

# The Link School Course Catalog

Year 18 (2025-2026)

## The Academic Program

Graduates of The Link School will be engaged learners as evidenced by their successful completion of a college preparatory curriculum, critical thinking skills developed in and out of the classroom, and curiosity for learning. The four-year curriculum, semester coursework, daily class periods, and academic components of field programs at Link are driven by this central academic [outcome](#).

At basecamp, students attend classes Monday-Thursday from 8:50-2:35 (55 minute class periods), Friday from 8:50-11:40 (30 minute class periods) and Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings from 7:15-9:00. Students receive mentorship and instruction outside of the traditional classroom during individual project time, field program time (biking, boating, climbing, skiing), service work, group games, and workout time from 2:50-5:30 Monday-Thursday and from 12:10-5:30 on Fridays.

During field programs, students apply the social-emotional skills, field skills, and academic knowledge developed at basecamp by embracing mental and physical challenges, putting backcountry lessons into action, and making connections and transferring learning. Field programs also support traditional academic work by serving as a reset for students. Students take time during field programs to develop individual reading and writing practices, to reflect, and to connect with one another, self, and the Divine.

On average, students spend three weeks of each month at basecamp and one week each month on a field program.

## Academic Vision, Values, and Competencies

### Y18 Academic Vision

\*Y18 Vision pending. Academic staff renew or update the academic vision midway through fall semester to meet the needs of the current group of students.\*

## Core Values

The Link School instructional staff ask of themselves:

- High expectations
- Compassion
- Purpose
- Collaboration
- Inquisitiveness

## Core Competencies

The Link School instructional staff support students in demonstrating:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Connection and transference
- Integrity
- Knowledge base
- Ability to access and analyze information
- Effective oral and written communication

## Credits

### Grading Scale

A+	97%	D+	67%
A	93%	D	63%
A-	90%	D-	60%
B+	87%	F	59% and below
B	83%	I	Incomplete
B-	80%	P	Pass
C+	77%	NP	No Pass
C	73%		

Credit is awarded for classes completed with a 60% (D-) or higher grade.

### Weighted Grades

Link does not weight grades or GPAs. Students who transfer in with weighted GPAs will have those GPAs noted on their transcripts, but the summative GPA recorded on a Link transcript will always be unweighted.

### Pass/No Pass Classes

Enrichment and elective courses are graded on a Pass/No Pass scale. With the exception of the elective social studies course offered each semester, classes for which students receive core credit are graded on a traditional grading scale.

In some cases, students may earn credit for a core class by receiving a P rather than a traditional grade. In these situations, context and decision steps will be noted in the student's end of semester narrative.

Credit is awarded for P (Passing) grades. P/NP courses do not impact GPAs.

## Honors and AP Classes

Students seeking additional challenge may opt into an honors track in any core class. Honors requirements are established by teachers and take into consideration students' individual interests, strengths, and areas for growth.

Honors work may include supplemental coursework, alternative and/or more rigorous assessments, and additional meeting times outside of the regular class period. When a teacher identifies a student who would benefit from honors level demands, they connect with the Academic Director, the student, and the student's family to gauge interest and determine next steps.

Alternatively, students who would like to pursue an honors track should reach out to their teacher(s) and the Academic Director.

Link does not offer AP certified classes. Students may elect to take AP exams and will receive instruction, study materials, and logistical support from The Link School in preparation for those exams. Link students regularly earn passing marks on AP exams.

## Transferring Link Credits to other High Schools

The Link School academic program is accredited by Cognia (formerly AdvancEd). Credits earned at The Link School are transferable to other public and independent high schools.

## Credit Recovery and Earning Credit for Individual Projects

All students earn a standard enrichment credit for their individual work during project time. Students who need to recover credits may earn P/NP credits for individual projects and enrichment courses offered during project time. In order to earn credit for projects or project time classes, students must complete additional requirements such as supplemental coursework, formal assessments, presentation/teaching, leadership, or service to the community. Additional requirements are established by the course instructor or project mentor and are approved by the Academic Director. To earn graded credit for an individual project or enrichment course, students must complete additional requirements (outlined above) and take a graded summative assessment.

These options are in place to support students in need of credit recovery. Link does not offer an accelerated graduation track.

## Auditing

With permission from the Academic Director and the course instructor, students may audit a class for no grade or credit.

## Student Assessments and Placement

The Academic Director works together with each student and his/her parents to review previous coursework and determine appropriate course placements at the start of term.

An Accuplacer assessment may be used to assist in appropriate placement.

## Standardized Tests

Freshmen through juniors will have the opportunity 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 at their colleges of interest. Parents are responsible for any charges associated with these tests.

## Academic, College, and Career Advising

Students work with the Academic and Executive Director as the academic and career advisor to help them either gain college admission or find engaging work after graduation. The Link Academic Director frequently meets with students one-on-one 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.

## 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. In addition to the credits needed below, students must also be in good standing – academically and in the community.

<u>Core Courses</u>	<u>Minimum Credits</u>
English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Modern Languages	2 credits
Science	3 credits
Social Studies/History	3 credits
Enrichment	8 credits
Physical Education	1 credit
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 credits</b>

### Standard Course Load for an Academic Year

English	1 credit
Mathematics	1 credit
Spanish	1 credit
Science	1 credit
Social Studies	.5 credit
History	1 credit
Expedition Based Leadership	.5 credit
Service and Community Learning	.5 credit
Physical Education	1 credit
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.5 credits</b>

## Academic Load

Balance, challenge, and engagement in all areas of Link programming create the best outcomes for students. To that end, The Link School requires that students carry a full load of core courses each semester. This allows the school to maintain excellent standards for both scholastic and non-scholastic elements of our program and creates the best possible comprehensive program for students.

The standard course load is five core (academic) courses, one physical education course, and additional credit earned in Expeditional Based Leadership and Service and Community Learning. On occasion, students are permitted to drop a core course if the Academic Director, Head of School, and relevant faculty determine that lightening a student's load benefits their overall growth and learning. Students must carry at least 4 core classes on their academic schedule. If a student petitions to drop a second class, it must be replaced by an approved independent study or online course.

## 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.

Use of ChatGPT and similar AI programs to complete assignments constitutes cheating unless such work is explicitly (for a specific assignment) permitted by the teacher and is properly cited.

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

## Courses

### English

#### **English I and English II** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Afton Leslie

English I and English II provide an integrated study of reading comprehension, literary analysis, oral communication, and written composition that aligns with each student's grade level and individual strengths and areas for growth. Students practice reading skills such as identifying themes, citing textual evidence, understanding characters, and explaining an author's use of language; students compose creative narratives, persuasive essays, and informative essays that demonstrate developing mastery of language and confident comprehension of texts. Reading selections include classic and contemporary novels, short stories, poems, essays, and explanatory texts.

#### **English III and IV** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Afton Leslie

English III and English IV emphasize the development and refinement of skills introduced in earlier English courses including reading comprehension, literary analysis, oral communication, and written composition. In alignment with each student's grade level and individual strengths and areas for growth, students practice reading skills such as comparing and contrasting themes, drawing inferences from texts, analyzing elements of a story, and recognizing exceptional language. Student compositions include a creative narrative that demonstrates advanced dexterity with language and a research paper that uses evidence to advocate a substantive cultural, social, or environmental issue. Reading selections include classic and contemporary novels, short stories, poems, dramas, narrative and persuasive essays,

and explanatory and peer-reviewed texts. Upon completion of this course, junior and seniors will be prepared to successfully complete the AP Language and Composition and AP Literature and Composition exams.

## Enrichment Courses

### **Expedition Based Leadership** (.5 credit, year long course)

Expedition Based Leadership is a cornerstone of learning and experience at The Link School. Through participation in multi-day and multi-week backcountry expeditions, students grow a sense of adventure, learn and implement technical skills, and are coached in developing a practical, humble, real-world leadership style. Students progress through a Link-tailored leadership curriculum rooted in technical skill-building, Chesty Puller's principles of leadership, and The Link School's principles of sound guiding. Students earn leadership levels (Raven, Big Horn Sheep, Big Horn Full Curl, and Wolf) that represent their progression and demonstration of leadership.

### **Physical Education** (1 credit, year long course)

Students engage in daily workout routines and spend one week each month completing demanding backcountry expeditions. Students work to achieve fitness "benchmarks" that indicate preparedness for field expeditions.

### **Service Learning and Community Participation** (.5 credit, year long course)

Students earn credit for participation in weekly community service, residential living practices, and development of individual projects.

## Foreign Language

### **Spanish 1** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Joel Benson

Spanish 1 is designed to introduce students to the foundations of the Spanish language. As a proficiency-based class, students will learn basic tools needed for speaking and understanding Spanish through regular, consistent exposure. The class will be conducted mainly in Spanish and students will be asked to speak in Spanish during class, using English when necessary and for clarification. Students will be encouraged to use Spanish during Link School activities outside of class as well. Throughout the year we utilize various resources and types of practice to help facilitate language acquisition and cultural exposure in a natural and engaging way. Students will be required to memorize a lot of vocabulary and grammar. We will periodically listen to songs, watch videos, play games, tell stories, read excerpts, and complete other activities that support language acquisition. We will also learn some vocabulary specific to our

international trip. Students will leave Spanish 1 at a Novice-Mid level, following the Colorado Standards for World Languages.

### **Intermediate Spanish** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Joel Benson

Intermediate Spanish is designed to help students build on their previous knowledge of Spanish. We will reinforce the basic skills that students learned in their previous Spanish class(es) and add on more complex skills to facilitate communication and understanding. Spanish 2 is a proficiency-based class, meaning the class will be conducted mainly in Spanish and students will be asked to use Spanish in all activities, using English only when necessary and for clarification. Throughout the year we use several different resources and practices to help our learning process; all resources are adapted to a Spanish 2 level. We will periodically listen to songs, watch videos, play games, tell stories, read excerpts, and other complete other activities that support language acquisition. We will also learn some vocabulary specific to our international trip. Students will end the year at a Novice-High level, following the Colorado State Standards for World Languages.

### **Spanish Literature** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Joel Benson

Spanish Literature focuses on reading and writing, interspersing listening, discussions and videos. The course uses a collection of readings from Cervantes and Degas to Marquez, Cisneros, and Allende, teaching new skills, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and expressions. This is a proficiency-based class, and classes will be conducted in Spanish. We explore different topics throughout the year, using authentic resources to foster discussion and critical thinking about the topic on hand. With each topic, students continuously improve upon their written and oral communication, incorporating new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and expressions. Students will demonstrate their proficiency through a variety of assessments including exams, short papers, oral and written assignments, daily conversations, and presentations. Students will end the year at an Intermediate-High level, following the Colorado State Standards for World Languages.

## Mathematics

### **Math Essentials** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Julie Kerr

Math Essentials supports students as they strengthen foundational math skills. The pace is tailored to meet individual needs, with a focus on practical skills that set students up for success in future math classes and everyday life. Course material emphasizes essential concepts in arithmetic, number sense, and introduction to algebraic concepts.

**Consumer Math: Principles of Accounting** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Independent/Makenzie Murray

Principles of Accounting provides a comprehensive introduction to financial accounting, modeled after the ALEKS adaptive learning approach. Students are introduced to and practice employing key accounting concepts, progressively advancing through topics such as the accounting cycle, financial statement preparation, journalizing transactions, and interpreting business financials. This is a “mastery” based course, meaning students must demonstrate understanding of the current material before progressing to subsequent topics.

**Algebra I** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Rob Wood

Algebra I is the foundation to further study in mathematics. It aims to deepen and extend student understanding built in previous courses by focusing on developing fluency with solving linear and quadratic equations, inequalities, and systems. These skills are extended in preparation for Algebra II by exploring linear, quadratic, and exponential functions graphically, numerically, symbolically, and as sequences. Students also use regression techniques with graphical calculators to analyze the fit of models to distributions of statistical data.

**Geometry** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Julie Kerr

This course introduces the basic concepts, terminology, and notations involved in geometry. Conditional statements, conjectures, theorems, and written justifications are systematically brought into the course. Students explore geometric relationships with a wide variety of tools and construct an understanding by working collaboratively on investigations. Instead of just memorizing rules and definitions, students perform constructions, measure figures, observe patterns, discuss their findings, write their own definitions, and formulate their own geometric conjectures. Strong emphasis is placed on developing a logical manner of thinking. Regular review and integration of algebraic concepts is employed throughout the course.

**Algebra II** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Rob Wood

In this course, students will build on skills learned in Algebra 1 to solve higher order algebraic systems of equations and inequalities. The first semester lays the groundwork by building students’ skills with polynomials, inequalities, proofs, and functions. The second semester builds on this foundation, giving students further abilities to solve real world problems with topics including complex numbers, analytic geometry, exponential and logarithmic functions, sequences and series, and trigonometry.

**Precalculus** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Julie Kerr

Precalculus weaves together previous study of algebra, geometry, and mathematical functions into a preparatory course for calculus. The course focuses on mastery of critical algebraic skills and exposure to new skills necessary for success in subsequent math courses. Topics include fundamental concepts of algebra, functions and graphs, polynomials and rational functions, exponential and logarithmic functions, trigonometric functions, analytic trigonometry, topics in trigonometry, and conic sections. In addition to content mastery, the course goals are to further develop students' problem solving and critical thinking skills.

### **Calculus AB** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Rob Wood

In calculus, we explore the idea of infinity. In our investigation of infinity, we will study the three main concepts of calculus, which are limits, derivatives and integrals. Some subtopics include related rates, optimization problems, and the Mean Value Theorem, which can be used in physical science applications, financial applications, and other applications. Students have the option to prepare for the AP Calculus AB exam.

## Science

### **Introductory Physics** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Woody Brown

Introductory Physics at The Link School is an engaging and comprehensive course designed to introduce students to the basic principles and concepts in the fascinating field of physics. Throughout the course, students will explore the fundamental Newtonian principles that govern the physical world, as well as classical mechanics, magnetism, and electricity. This course challenges students by providing opportunities to learn and explore through hands-on labs, diagrams, graphs, and calculations as well as real world connections made throughout the year during our outdoor activities and backcountry trips.

### **Advanced Physics** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Woody Brown

Advanced Physics at The Link School is an engaging and comprehensive course designed to provide students a deep understanding of the foundational principles and concepts in the fascinating field of physics. Throughout the course, students will explore Newton's fundamental principles that govern the physical world, as well as classical mechanics, magnetism, and electricity. This course challenges students by providing opportunities to learn and explore through hands-on labs, diagrams, graphs, and calculations as well as real world connections made throughout the year during our outdoor activities and backcountry trips.

## History and Social Studies

**American Government** (.5 credit, spring semester)

Instructor: James Orlet

Students explore the roots of American government with an in-depth study of the United States Constitution: its origins, its content, and its application through the past 229 years to today. The course also focuses on the American presidential election process, with a review of the candidates, the issues, and the system. Research projects explore the legal, historical, and cultural contexts of American civic values and are differentiated to meet according to grade level.

**Global 19th Century** (1 credit, year long course)

Instructor: Adrianna Swarts

Global 19th Century will examine events, trends, and wars surrounding the 1800s. Course content is designed to not only give students an awareness of significant historical events but also to give students an understanding of how these events have shaped the current day. We will observe changes and movements from geographical, social, cultural, political, economic, and technological lenses. Generally speaking, content will progress from 19th century American history and US foreign policy during fall semester to a broader world focus during spring semester.

**Social Studies Courses** (.25 credit, fall/spring semesters)

Instructor: James Orlet

Each semester, students participate in an all-school social studies course that meets for reading and discussion once per week, on Monday evenings. Here, students draw from their learning in various classes and make connections to real life experiences on field programs.

Course topics:

- Civil Rights Movement
- Counterculture and the 1960s
- Current Events
- Dust Bowl
- Native America
- Prisons and Justice
- Resilience
- US Foreign Policy in Latin America