

# **CURRICULUM REVIEW GUIDE**

Many thanks to our wonderful parents who shared their thoughts  
& expert knowledge in reviewing curriculum!

<b><u>MATH</u></b>						
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other Texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>
<b>Math U See</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Ed.</li> <li>• Student wkbk</li> <li>• Test booklet</li> <li>• DVD</li> <li>• Manipulatives</li> </ul>	K-12	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to teach-video does the “heavy lifting” while parent lends support</li> <li>• Consumable worksheets</li> <li>• Easy lesson planning</li> <li>• Well-explained concepts-explains WHY</li> <li>• Teacher on video is engaging</li> <li>• Online Supplemental Resources: mathusee.com (worksheets, online drill pages, free resources)</li> <li>• Teaches to mastery</li> <li>• Now with Common Core word problems “G” &amp; “H”</li> <li>• Teaches concepts thoroughly with realistic steps</li> <li>• Thorough teacher’s edition</li> <li>• Great DVD support &amp; manipulatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not aligned to state standards; puts kids at disadvantage for state testing until they’ve finished all topics</li> <li>• Doesn’t follow traditional sequence</li> <li>• Hard to transition in and out of program</li> <li>• Lacks illustrations/color</li> </ul>	I use <a href="#">Khan Academy</a> to supplement
<b>Math in Focus (Singapore Math)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher’s Guide</li> <li>• Student wkbk (K-5)</li> <li>• Student Text</li> </ul>	K-8	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumable workbook-K-5</li> <li>• Aligned to State Standards</li> <li>• Great for visual learners</li> <li>• Online component with activities related to the lesson</li> <li>• Solutions Key with step by step answers</li> <li>• Real world problems and hands-on activities in the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those starting in the upper grade levels it can be challenging due to the lack of foundational understanding and “new” way of learning</li> </ul>	None

<b>Saxon Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>Student text</li> <li>Study packet (includes basic facts tests, tests, &amp; flash cards at some levels)</li> <li>Solutions Manual (upper levels)</li> <li>Manipulatives (K-3)</li> </ul>	K-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saxon Phonics (K-2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task-analyzed objectives keep each lesson focused</li> <li>Thorough teaching of objectives</li> <li>Review of past lessons with each new lesson</li> <li>Lesson numbers listed beside review problems for reference to the original lesson</li> <li>Testing every 5 lessons</li> <li>Self-guided lessons for the independent learner</li> <li>Daily mental math practice</li> <li>Learning basic math facts emphasized</li> <li>Prepares students well for secondary math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black &amp; white format</li> <li>Direct teacher instruction required</li> <li>Does not correlate chronologically with elementary state standards</li> </ul>	
			<b><u>WRITING</u></b>			
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other Texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>
<b>Just Write</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workbook with Teacher Key</li> </ul>	1-4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cute, fun way to get kids writing on their own</li> <li>Structured &amp; easy to follow</li> </ul>		
<b>Institute for Excellence in Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's Guide</li> </ul>	1-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fix-It Grammar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breaks writing down into steps</li> <li>Helps think beyond basics to make writing more colorful and informative</li> <li>Has an online class</li> <li>Very effective</li> <li>Can be taught to multiple grade levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A lot of work on part of parent unless child enrolled in online class</li> <li>Can cost money</li> </ul>	

<p><b>The Complete Writer: Writing With Ease</b> By Susan Wise Bauer</p>	<p>Instructor Text Student Workbook</p>	<p>Levels 1-4</p>	<p><u>Levels 5 - 8</u> Writing with Skill The Creative Writer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple approach</li> <li>• Literature Based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow progression</li> <li>• Lacks projects</li> </ul>	<p>Ordinary Parent's Guide to Teaching Reading/Wise First Language Lessons/Wise Story of the World/Bauer</p>
			<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>PHONICS</u></b></p>			
Curriculum	Components	Grade Range	Other Texts in Curriculum Family	Strengths	Weaknesses	Compatible Curriculum
<p><b>Explode the Code</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Ed.</li> <li>• Student workbook</li> </ul>	<p>K-2</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional and entertaining</li> </ul>		
<p><b>MCP Phonics</b> (Modern Curriculum Press)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Guide</li> <li>• Student workbook</li> <li>• Readers (in hanging file near library)</li> </ul>	<p>K-5</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorful worksheets, good seatwork, easy to follow</li> <li>• Covers basic grammar &amp; phonics with some spelling &amp; comprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As it progresses, the older grades have more writing &amp; less color</li> <li>• Some suggested books are hard to find</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

<b>Rewards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>workbook</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>basic word recognition, decoding, comprehension, reading, &amp; spelling</li> <li>good for middle to upper grade students with trouble decoding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overheads not provided</li> <li>very basic &amp; dry</li> <li>not a variety of activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<b>Saxon Phonics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>Workbook</li> <li>Flashcards</li> <li>Games</li> </ul>	K-2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scripted teacher guide</li> <li>Comprehensive</li> <li>Holds kids interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a bit tedious</li> </ul>	
<b>Sing, Spell, Read, &amp; Write</b> (by Sue Dickson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>Student wbk</li> <li>Song on audio CDs</li> <li>Student readers</li> <li>Instructional games</li> <li>Progress chart</li> <li>Game prizes</li> </ul>	K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-K instructional text &amp; student wbk</li> <li>Musical math facts</li> <li>Winning, It's the Way to Read (4<sup>th</sup>-Ad reading program)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages all learning styles</li> <li>Uses games/songs to reinforce objectives</li> <li>Comprehensive: Includes both phonics lessons &amp; sight-word recognition lessons</li> <li>Grammar &amp; punctuation lessons</li> <li>Colorful</li> <li>Uses tangible game rewards</li> <li>Plenty of review</li> <li>Student readers colorful &amp; engaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires instructor or advanced student participation</li> <li>Quick-paced lessons may be overwhelming for new teachers &amp; some students</li> <li>Best to learn from someone who has used it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most phonics-based reading curricula</li> <li>Bob Books MCP K-1 Readers</li> </ul>
			<b><u>READING</u></b>			
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other Texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>

<b>Five in a Row</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructor's Manual</li> </ul>	K-2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thorough lesson plans</li> <li>Cross-curricular activities</li> <li>Quality literature offers opportunity to highlight writer's crafts</li> <li>Online resources</li> <li>Can be used with multiple grade levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be overwhelming due to number of activities to choose from</li> <li>No preprinted worksheets or activities</li> <li>Requires more parent planning</li> <li>Suggested reading of 5 times seems excessive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Beyond Five in a Row</u>-older students</li> </ul>
<b>Spotlight on Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>Student Practice Workbook</li> </ul>	K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Grammar &amp; Spelling Workbooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Teacher's planning Guide has a 5 day lesson plan that coincides with the workbooks</li> <li>Great additional material for using lessons from the coinciding story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's Guide is very confusing on 1<sup>st</sup> glance...and 2<sup>nd</sup> ; too much information going on – by 2<sup>nd</sup> year I was able to utilize the 5 day lesson plan because I couldn't figure it out on my own</li> </ul>	
<b>Junior Great Books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Guide</li> <li>Readers</li> <li>Worksheets</li> </ul>	2-8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good, solid literature to read and comprehend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a lot to the actual lessons</li> </ul>	
			<b><u>Spelling &amp; Vocabulary</u></b>			
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>

Mountain Home School Charter Curriculum Review

<p><b>Spelling Power</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Guide</li> <li>• Student wkbk</li> <li>• Activity Task Cards</li> <li>• Instructional DVD</li> </ul>	<p>2-Ad</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly using this curriculum is rewarding</li> <li>• 10 Step study sheets produce positive results when used with suggested activities in back of book</li> <li>• Activity Task Cards make it easy to integrate activities</li> <li>• Instructional DVD for teacher</li> <li>• Requires only 15 min/day</li> <li>• Format engages all learning styles &amp; is “hands-on”</li> <li>• Research-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to use this curriculum was time consuming- it helped to take lots of notes</li> <li>• Requires instructor or advanced student participation</li> </ul>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Spelling Workout</b> (MCP company)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Key</li> <li>• Student Wkbook</li> </ul>	<p>1-6</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy format</li> <li>• Pre-tests</li> <li>• Spelling tips</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Proofreading</li> <li>• Optional writing assignment &amp; bonus words</li> </ul>		
<p><b>English From the Roots Up</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Guide</li> <li>• Vocabulary Cards</li> </ul>	<p>2-Ad</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I thought this would be too difficult for my 2<sup>nd</sup> grader but she ate it up!</li> <li>• Made discussing root words, prefixes &amp; suffixes a natural part of all our other language arts</li> <li>• Puts a new dimension on the student’s relationship with words</li> <li>• Great for aspiring spellers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a color confusion with the books and coinciding cards-Vol. 1 book RED, Vol. 1 cards are GREEN</li> <li>• Pay attention to the volume number &amp; colors</li> </ul>	<p>None</p>

<b><u>GRAMMAR</u></b>						
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>
<b>Easy Grammar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's edition</li> <li>Student wkbk</li> </ul>	2-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>none</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workbook spends too much time on one area of grammar</li> <li>Too slow</li> <li>Should repeat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily Grams</li> </ul>
<b>Daily Grams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student wkbk with answer key in back</li> </ul>	2-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>none</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good for daily review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can't be a stand alone curriculum-not in depth enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy Grammar</li> </ul>
<b>First Language Lessons for Well-Trained Mind</b> By Jessie Wise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructor Text</li> <li>Audio Companion</li> <li>Levels 3 &amp; 4 Workbooks</li> </ul>	Levels 1-4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive</li> <li>Real terminology</li> <li>Sentence Diagramming</li> <li>Occasional Games</li> <li>Poem Memorization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All instruction is given orally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ordinary Parent's Guide to Teaching</li> <li>Reading/Wis e Writing with Ease/Bauer</li> <li>Story of the World/ Bauer</li> </ul>
<b><u>HISTORY</u></b>						
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>



<p><b>Story of the World</b> By Susan Wise Bauer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Ed. includes activity pages</li> <li>Text in story chapter format</li> <li>CD's follow story text</li> <li>Test book</li> </ul>	<p>K-6</p>	<p><u>Levels 9-12</u> The History of the World</p> <p><u>Any Level</u> Who In the World Biographies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interesting to read for the entire family-in story form</li> <li>Great springboard for discussions</li> <li>Easy to lesson plan</li> <li>As easy or difficult as you want to make it depending on supplemental use</li> <li>Includes audio CD</li> <li>Multiple age use</li> <li>Chronological and comprehensive</li> <li>Maps, activities, reading suggestions</li> <li>Includes geography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes too much detail kids have a hard time understanding</li> <li>Needs summarizing on part of parent</li> <li>Lack of actual dates</li> <li>No workbook</li> <li>Difficult to finish in 1 school year</li> <li>Resources outdated</li> <li>Tests aren't age appropriate-more for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></li> <li>Our library &amp; local don't have all resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>History Odyssey</u> for older students</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>						
Curriculum	Components	Grade Range	Other texts in Curriculum Family	Strengths	Weaknesses	Compatible Curriculum
<p><b>Harcourt Science</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher's Edition</li> <li>Workbook</li> <li>Assessments</li> </ul>	<p>1-5</p>	<p>None but Brain Pop videos are a nice way to preview concepts (can be accessed free of charge via mcoe website – maders.org)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to read T.E.</li> <li>Typical textbook used in a traditional classroom</li> <li>Clear Objectives for each lesson in each chapter</li> <li>Materials list for all activities</li> <li>Vocabulary words listed with each chapter can be found in bold</li> <li>Print is large and easy to read at younger levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TE can seem overwhelming as there are MANY connecting lessons/activities</li> <li>Some lessons not in depth</li> <li>Some activities require items not readily available</li> <li>Workbooks are</li> </ul>	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts build over time (similar concepts taught in first through fifth grade)</li> <li>• Lots of extra hands-on activities at end of each chapter</li> <li>• Textbook has lots of colorful pictures</li> </ul>	<p>not same edition as text (can be confusing if teacher is not paying attention ☺ but pages do match up)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some lab activities are hard to see connection to material</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Great Science Adventures</b></p> <p><u>Topics:</u></p> <p>Light and Sound</p> <p>Vertebrates</p> <p>Discovering the Ocean</p> <p>Tools and Technology</p> <p>Landforms</p> <p>Space</p> <p>Atoms, Molecules, and Matter</p> <p>Plants</p> <p>Insects and Arachnids</p> <p>Human Body</p>	<p>Within the TE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mini Books (students make them from photo copies)</li> <li>•3D Graphic Organizers (student made)</li> </ul> <p>Teacher Pages</p>	K-8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each book focused on one topic making learning very thematic</li> <li>• Lessons are easily adaptable to different age groups (but takes some work on the part of the teacher)</li> <li>• Each lesson has a graphic organizer so there is a visual representation of what you have studied</li> <li>• No “worksheets” but lots of creative activities/3D displays of things you’ve learned</li> <li>• Lots of high interest topics</li> <li>• Labs that show an easy connection to concepts</li> <li>• Good variety of extension activities at the end of each lesson (including internet activities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopies must be made for all lessons</li> <li>• Minibooks give good basic information but older students will probably need supplemental information (none provided)</li> <li>• No “worksheets”</li> <li>• Lots of planning on teachers part (can’t just open the book and go)</li> <li>• No “text book” per say. Mini books are supposed to replace this.</li> <li>• No flashy graphics</li> </ul>	

<b><u>FOREIGN LANGUAGE</u></b>						
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Other Texts in Curriculum Family</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Compatible Curriculum</b>
<b>Rosetta Stone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online access</li> <li>• CD &amp; text (if not using the online version)</li> </ul>	4-AD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great, self-motivating lessons</li> <li>• Good for slow readers</li> </ul>		
<b><u>Resources</u></b>						
<b>Right Brain Phonics</b> (Dianne Craft)  [A reading intervention program]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher's Guide</li> <li>• Flashcards</li> <li>• Phonics cards</li> <li>• Sight word cards</li> </ul>	K-8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading intervention</li> <li>• Great for kids who learn visually</li> <li>• Great for kids who have difficulty with memorization</li> <li>• Teaches right-brain kids tools to use to help with reading.</li> <li>• The program works!</li> <li>• ****Important: omit other spelling, phonics, reading programs while teaching with this program!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be tedious &amp; repetitive</li> </ul>	
<b>Reading &amp; Spelling System</b> (Susan Barton)						

