Mountain Middle School

2026-2027 Syllabus

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Introduction:

Sixth grade is an important year at Mountain Middle School. This year, most of our students will be learning for the first time how to:

- Plan, complete, and collaborate on projects.
- Think innovatively.
- Learn to embrace challenges and own our work.
- Present, defend, and publicize our work.
- Read carefully and analytically.

We hope to instill and inspire our students to find new meaning in their learning and school experience, using remote resources and hybrid learning as a tool for greater understanding and independent learning.

Important Dates:

Please see our biweekly newsletter for important dates.

PURPOSE LEARNING

Habits of Heart & Mind:

In order to reach our full potential, all students and teachers need to constantly work towards our Habits of Heart and Mind; Effort, Respect, Integrity, and Refinement.

As a member of this team:

- We speak kindly and calmly to each other.
- We practice simultaneous engagement through classroom protocols; in other words, students are challenged to be fully engaged and never "opt-out."
- Participation and learning requires focus--we cherish and utilize quiet work time.
- We start on time with the Learning Target breakdown.
- We utilize clear and focused learning targets.
- We speak in turn and listen attentively.
- We appreciate and are responsible with our technology.
- We create a safe space and use protocols for collaboration and peer critique--we make each other's work better.
- We inspire full effort from each other--we seek out challenges.
- We allow for choice in our work.
- We strive to keep our space clean and tidy.
- We use technology appropriately

If a student needs direction in order to follow these guidelines, we take the following steps:

1. We politely call out inappropriate behavior in class and wait until the behavior is corrected.
2. The teacher will take the student out into the hall for a conversation.
3. The Teacher Leader will contact the parents about repeated problematic behaviors.
4. Students and parents will meet with the Sixth Grade Team and Head of School.

Standard Protocols and Policies:

Exhibitions:
Students are still required to dress and conduct themselves professionally and adhere to the deadlines for submission. Please see the school handbook for specific guidelines.

The Middle School Workload:
6th grade has significantly more work than 5th grade! This year, work will be assigned for either AT HOME or IN SCHOOL. It is the students responsibility to read directions, ask questions, and to turn assignments in on time. We are asking that students spend one hour on each class per day when working remotely. If you're struggling to complete assignments within that time frame, please reach out to the 6th grade team and we will help support you in time management.

Late Work Policy:
Students benefit from turning in their work on time, however, we do accept late work based on a conversation with the teacher. We will require that students email their teacher about their late assignment at least 24 hours BEFORE the due date. Failure to notify the teacher of the late assignment may not receive full credit. We will not accept late work after the project has ended.

Attendance:
Colorado School Attendance Law requires that students miss no more than 10 school days per year, excused or unexcused. Given the current circumstances with online learning, students are required to have proof of their attendance on a daily basis, either through attending in-person meetings, attending online meetings, completing daily assignments, or checking in with a teacher. Failure to participate consistently will result in an intervention with the 6th-grade team, and then our administration.

Infinite Campus
It is the responsibility of both the student and parents to regularly check the student's grades. Grades will be updated frequently and are available on Infinite Campus. You will receive a username and password at the beginning of the year that will allow you to access grades on a regular basis. Please let Ms. Evans know if you lose or forget your username and password.

Google Classroom: Students are responsible for turning in all assignments by the due date on Google Classroom. Students can invite Guardians to view their Google Classrooms, which means that Guardians will get weekly summary emails. Students are also able to turn off email notifications on Google Classroom if they need to. Missing assignments are displayed on Google Classroom under the "Your Work" tab. If you need any help navigating Google Classroom, please contact one of our team.

6th Grade Curriculum:

Mathematics:

Following iReady diagnostics, students are placed in similarly-paced instructional groups that they will remain in for the entire year. Mountain Middle School uses the Open Up Resources curriculum for the majority of its mathematical instruction, and students will be responsible for bringing their Unit Math Workbooks to school every day they attend. Students are encouraged to do at least 10 minutes of Math practice every day outside of their usual assignments - this takes place on IXL, Prodigy, TeachBanzai, Khan Academy and other online resources. Student assignments, quizzes, exams and projects will be posted on Google Classroom, as the exchange of paper is not conducive to a sanitized classroom. However, students are always asked to show their work in their graphing notebooks before submitting an answer.

Science:

Students can expect to complete 1-2 graded assignments per week. We will use **Google Classroom** as the primary place for all assignments.

Unit 1: The Story Beneath Our Feet

Students will become **Geologists, Archaeologists, and Cultural Researchers** as they investigate the relationship between the geology of the Four Corners Region and the lifeways of the Ancestral Puebloans, Ute Peoples, Jicarilla Apache, Diné, and Comanche communities. Students will explore how landforms, rocks, climate, water, plants, and other natural resources have influenced the ways people have lived and interacted with the land. For their culminating project, students will

research a traditional home and create an artistic model that demonstrates how the environment influenced its design and construction. Students will use evidence to explain why particular natural materials were used, how the home was adapted to the local climate and landscape, and how the surrounding environment helped meet the needs of the community. Through this project, students will discover that geology is more than the study of rocks. It helps us understand the landscapes we live in, the resources available to us, and the relationships people develop with the land.

Unit 2: Out of this World: Spaceflix Film Festival

Students will become **Astronomers, Space Scientists, and Filmmakers** as they investigate the objects, patterns, and forces that make up our universe. Students will explore the formation of the solar system, the characteristics and movement of planets and other celestial bodies, the life cycles of stars, and the forces that shape the universe. Students will use models, observations, simulations, and evidence to develop explanations for what they see in space. They will then use their scientific understanding to create a Space Western film that communicates an astronomical concept through storytelling and creativity. The unit will culminate in a **Spaceflix Film Festival**, where students will share their films with an audience. Through this project, students will learn that science is not only about discovering how the universe works, but also about communicating what we discover in creative and meaningful ways.

Unit 3: Environment and Climate: Durango Climate Solutions

Students will become **Climate Scientists and Environmental Problem Solvers** as they investigate the complex systems that influence Earth's climate and environment. Students will explore weather and climate patterns, the movement of energy and water through Earth's systems, human impacts on the environment, and evidence of environmental and climate change. Students will then focus their attention on Durango and the surrounding Southwest Colorado region as they investigate a local environmental or climate-related challenge, examine scientific evidence, consider how the issue affects our community, and explore possible solutions. For their culminating project, students will develop and communicate a

Durango Climate Solution using scientific evidence to explain the problem, evaluate potential solutions, and propose an action or innovation that could help our community respond to the challenge. Through this project, students will learn that understanding Earth's systems gives us the tools to make informed decisions about the places we call home and to become thoughtful stewards of our environment.

Humanities: Students can expect to complete 1-2 graded assignments per week. We will use Google Classroom as the primary place for all assignments.

ELA: Students will be given carved out, dedicated time to read independently in class nearly every day. Students should use this time to apply concepts from English to the texts that they are reading on their own. Students should also use this time to explore genres of books that they may not have engaged with in the past. As a class, we will also read a number of short stories and novels that correlate with the topics we will be covering in Social Studies. A final major component of this class will be writing, and students will quickly learn that writing is a communal activity in which we write together, share our work and provide one another with constructive feedback. This year, students will produce writing that fits into the following categories: narrative, informational and argumentative. Here are the books we will be reaching this year:

Rez Dogs by Joseph Bruchac

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Among the Hidden by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Social Studies:

Unit 1: The First Americans and how they adapted to their environments

Students will explore theories as to how the first people migrated to North America. Then, students will examine the various Native American cultural regions within North America as they analyze how these people interacted with the geographic features within their landscape. Finally, students will create a

replica of one of the styles of homes of the Native Americans as well as adding modern features to it that would make it suitable and sustainable for today's climate and environment.

Unit 2: The Rise and Fall of Ancient Civilizations

Students will study the ancient civilizations of the Maya, Aztec and Inca, focusing both how these societies succeeded and why they ultimately fell. Students will also analyze the technological contributions of these civilizations and how they impacted life at that time. Students will be given a choice as to how they want to demonstrate their understanding of the unintended consequences of technology, and they will have the opportunity to connect the past to the present and how we interact with technology today.

Unit 3: The Columbian Exchange Cafe

Students will study the European motives for exploration as well as the first interactions they had with the people already living in North America. Using primary sources, students will study the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its impacts on Western civilizations. Finally, students will analyze the impact of the Columbian Exchange on the world today, connecting it to modern-day globalization. For a final project, students will create a Columbian Exchange-themed cafe in which the foods and knowledge served will be representative of the Old and New Worlds.

6th Grade Specific Supplies

Each student will need to bring supplies. Some will be used communally and others will be individual.

6th Grade Specific Supplies

Please label all starred items with student name

- 1 set of earbuds/headphones *
- 1 Lined Paper Composition Book
- 1 Graph paper Composition Book
- 5 3-Prong 2-Pocket Folders
- 1 pencil & supply box*

Classroom supplies, no need to label with student names:

- 1 box Tissue
- 1 pair of school scissors

- 1 Hand sanitizer
- 1 pack of Expo dry erase markers
- 1 fine tip Sharpie (Black)
- 1 regular tip Sharpie (Black)
- 2 pack of paper towel rolls and 1 multi-purpose cleaner spray (only students with last names starting with A-J)
- 1 pack Hot glue sticks (Full size/thick) and 1 box Sandwich Bags (only students with last names starting with K-Z)