

what if ...



A R C H E R
THE ARCHER SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



what if...

instead of just *testing* her,
your daughter's middle and high school years
could *transform* her?

into a person in love with learning
into a person mature beyond her years
into a person ready to take charge
into the person she was meant to be

What if you could take away the “what if?”

what if... her school could help her see that discovery comes not only from the pages of a book or notes on the Smartboard—but from within herself?



Your daughter. Always a learner. Now she's at the crucial stage where she's beginning to realize what moves her. The stage where, under the careful guidance of teachers who understand her interests and motivations, she can go from *steps to leaps*.

From inquirer to scientist, reader to author, painter to artist, calculator to mathematician. These next seven years are all about *her*—who she's becoming, what she's pursuing, where her natural curiosity and well-practiced talents can take her.

And that's where Archer comes in. We founded this school to orchestrate joyful and ambitious learning for every girl who steps through our front door. That means getting to know every girl on a personal level, uncovering what moves her, and giving her every opportunity to showcase her emerging intellect and talents. An Archer education is all about learning—and it's also all about learning there are no limits to a girl's possibilities.

What makes Archer special is that so many different kinds of girls fit in here. You don't have to be just "an arts person," or "an athlete," or "a super academic." Every girl finds her niche and fits in.
— faculty member



what if... her school inspired joyful faces,
engaged conversations, boundless
energy, and real learning?



There's a surprise in store for first-time Archer visitors: It's precisely *not* the common stereotype of an all-girls' school. Gone are the exclusive cliques, the petty jealousies, judgments based on shallow circumstances.

In their place? A supportive sisterhood where every girl feels welcomed. Girls *thanking* teachers after class. Highly spirited lunch in our courtyard where your daughter can sit *anywhere* and feel at home. A culture where girls think learning is cool, where they honor achievement, applaud success, and have each other's backs when times get tough.

It's almost *too* unexpected to imagine. But once you see it for yourself, you'll probably find yourself watching the interactions around you and thinking, "*Lucky girls.*"

You feel this empowerment when you walk through the Archer hallways. I've never felt that type of energy at any other school. To witness these girls just owning it is really extraordinary.

– middle school parent



maddy fraser, class of 2009

“Archer is all about the student, and that’s really exciting. I’ve met many local artists and seen how they work, talked to them about their process. And our art gallery is student-run; we’re in charge of every aspect of its operation. I’ve learned so much that way.”



In the spring of her senior year, Maddy received big news—she’d been awarded an art scholarship to attend George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

But she didn’t go—at least, not right away.

Instead, she traveled to India to teach English in the rural village of Kiratpur. “The people I met on my first trip there were so amazing,” Maddy says. “It’s eye-opening to go to a place where people are continually good-natured and good-hearted and completely welcome you into their homes, into their culture.”

Maddy first visited India with Archer in the fall of her senior year, when she spent a week at the school in Kiratpur.

When she returned to the States, she had the better part of a semester to devote to her other love: her art. “Archer has been an amazing opportunity for me. During my senior year, I put on my own gallery show and used the money from the paintings I sold to fund my trip. Everything has worked out so perfectly, I still can hardly believe it.”

As for what Archer gave her? “Archer really helped me open up and deeply explore who I was and what I wanted to do. It’s the type of experience I wasn’t expecting to have until college. I feel very lucky to have had that opportunity for the past seven years—I just love this school.”



what if... her teachers were on top of the latest research on how girls learn best, guiding her to think analytically—even about her own thinking?



There are as many ways to achieve high-level thinking as there are girls at Archer, and it's our teachers' passion to discover all 500 of them. Therefore, Archer teachers approach every class with a dual purpose. They empower the girls by teaching with mastery of the subject—the art of analyzing a text, understanding the chemical component of a biological process, viewing the same historical event through multiple lenses. And they also guide the girls toward a deeper awareness of how they learn best.

Your daughter might best understand a difficult chapter by going back and re-reading the topic sentence of every paragraph. She might color-code her notes as she maps connections between different subject areas. Through each assignment, she assembles a metacognitive toolbox of strategies so that she not only understands the material—she learns about her own learning. And she internalizes these skills, making them an integral part of how she learns for the rest of her life.

AP offerings at Archer

Art History	French Language
Biology	Human Geography
Calculus AB	Latin
Calculus BC	Physics
Chemistry	Spanish Language
English Language	Statistics
English Literature	U.S. History

At Archer, you have incredibly in-depth relationships with your teachers because they create unforgettable experiences every day. I'll carry that with me forever.

— alumna



what if... her relationships with classmates
propelled her learning
even further?



To say Archer girls don't compete at all would be naïve. But here are some things they don't compete about: boys, clothing labels, class rank, college choice. Competition at Archer transcends the superficial because it's healthy—and productive. Your daughter—surrounded by supportive, high-achieving girls—emulates the work ethic and dedication of her peers.

She and her best friend discuss how, even though their essays on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* adopted different points of view, they still arrived at similar conclusions about how society views "otherness." *How did you balance that chemical equation?* she might ask her lab partner. In explaining it, both girls gain a deeper understanding of acid-base reactions. At Archer, girls lead each other further down the path of learning, because learning is the *whole point* of going to school here.

The minute I set foot on campus, I saw happy, inspired girls. I've never seen young girls so self-confident, so outgoing, and so at ease with themselves.

— middle school parent



rebecca richman, class of 2009

“I was pretty quiet in seventh and eighth grades. Now I’m outgoing. I wouldn’t be who I am today if I went to a different school.”



A scientist at heart, Rebecca found numerous outlets at Archer to nourish her academic passion. From taking electives on comparative anatomy and environmental science to participating in Archer’s highly competitive Robotics Club, Rebecca often stayed at school until it was time for dinner. A senior-year independent study project spurred her toward enrolling at Reed College as a biology major.

Working with an Archer-referred professor at UCLA’s Black Laboratory, Rebecca conducted in-depth research on alternative gene splicing. She explains:

“It’s an emerging field of research. I investigated the timing of the DNA protein splicing to find out when in the

transcription process it occurs. The textbooks will tell you that it happens directly after the transcribing. But our research has shown it comes at the same time—it’s actually spliced at the same time it’s transcribed. I never would have imagined getting this level of experience in high school, but that’s what Archer can provide.”

After logging countless hours in the UCLA lab, Rebecca presented her findings to fulfill the independent study requirements. “The students here know what they want to do and how they want to do it. And Archer encourages us and supports our ambitions. Our teachers want to see that drive in us, and they do whatever possible to help us go for it. It’s been an incredible six years.”



what if... her teachers went beyond delivering information, and worked side-by-side with her in pursuit of her passions?



“As a teacher, you never just lecture here—you have to be interactive and spontaneous. These girls are thirsty for projects, for anything hands-on.” That comment from an Archer teacher describes what unfolds in our classrooms every day.

Instead of just taking notes, your daughter may learn ninth-grade medieval history by first creating an illuminated manuscript on the historical figure of her choosing. Then she builds a wiki page to fill in the details surrounding her character’s life and influence, using appropriate vocabulary and terminology. In the process, she learns how to evaluate and cite online resources. Collectively, the wiki pages constitute a class-wide study guide for the final exam—and the girls themselves assess the content together. The result: full-brain learning that sparks excitement about the subject matter, camaraderie within the classroom, and an eagerness to never stop learning.

Learning at Archer: a snapshot

In seventh-grade science class, two of your daughter’s teachers set up a “chocolate burglary” in the lab—and call on her and her classmates to solve the mystery using their newfound knowledge of forensic science.

To stage the scene, the teachers cut a brick out of the chocolate and leave behind a knife. They also accidentally “cut” themselves to provide a blood sample. They drop flour to preserve footprints. They scatter hair samples from a variety of colleagues and even have a security guard rope off the scene with yellow tape.

After her teachers orchestrate this creative scenario, it’s up to your daughter and her classmates to solve the crime. Together, they set up centers for fingerprint, hair, and DNA analysis. They examine the chronology of scientific evidence in the observation process and then offer a hypothesis as to who the burglar is. It’s an entirely experiential exercise—one you’re likely to hear about over dinner.



imagine this.

It's 1995, and three women search Los Angeles for a school for their daughters. They encounter many fine options—large and small, public and independent, traditional and progressive. But each agrees: *None of these are quite right for us.* None of these inspire us to say, “Yes, I want my daughter to have exactly this experience.”



Then they have an idea. A crazy idea, they would say later, laughing. “What if we create our own school, and make it just as we want it? What if we could create the *exact* school where our daughters would thrive?” Later that year, The Archer School for Girls is born—out of an *idea* and an *ideal*.

the idea:

That if three mothers sought a school where their daughters would not only thrive, but learn in a way that felt *compelling* to them—that propelled them toward their greatest possibility, within a culture of respect and support—then there must be more families who sought the same experience. There must be others *looking beyond* the standard choices, who want their girls to benefit from the vision of the Archer, the mythic Diana: *expert huntress, protector of girls, and independent spirit who transformed her will into her destiny.*

the ideal:

Always, to be intentional.

Intentional in how Archer teaches girls: informed by 21st-century brain-based research that details how *girls* learn best.

Intentional in developing a curriculum steeped in the experiential—the girls drive their own learning, supported by expert teachers who direct their studies, help them cultivate their passions, and motivate them to take charge of their lives.

Intentional in creating a culture shaped by relationships. What if girls didn't so much compete with each other, but could genuinely *support, respect, and appreciate* each other in the classroom, forging lifelong bonds?



Archer's birth—from *idea* and *ideal* to living, breathing school—wasn't easy. But through it all, our commitment to the founding idea and ideal saw us through: gaining accreditation, acquiring an historic facility, growing from 30 to 500 students, recruiting teachers who believe in our mission, and sending off our first class of seniors.

Now, a decade and a half later, as we send another class of Archer girls to the finest colleges and universities in the country and across the globe and welcome a new group of bright, eager sixth graders into our halls, we can be sure of several constants.

Archer is still an *idea*, evolving every day, solidifying but still adapting.

Archer is still an *ideal* and stands for girl-directed learning inside a culture best suited for girls.

And Archer is still a *transformation*—exciting young minds, kindling intellects, sparking discovery, pinpointing passions—and becoming stronger by the day.

*The value of an education lies in its outcomes.
An Archer girl graduates with strength
of character, a creative and entrepreneurial
spirit, a powerful voice, and above all,
the drive to lead.*

— Elizabeth English, Head of School

what if... instead of pressuring her
to conform, her school inspired her
to come into her own?



There's a common trait shared by every girl at Archer—each excels at *something*. But what each girl chooses to devote her energy toward depends solely upon her.

Archer cultivates the passions of mathematicians, dancers, scientists, writers, engineers, musicians, historians, journalists, painters, actors, linguists, and more. Because our culture encourages girls to push their talents as far as they can, our students support each other in their endeavors, attending plays, art exhibitions, sporting events, poetry readings, and robotics competitions. Archer girls take pride in their classmates' achievements and learn from them along the way.

That's why Archer girls stay in contact long after graduation. Each trip back home from college means getting together for dinner, going to a gallery, or just meeting for coffee. Having grown up as Archer girls, graduates will always share this transformative experience that sets them on the course for the rest of their lives.

We're all self-motivated and highly ambitious. We share a core friendship that's very easy to revive. As we grow older, we're committed to keeping alive the friendships and conversations that started here.

— alumna



chloe makhani, class of 2009

“Archer gives each individual an opportunity to find out what she’s good at, what she’s interested in, and to run with it and take it as far as she can.”



If you’d told Chloe when she started at Archer that she’d be student body president by senior year, she certainly wouldn’t have believed you.

Arriving in seventh grade, she admits she had second thoughts about her new school, and even considered transferring at the end of her eighth-grade year to a co-ed institution. But she stayed, and that made all the difference.

“When I decided to stay, I resolved to try new things, join new clubs, and see what interested me. I love Archer because I’ve made lifelong friends and we all have great respect for one another. Archer encouraged me to have a voice, and I’m so happy that I stayed. I’m proud to be an Archer graduate.”

For Chloe, student council was her gateway toward Archer involvement—and fulfillment. Senior year, her peers elected her school president, and she attributes her confidence and competence to the array of leadership opportunities Archer provides.

“The students plan most of the events that happen here. We run the meetings. We stay after school and do it on our own time, which is great because we learn how to take charge, manage time, and communicate with others. There’s so much leadership in this school—you can literally be a leader in anything you do.”

In fall 2009 she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to pursue a broadcast journalism major. But Archer is never far from her mind.

“It’s made me the person I am—a person who gets involved, has a voice, and can lead by example. Everyone here is passionate about something. There’s absolutely no apathy at this school—being in that environment rubs off, and makes you a more accomplished person. I’ll always love Archer.”



what if... she viewed college selection not only as a validation of her resume, but as an expression of herself and her potential?



In any given year, Archer's 60 to 70 graduating seniors go on to attend 50 or more different colleges. Brown, Bard, and Brandeis. Cornell and Cal Poly. Stanford, Reed, Kenyon, Vassar, Duke. USC, UCLA, and UCSB. NYU and the Parsons School of Design. Yale and Penn.

That's because Archer girls learn early on to embody our college counseling philosophy: *College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.* That means choosing a college based on who they are, not what others expect. It means refusing to play the prestige game and choosing a college that will respond to each girl's interests and push her to new heights. And it means a healthy, successful future based on independent thinking, discernment, and self-awareness.

Seniors come back and say, "I was so over-prepared and ready for college that it was ridiculous."
– upper school student

During the college search at Archer, you learn as much about yourself as about where you want to go to college.
– upper school student

Archer's graduates gain admission to colleges and universities across the country and around the world. A sampling includes:

Bard College
Bates College
Boston College
Boston Conservatory
Brandeis University
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
Carnegie Mellon University
Columbia University
Cooper Union
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Duke University
Emory University
George Washington University
Georgetown University
Grinnell College
Hamilton College

Harvard University
Haverford College
Kenyon College
Middlebury College
New York University
Northwestern University
Oberlin College
Pennsylvania State University
Pomona College
Princeton University
Reed College
Santa Clara University
Sarah Lawrence College
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Skidmore College
Smith College
Spelman College
Stanford University

Suffolk University
Swarthmore College
University of California
– Berkeley
– Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Edinburgh (Scotland)
University of Michigan
University of Pennsylvania
University of Southern California
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vassar College
Washington University
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University
Williams College
Yale University



girls in motion: cocurriculars at Archer

An Archer education begins in the classroom, but girls find outlets—creative and athletic—across our campus. Since our founding in 1995, Archer has provided an intensive **visual arts program** that supports girls' burgeoning talents and trains them classically in disciplines ranging from drawing, painting, sculpture, and ceramics to printmaking, photography, and graphic design. As an Archer artist, each girl has the opportunity to develop an in-depth portfolio for art school or explore photography as a novice. She can put on her own exhibition as part of a senior-year independent study or learn the basics of advanced design software. It all depends upon her own interests, motivations, and talents.

Our heralded **performing arts program** stages plays and musicals in our on-campus Blackbox theatre. Likewise, Archer choirs and orchestras give public performances and play in competitions throughout the year, while our dancers perfect their technique in our campus studio. For those interested in working behind the scenes, the Archer Tech Crew provides girls an opportunity to experience stagecraft from the inside—setting up lighting, building sets, and managing the stage. Whether they specialize in visual or performing arts, Archer girls quickly find their individual niches and immerse themselves.

The same opportunities hold for **Archer athletics**. Archer girls take to the field and court, competing in a variety of sports each term. Some of our athletes go on to compete collegiately, while others compete to stay in shape, experience the camaraderie of team play, and simply enjoy the game. Either way, sports at Archer strengthen bonds, promote healthy competition, and foster inner strength.

Our physical education program, **Fitness and Wellness for Life**, introduces girls to a variety of physical regimens that promote overall well-being and help students explore individuated ways to develop healthy and productive lifestyles. In addition to cardiovascular routines and weight training, Fitness and Wellness for Life also encompasses Pilates, yoga, and human development.

<i>Fall Sports</i>	<i>Winter Sports</i>	<i>Spring Sports</i>
Cross Country	Basketball	Equestrian
Equestrian	Equestrian	Softball
Tennis	Soccer	Swimming
Volleyball		Track

The teachers encourage you to try new things here. This year, I took ceramics and played on the volleyball team. I'd never done either before, but I've grown to love them both!
— upper school student



arrow week

As part of our experiential curriculum, Archer girls depart on grade-specific, week-long trips that supplement their on-campus learning, strengthen class-wide bonds, and provide creative, outdoor, community service, and cultural outlets for students.

Ocean Ecosystems

Where: Coastal locations across Southern California

Activities: Sea kayaking, guided rock climbing, surfing, hiking, and mountain biking.

Outcomes: Understanding the marine environment, oceanography, and tidal science.

Mountain Ecosystems

Where: Sequoia National Park

Activities: Orienteering, snow-shelter building, cross-country skiing, snow sculpture, and astronomy.

Outcomes: Knowledge about water resources, geology, biodiversity, and environmental threats.

Desert Ecosystems

Where: Grand Canyon National Park

Activities: Hiking, rafting, rock climbing, astronomy, and archeological exploration.

Outcomes: Understanding canyon geology and the unique adaptability of desert life.

Outdoor Education

Where: The American River

Activities: River navigation, setting up and breaking down camp, and meal preparation.

Outcomes: Students learn about teamwork, camping, and outdoor safety skills while testing their physical stamina and gaining a greater appreciation of nature.

Language and Cultural Exploration

Where: Los Angeles

Activities: Language immersion and in-depth cultural study that encompasses history, food, dance, music, and art.

Outcomes: Learning the linguistic and cultural history of Los Angeles' diverse populations.

The Urban Classroom

Where: Southern California

Activities: Art and architecture, documentary filmmaking, photojournalism, dance/music/theater.

Outcomes: Students utilize Southern California as their laboratory to gain in-depth knowledge on a topic of their choosing.

Community Service

Where: Greater Los Angeles

Activities: House-building with Habitat for Humanity, working in animal shelters, cleaning up wetlands, maintaining area trails.

Outcomes: Students call upon increased compassion and leadership skills to share their time and efforts with community members through a self-directed service project.



given the right tools, an Archer girl creates her own learning

The Gallery at Archer. On the surface, an attractive, modern space for displaying the artwork of students and guest exhibitors. But like many things at Archer, it's more than meets the eye—it's experiential learning at its best.

We start with girls in love with art. Then we put them under the guidance of an expert teacher who knows the landscape of the contemporary L.A. art scene and the ins and outs of running a gallery.

Our philosophy: set up the perfect conditions where the girls' passion for art helps them learn in areas that diverge far from typical "art appreciation." The girls form a student board that oversees the production of a fully realized exhibit from conception to exhibition.

Girls occupy every position within The Gallery. Co-directors, managers, docents, communications directors, exhibition designers, historians, and photographers all work together to create a publicly attended, professional-level art exhibit. Our inaugural exhibit in 2006 featured the photography of Leonard Nimoy. Since then we've hosted sculptors, painters, photographers, and ceramicists.

And the girls do it all. They consult with museum professionals as well as with our own gallery director, getting advice, tips, techniques. They read the books and do the research. They keep track of the finances. They help choose and mount the artwork. And most of all, they learn to surpass their own expectations every step of the way.



ambitious and joyful: life after Archer

Girls who graduate from Archer are self-assured, kind, and each one is incredibly unique. They are consistently charismatic and have a sense of self that I've never seen anywhere else.

—upper school parent



Above all, Archer is transformative.

We begin with ambitious, exuberant, multi-talented girls. We surround them with expert teachers attuned to how girls learn best. We offer them a challenging curriculum, a classical visual and performing arts program, competitive athletics, and experiential learning opportunities ranging from study abroad to community service. We see their abilities accrue, their energy build, their confidence reach new heights. And we send them into the broader world, where they become leaders and pursue productive, joyful lives.

We're not in the business of changing a girl's essential nature, but rather of drawing out that nature and helping her realize her full potential. After Archer, she sees all the possibilities in front of her and possesses the wherewithal to seize them. She goes on to college with a keen intellect, a healthy self-confidence, an awareness of global realities, and the passion to make her contribution matter in whatever field she chooses.

When we founded The Archer School for Girls in 1995, we broke the mold of Los Angeles independent schools. Today, Archer girls continue to break the mold of what girls can accomplish. It's an attitude we instill, and one that lasts a lifetime.



what if your daughter could learn ...

at a contemporary girls' school

Founded in 1995 by three mothers in search of the ideal school for their daughters, Archer's arrival on the L.A. educational scene provided families an alternative that didn't previously exist. Combining the latest research on how girls learn best with a 21st-century approach to pedagogy, technology, and social issues, Archer provides more than a traditional, girl-centric learning environment. The school equally prepares young women for leadership in our global world.

in a National Historic Landmark

Archer occupies the former Eastern Star Home for Women, a 1931 Spanish Colonial Revival building on Sunset Boulevard in Brentwood. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989, the structure provides Archer girls with a one-of-a-kind learning

environment complete with dark wood beams, colorful mosaic fountains, and intricate architectural details around every corner. True to its origins, the building feels more like a "home" than a school, and girls quickly grow attached to its unique charm.

alongside creative, dedicated teachers

Teachers choose Archer for specific reasons. They're passionate about teaching girls, passionate about their subject matter, and dedicated to continual professional development that keeps them on the cusp of emerging best practices in the classroom. You won't find rote lectures or passive learning at Archer; rather, in each classroom, you see teachers learning shoulder-to-shoulder with students, engaging their minds in the type of active learning that's as effective as it is memorable.

within an energetic, supportive sisterhood

Archer girls believe that excelling at school shouldn't come at the expense of their classmates. They put that belief into practice each day, sharing their emerging interests, their newfound curiosities, and their opinions on topics ranging from genetic engineering to national politics. And if an Archer girl happens to be going through an adolescent rough patch, she has hundreds of sisters right beside her to support her, cheer her up, and see her through it.

across the curriculum

Research shows that adolescent girls' brains exhibit high levels of communication between the left and right hemispheres, which means girls naturally make connections between different subject matters, different cultural milieus, different time periods... the list goes on. At Archer, we teach to that strength by engaging girls in cross-curricular projects and by widening the scope of assignments to cover not just the subject matter, but also to embrace the relationships to other disciplines that emerge during discussion.

about finding her best-fit college

Archer's college counseling program has a clear aphorism: *College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.* And Archer girls take that message to heart. Each year they collectively gain acceptance into the finest colleges and universities in the country and also wisely and responsibly select the colleges that are right for them, as individuals. That means you can find Archer girls just about anywhere, from Ivies to art schools, regional liberal arts havens to national research universities.

all that's possible in her life

Because an Archer education instills an abiding love for learning in girls, it's an experience that shapes graduates for the rest of their lives. Each Archer girl emerges as a stunningly confident young woman, fully prepared for her next endeavor and equipped with Archer's lifelong gifts: the belief in a life full of possibility, the capability to achieve in most any circumstance, and the unquenchable desire to keep learning every day.



archer.org

what if...

she could do middle and
high school differently?

At Archer, *she can.*



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THE ARCHER SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

We invite you to contact us at 310-873-7037 to learn more, set up a campus tour,
or just talk about how Archer and your daughter might be a good fit.



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AMBITIOUS, JOYFUL LEARNING FOR GIRLS
GRADES 6 THROUGH 12