Thank you for your interest in online courses through Columbia Virtual Academy (CVA). Our online courses are provided by Florida Virtual School (FLVS), a premier middle school and high school online course provider since 1997. Here are some quick facts about online courses through CVA:

* All courses are aligned to state standards and are approved by the Washington State Digital Learning Department.
* Students have access to a variety of courses to meet state graduation requirements and prepare them for college and careers that are aligned to national standards.
* Students can choose “regular” or honors level course tracks.
* Students can work from anywhere and plan their own daily schedule, as long as they stay on track with assignments.
* Students and parents are able to self-monitor their day-to-day academic progress.
* Learning is based on achievement, rather than seat time, with end-of-course assessments.
* Students are supported in their learning by Washington State Certified and Highly Qualified CVA teachers.

Each online course is tailored to the specific course content, grade level and best methods for delivery and learning. As a result, no two courses are exactly the same. To get an idea of what a course might be like, here is an example of a [7th grade Language Arts online course](http://www.screencast.com/t/sRm49LfXV) and the [Algebra I course tour](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nAr9BDis74) along with some [Lesson Basics](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_vikcYJXxQ). You can also check out this video where students talk about their [experiences with taking FLVS courses](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxVa5DdbSvI) and in this video, FLVS offers some tips about [what it takes to be a successful student](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwsZZ2rprqc).

Please note that these are samples shared from FLVS, so be sure to direct any questions you might have to us here at CVA and we’ll be happy to get them answered for you. In the meantime, attached is a Frequently Asked Questions sheet for your reference. For a bigger picture view of online learning in the context of our changing world, here is a thought-provoking video called [Learning to Change-Changing to Learn](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tahTKdEUAPk), which was first published in 2008 and remains highly relevant today.

***Frequently Asked Questions***

***Is taking an online course right for my student?***

There are numerous benefits to taking courses online. Here are a few:

* Online education allows students to choose from a wide variety of programs not available in their area.
* Students enrolled in online education programs network with peers locally and from all over the nation.
* Online courses allow pupils to work at their own pace.
* Students who choose online education save on gas and commuting time.
* The variety of online education programs available means that students are able to choose a learning and evaluation format that works for them.
* Online education is effective. A 2012 meta-study from the Department of Education found that students taking online courses outperformed their peers in traditional classrooms.
* Online education offers flexibility for students who have other commitments.

***Are FLVS courses accredited, meet WA State and CCSS requirements/ standards and approved by the Digital Learning Department?***

* FLVS is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA). FLVS courses meet the State Standards developed by all the states in which FLVS courses are used. As Common Core State Standards continue to roll out, FLVS works with each state’s requirements to align every course accordingly.
* FLVS Global is committed to meeting National Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which ensure parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, language, and mathematics. Input in developing these standards was provided by teachers, parents, school administrators, state leaders, and experts around the country.
* FLVS course are Washington State and Digital Learning Department approved.

***How fast or slow can a student work?***

* Students will be given a pace chart which shows an average of 2-3 lessons a week for a rate of about 3-5 hours of study time a week. Students can elect to do extra assignments each week, completing the course in less time. Within each course, there is an Individual Pace Planner (IPP) that allows students to customize a pace that works for them – traditional, accelerated or remedial.

***How do FLVS courses provide support if a student needs extra help? Are FLVS courses able to meet the needs of SPED students? If so, how?***

* There are many interactive activities that allow students to perform activities in a visual manner while engaging with the material. All of these tasks offer reading support and can be read as simple text passages too. There are mouse rollover features that provide live definitions for students to access as they read. In addition, each course has a glossary that is always easily accessible for additional reading and visual support.
* For audio support, there are numerous screen readers available, some of which are often already a part of the computer the student is using. There are also some free downloads and commercial products to use for reading text aloud. This is not provided by the FLVS course, but screen reader information is available.

***How do Discussion-Based Assessments work?***

* Each course has a series of discussion based assessments (DBAs) or oral components. These are intended to be an academic integrity measure. They are also intended to be a time for the instructor to build rapport with the student and parent through academic conversation. These assessments are generic in nature and allow the instructor to vary the questions from student to student and really individualize the assessment based on each student’s needs. There are sample questions and answers for each DBA located in the answer keys. Instructors can ask different questions of each student as well as add their own. A generic grading rubric is also available for most DBAs.

***Does a student work all the time on the computer?***

* Much of the student work is done and submitted via computer. However, there are many times a student completes his or her work away from the computer. Project-based research, completing video and audio assignments, interacting with other people in their lives for interviews and other academic activities are just some of the ways students may complete their work. Today’s online learning is not the old “correspondence” model of learning that has students simply read online text then answer questions. In today’s virtual classroom, interaction with the outside world combined with proper use of cutting-edge technology benefits the student in a more holistic, effective and contemporary way.