

MOUNTAINSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

8th Grade Course Guide
2026-2027



Mountainside Middle School
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Mountainside Middle School

8th Grade Courses

Eighth grade required courses

Math*	2 semesters
English (see course descriptions for options)	2 semesters
Social Studies	2 semesters
Science	2 semesters
Physical Education	1 semester

**Students will be placed in the appropriate math course.*

Eighth grade elective courses (students choose one of the following)

Band	Year-long class
Choir	Year-long class
Orchestra	Year-long class
Spanish I	Year-long class
General Electives	Three semester-long classes <i>(see course descriptions below)</i>

Mountainside Middle School

8th Grade Course Descriptions

REQUIRED COURSES

ENGLISH

English 8: The eighth grade English course focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and research skills that are all taught and reinforced through our core curriculum program called *Collections*. Students read a variety of novels, fiction and nonfiction selections, and poetry. Reading comprehension and vocabulary study are foundational in all English classes. Writing is taught throughout the core curriculum and focuses on the three modes: narrative, informational, and argumentative. Students learn structure, organization, word choice, idea development, and conventions as they deepen their understanding about how to communicate through writing.

Honors English 8: This course uses the same core curriculum program as English 8, *Collections*, but the activities take them deeper into the content. Students will also read more complex texts that may be above grade level. This course is designed to offer an enriched and challenging sequence of study for students who may be advanced in reading and writing. This is an advanced course that is open to all students; however, students should thoughtfully consider enrollment in an honors course.

Resource English 8: Students with IEPs will be placed in Resource or Inclusion English, depending on individual student needs. Inclusion English placement is based on Team decision and student performance/readiness. See description below.

MATHEMATICS

Math 8: Students take their understanding of unit rates and proportional relationships to a new level, connecting these concepts to points on a line and ultimately using them to solve linear equations that require them to apply algebraic reasoning as well as knowledge of the properties of operations. Students will also expand their understanding of numbers beyond rational numbers.

Algebra I: Algebra I is foundational for all future math courses. Students explore algebraic problem-solving for linear, exponential, and quadratic functions as represented in context or as a graph, equation, and table. Areas of study include arithmetic and geometric sequences; linear systems and inequalities, polynomials and factoring; and modeling and statistics. This course is consistent with Washington State Standards. *A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year. (WAC 180-51-030)*

Geometry: In this course, students will strengthen their logical system of thought while developing geometric concepts and addressing formal proof through transformational reasoning. Algebra is used throughout to analyze characteristics of geometric figures through the coordinate plane. The Common Core State Standards and Standards for Mathematical Practices are followed in this course. *A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year. (WAC 180-51-030)*

Resource Math 8: Students with IEPs will be placed in Resource or Inclusion Math, depending on individual student needs. Inclusion Math placement is based on Team decision and student performance/readiness. See description below.

For more information the various Math pathways please see the links below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YEYXK4BK-larauByqAGxpg4E8fl1MbG6/view?usp=drive_link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-EDMb6PF4oZ8lpJKq5YgJXZM8PuERZdz/view?usp=drive_link

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Health and Fitness Education: This course emphasizes team and individual sports, lifetime activities, and health and fitness concepts. Students will participate in a wide variety of activities, as well as gain an understanding of how to plan their own lifelong health and fitness. Students are required to take one semester of PE. If a student would like an additional semester, please be sure to select the PE elective.

SCIENCE

Science 8: This course offers students the opportunity to explore the natural and physical wonders of the earth and space. The big ideas addressed in eighth science are: Forces and Motion, Energy, Astronomy, and Intro to Chemistry and Matter. Career Technical Education (CTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) principles are infused in a project-oriented curriculum.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies 8 (U.S. History): Eighth graders examine ideas, issues and events from the American Revolution through the post Civil War era. Students will explore the founding of the United States and the framing of our Constitution in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding of politics, society, culture and economy in the United States. In addition, students will explore current world and local issues and events that affect students' everyday lives.

MUSIC ELECTIVES (year-long courses)

Beginning Band: Beginning Band is for the student who has little or no band experience. There will be performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional rehearsals and events. Students are responsible for providing their own instruments. The band instructor will guide this process during the first week of school. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

Cadet Band: This course is for students with band experience. Along with music fundamentals at the individual level, students will learn group techniques in an advanced band setting. This band has a number of performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional rehearsals and events. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

Symphonic Band: This course is for advanced students with concert band experience. Along with music fundamentals at the individual level, students will learn group techniques in an advanced band setting. This band has a number of performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional rehearsals and events. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

Wind Ensemble: An elite band for students with advanced band experience. Musicians are expected to perform at the fourth-year level. The curriculum consists of developing and refining techniques introduced in previous bands. Along with stressing individual musicianship, group ensemble techniques will be dealt with on an advanced level. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class and attendance at additional required rehearsals and events. Students will be placed in the appropriate band.

Jazz Ensemble I: Jazz I is an elective class for the most advanced students who have auditioned and been selected as members of the ensemble. Students in Jazz I are required to also have a concert band as their elective, unless their instrument is piano or bass. The curriculum consists of advanced jazz techniques such as ensemble playing, style, feel, jazz theory and improvisation. This band has a number of performances throughout the year.

Jazz Ensemble II: Jazz II is a “zero hour” class for students who have auditioned and been selected as members of the ensemble. Students in Jazz II are required to have a concert band as their elective, unless their instrument is piano or bass. The curriculum consists of developing jazz techniques such as ensemble playing, style, feel and improvisation. This band has a number of performances throughout the year. Jazz II rehearses Mondays and Thursdays from 7:00 am to 8:00 am. Auditions are held at the beginning of the year.

Concert Choir: For all voices - sixth, seventh and eighth grade - no audition required. Students will learn and improve vocal skills by performing literature from many genres including American, sacred, jazz and contemporary. Students will perform in night concerts and travel to festivals. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. This is not an audition-based choir. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase.

Treble Choir: For Soprano, Mezzo Soprano and Alto voices, advanced singers in mostly seventh and eighth grade, by audition. Students will learn and improve vocal skills by performing challenging literature from many genres. Students will perform in night concerts and travel to festivals. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase. This is an audition-based choir and will be a year-long (two semester) commitment.

Symphonic Choir: For Tenor, Baritone and changing voices - sixth, seventh and eighth grade - no audition required. Students will learn and improve vocal skills by performing literature from many genres including American, sacred, jazz and contemporary. Students will perform in night concerts and travel to festivals. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. This is not an audition-based choir. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase.

Jazz Choir: For all voices including Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone, mostly eighth grade advanced singers by audition only. Students will learn and improve classical and jazz vocal skills in particular, performing challenging literature from many genres including chamber and jazz music. Students are graded on participation in class, skills-evaluations, and required performances as outlined in the Choral Handbook. Required fees include ASB and uniform purchase. This is an audition-based choir and will be a year-long (two semester) commitment.

Beginning Orchestra: Beginning Orchestra is a year-long performance ensemble for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students with little or no orchestra experience. Instruments included in orchestra are: violin, viola, cello, and double bass. There will be after school performances during the school year. Students will be graded on performance, preparation, participation in class, and attendance (in class and performances). Students are highly encouraged to provide their own instruments. The orchestra instructor will help guide this process during the first week of school.

Intermediate Orchestra: This Orchestra course is designed for the intermediate strings student who has had two or more years of playing experience. Students will receive further instruction on the music fundamentals, scales, rhythm, sight-reading and advanced playing techniques. Grade is based on performance, preparation, and participation in class, contests and concerts. Students are highly encouraged to provide their own instrument and accessories, with the exception of cellos and basses, but should have an instrument at home to practice on. Students will be placed in the appropriate orchestra.

Advanced Orchestra: This course is designed for the advanced strings student with two or more years of playing experience, or those students with advanced skills on their instrument. Students will receive further instruction on the music fundamentals, scales, rhythm, sight-reading at more advanced levels. Grade is based on performance, amount of time spent preparing and learning performance skills, and participation in class. Students will be placed in the appropriate orchestra by the instructor based on playing skills.

ELECTIVE COURSES (Year Long)

Spanish I: Students will acquire the tools to communicate in Spanish at a beginning level through listening, speaking, reading and writing. A variety of interactive learning methods will be used in this foundation course. Students must earn a C or better grade in order to advance to Spanish II at the high school. This is a year-long elective, therefore students will not be allowed to exit at semester due to a desire to take another elective or for a failing grade. A student earning a passing grade in this course will receive high school credit, which shall be applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements, unless requested otherwise by the student and the student's parent or guardian by the end of the 11th grade year. (WAC 180-51-030)

ELECTIVE COURSES (Semester Long)

Art 8: This 18-week course teaches three-dimensional art forms, which may include: ceramics, cardboard assemblage, origami, wire sculpture, crochet, and basketry. Students will also learn how to respond to works of art thoughtfully and intelligently. No previous experience is required.

Design Fab Lab (Woodshop): This course will have students design, create, test, and modify advanced completed projects using equipment like drills, sanders, saws, CNC machines, and other power tools. It is recommended but not required that students first take Design and Modeling so they may understand the Design Process and basic engineering.

Robotics 8: This course is a project-based learning environment where students must work effectively with one another using Vex EDR, Vex V5 robotics materials and Robot-C programming software. Students will be challenged to work productively using the design process and in small groups to solve a series of project and programming challenges. Students will be able to explain the use of gears, mechanisms, compound machines, and system interactions.

Leadership 8: Leadership class focuses on the way students can help improve our school. Students enrolled in this class will be responsible for taking part in school-wide activities. This course will be "hands on" and provide an excellent opportunity to gain leadership skills.

PE - Elective: This course emphasizes team and individual sports, lifetime activities, and health and fitness concepts. Students will participate in a wide variety of activities, as well as gain an understanding of how to plan their own lifelong health and fitness. **Only select this elective if you want a full year of PE.*

Yearbook: Students will work cooperatively to design and produce the school yearbook. Tasks will include photographing and creating layouts for the current year's edition. Teamwork, time management and organizational skills will be emphasized.

Office Student of Service: Students will deliver messages to classrooms, organize office and class paperwork, set up art and project displays, and perform other tasks as assigned. Students need to complete the application process for this position.

Unified PE SOS: Students of Service (SOS) support our DLC students during Physical Education. This is a rewarding and engaging class where students build meaningful

connections, develop leadership skills, and experience the joy of inclusive teamwork. Interested students must complete the application process.

SUPPORT COURSES

Reading Enrichment: This course focuses on reading comprehension and vocabulary. Students learn different reading strategies each week that can immediately be implemented in their core classes to help build reading comprehension. Weekly attention is also given to reading fluency and reading rate, as necessary. However, the focus is on reading strategies and vocabulary development to improve understanding of all different types of texts. Students will be assigned to this class.

SPECIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

Students must be qualified through the Mead School District's Special Services Department. Each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) services will be determined on a case by case basis. A continuum of services will be provided for each individual student's needs.

Inclusion Class: The purpose of the Inclusion Class is to provide instruction using general education curriculum and individual instruction in the basic skills of reading, written expression, mathematics, and other areas as determined by the IEP team. Inclusion classes are co-taught by a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

Resource Room: The purpose of the Resource Room is to provide specially designed curriculum and individual instruction in the basic skills of reading, written expression, mathematics, and other areas as determined by the IEP team.

Life Skills: The goal of Life Skills is to teach the functional skills necessary to become a productive and independent member of society. Students will be taught how to participate in a variety of vocational and leisure time activities.

Developmental Learning Center: This is a Mead School District program for middle school students who qualify for special education services and who have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The curriculum is highly individualized and based on each student's IEP. The program's focus is on functional academics, communication skills, and the development of social and adaptive skills. This is a non-graded program for middle school students.