

The Link School Course Catalog 2011-2012

The experiential education at The Link School has five key components:

Academics - a variety of learning opportunities includes an innovative blend of small group and individual instruction taught by dedicated Christian Scientist faculty members who hold advanced degrees appropriate to their subjects; intensive block courses conducted by visiting instructors; state-of-the-art online courses which allow students to earn credits outside of the Link curriculum; and interdisciplinary learning opportunities in an unparalleled natural setting of rivers, mountains and canyons which stretch out from the school's backyard.

Expeditions - trips each month encourage character development, leadership, writing, and natural sciences education in backcountry settings.

Individually Mentored Projects – projects broaden knowledge and skills in areas of the students' interests with instruction and oversight from a mentoring adult.

Service Work – service opportunities include daily chores and responsibilities at home in the Lodge and projects that extend out into the greater community.

Spiritual Development - purposeful spiritual exploration and community investment in living our faith deepens students' "link" with the Divine.

Academic Plan

The academic program is designed and taught by the school's faculty. Courses are taught in multi-age settings with grade-appropriate assignments, resources, and assessments. Link School courses are experiential by design and include a wide variety of assessments, including, but not limited to, portfolios, presentations of learning (POLs), field experiences both local and abroad, fieldwork, blogs, group problem-solving, and authentic assessments such as writing for publication. Extensive use of technology is a critical component of the curriculum.

Students pursue individualized learning plans (ILPs), individual projects and group activities. Some credits are earned through successful mastery of college preparatory core subjects; others by self-directed student explorations. In general, for three weeks of each month, students will work on their ILP through Link's project based courses and then have time in the afternoons for personal projects, and group recreation and service activities. The other week of each month will be spent on a wilderness expedition.

Student Assessments & Placement

The Education Director and Academic Advisor work together with each student and his/her parents to review their previous work and determine appropriate course

placements at start of term. Standardized tests may be used to assist in appropriate placement.

Individual Learning Plans - ILPs

ILPs are developed for each student based on their grade, previous course work completed, and goals for either a college prep track or aiming for high school graduation and then vocational courses.

Transferring Link Credits to other High Schools

The Link School is fully accredited with the North Central Association, recently re-named AdvancED.

Standardized Tests

Standardized testing: Freshmen through juniors will register to take the PSAT (Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test) in October. This preliminary exam gives students practice in taking standardized tests before results from such exams become part of their record for college. Students and faculty receive detailed PSAT score reports. As part of the college admission process, upperclassmen will also take SAT and/or ACT exams, depending on the requirements per college. Students are responsible for SAT/ACT test fees.

On-line Research

Students gain access for on-line research sites through Bill Fabian, the librarian at Buena Vista High School, and our Social Studies & History teacher.

Academic, College and Career Advising

Link teachers meet with students one-on-one at least four times a year to discuss academic progress, and academic goal setting, done both at the beginning and middle of each semester. We focus on each student's goals, whether those be to attend college, a vocational school, or begin work, and how Link can support each student. In addition, each senior is guided through the college application process, including all support necessary for taking standardized tests.

A letter will be sent to parents of Juniors and Seniors outlining the steps Link's College Advisor will be taking with the student and the role parents can play in college preparation.

Project Based Learning (PBL) Overview

The Link School works to ground academic learning in real life experiences and employs PBL as a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks.

Driving Question: A central part of Project Based Learning is the selection of a theme or “driving question” for each academic year. This year’s theme is **“How can I/we make a difference for good?”**

Assessment - Grading:

Assessments are done in a narrative fashion and “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “I” letter grades. Assessments are developed appropriate for the student’s skills and grade level. “I” represents an Incomplete and students are given the opportunity to complete their work and earn a passing grade.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance: Attendance requirements at The Link School is equal to or greater than the minimum number of days and hours required by the state of Colorado, which is 1056 hours and 160 days (Title 22, Colorado Revised Statutes: Education Article 33, School attendance Law of 1963, Section 104).

Excused Absences include all absences for reasons beyond the control of you or your family, such as illness/injury, appointments, or a family emergency. If you are not able to get or complete work from the teachers to do while you are away from school, it is expected that the work will be made up within a period of time no longer than the time missed from school. Teachers will determine when missed exams are to be made up.

Parents may also request from time to time for students to miss class time for family events or trips, but such absences should not be a regular occurrence due to the stress it can put on a student’s academic responsibilities.

Unexcused Absences are defined as absences from class or school without proper authority from home or the school. Parents or legal guardians will be notified immediately of any unexcused absence. The academic penalty for an unexcused absence will be a daily grade of “0” in every class missed, with no makeup privilege. Additional consequences may include disciplinary action – probation, suspension or expulsion.

Block Courses

From time-to-time, Link courses are instructed in blocks. On those days, rather than rotating from class to class each hour, students spend the entire day, or multiple days, on one interactive subject and corresponding project.

Presentations of Learning – POLs

Students conclude each term with Presentations of Learning that display to the community the students’ knowledge and development in a given subject area, or from their project work.

Whole School Learning Community – WSLC

Link staff do not view students as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge by teachers. Link teachers facilitate and teach, but also openly join students as learners and coconspirators in the quest for understanding. Link staff also share what they are working on professionally and personally through POLs. Lastly, staff work to honor students' input by engaging students in academic and community problem solving and not just imparting solutions.

Graduation requirements

The graduation requirements listed are minimum requirements. Students interested in attending highly selective colleges are expected and encouraged to complete more academic coursework.

English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Modern Languages	2 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies/History	3 credits
Electives	8 credits
Physical Education	1 minimum
Total	23 credits + 1 PE (a minimum for graduation)

Course Requirements for an Academic Year at Link

English	1 credit
Mathematics	1 credit
Spanish	1 credit
Science	1 credit
Social Studies	1 credit
Electives	1 or more credits
Physical Education	1 PE credit
Total Credits	6 (minimum) + 1 PE

Portfolios

Students prepare a portfolio of completed work as a key graduation component including: course work, photos, writing samples, projects, expeditionary accomplishments, service work, personal code, athletics, entrepreneurial work, & presentations of learning (POLs).

Diplomas

High School diplomas are awarded to students who have completed graduation requirements.

AP (Advanced Placement) courses

Courses are available and offered on request as independent study.

College Courses

Courses are available through a local satellite of Colorado Mountain College.

Academic Integrity

The Link School cultivates honesty in every area of a person's life. Academic integrity means that the student or teacher guarantees that work turned in as his or her own is in fact original, unless properly cited.

Any instance of academic cheating, copying other's homework, or plagiarism is a serious offense. Copying and pasting information is common, but the student is responsible for learning proper methods of paraphrasing or citing information so that another's ideas are not represented as one's own.

Consequences for academic dishonesty are a grade of zero on the assignment and, if the situation continues, possible suspension from school.

The Link School Course Catalog For 2011/12, Year 4

English

Contributing citizens of the 21st century must be able to think and communicate clearly. Guided practice in analytical reading, and writing and speaking for various audiences, gives students the tools and confidence to share their ideas with others. Much of Link's writing instruction is on a one-on-one, coaching basis.

English I-IV and Honors

Two Semesters, one credit

Why do we tell stories? Can literature make a difference for good in our society? How do we join in the conversation? In English this year, we are exploring the various ways stories are told, both audibly and through the written word. Texts include biographies, folktales, poetry, and a play, as well as novels and non-fiction writing. Specific books read by each student will vary depending on interest and skill level. The course also looks at articles, talks, and radio programs to explore the many ways we share stories in our lives, and through it all, students examine the relevance such storytelling can have on a large scale. Besides reading a variety of texts, students add their own voice through persuasive essays, original stories, narratives, poetry, and any other medium they can think of to make themselves heard.

Mathematics

Mathematical reasoning, skills and principles play an ever-increasing role in our digital society. Colleges expect students to complete four years of high school level math starting with Algebra I.

Algebra I

Two semesters, one credit.

Algebra I is a comprehensive, standards-based coverage of Algebra I and its prerequisites. Students study arithmetic readiness, real numbers and linear equations, functions and systems of equations, polynomials and quadratic equations, rational expressions and proportions and exponents and square roots. If time allows, students also study introductory lessons on geometry, trigonometry, data analysis and probability and other topics.

Geometry

Two semesters, one credit.

Students study algebra and deductive reasoning, lines and angles, triangles, polygons and circles, similarities and transformations, volumes and surface areas and coordinate geometry.

Pre-Calculus

Two semesters, one credit

Throughout this course students study functions and graphs, polynomial and rational functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, trigonometry, systems of linear equations and matrices, sequences, series, and probability, conic sections and limits and continuity.

Trigonometry

Two semesters, one credit

This course covers functions and graphs, quadratic functions, unit circle and right triangle trigonometry, trigonometric graphs and inverse function, trigonometric identities and equations and applications of trigonometry.

Calculus

Two semesters, one credit

Calculus is a balanced approach to problem solving using analytic/algebraic, numerical, graphical, and verbal/written methods of representing problems. Students study all topics associated with functions, graphs, and their limits. Students study derivatives of a variety of functions (i.e. polynomial, trigonometric and inverse trigonometric; exponential, and logarithmic). Integration, area under a curve, and volumes of a surface of revolution are also covered.

Students study limits in indeterminate forms, L'Hospital's rule, growth rates of functions, and indefinite integrals. Students also study a variety of sequences and series, along with polynomials of infinite degree and their derivatives and integrals. Taylor series and MacClaurin series, as well as tests for convergence and divergence. The course closes with parametric functions, vectors, and polar coordinates. Completion prepares students for either the Calculus AB or BC exam.

Math Studies I

Two semesters, one credit

This course uses two online curriculums, IXL and ALEK math suites. Both programs focus on identifying appropriate level math concepts for students to review and improve on. Concepts covered will include whole numbers and integers, rational numbers, measurements, proportions, percents, probability, variable expressions and equations, functions and graphs, geometry, and various other topics. To provide deeper understanding in some of these content areas, practical application of these concepts will be presented using a Project Based Learning model.

Modern Languages

Study of a second language opens windows on the world. Students become comfortable standing in another person's shoes. Language study includes an appreciation for and understanding of other cultures. It also heightens awareness of one's native tongue of English through emphasis on speaking, listening, reading and writing. The Link School offers Spanish language study for its practical application in the U.S. and as preparation for the extended field program in Chile.

Spanish I

Two semesters, one credit.

This course is designed to introduce students to a foreign language. Students learn Spanish in addition to good methods on how to approach a foreign language and techniques of learning a language that makes it easier and more fun. We begin with the very basics like the alphabet, and pronunciation and gradually work up to being able to apply the language to everyday life. By the end of the course, students will have a good vocabulary base and be able to form coherent sentences. The grammar studies in this course are very basic. We do work on present and past tense verb conjugations, as well as basic sentence structure and parts of speech. The students should be enjoying their introduction into language so we mostly work on vocabulary and fun activities that get the students actively participating in Spanish.

In addition we will be involved in Cultural Studies with the other 2 Spanish classes, examining the Chilean culture. The students will make a presentation on Chile at the end of the year using as much Spanish as they are able.

Spanish II

Two semesters, one credit.

This course is designed to strengthen the students in all areas of the Spanish language through reading, writing, grammar, speaking and listening exercises as well as cultural studies of Chile. By the end of the year, the students will be able to make a presentation on a specific aspect of Chile's culture in Spanish. In our reading section, the students choose a book from which to do a weekly reading and discussion. There is one grammar lesson per week and are based on the classe's progress and current grammar level. We speak only Spanish in the classes, and students perform bi-weekly mini presentations to practice speaking to each other and me. Each week we study a small piece of the Chilean culture through current newspaper articles and on line history reports. Most of all I want the students to enjoy the process of learning a second language.

Spanish III – Spanish Literature

Two semesters, one credit

This course is designed to move students from simply studying Spanish into being proficient practicing speakers, writers and readers of the language. Students are expected to apply grammatical knowledge into all aspects of the language. They study the language as a whole and not just its separate components. There are different sections of the course applied to reading, writing, speaking, listening,

grammar and cultural studies but the goal is to have them applying the knowledge from all areas simultaneously. We focus more on cultural studies in this course as the students do everything in Spanish and applying a more practical use of the language. We read a level 3 novel which is chosen based on the students' reading abilities. The grammar activities are based on a standard of a Colorado level 3 Spanish class but may be adjusted depending on how fast the students progress. Students write weekly reports on Chilean news and current events. The class is held entirely in Spanish and students are expected to speak only Spanish. By the end of the year, they should be able to function efficiently in all areas of the Spanish language.

Spanish – Conversational Spanish

Two semesters, variable credit.

This course moves students from simply studying Spanish into being proficient practicing speakers, writers and readers of the language. The different sections of the course focus on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and cultural studies to give students more confidence in speaking the language. The focus on cultural studies in this course helps students applying a more practical use of the language. The class is held entirely in Spanish and students are expected to speak only Spanish. By the end of the year, they should be able to function efficiently in all areas of the Spanish language.

French – AP

Two semesters, one credit.

The Link School uses Powerspeak¹²'s online AP French course, which enables students to practice perfecting their French speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. They study vocabulary, grammar, and cultural aspects of the language, and then apply what they've learned in extensive written and spoken exercises. By the end of the course, students will have an expansive vocabulary and a solid, working knowledge of all verb forms and tenses. The equivalent of a college-level language course, AP French prepares students for the AP Exam and for further study of French language, culture, or literature.

Environmental Science

In the 21st century, the environmental sciences will continue to play a powerful role in transforming our society and our place in the universe. Stewardship for the natural environment is an Intended Outcome of The Link School. Environmental Science courses develop that sense of stewardship as humanity makes progress towards sustainability.

Global Science

Two semesters, one credit.

It has been said that human population growth underlies all environmental problems. This course explores the concepts that regulate natural ecosystems and how these same concepts regulate human systems as well. As populations grow, humans have a greater impact through both consumption of resources and environmental degradation. Students of today need to understand these

impacts, how their impact might be mitigated, and what actions can be taken, the role of technology, and how to make informed decisions in the future.

Social Studies

Social studies courses help students meet many of The Link School's Intended Outcomes, including a compassionate and respectful relationship with others, service to their communities as informed citizens and prospective voters, and making a difference for good through prayerful and informed action. An interdisciplinary extended field program to Europe and Central Asia provides a unique classroom setting in which to learn history, geography, religion and culture.

World Cultures/Current Events

Two semesters, one credit.

World Cultures/Current Events is a project based course exploring the vastly different societies of our neighbors around the world. Students will become familiar with physical geography while learning to appreciate distinctive cultures with a sense of curiosity and an open mind. The foundation of the work will be the BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. After immersing ourselves into these cultures as a class, students will become experts on, and teach others about, individual countries on the corresponding continent(s) using reliable Internet sources, databases, videos and The Christian Science Monitor. Country research will include a study of current events in the news, as well as a look at individuals who are making a positive difference. The second semester includes an in-depth library research project on a current issue facing Africa or the Middle East. Skype conversations with individuals around the world, as well as local guest speakers, will add a personal outlook. Bring your passports to class!

One night a week includes a 30-minute discussion of current events.

Collapse of Societies

Two Semesters, one half credit

This course explores what historically has led to the failure of societies, and is designed as a compliment to the Year3 study of what makes communities healthy. The classes are reading and discussion based and include a speaker series, case studies, and field components.

Electives – 1 - 1.5 credits per year

Electives at The Link School are designed to support the living and learning experience of each student. Many of the skills and dispositions cultivated in these courses are integral to the underlying educational philosophy the school, but do not fit cleanly in more traditional coursework.

Service Learning & Stewardship

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Service work in support of the school and local communities includes forestry work, trail work, projects with the Division of Wildlife, construction of a garage, animal husbandry, and work in our greenhouse and garden.

Leadership Seminar and Expeditions

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Leadership skills are taught, in particular, in preparation for and during expeditions. Students earn various levels in relation to communication skills, small group leadership skills, small group participation, expedition mentality, outdoor skills, & environmental awareness. Expeditions during Year IV include rafting in UT through Westwater Canyon and either Dinosaur National Monument or on the San Juan River, horse packing in the San Isabel, Mountain Biking in Colorado and Utah, Hiking in through mountain and canyon settings in CO and UT, an international trip to Chile, a mountaineering trip to The Lost Wonder Hut, and a variety of shorter weekend trips.

Creative and Industrial Arts, & Computer Workshops

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Students have the opportunity throughout the year to develop artistic skills and abilities in photography, fine arts, music and handcrafts. Students receive basic instruction and have the opportunity to work on projects in carpentry, auto mechanics, pottery, and metals. Students also have the opportunity to become proficient in a variety of computer applications, including blogs, video and photo editing, web page design, Skype, video conferencing and other skills useful in presenting POLs.

Culinary Arts & Sustainable Foods

Two quarters, one-quarter credit

Students learn the practical art of planning nutritious, well-balanced meals from local food sources, shopping, cooking and meal presentation. In addition they participate in cooking classes taught by local chefs, in food related activities with the local farmers' market, and learn about sustainable ways to produce food as well as the resources available on a local level, including working in our own garden.

College Prep for Juniors and Seniors

Two semesters, one-quarter credit

Students focus on the college search process, including college essay writing and SAT/ACT practice, review, and testing.

Physical Education

Two semesters, one credit

Students engage in daily workout routines and spend one week each month on a physically demanding expedition. For independent work out time, students are

required to do 15 minutes of aerobic work and 15 minutes of strength work – at a minimum.

Senior Seminar

Length varies, credit available varies – maximum 1 credit

Seniors who qualify may choose to engage in a self-directed project during April of their senior year. Qualification will be based on 1) having a completed core course work necessary for graduation, and then 2) being in good standing in the community.

Projects may range in length from a few weeks to a month and need to take place in the western hemisphere. Generally, the expense is too great, and too much time is lost when traveling to Europe or Asia in adjusting for the time change.

A staff member works as a project mentor with each student on his or her project.

Senior projects culminate with a POL and should focus on Link outcomes – i.e. service work, career development, backcountry skill development, an expedition, etc. Students may also introduce what they are doing with a fall POL.

Projects will be assessed by staff on a Pass/Incomplete basis.

Application Process: Students who would like to be considered for a senior project should work during the fall to develop a rough idea of what they want to do, and submit in writing a general scope of their project before Christmas break. After break, and before the international trip, students must submit a full proposal which should include the items below. Staff will then review the proposal and help the student come up with a firm plan by the start of the spring semester.

The written proposal should include:

- Description of the project (one page on the project content)
- Assessment of qualification (in terms of showing you have or will have the credits to graduate. This will require talking first to the Academic Director, and then to all your teachers and working out how to get your class work completed.)
- Explanation of how it will fulfill Link School Outcomes
- Length of time for the project and the proposed dates
 - Project timeline for key components
- Budget for the project (up to \$50/day is available from Link for the first 14 days. Students and their families will need to have a plan to cover expenses beyond \$50/day and 14 days.)
- Presentation of Learning (POL) plan

If approved, seniors should give their fall semester POL on what they are planning and spring semester POL on what they did and learned.

Block Courses:

Block courses fit into the overall academic program as enhancement. The instructors work with Link staff to accomplish established objectives and meet planned benchmarks. Whenever possible, block courses are project based and employ the PBL approach coordinated by Dave Bailey. Time blocks for these courses is often the afternoons but sometimes is all day.

Faculty and Adjunct Faculty List for 2011-2012

- Bobby Lewis (Link Director) Spanish tutor, Social Studies, World Religions, PE, Service Learning, Leadership, Wilderness Skills.
- David Bailey (Education Director) ILP Coordinator, Math and Spanish tutor, Wilderness Skills.
- Natalie Lewis (School Administrator) Home Economics, Math and Spanish tutor, Horse Program, Agriculture Program.
- Christine Love Bailey (Instructor) English Instructor, Spanish tutor, College Advisor.
- Bill Fabian (Academic Advisory Committee, Instructor) Current Events, Social Studies, History, Academic & Career Advising, Accreditation Head.
- Preston Larimer (Instructor) Global Science.
- Bryan Reed (Resident Counselor, Instructor) Math instructor, Wilderness Skills
- Hanna Mehring (Resident Counselor) Standardized test tutor, Spanish tutor, PE.
- Erin Easton (Instructor) Spanish and French.