to their timeline and Masterpiece learning plan. Students' time in Orbit culminates in their completed Masterpiece.

Importantly, we encourage students to find and take additional courses related to their Masterpiece area of expertise. Though these courses are not formally offered as part of the AlphaX program, we may classify these courses as a student-driven elective for which students are able to earn credit.

AlphaX



What is AlphaX?

AlphaX, short for Alpha Expertise, is a four-year program that every Level 4 student must complete before graduating from Alpha. The mission of the program is to give students the time, structure, and resources to develop expertise and pursue a bold and valuable project in an area of personal interest.

What are the stages of AlphaX?

The stages of AlphaX are outlined below. Each stage has a Test to Pass which will unlock the next stage for the student. The process is individualized. Each student will be progressing at his or her own pace. * Completion of the Test to Pass associated with a particular stage will unlock the next stage for the student.





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Course Offerings

*AP course available

English	English 9 English 10 English 11* English 12*	Mathematics	Algebra I Geometry Algebra II Pre-Calculus Calculus* Statistics*
Science	Biology* Chemistry* Physics* Computer Science* Environmental Systems*	Social Science	World Geography* World History* US History* US Government* Micro/Macro Economics*
AlphaX	AlphaX Fundamentals AlphaX Passion & Purpose AlphaX Lift-Off AlphaX Sprint AlphaX Orbit 1 AlphaX Orbit 2 AlphaX Orbit 3 AlphaX Project Management AlphaX Communication & Public Speaking	World Languages	Full suite of courses offered through online provider, Language Bird*

Student-Driven Electives

Alpha has a very liberal approach to electives. Our goal is for electives to be driven by student interest. Therefore, we accept a broad range of third-party courses as electives.

With respect to AlphaX, we encourage students to find and take courses related to their Masterpiece area of expertise. Though these courses are not formally offered as part of the AlphaX program, we may classify these courses as a student-driven elective for which students are able to earn credit.

Additional Reference Materials

- Alpha School Profile
- Alpha CBE Procedures



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Course Descriptions

English

[English 9](#)
[English 10](#)
[English 11](#)
[English 12](#)

Mathematics

[Algebra I](#)
[Geometry](#)
[Algebra II](#)
[Pre-Calculus](#)
[Calculus](#)
[Statistics](#)

Science

[Biology](#)
[Chemistry](#)
[Physics](#)
[Computer Science](#)
[Environmental Systems](#)

Social Science

[World Geography](#)
[World History](#)
[US History](#)
[US Government](#)
[Micro/Macro Economics](#)

AlphaX

[AlphaX Fundamentals](#)
[AlphaX Passion & Purpose](#)
[AlphaX Lift-Off](#)
[AlphaX Sprint](#)
[AlphaX Orbit 1](#)
[AlphaX Orbit 2](#)
[AlphaX Orbit 3](#)
[AlphaX Project Management](#)
[AlphaX Communication & Public Speaking](#)

World Languages

[World Language Courses](#)