

Mountain Academy

K–8 Curriculum Framework

A PLACE-BASED, INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC PROGRAM



This K-8 curriculum framework is designed to support vertically aligned, interdisciplinary learning at Mountain Academy. The curriculum integrates literacy, science, social studies, mathematics, the arts, and outdoor education through inquiry-based and place-based learning experiences connected to Jackson Hole and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING



Academic subjects are integrated through thematic units and project-based learning experiences.

VERTICAL ALIGNMENT



Multi-year curriculum maps support coherent skill development and standards alignment across grades K-5.

PLACE-BASED EDUCATION



Units connect students with the natural environment and community partners throughout the Jackson & Greater Yellowstone region.

AUTHENTIC PROJECTS



Each unit culminates in real-world projects, exhibitions, or performances that demonstrate student understanding.

CORE THEMES

The four Core Themes organize the distribution of units throughout the year, ensuring a balanced exploration of ideas and perspectives. Each theme is revisited annually, creating vertical alignment and allowing students to deepen their understanding over time.

CREATIVITY & EXPRESSION



Creative thinking, artistic expression, music, movement, and the power of storytelling.

HUMAN STORIES



Cultures, history, and identity. Where we are in time and place.

INNOVATION & DISCOVERY



How people and animals solve problems

OUR SHARED PLANET



Community, responsibility, stewardship

Learning Begins With Questions

At Mountain Academy, students use science, humanities, mathematics, and the arts to explore enduring questions, connect ideas across time and place, and take meaningful action in their community. Every expedition follows the same **inquiry cycle**:

WONDER



Ask a meaningful question worth investigating.

INVESTIGATE



Build understanding across multiple disciplines.

WRESTLE



Explore competing values and multiple perspectives.

EXPAND



Connect local experiences to global challenges.

RETURN



Reflect and apply learning to improve our own community.

EVERY ANSWER LEADS TO NEW QUESTIONS.



ASK

Ask a meaningful question worth investigating.

Great learning begins with curiosity. Students notice the world around them, connect to what they care about, and ask questions that lead to deeper understanding and new discoveries.



NOTICE

Pay attention to the world and the details others might miss.



WONDER

Let curiosity lead you to questions about how and why things work.



CONNECT

Link to your experiences, interests, and what you know.



EXPLORE IDEAS

Consider different possibilities and what you want to learn more about.



SHARE & LISTEN

Talk with others, listen to new perspectives, and refine your thinking.



CHOOSE A FOCUS

Narrow your question to something meaningful and investigable.

→ A powerful question is the first step toward discovery, understanding, and making a **positive difference** in the world.



INVESTIGATE

Build understanding across multiple disciplines.

Students investigate by **gathering and analyzing evidence** using the tools and perspectives of many fields. This helps them see a fuller picture and build deeper understanding.



SCIENCE

Observe, experiment, and analyze the natural world.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Build self-awareness, empathy, relationships, and healthy choices.



SOCIAL STUDIES

Examine systems, communities, and human relationships.



MATHEMATICS

Use numbers and patterns to find relationships and solve problems.



ARTS

Explore, imagine, and communicate through creative expression.



LANGUAGE

Read, write, listen, and speak to share ideas and learn from others.

➔ By investigating across disciplines, students develop critical thinking, curiosity, and the skills to **ask better questions and make informed decisions**.



WRESTLE

Explore competing values and multiple perspectives.

Notice that every **WRESTLE** section now has one tension from each category:



SCIENTIFIC

Type



PREDICTION ↔ **UNCERTAINTY**

Example



SOCIAL / CIVIC

Type



LIBERTY ↔ **EQUALITY**

Example



ETHICAL

Type



PRESENT NEEDS ↔ **FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Example

That means every expedition naturally asks students to think like:



a scientist,



a citizen,



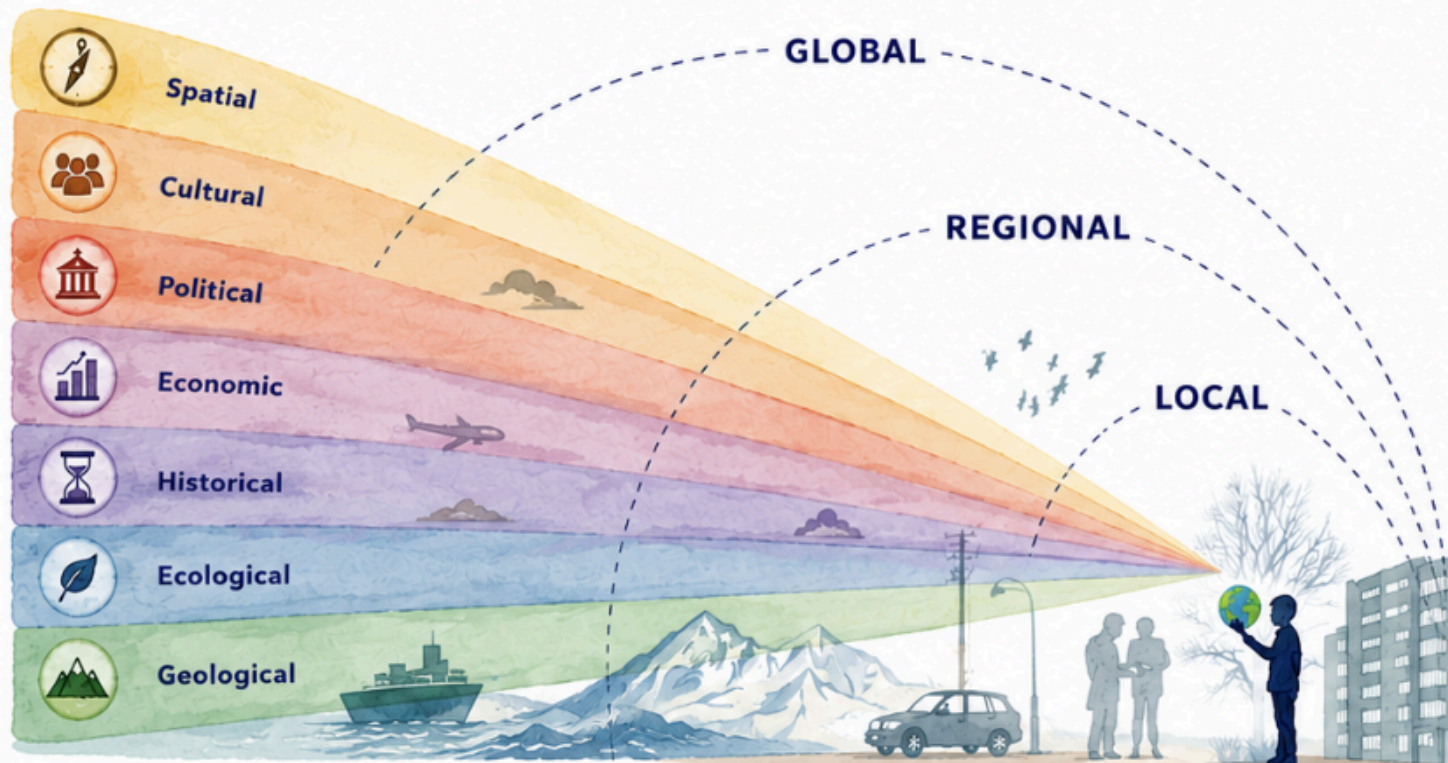
and an ethical decision-maker.



EXPAND

Connect local experiences to global challenges.

As students expand their thinking, they consider how issues are shaped by **multiple systems and scales** — from the most local to the global.



→ By looking across scales and systems, students build understanding, empathy, and responsibility as they work to **create a better future**.



Spatial

Where something is located and how space is organized.



Cultural

Values, beliefs, traditions, and ways of life.



Political

Systems of power, governance, and decision-making.



Economic

Resources, production, exchange, and consumption.



Historical

Events, patterns, and change over time.



Ecological

Living systems and the relationships within them.



Geological

The physical Earth and natural processes.



RETURN

Reflect and apply learning
to improve your community.

Learning comes full circle when students reflect on what they've learned, take meaningful action, and contribute to a better future for themselves, their community, and the world.



REFLECT

Think about what you learned, what surprised you, and what matters most.



APPLY

Use your learning to solve problems and make thoughtful decisions.



ACT

Take action—big or small—to make a positive impact in your community.



COLLABORATE

Work with others, share ideas, and build stronger solutions together.



CONTRIBUTE

Support your community and the world through meaningful contributions.



SUSTAIN

Keep learning, keep caring, and help build a more just and sustainable future.



When we return what we learn to the world, we **create lasting change**—and inspire new questions.

