

Curriculum Map Social Studies and Science (Place-based Units)

Place-based projects at the Cottonwood School are grounded in the history, environment, and people of Portland and the Pacific Northwest. Each trimester concentrates on key social studies or science concepts. Reading, writing, public speaking, and geography skills are heavily embedded into the project work. Through an integrated approach, students go deep into a topic over an extended period of time. This allows them to learn the complexities of an issue while discovering how components naturally connect with other concepts. We apply the lenses of social justice and eco-justice to all units of study.

As students grow, so do to places they study. In kindergarten through second grade, students focus on family, home, school, and neighborhood. This also includes looking at local rivers, forests, and mountains. In third grade student reach further back in time to learn about the ancient history of Oregon, and in fourth and fifth grades, students learn about United States history as well as the biomes of the Pacific Northwest. Sixth through eighth grades introduce students to national and global topics while also striking a balance with local connections. For example, as student learn about globalization in the seventh and eighth grades, they visit local businesses who sell products internationally to see how global trade impacts Portland. Coordinating scope inline with a child’s evolving understanding of the world allows us to create a developmentally appropriate approach to learning about place.

Our literacy and math programs support our overall place-based curriculum by giving students the skills they need to complete high-quality, authentic project work. All of our curriculum correlates with state and national standards and student learning is assessed in multiple ways in addition to standardized testing.

	Science	Social Studies
7th/8th grades	Year one: 1) Ecology: Animal and Ecosystem interconnectedness 2) Astronomy: Gravity, Eclipses, Seasons 3) Forces: Newton’s laws, simple machines Year two: 1) Weather and Climate 2) Humans and Resources 3) Magnetism, electricity, energy sources	Year one: 1) Bill of rights, first amendment 2) Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of “us and them” in the U.S. and Portland • Immigration 3) Project Citizen Year two: 1. Elections, diplomacy, leadership (levels of Gov’t) 2. Trade/Global Economy, World Geography 3. Project Citizen

6th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Chemistry 2) Human Body/Evolution 3) Plant Biology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Civil War 2) the African-American history of Portland
4th/5th grade	<p>Year One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Watersheds and water cycle Include states of matter 2) Weather and Biomes -seasons Native animals and native plants 3) Oceans -Earth, sun, moon <p>MINI: Electricity and Magnetism unit</p>	<p>Year Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) "Discovery" and colonization of North America 2) American Revolution and creation of Government (Constitution and 3 branches of govt) 3) Corps of Discovery and Western Migration through a Native American perspective, tribes today
3rd grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geology/Geologic history 2. Archeology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3) The Chinook tribe
1st/2nd grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forests, Mountains, Rivers Plants and Gardening Salmon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhoods Community Food/Restaurants
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animals in winter Pond ecology and life cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Me, my family, other families, our community