



MESA VALLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Beginning Curriculum Options Grades K-8

MVCS encourages parents to learn about their child, themselves, and curriculum to find the best match for their skills, needs, and goals. However, it often isn't realistic for first-time parent educators to do significant learning and research prior to their first year of schooling, and they may not know their needs yet. This chart simplifies initial curriculum choices by outlining one or two solid picks to get started in each grade in the core subjects. Most parents and students will find these options easy to use. Your Academic Advisor can help fine-tune your curriculum choices (possibly adding in some supplements) after you've gotten started. Preserving parent curriculum choice is a key goal of MVCS; this list is not intended to force parents to use curriculum listed below. For parents who are ready to spend more time looking at curriculum, MVCS has resources to help delve further into options. There are many other excellent choices. As you and your child learn and grow, we hope you take the opportunity to explore them.

Grade	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
K	All About Reading (Level 1) + Voyages (K)	Saxon (K) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (K) OR MCP Mathematics (K)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science K	Studies Weekly (K) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>
1	All About Reading (Level 2) + All About Spelling (1) + Voyages (1)	Saxon (1) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (1) OR MCP Mathematics (1)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science 1	Studies Weekly (1) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>
2	All About Reading (Level 3) + All About Spelling (2) + Voyages (2)	Saxon (2) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (2) OR MCP Mathematics (2)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science 2	Studies Weekly (2) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>
3	All About Reading (Level 4) <i>(strong readers may not need)</i> OR Mosdos Press Literature Opal (3 rd Grade) + All About Spelling (3) + Voyages (3)	Saxon (3) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (3) OR MCP Mathematics (3)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science 3	Studies Weekly (3) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>
4	All About Spelling (4) + Voyages (4) + Mosdos Press Literature Ruby (4 th Grade)	Saxon (4) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (4) OR MCP Mathematics (4)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science 4	Studies Weekly (4) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>
5	All About Spelling (5) + Voyages (5) + + Mosdos Press Literature Coral (5 th Grade)	Saxon (5) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (5) OR MCP Mathematics (5)	Studies Weekly OR Bookshark OR Elevate Science 5	Studies Weekly (5) <i>homeschool version</i> <i>(also do the online work)</i>

6	Voyages (6) + Mosdos Press Literature Pearl (6 th Grade)	Saxon (6) OR Dimensions (Singapore) (6) OR ALEKS (6) (<i>online</i>)	Elevate Science 6	Studies Weekly (6) <i>homeschool version</i> (<i>also do the online work</i>)
7	Voyages (7) + Mosdos Press Literature Jade (7 th Grade)	Saxon (7) OR Dimensions (Singapore) OR ALEKS (7) (<i>online</i>)	Elevate Science 7	Studies Weekly (7) <i>homeschool version</i> (<i>also do the online work</i>) (choose California)
8	Voyages (8) + Mosdos Press Literature Gold (8 th Grade)	Saxon (8) OR Dimensions (Singapore) OR ALEKS (8) (<i>online</i>)	Elevate Science 8	"Studies Weekly (8) <i>homeschool version</i> (<i>also do the online work</i>) (choose California)



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Choosing Curriculum

If you're ready to investigate curriculum options on a deeper level, at least for some subjects, this information can help point you in the right direction. As you review curriculum choices, think about the educational method of the curriculum and the learning style of your student. Cathy Duffy's *102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum* contains helpful chapters about approaches to education and about learning styles. She also maintains a website with many curriculum reviews: cathyduffyreviews.com. Other helpful resources include placement tests (e.g. bookshark.com/about/resources) and curriculum comparison charts (e.g. rainbowresource.com/category/999999950/Resources.html).

For the family new to home-based education, a prepackaged option is a great place to begin.

- Rainbow Resource offers traditional packages for grades K-8:
<https://www.rainbowresource.com/category/8769/Rainbow-Curriculum-Starter-Packages.html>
- Bookshark uses a literature-based approach for grades K-8:
<http://www.bookshark.com/>
- Moving Beyond the Page is another literature-based approach for ages 4-14:
<https://www.movingbeyondthepage.com/>

English Language Arts

When considering language arts curricula, a large set of topics must be taken into account: *phonics, reading skills, comprehension, literature, grammar, usage, mechanics, composition, spelling, vocabulary, penmanship, and speech*. Some products teach groups of these topics and others are targeted to a single topic. Be aware of the need to address all of them and of the need for specific types of composition at each grade level. Some options are below.

Phonics		
ABeCeDarian	McRuffy Kindergarten Phonics	Right Brain Phonics Program
All About Reading	Modern Curriculum Press Plaid Phonics	Saxon Phonics
Explode the Code	Phonics Pathways	Sing, Spell, Read, & Write
The Logic of English	Phonics Works (K12)	Words Their Way (K-5)
Reading Comprehension		
MCP Comprehension Plus (1-6)		Reading Detective (3-12)
Daily Reading Practice (1-10)		Starting Comprehension (K-2)
Evan-Moor Daily Reading Comprehension (1-6)		Visualizing and Verbalizing (2-6)
Literature		
Blackbird Literature Discovery Guides (K-12)		Mosdos Press Literature (3-8)
Bookshark Literature (K-9)		Moving Beyond the Page Literature (K-8)
Discovering Literature Series (6-12)		Novelinks (9-12)
Essentials in Literature (7-9)		Novel-Ties (K-12)
Implications of Literature (9-12)		Novel Units (1-12)
Lightning Lit. & Comp. (1-12)		
Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics		
Analytical Grammar (4-12)		Fix-It Grammar series (3-12)
Caught Ya! Grammar with a Giggle (3-12)		GUM: Grammar, Usage and Mechanics (2-8)
Easy Grammar/Daily Grams (2-12)		Hake Grammar & Writing (4-8)
Editor in Chief (2-12)		Shurley English (1-7)
Michael Clay Thompson Language Arts (3-12)		Voyages in English (1-8)

Composition	
Beyond the Book Report (6-10)	Redbird Language Arts and Writing (2-7)
Brave Writer series (K-12)	Teaching Writing Structure and Style (3-12)
Building Writers (K-5) (Learning w/o Tears)	Voyages in English (1-8)
Clear Water Press Writing Curriculum (6-12)	Winning with Writing (1-8)
Essentials in Writing (1-12)	Wordsmith series (4-12)
Fairview's Guide to Composition (9-12)	Write Source (K-12)
Hake Grammar & Writing (4-8)	WriteShop Primary/Junior (K-6)
Lightning Lit. & Comp. (1-12)	Writing for 100 Days (4-12)
Primary Arts of Language (K-2)	
Spelling & Vocabulary	
All About Spelling (1-12)	Spelling Power (K-12)
Blackbird Operation Lexicon (5-9)	Vocabulary Cartoons (3-12)
Building Spelling Skills (Evan Moor) (1-6)	Vocabulary from Classical Roots (4-12)
English From the Roots Up (1-12)	Vocabulary Vine (4-12)
Sequential Spelling (2-12)	Wordly Wise (K-12)

Math

The most basic difference between math programs is the approach: spiral or sequential. A spiral approach covers topics several years in a row, advancing slightly with each pass. Concepts are reviewed and repeated, encouraging long-term memory. A sequential approach organizes learning objectives into smaller, sequentially structured units. Children master a particular concept before moving on. Potential drawbacks are less review for the student and being out-of-step with standards. If a sequential approach seems best for your child, consider supplementing with something like Mathematical Reasoning (online or workbook) to expose your child to concepts he or she will meet on standardized tests.

Sequential Math Programs	
A+ Interactive Math (1-8)	JUMP at Home Math (K-8)
A Fresh Approach (9-12)	Math In Focus (K-8)
Art of Problem Solving (6-12)	MCP Math (K-6)
Beast Academy (1-8, Conceptual Topical)	Primary Math (US or SE) (1-6)
Developmental Math (K-8)	Primary Mathematics Common Core (1-5)
Dimensions Math (Singapore) (6-8)	Ray's Arithmetic (K-12)
Jacob's Math (9-12)	Video Text (9-12)
Spiral Math Programs	
Making Math Meaningful (K-6)	Miquon Math (1-3)
Mathematical Reasoning (PK-9)	Saxon (K-12)
Online or DVD-based Math Programs	
A+ Interactive Math (1-9)	CTC Math (K-12)
ALEKS (K-12)	Mathhelp.com (5-12)
Beast Academy online (1-8)	Thinkwell Homeschool (6-Calculus)
CK-12 (K-12)	Redbird Mathematics (K-7)
Right-Brain or Visual Math Programs	
Math-U-See (K-12)	RightStart (K-8)
Right-Brained Math (K-7)	Miquon Math (1-3)
Mindset Mathematics (1-8)	Moving Beyond the Page Math (K-6)
Math Supplements	
Base Ten Blocks	Focused Topical Books:
Cuisenaire Rods	Key to... series
Flashmaster App	Mastering Essential Math Skills
25 Real Life Math Investigations	One Digit Addition and Subtraction
Down and Dirty: A "How to" Math Book	Classroom Ready Number Talks

Social Studies

Social Studies is a wide-ranging topic which includes instruction in *History, Geography, Economics, and Civics*. The Colorado Academic Standards focus on particular historical eras and geographic areas each year:

- Kindergarten: begin to develop an understanding of the past
- 1st Grade: patterns and chronological order of events of the recent past and family and U.S. cultural traditions
- 2nd Grade: identify historical sources and look at historical events of neighborhoods and communities
- 3rd Grade: comparing primary and secondary sources and examining how people in the past have influenced the development of communities or regions
- 4th Grade: Colorado history
- 5th Grade: North America from 1491 to the founding of U.S. Government
- 6th Grade: Western Hemisphere
- 7th Grade: Eastern Hemisphere
- 8th Grade: U.S. History from American Revolution through Reconstruction
- High School: U.S. History from Reconstruction through present and World History from Renaissance through present.

Economics and Civics instruction begins with personal financial literacy and local government and builds on that foundation.

The study of History can be approached through textbooks, unit studies, or “real books”. Cathy Duffy’s [102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum](#) includes a list of “real books” by time periods/topics.

Traditional Series	
AGS Globe	Prentice Hall America: History of Our Nation
McGraw Hill	Prentice Hall History of Our World
Holt McDougal Harcourt Horizons	Scott Foresman Social Studies
Houghton Mifflin	Steck-Vaughn History of our World
Magruder’s American Government	Steck-Vaughn World Geography & You
myWorld Social Studies	Taking the High Road to Social Studies
U.S. History	
A Child’s First Book of Am. History (2-7)	A History of the U.S. and Its People (6-8)
The Classical Historian (6-12)	The Landmark History of the Am. People (4-up)
Famous People Research Disc. Guides	The People, Places, & Principles of America (7-12)
Focus on U.S. History series (7-11)	Studies Weekly (K-6)
A History of US (7-12)	U.S. History Detective (7-12)
Colorado History	
World Almanac Colorado	Colorado Encyclopedia https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/
Studies Weekly	Chronicles of ... State History Notebook
World History	
A Child’s History of the World (K-5)	Short Lessons in World History (6-9)
The Classical Historian (6-12)	The Story of the World (1-8)
A Little History of the World (5-12)	Studies Weekly (K-6)
The New Penguin History of the World (9-12)	World History Detective (6-8)
PAC World History (9-12)	Focus on World History series (7-11)
Geography	
Evan-Moor Daily Geography and Beginning Geography (K-6)	PAC World Geography (9-12)
Expedition Earth Geography (5-12)	Trail Guide to U.S. Geography (2-12)
Maps, Charts and Graphs (1-8)	Trail Guide to World Geography (2-12)
Oak Meadow World Geography Syllabus	The Ultimate Geography and Timeline Guide (K-12)
	Global History and Geography (9-12)

Economics	
Basic 6-8+ Economics (6-8)	Money Savvy Kids @Home (3-6)
Common Sense Business for Kids	Simply Put: A Study in Economics (9-12)
Economics in One Lesson (11-12)	Whatever Happened to Penny Candy (5-12)
Economics and You (5-8)	
Civics	
The Classical Historian: American Government and Economics (6-12)	You Decide! Applying the Bill of Rights to Real Cases (7-12)
Our Living Constitution: Then and Now (5-8)	We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution (9-12)
Uncle Eric series (economics and government) (8-12)	iCivics (https://www.icivics.org/)

Science

The Colorado Academic Standards includes instruction in three science strands every year, from grades K-5: *Physical Science*, *Life Science*, and *Earth and Space Science*. Because of this, families that choose to use science programs that focus on one theme throughout the semester or year will need to supplement for the strands they are not otherwise addressing. Middle and High School standards reflect year-long courses from the same three strands.

Traditional Series	
Savvas Interactive Science (K-8)	Prentice Hall
Savvas elevateScience (K-8)	CK-12 (http://www.ck12.org)
Discovery Education Science Techbook	
Elementary	
Earlybird Science (1-2)	Real Science 4 Kids (K-9)
Exploring the Building Blocks of Science (K-8)	R.E.A.L. Science Odyssey (1-4)
McRuffy (K-3)	Starline Press (3-12)
My Pals are Here! (1-6)	Elemental Science Classic Series (1-8)
Middle School	
Exploring the Building Blocks of Science (K-8)	Real Science 4 Kids (K-9)
Exploration Education Physical Science (6-8)	Elemental Science Classic Series (1-8)
Centripetal Press (6-8)	Royal Fireworks Press (3-8)
My Pals are Here! (6-8)	
High School	
Book Shark Physics, Electromagnetism and Waves Level J	Houghton Mifflin Science
Centripetal Press	Memoria Press
Classic Science	Oak Meadow
Conceptual Academy	Pandia Press
Elemental Science	The Home Scientist
Exploration Education	Colorado Digital Learning Solutions