

Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School #34

Common Core Curriculum Parent Resource Guide



***Your Future Begins Here....
Empowered to Learn, Interact & Succeed***

4 STARS

★ ***Safety***

★ ***Kindness***

★ ***Respect***

★ ***Responsibility***

FOR PREKINDERGARTEN–5TH GRADE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

In 2011 New York adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to make sure that all children succeed once they graduate from high school. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children the classroom.

Why Are the Common Core State Standards Important?

The Common Core State Standards are important because they will help all children – no matter who they are – learn the same skills. They create clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: **reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics**. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

The new Common Core State Standards make several important changes to current standards. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what these shifts change, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. If your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

| What's Shifting? | What to Look for in the Backpack? | What Can You Do? |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will now <u>read more non-fiction</u> in each grade level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child <u>learn about the world through reading</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for your kids to bring home more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1st Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's <i>A Tree is a Plant</i>. This book lets students read and learn about science. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>read challenging texts very closely</u>, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2nd or 3rd Grader might be asked to read aloud Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled <i>What the World Eats</i> and retell facts from the story. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will <u>use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from the opinion questions that have been used in the past. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>learn how to write from what they read</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4th and 5th graders, this might mean reading and writing about <i>The Kids Guide to Money</i>, a non-fictional book by Steve Otfinoski. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>have an increased academic vocabulary</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach them that "language is power." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children. |

MATHEMATICS

To improve student learning, the new Common Core State Standards are different from the old ones. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what is shifting, what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. Again, if your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

| What's Shifting? | What to Look for in the Backpack? | What Can You Do? |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>work more deeply in fewer topics</u>, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>keep building on learning year after year</u>, starting with a strong foundation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>spend time practicing and memorizing math facts</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will <u>understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child will now be asked to <u>use math in real-world situations</u>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5th graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home. |

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

When talking to your child's teacher, try to keep the conversation focused on the most important topics that relate to your child. This means asking the teacher how your child is performing based on grade-level standards and expectations.

Also, ask to see a sample of your child's work. Compare your child's samples to those found at <http://engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-common-core-sample-questions>. Also, feel free to bring those samples to your child's teacher and ask the teacher to explain how the samples are used in the classroom.

This information will enable you make important adjustments at home that can help your child achieve success in the classroom.

For more information, please visit: www.engageny.org or contact your local principal or superintendent.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Parents across New York want to know more about the Common Core State Standards. Below, you will find some frequently asked questions and answers about the standards. It will be updated over time. Please contact your child's teacher or principal to learn more about your school's work with the Common Core.

Q: What are the Common Core State Standards?

A: The Common Core State Standards show what students in Pre-K through 12th grade should know and be able to do in English language arts and mathematics. The standards will help all students across the State learn the same skills. This will make sure that they are ready for college and careers. The standards include changes, or "shifts," in how teachers teach to help children succeed in the topics and skills that matter most. The standards are designed to help all young people get prepared for college and careers.

Q. Does having common standards mean everyone will learn less?

A. No. The Common Core State Standards have been built from some of the best standards gathered from States across the country, as well as from other nations and extensive research on what's needed to succeed in jobs and higher education. The Common Core standards ask teachers and students to dig deeper into the core skills and concepts for each grade level. This means that students will learn much *more* about *fewer* topics. It also means that teachers will have more time to cover subjects in greater detail. This gives students an opportunity to really understand what is being taught.

Q. Do the standards tell teachers how to teach?

A. No. They are a tool to help teachers prepare the best classroom lessons and activities. The standards also help students and parents by showing them what it takes to be successful in each grade level. They are an important roadmap for teachers, students and parents.

Q: How were the standards developed?

A: Forty-six states brought together experts, teachers and researchers to write the Common Core State Standards, along with almost 10,000 comments and suggestions, including many from New York teachers and parents. New York adopted them in 2010. The standards are well-matched for our classrooms and will help our students learn more. Please visit <http://corestandards.org/the-standards> to read the full set of standards.

Q. Will this mean more tests?

A. No. The Common Core State Standards do not mean more tests. But there will be different, and better, tests. Starting in April 2013, the New York State Assessments will test student's Common Core knowledge and skills for 3rd grade through 8th grade in English language arts and mathematics. These new tests will reflect the changes, or "shifts," in the standards. The tests will make sure that students can meet grade-level expectations.

Q. Will these new tests be harder?

A. At first, the new tests may seem more difficult. This is normal. The new tests will be based on the "shifts" in the standards. Over time, students and teachers will adjust to the clear expectations. There also is a possibility that student test scores could drop in the first or second year of the new tests. However, the tests are an important tool for improving student achievement. The new tests will help principals and teachers identify those students who might need extra support to successfully move on to the next grade level.

Q. What does this work mean for students with disabilities and English language learners?

A. The standards will help teachers have more time to cover subjects in greater detail. This gives students an opportunity to really understand what is being taught. There is a clear guide for applying the standards to English language learners and students with disabilities. Also, all states will be working together to constantly improve upon these issues. This will result in a strong support system for all learners.

Q. What will the Common Core State Standards mean for students across the country?

A. The standards set clear expectations for student learning across the country. In the past, every State had its own set of different academic standards. This meant that U.S. students were learning different skills and concepts at different rates. The Common Core State Standards give *all* New York students an equal opportunity to learn the same high standards. This leads to a greater chance of success in college, career and life.

Q: If standards are raised, is it more likely that students will drop out of school?

A: It is not more likely that students will drop out of school. Research points out that many factors come together to cause a student to drop out of school. Research also shows that students want to be challenged more in school. For example, 7 in 10 young people who had dropped out said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard in high school. Two-thirds of the dropouts said they would have worked harder if more was demanded of them (such as with higher academic expectations, more studying and more homework).¹

Q: Is the adoption of common core standards in English language arts and mathematics going to limit student access to other subject areas, such as the arts or career and technical education?

A: No. New York understands the importance that all subjects have in preparing students for success beyond high school. Graduating well-rounded students is important for the State's future. The clearer standards of the Common Core will actually help teachers integrate learning across subject areas. This means that students will be given lessons that bring together mathematics, science, social studies, English language arts and other subjects.

Q: Do the Common Core State Standards penalize students in low-performing schools by creating unrealistically high expectations?

A: No. All too often, students in low performing schools today are held to lower expectations. New York has adopted the Common Core State Standards so that *all* students receive an excellent education.

Glossary:

- Shift – A change in how teachers teach and how students learn
- Text – Any written work
- Non-fiction – Texts about real-life events or facts
- Evidence – Bits of proof from the text
- Arguments – How students to convince someone of something
- Judgment – A student's conclusion about what they have read
- Focus – Learning more on fewer topics
- Speed and Accuracy – How quickly a student can solve math problems correctly

Sources:

- Common Core State Standards Initiative: <http://www.corestandards.org/>
- Council of Great City Schools: <http://www.cgcs.org>
- EngageNY: www.engageny.org
- National PTA: <http://pta.org>

¹ Civic Enterprises. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. March 2006.
<http://www.saanys.org/uploads/content/TheSilentEpidemic-ExecSum.pdf>

Common Core Resources for Parents

Where to Learn More and Get More

NATIONAL RESOURCES

National PTA Parent's Guides for Student Success

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

The site contains a suite of materials, including short guides explaining changes in standards in English language arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Guides are available for each grade K-8 and for high school by subject.

The guides are available in English and Spanish and include:

- What children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade with the new standards.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career readiness.

Council of Great City Schools Parent Roadmap

<http://www.cgcs.org/Domain/36>

The site provides individual road maps in English and Spanish for ELA and mathematics for each of grades K-8. These maps help guide parents through what their children will be learning and how they can support that learning. They also provide timelines showing how selected standards change from year to year so that students will be college- and career-ready upon their graduation from high school.

The Council of Great City Schools has also produced a parent-friendly three minute video explaining the Common Core, available at: <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>

Stand for Children Web site

<http://stand.org/national/blog/2012/09/10/common-core-standards-building-strong-foundation-our-childrens-success>

The Stand for Children web site includes a brief and parent-friendly description about why states have adopted CCSS, what the shifts are and what will change for students.

NEW YORK RESOURCES

Engage New York Parent and Family Resources

<http://engageny.org/parent-and-family-resources>



Our Students. Their Moment.

This page links to the resources described here as well as others, including guides and activities to help parents better understand how New York is implementing Common Core Learning Standards and how they will look in classrooms.

Engage New York Common Core Assessments

<http://engageny.org/common-core-assessments> and <http://engageny.org/resource/test-guides-for-english-language-arts-and-mathematics>

Resources and information for parents interested in learning more about Common Core assessments, including test guides and sample questions.

New York City Department of Education Common Core Library for Families

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/default.htm>

This site includes resources such as an Overview of Common Core and a script to accompany a brief video in multiple languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

Working with the "Shifts"

What Parents Can Do to Help their Children Learn

The Common Core State Standards ask teachers to make 12 major "shifts" or (changes) in their classrooms – six shifts in English language arts and six shifts in Mathematics. These changes may be tough at first as students and teachers adjust to higher expectations.

As a parent, you can help and learn more by talking with your child about what they are learning. Ask open-ended questions about what they learned in school each day, read their homework and attend school events to learn about what their teachers expect.

This document explains some of the ways that your child's classroom is changing and how you can help; for more information, check out www.engageny.org.

THE 12 SHIFTS

| English Language Arts/Literacy | Mathematics |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Read as much non-fiction as fiction | • Build skills across grade levels |
| • Learn about the world by reading | • Learn more about less |
| • Read more challenging material | • Use math facts easily |
| • Talk about reading using "evidence" | • Think fast AND solve problems |
| • Write about texts using "evidence" | • Really know it, really do it |
| • Know more vocab words | • Use math in the real world |

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS & IDEAS FOR PARENTS

| What's the shift? | What will students have to do? | What can parents do to help? |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Read as much fiction as non-fiction | Read more non-fiction | Supply more non-fiction texts |
| | Understand how non-fiction is written and put together | Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child |
| | Enjoy and discuss the details of non-fiction | Have fun with non-fiction in front of your child |
| Learn about the world by reading | Learn more about science and social studies through reading | Supply series of texts on topics that interest your child |
| | Use "primary source" documents | Find books that explain how things work and why |
| | Get smarter through the use of texts | Discuss non-fiction texts and their ideas |
| Read more challenging material | Re-read until they understand | Know what is grade-level appropriate |
| | Read books both at and above their comfort level | Provide challenging texts as well as books they can read easily |
| | Handle frustration | Read challenging books with your child |
| | Keep pushing to improve | Show that challenging books are worth reading |
| | Find evidence to support their arguments | Talk about texts |
| Talk about reading using evidence | Form judgments and opinions | Demand evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements |
| | Discuss what the author is thinking | Read aloud or read the same book as your child and discuss |
| | Make predictions about what will happen next | Discuss predictions |
| | Make arguments in writing using evidence | Encourage writing at home |
| Write about text using evidence | Compare multiple texts in writing | Write "books" together using evidence and detail |
| | Learn to write well | Review samples of exemplar student writing |
| | Learn the words they will need to use in college and career | Read often and constantly with young children |
| Know more vocab words | Get smarter at using the "language of power" | Read multiple books on the same topic |
| | | Talk to your children, read to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes and word games |

MATHEMATICS: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS & IDEAS FOR PARENTS

| What's the shift? | What will students have to do? | What can parents do to help? |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Build skills across grade levels | Keep building on learning year after year | Be aware of what your child struggled with last year and how that will effect ongoing learning |
| | | Advocate for your child |
| | | Ensure that support is given for "gap" skills, such as negative numbers, fractions, etc. |
| Learn more about less | Spend more time on fewer concepts | Know what the priority work is for your child at their grade level |
| Use math facts easily | Go more in-depth on each concept | Spend time with your child on priority work |
| | | Ask your child's teacher for reports on your child's progress on priority work |
| Think fast AND solve problems | Spend time practicing by doing lots of problems on the same idea | Push children to know, understand and memorize basic math facts |
| | | Know all of the fluencies your child should have |
| | | Prioritize learning the fluencies your child finds most difficult |
| Really know it, really do it | Make the math work, and understand why it does | Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands <i>why</i> as well as <i>what</i> the answer is. |
| | Talk about why the math works | Advocate for the time your child needs to learn key math skills |
| | Prove that they know why and how the math works | Provide time for your child to work on math skills at home |
| Use math in the real world | Apply math in real world situations | Ask your child to do the math that comes up in daily life |
| | Know which math skills to use for which situation | |

Effective Strategies for English Language Learners

Keep in mind that strategies that are good for teaching English Language Learners are good for *every* learner.

1. Identify them— Step one. Know who the EL students are in your class.

2. Give them ways to show understanding in different ways that count— Sure, we assess on writing essays, but can we also assess a skill based on a 1-3 sentence submission like an exit card, blog post, or caption? How 'bout as a sound file? How about as a discussion, debate, or formal conversation? We can make rubrics for just about anything, so why not try something that isn't just writing-focused?

3. Keep them close— Try to put as many EL students as possible in the tables closest to you or the front of the room. If they can't be right next to the teacher, at least put them in a functioning group, surrounded by achievers plus hopefully a person they would like to sit with. (see strategy #14)

4. Notice the top 3 errors they all share and teach to those— it's hard to individualize attention for every kid, but if you can identify the top 3-5 errors they all tend to make and then weave lessons around those into your class lessons, then at least you will have some targeted lessons in the bag.

5. Blog— Blogging means they don't have to raise their hand in public. In addition, a teacher can create a prompt easily based on responding not only to a piece of reading, but also to a picture or a video. What's turned in can be anywhere from 1 sentence to 5 paragraphs. It's up to you, but it definitely seems to demystify participation for many of them.

6. Give Students Choice— Let them choose the book they get credit reading. Let them choose from a few prompts to answer. Let them choose the question they respond to. Etc...

7. Give them Accessible Scaffolds— Have them glue scaffolds into their writers note books to give them ownership of their resources. These can be sentence stems for oral discussion, definitions, sentence stems for leveled questions, outlines, etc....

8. Have them work with partners- Working with partners develops their oral communication skills and comprehension. Talking about what we are learning about or sharing what they have written helps them retain information and get better in communicating their knowledge.

9. Have them use T-T-W- Use the think, talk, write strategy to prep their brains.

10. Create opportunities for "small responses"- Use "Think Marks." These are book marks where they can write questions, thoughts, vocabulary in a non-threatening, short and sweet format.

11. Use the "Say Something" strategy— This is where the students are given sentence starters to help them comment on what they are reading before, during, and after.

12. Use cloze paragraphs to help scaffold writing – Create paragraphs structures that ask them to fill in the blanks with content. That way they learn organization and structure through modeling while still showing their knowledge.

13. Review Key Vocabulary- Model the correct pronunciation and have the whole class repeat it chorally (this is good for our EOs as well, since sometimes they don't know how to properly pronounce the words either).

14. Use Heterogeneous Grouping — Mix them up. Seat an English learner next to another student who speaks the same language.

15. Modify rubrics for our ELD students– Develop modified rubrics that reflect mastery of content rather than perfection of grammar, syntax, mechanics, punctuation, etc. Assess what's most important.

16. Use a word of the day to teach high-level content words- Be sure to use these words on a regular basis and to remind students of the meaning and simpler synonyms we often use to mean the same thing. e.g. "The exposition is the word we use to describe the beginning of a story. So, what happens in the exposition of "Seventh Grade?"

17. Use BrainPop to review concepts – Have students take notes from the video, as needed. Use the close captioning option so students can hear and read the words as the video progresses.

18. Use Listening and Reading Simultaneously – Use the audio CDs or downloads to listen to the story as students follow along in their texts.

19. Give them choice, but limit their choices – Unlimited choices are overwhelming for anybody. Limit their choices of presentation so they aren't hit by a wall of possibilities. That way, they are also choosing from possibilities that reflect the level you expect and it doesn't freak them out.

20. Provide first sentences or paragraphs for writing assignments – Having that first part done already for them to tack onto can defeat the blank-white-paper-phobia.

21. Allow students to parrot the teacher's answers – If they can do that much, they've likely been paying attention.

22. Find time to teach grammar explicitly – Principal parts of verbs is an area that deserves special attention. When we hear someone say "the car is broke" or "I should have went" we ask whether he paid attention during English class, yet many of the errors adults make involve similar problems with verbs. Be the model and target what you want them to know.

23. Provide Model Pieces – Post correct examples of work, color-coded when possible. It's a great time saver when kids say they don't know how to do an assignment or are confused about your level of expectation.

24. Provide a Print Rich Environment- Have a classroom library with a wide variety of reading materials.

them to read whatever strikes their fancy even if it seems that it is not challenging them. Once you get them hooked on your library, then you can direct them to more challenging materials.

25. Teach How to Use Dictionaries- Don't assume kids know how to use a dictionary or any other kind of informational resource. Teach them how to use them and that they are not all created equal. Have several types in the classroom-picture dictionaries, collegiate dictionaries, English-Learner dictionaries. Show them some reputable online dictionaries. Encourage their use. Create a homework assignment that requires dictionary use. Model using them yourself regularly.
- 26 Color Code- Use color and shapes to locate text structure, find verbs, adjectives, literary techniques at work. "Cloud the similes and make the descriptive adjectives green." Use color to get them interacting with text.
- 27 Utilize Props and Visual Cues- Point at things, use the document camera; get props from a yard sale. A giant ear for "listen", a golden key for "this is important", a pirate's hook for narrative attention getters.
28. Speak Idiomatically- Use idioms and figurative language in your speech and draw attention to it when you do. "Metaphorically speaking, we need to get a fire under us to finish this assignment before the bell rings."
29. Give them a heads up – Don't "require" EL students to talk on the spot. Instead, give them fair warning. Tell them that tomorrow we're doing this and that, and then let them know that you will ask them two questions about it. Or ask a stronger student to answer, and then ask the EL student to repeat what that student said. Ask the EL student if he agrees. This way, you can indirectly get the student to participate in discussions without all the anxiety.
30. Let them use their expertise - Encourage Spanish speakers to use their knowledge of the language in figuring out meanings of new vocabulary. There is a lot of correlation and similarities that they don't realize.
31. Utilize role-playing – Role playing is great to use and it doesn't have to take a lot of class time. It's fun for everyone and EL students can "see" what they just read. You can also ask for students to illustrate on the board.
32. Encourage parental involvement – Many EL parents still don't understand the American educational system. Something as simple as reading a report card or grade sheet is new to them. They may not even know what classes their children are taking. Find ways to get parents involved. Send home a sheet in the home language that specifically explains how to email or call you. Encourage parents to write notes to you in their own language (student will translate, and they usually are very honest). This bridge in communication makes students more accountable because now they know that their parents are involved and parents have a better understanding of what's going on.
33. Compare their learning to what they recognize – When teaching the grammar/mechanics of writing, ask students to compare it to their native language. Sometimes if they are aware of the differences or similarities, then English grammar will make more sense. Teachers don't have to be bilingual.

34. Have them think and write in their first language to fill in gaps – If there is a word or phrase that must be used to enhance the writing, but the student can only write it in her native language, let her do so. We want to develop fluency of thought. We don't want the student to give up because she's stuck on a word or phrase. This is true for using the bilingual electronic dictionaries. Tell students to only use it the last five or ten minutes of an assignment. Write whatever they can in English and leave blanks for the words/phrases they don't know. Then they can look it up later. Otherwise, they'll look up every other word!

35. Have them create samples on/at the board – Using the new activeboards or using a document camera/computer, students can come up and write, click/drag, label, color, highlight, etc. on the board. This helps check for understanding and it's FUN!

36. Find small group/one-on-one time – After teaching a lesson and sending off the kids to break out into small groups or work independently, pull the EL's and make sure they understand the lesson, and, if not, find out what they didn't understand. By working with a small group, even if it's only for a few minutes once or twice a week, you slowly gain an understanding of how much they understand from your lessons and what things you need to go through more thoroughly.

37. Use visuals – By having students draw pictures to represent vocabulary or key terms it helps them visualize the word or the concept better. For some EL's they can express themselves better through pictures than words.

38. Provide student samples – we can give kids directions and rubrics and tell them what a 5 paper looks like and the components that are necessary, but showing them samples of a real 5 paper from former students and comparing it to a 2, 3, or 4 paper has real power. Let them dissect it to help them become better writers. It is also a good model for them to refer back to and compare their own writings to.

39. Use academic vocabulary – Even if it seems like it would be above their heads, ELD students won't learn higher levels of word choice unless we use those words daily. Don't hesitate to use the word analyze or synthesize. Just make sure you use easier synonyms too while talking about what the words mean. Academic vocab is hard to understand on context alone.

40. Don't assume... – Finish this sentence however you want. Don't assume that just because they don't speak our language the student isn't capable of greatness. In the end, it's really all about ensuring that we are doing everything we can so that they understand the content and produce evidence of that knowledge in the most engaging way they can.



National
PTA

everychild.onevoice.

PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of kindergarten in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K-12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 1st grade.

KINDERGARTEN

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in kindergarten
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Learning new language skills is a hallmark of kindergarten. Your child will learn about the alphabet and its role in reading. Your child will practice rhyming, matching words with beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words. Practice with these types of activities is a powerful step toward learning to read and spell correctly. The size of your child's vocabulary is another key factor in his or her ability to read and comprehend books and stories. Your child also will begin to experiment with writing and will be encouraged to use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing letters to share information, ideas, and feelings.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in Kindergarten

- Naming upper- and lower-case letters, matching those letters with their sounds, and printing them
- Comparing the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories, such as fairy tales and folktales
- Retelling familiar stories and talking about stories read to them using details from the text
- Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to describe an event, including his or her reaction to what happened
- Stating an opinion or preference about a topic or book in writing (e.g., "My favorite book is . . .")
- Taking part in classroom conversations and following rules for discussions (e.g., learning to listen to others and taking turns when speaking)
- Speaking clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, including descriptions of familiar people, places, things, and events
- Asking and answering questions about key details in stories or other information read aloud
- Understanding and using question words (e.g., *who, what, where, when, why, how*) in discussions
- Learning to recognize, spell, and properly use those little grammatical words that hold the language together (e.g., *a, the, to, of, from, I, is, are*)

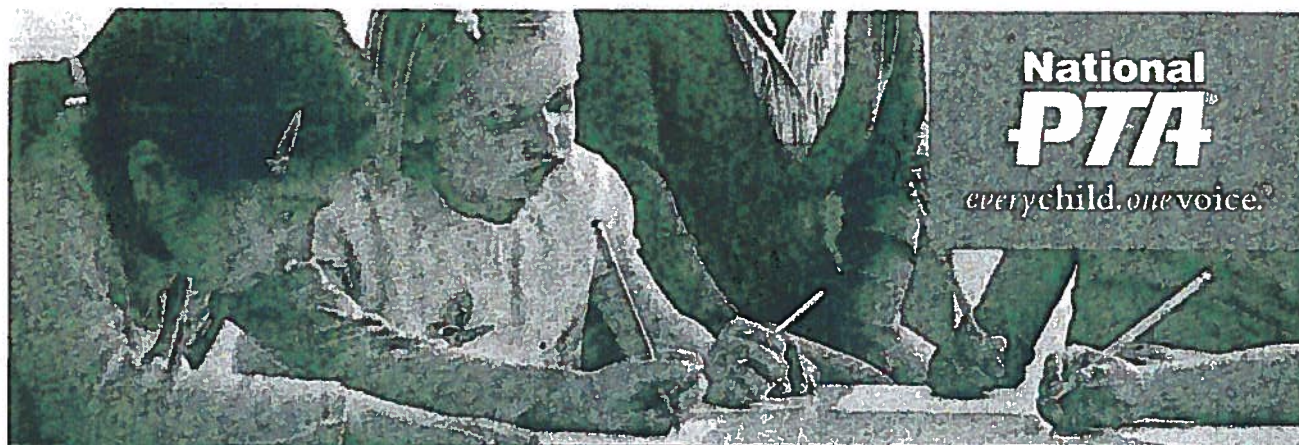
Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In kindergarten, these include:

- Using knowledge of letters and letter-sound correspondences to figure out how to spell words as they sound
- Reading and understanding a story designed for early readers

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

1ST GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 1st grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 2nd grade.

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THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 1st grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 1st grade, your child will become a more independent reader and writer. Your child will continue to learn and practice rules for recognizing the sounds that make up words and will be able to sound out more complex words. Such foundational skills are necessary and important components of developing proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend a wide range of materials. Students will learn to think about what they read and talk about the main ideas of simple stories. As they write and speak, 1st graders will learn to use language appropriately; this includes using complete sentences and spelling words with increasing accuracy.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 1st Grade

- Using phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing
- Describing characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- Getting facts and information from different writings
- Writing about a topic, supplying some facts, and providing some sense of opening and closing
- Participating in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of "how-to" books and using them to write a sequence of instructions)
- Taking part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions to clear up any confusion
- Describing people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly and with complete sentences
- Producing and expanding complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands, and exclamations
- Identifying the correct meaning for a word with multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (e.g., deciding whether the word *bat* means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball)
- Learning to think about finer distinctions in the meanings of near-synonyms (e.g., *marching*, *prancing*, *strutting*, *strolling*, *walking*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 1st grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level text with understanding and fluency
- Learning from, enjoying, and getting facts from books he or she reads and listens to

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

2ND GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 2nd grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K-12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 3rd grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

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HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

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At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 2nd grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Students in 2nd grade will gain more skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They continue to learn and practice rules for matching sounds to letters that make up words, and they learn new concepts — such as words that share the same root (e.g., *add* and *additional*) — that help them figure out the meanings of new words. Writing will become an exciting way for your child to use newly learned words and phrases to express ideas. As they write and speak, 2nd graders will be more attentive to the formal and informal uses of English and will spell most words correctly in their writing.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 2nd Grade

- Paying close attention to details, including illustrations and graphics, in stories and books to answer *who, what, where, when, why, and how* questions
- Determining the lesson or moral of stories, fables, and folktales
- Using text features (e.g., captions, bold print, indexes) to locate key facts or information efficiently
- Writing an opinion about a book he or she has read, using important details from the materials to support that opinion
- Writing stories that include a short sequence of events and include a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Participating in shared research projects (e.g., read books on a single topic to produce a report)
- Taking part in conversations by linking his or her comments to the remarks of others and asking and answering questions to gather additional information or deepen understanding of the topic
- Retelling key information or ideas from media or books read aloud
- Producing, expanding, and rearranging sentences (e.g., "The boy watched the movie"; "The little boy watched the movie"; "The action movie was watched by the little boy")
- Determining the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix or suffix is added to a known word (happy/unhappy; pain/painful/painless)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 2nd grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level books and stories with understanding and fluency
- Building a foundation of knowledge through reading and listening to books in history/social studies, science, and other subjects

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

3RD GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 3rd grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 4th grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

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HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

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At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 3rd grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Third grade is a pivotal year for your child. Learning to read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. By practicing with learning-to-read strategies, your child will reliably be able to make sense of multisyllable words in books. He or she will come to appreciate that words have meanings that are not literal (e.g., *a piece of cake*) and have relationships to other words (e.g., *company* and *companion*). Recognizing and understanding words will help your child read increasingly challenging stories and books and build knowledge about the world around him or her. By the end of the year, your child also will be writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 3rd Grade

- Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story
- Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories (e.g., first, second, third; cause and effect)
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details
- Writing stories that establish a situation and include details and clear sequences of events that describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters
- Independently conducting short research projects that build knowledge about various topics
- Asking and answering questions about information he or she hears from a speaker or while participating in classroom discussions, offering appropriate elaboration and detail that build on what others have said
- Reading stories and poems aloud fluently, without pausing to figure out what each word means
- Distinguishing the literal and nonliteral meanings of words, such as *something's fishy* and *cold shoulder*
- Spelling correctly and consulting dictionaries to clarify meanings of words

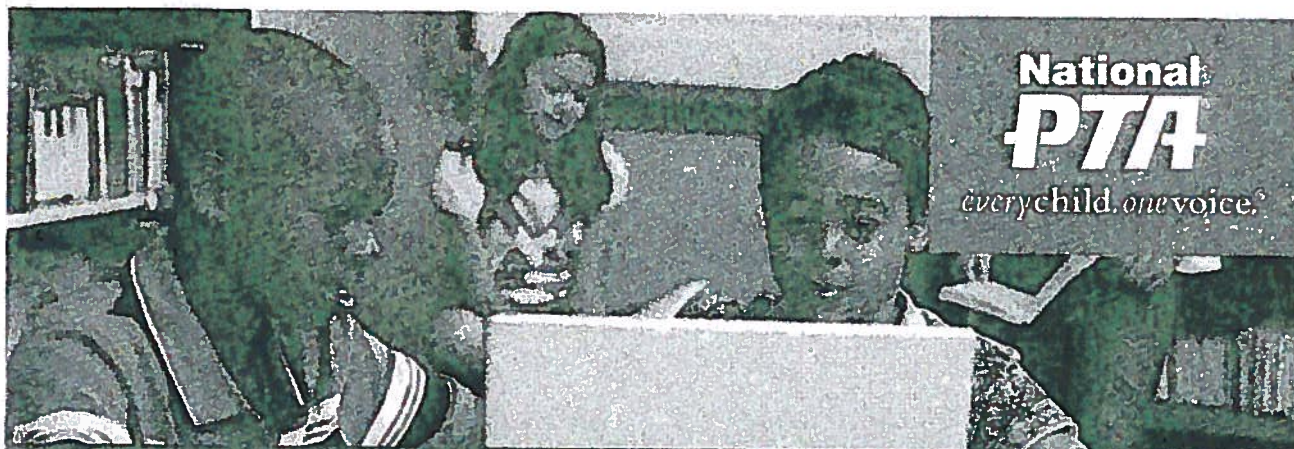
Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 3rd grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level books, stories, poems, and articles fluently
- Writing and speaking well, following rules of punctuation and grammar

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

4TH GRADE

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WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

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HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

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At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 4th grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

Building the stamina and skills to read challenging fiction, nonfiction, and other materials is fundamental in 4th grade. Your child will continue to learn about the world as well as build vocabulary skills by reading more complicated stories and poems from different cultures and a range of books on history, science, art, and music. Fourth grade students also will make important strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what a book says — both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By 4th grade, your child will be writing effective summaries, book reports, and descriptions of characters or events that use correct grammar and punctuation.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 4th Grade

- Describing the basic elements of stories — such as characters, events, and settings — by drawing on specific details in the text
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: these include understanding the main and supporting ideas; being able to compare and contrast information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples
- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the Internet
- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (*synonyms*) and to their opposites (*antonyms*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 4th grade, these include:

- Comprehending a range of grade-level stories, poems, and informational texts such as biographies, articles, or guidebooks about history, science, or the arts
- Building understanding of relationships between words and nuances in word meanings — *synonyms*, *antonyms*, *idioms* — and using this knowledge to convey ideas precisely

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

5TH GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 5th grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 6th grade.

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THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 5th grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 5th grade, your child will read widely and deeply from a range of high-quality, increasingly challenging fiction and nonfiction from diverse cultures and time periods. Building knowledge about subjects through research projects and responding analytically to literary and informational sources will be key to your child's continuing success. Your child will write stories or essays that are several paragraphs long. By devoting significant time and effort to producing numerous written pieces over short and extended timeframes throughout the year, he or she also will gain control over many conventions of grammar, usage, and punctuation as well as learn ways to make himself or herself understood.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 5th Grade

- Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their themes or main ideas
- Identifying and judging evidence that supports particular ideas in an author's argument to change a reader's point of view
- Integrating information from several print and digital sources to answer questions and solve problems
- Writing opinions that offer reasoned arguments and provide facts and examples that are logically grouped to support the writer's point of view
- Writing stories, real or imaginary, that unfold naturally and developing the plot with dialogue, description, and effective pacing of the action
- Coming to classroom discussions prepared, then engaging fully and thoughtfully with others (e.g., contributing accurate, relevant information; elaborating on the remarks of others; synthesizing ideas)
- Reporting on a topic or presenting an opinion with his or her own words, a logical sequence of ideas, sufficient facts and details, and formal English when appropriate
- Expanding, combining, and reducing sentences to improve meaning, interest, and style of writing
- Building knowledge of academic words with an emphasis on those that signal a contrast in ideas or logical relationships, such as *on the other hand*, *similarly*, and *therefore*
- Producing writing on the computer

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 5th grade, these include:

- Reading closely and drawing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction materials, including the ability to quote accurately from them when answering questions
- Adjusting communications to accomplish a particular purpose (e.g., providing more background information for audiences who do not know the topic well)

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

6TH GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 6th grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K-12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 7th grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

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THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 6th grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 6th grade, students apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of longer, more challenging books and articles. That includes learning about how authors try to influence readers and find reasons to support their ideas. Focusing on how authors make their points and support their arguments with evidence and reasoning helps 6th grade students sharpen their ability to write and speak with more clarity and coherence. Students also will expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. To meet these literacy goals, students must devote significant attention to precise details in their reading and when writing.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 6th Grade

- Analyzing how chapters of a book, scenes of a play, or stanzas of a poem fit into the overall structure of the piece and contribute to the development of ideas or themes
- Gaining knowledge from materials that make extensive use of elaborate diagrams and data to convey information and illustrate concepts
- Evaluating the argument and specific claims in written materials or a speech, and distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not
- Presenting claims and findings to others orally, sequencing ideas logically, and accentuating main ideas or themes
- Writing arguments that provide clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources
- Writing brief reports that examine a topic, have a clear focus, and include relevant facts, details, and quotations
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and sharpening the focus based on the research findings
- Reviewing and paraphrasing key ideas and multiple perspectives of a speaker
- Recognizing variations from standard English in his or her own and others' writing and speaking, and using this knowledge to improve language use
- Determining the correct meaning of a word based on the context in which it is used (e.g., the rest of the sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 6th grade, these include:

- Reading closely and citing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction to support an analysis of what the materials say
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?