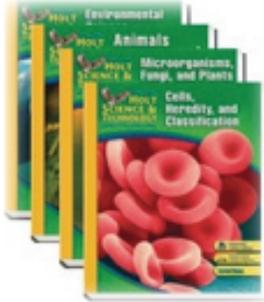


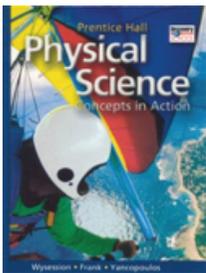
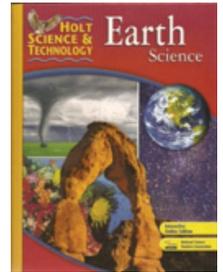
MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE

Choosing the appropriate course of study for science for your student should be based on several factors: math ability, interest, and goals in high school. The following information and FAQ section should help you to discern the best course for your child.



Life Science: This course prepares students well for high school biology. In general, this course should be completed at some point during the middle school years whether that be in 6th, 7th, or even 8th grade. No particular math skills are needed for successful completion of this course.

Earth Science: This is a fun science course with topics that typically excite students and are easy to understand. (Who doesn't get excited about earthquakes and tornadoes???) It can be completed in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade with no particular math skills to worry about prior to starting. At the same time, Earth Science isn't a "necessary" course in terms of preparing a student for a particular high school science course. Therefore, Kolbe would advise dropping this course out of the middle school science course of study for a student if there is no room in the schedule.



Physical Science: This course may be done in 8th or 9th grade, but it is advisable that all students in physical science be enrolled concurrently in Algebra 1. This course is essential for all high school biology, chemistry, and physics course preparation. Taking this course in 8th grade (if math skills are in place), allows the student to complete the biology, chemistry, and physics trifecta by 11th grade with the possibility of having a science elective as a 12th grader. However, it should be noted that plenty of math and science majors have been created despite starting their first physical science course as 9th graders.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAQ

My student has used the Harcourt 6 book in 5th and 6th grade. I don't know yet whether he will be ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade. What science would you suggest for his 7th grade year?

Since his math readiness for 8th grade is still up in the air, we would suggest taking Life Science during the 7th grade year. Life Science is designed to prepare students for high school biology, so if he is ready to do Physical Science in 8th grade, he'll have the utmost preparation possible for all of his high school sciences. If he ends up not being ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade, then he can opt to do Earth Science during his 8th grade year instead of Physical Science.

My student completed the Harcourt 6 series prior to 6th grade. What science would you suggest for his 6th grade year?

Since most students who are advanced in science also tend to be advanced in math, a student like this would use his 3 middle school years for Life, Earth, and Physical Science. In this case, either the Earth or Life Science program would be just fine for the student since neither requires certain math abilities. Whichever of these two courses is done in 6th, the alternating one would be done in 7th. This leaves Physical Science for 8th grade as long as the student is ready for Algebra 1 in 8th.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAQ

My student completed the Harcourt 6 in 6th grade and has just completed Earth Science in 7th grade. What science would you suggest for his 8th grade year?

If your student is ready for Algebra 1, you have the option of using Physical Science in 8th grade. However, you still have the option of using Life Science as an 8th grader and waiting until 9th grade to start Physical Science. The benefit to starting Physical Science in 8th grade is there will be more room in the student's schedule for science electives with the added benefit of a more rigorous course of study in the sciences reflected on his transcript. However, the benefit to doing Life Science in this situation is that the student will have a more thorough preparation for high school biology.

My student completed the Harcourt 6 in 6th grade and has just completed Life Science in 7th grade. He shows that he is ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade. What science would you suggest for his 8th grade year?

While you do still have the option of doing Earth Science as an 8th grade, if he is ready for Algebra 1, it is probably a good idea to do the Physical Science course in 8th grade. Earth Science doesn't prepare a student specifically for any of the standard high school courses of biology, chemistry, and physics. As such, while Earth Science wouldn't be a complete waste of time, it is probably not the most efficient use of his time since he has already completed Life Science and is ready for Algebra 1.

We will not be finishing the Harcourt 6 book until 7th grade. What would you suggest for this student as he goes into 8th grade?

Some parents find that their child is motivated and would like to be doing high school biology in 9th grade. If this is the case, AND if the student is ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade, it is fine to go ahead and start Physical Science in 8th grade. Harcourt is a wide-sweeping general science and so students have at least touched upon some of those life science topics they will see in biology. However, if the student is not ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade, then the best choice for this student would be the Life Science course to prepare the student even more adequately for high school biology. As a 9th grader, the student would then take Physical Science, leaving biology until 10th grade.

My student is starting Kolbe in the 6th grade and we haven't done much science up until this point. What is your science suggestion for my 6th grade student?

There are a couple of scenarios that may work for your student. Since you haven't done much science yet, it may be a good idea to use the Harcourt 6th grade book, which introduces several broad topics in life, earth, and physical science, to get the student's feet wet in a wide range of topics. For a student who is more advanced, the Harcourt 6 text could be done in one year. However, you may opt to do it over 2 years as outlined in our course plans. You will still have options as an 8th grader (see question 5 above).

My student is starting Kolbe in the 7th grade and we haven't done much science up until this point. What is your science suggestion for my 7th grade student?

There are a couple of scenarios that may work for your student. Since you haven't done much science yet, it may be a good idea to use the Harcourt 6th grade book, which introduces several broad topics in life, earth, and physical science, to get the student's feet wet in a wide range of topics. Especially for a 7th grade student, the Harcourt 6 text could be done in one year. This will give a wide-sweeping general science course for your 7th grader allowing him to get his feet wet in science. That leaves 8th grade open for options as described in question 5 above.

Alternatively, you could skip Harcourt altogether and jump into one of the middle school science courses. Our suggestion would be to start with Life Science in 7th so that you have prepared the student for high school biology. Then, in 8th grade, you have the option of doing Physical Science if he is ready for Algebra 1, or you can do Earth Science in 8th if he is not ready to begin Algebra 1.