

Critical Concepts Parent Guide



K-8 Literacy & Math



About This Document

Dear parents,

This document is intended to help you better understand the academic expectations of your children in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The guide offers knowledge and skills that are important for student growth at each grade level, Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth grade. It is our hope that you will gain a clear understanding of the skills and basic tools your child will need to be successful during the school year. In developing this document our team had rich conversations. We examined instructional priorities with different types of learners in mind. This document should also assist you as you engage in effective conversations with teachers.

This guide includes:

- Key items children should be learning in English Language Arts and Mathematics at each grade level
- Links, **in blue and underlined**, to activities that you can access at home to support your child's learning
- Links, **in blue and underlined**, to information that will help you understand grade-level expectations

We hope you find this document both useful and helpful.

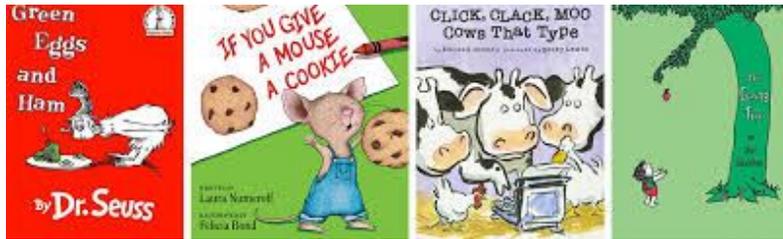
Sincerely,

The School Improvement Team at Questar III BOCES

A Parent's Guide to Reading & Writing

PreK through 8th grade

PreKindergarten



For a list of suggested books to read aloud [click here](#).

Conversations

Talk with others.
Engage in turn-taking while talking.
Talk about feelings.
Hear and say rhyming words (cat/hat, house/mouse).

Print

Find some known letters in print (Can you show me a "C"?).
Notice [print in the environment](#) (STOP signs, McDonald's sign).
Recognize your name and use letters to represent it.
Recognize a **few** common words (I, a, see). [Dolch High-Frequency Word List](#)
Follow print by pointing to each word in a book or text.
Hold and handle books correctly (front, back, top, bottom, beginning, end).
Understand that a book has a title (name of the book), author (person who writes the book), and illustrator (person who draws the pictures in the book).

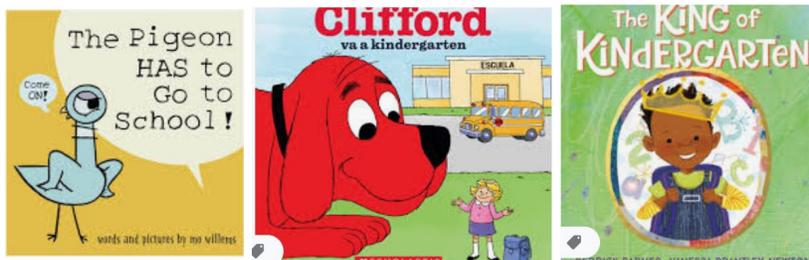
Discussion

Retell stories.
Ask questions about a story.
Make predictions. (What do you think is going to happen next?)
Talk about why a story is liked or disliked.
Talk about how a character feels in a story.

Writing

Write and draw to tell about a story.
Draw/Write about the beginning, middle, and end of a story.
Label drawings using letters.

Kindergarten



For a list of suggested book titles to read aloud [click here](#).

Listening for Sounds in Words

Hear and say [sounds in words](#) (c-a-t).

Hear sound in syllables (mon/key).

Hear rhymes (hat/cat).

Break words apart.

Letters and Letter Sounds

Know all letters and sounds, A-Z, and some combinations (ch, sh, th).

Begin to [invent spelling](#) (write words with sounds they hear: butrfli= butterfly).

Read **some** words. [Dolch High-Frequency Word List](#).

Read words with short vowels (a,e,i,o,u).

Notice endings on words (cat/cats).

Reading and Understanding

Check to see what is happening in the picture.

Point to each word as it is read.

Find some known words on a page. (Can you find the word "the"?)

Read aloud with others.

Read like the teacher reads (memorized short text).

Read books over and over with crisp, quick pointing.

Talk about the author (person who writes the book) and illustrator (person who draws the pictures in the book).

Talk about characters, problems, and events in the story.

Make predictions about what will happen next.

Express personal connections through discussion.

Have opinions about the text.

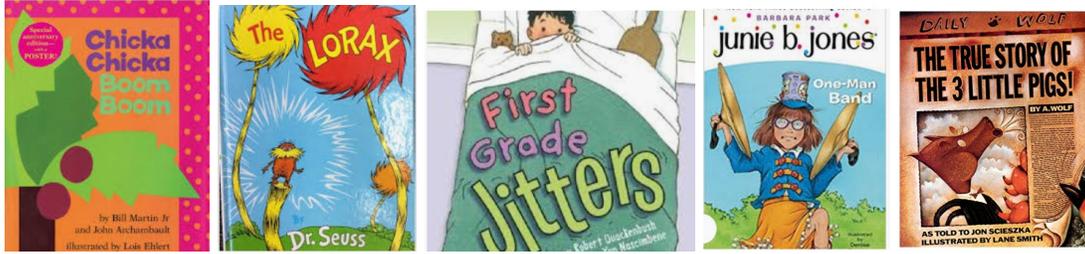
Compare different versions of the same story, rhyme, or poem.

Writing

Draw, label, and/or write about the story.

Write simple statements about the text.

First Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Read and Write Words

Use [invented spelling](#) (write words with sounds they hear: butrfli= butterfly).
Use blends (bl, cl) and digraphs (sh, ch, th) in words.
Read and write the most common words. [Dolch High-Frequency Word List](#).
Count syllables in words (fan/tas/tic = 3 syllables).
Read words with long vowel sounds (a.e.i,o,u).

Reading

Notice the first word, capital/upper case letters, and punctuation marks (. ? !) in books.
Read to the end of a line and then go to the beginning of the next line when reading.
Stop reading when it doesn't look right, sound right or if it doesn't make sense.
Know the difference between a word and a sentence, and a sentence and a paragraph.
Read aloud or silently in 2-3 word chunks.
Notice periods (.) exclamation marks (!) and **BOLD** words.
Read dialogue with expression.

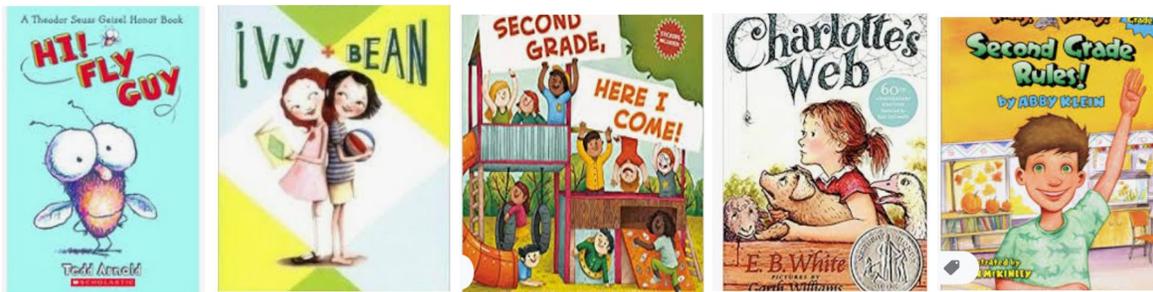
Understanding Reading

Notice a lack of understanding while reading and ask questions to clarify confusion.
Notice and use the information in pictures to make meaning.
Talk about characters, problems, and events in a story.
Make predictions about what might happen next.
Talk about the character's feelings when reading.
Talk about personal connections when reading. (I ride my bike to the park too!) (I saw a movie like that.)
Recognize and identify parts of stories (beginning, middle, and end) in order.
Express opinions about the story and how it ends. (I liked this story because.)
Notice when the author uses language or words to make the text interesting or funny.

Writing

Label, draw and write interesting information about the story.
Use details from the text when writing about a story.
Recognize and use some aspects of text structures when writing.

Second Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Read and Write Words

Know vowel teams (two letters that make one sound), trigraphs (three letters that make one sound) and multisyllabic words (**words** that have more than one syllable, or vowel sound).

Read and write all high-frequency words. [Dolch High-Frequency Word List](#).

Use letter combinations that represent vowels.

Know the difference between short and long vowels.

Know that some words with letter patterns have no sound (night and lamb).

Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, use of pausing and phrasing, when reading.

Quickly and automatically solve most words in the text.

Read silently and orally with a smooth voice.

Understanding Reading

Talk about characters, problems, and events in a story during a discussion.

Make predictions before reading about what will happen next or what characters might do.

Use background knowledge and experiences to contribute to text understanding.

Make connections between text and previously read or heard texts.

Use details from illustrations to contribute to understanding the text.

Understand a character's feelings or motivations in preparation for reading in the character's voice.

Begin to understand how the writer's word choice can contribute to the mood of a story.

Notice characters that have memorable traits.

Notice how the layout of pictures or print affects the way you read it (ex: larger fonts and **bold text**).

Writing

Write short responses to a text in a variety of ways (predictions, opinions, facts).

Write sentences reporting interesting information about the text.

Write opinions about the text and back them up with specific details from the text.

Third Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Studying Words

Understand prefixes and suffixes (**friend**, **befriend**, **friendly**).

Recognize patterns in known words to help you learn new words. [Dolch High-Frequency Word List](#)

Read and write words with three or more syllables (**but-ter-fly**, **ham-bur-ger**).

Reread to solve words and comprehend ideas.

Understanding Reading

Notice character change over time.

Notice the character's motivations and feelings.

Notice problems and solutions in books.

Talk about setting (where an event takes place) and plot (main events) in books.

Understand the theme (main idea or big idea) in books.

Talk about books using evidence from the story.

State your opinions about a book using evidence from it.

Tell how a book is organized and how it helps with your understanding.

Understand how text features assist in gaining new information (pictures or photographs, captions, graphs, /charts).

Writing

Write to show an understanding of new information.

Write summaries that include important details.

Write opinions about books and support ideas with text-specific reasons.

Fourth Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Studying Words

- Read and write complex compound words.
- Break words into syllables to write them accurately.
- Notice patterns in words to assist in reading and writing them quickly.
- Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, use phrasing, and read punctuation in a way that reflects understanding.
- Adjust reading pace to process difficult texts.
- Reread to solve words or comprehend ideas.
- Use word parts to make meaning of new words.

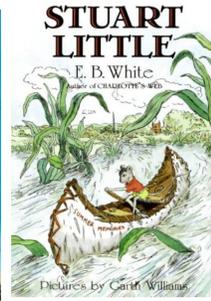
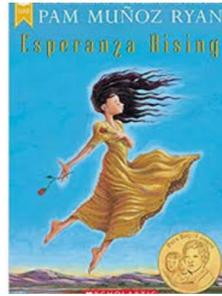
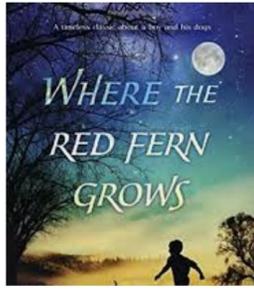
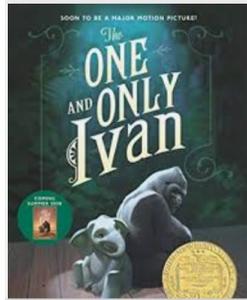
Understanding Reading

- Make connections between characters in different texts. (This character in this book is just like the character in the other book.)
- Take into account perspectives that may be unfamiliar when understanding character motives.
- Understand character traits and how and why they change, with evidence.
- Understand difficult plots.
- Understand the relationship between setting and plot.
- Identify significant events and tell how they are related to the problem or solution of the story.
- Understand the theme or big ideas of a text and discuss how they relate to people's lives today.
- Read texts with multiple topics and categories and determine the main idea.
- Express changes in ideas across the reading as events unfold.
- Use background knowledge to understand new information.
- Identify important ideas in a text and talk about them in an organized way.
- Understand the full range of graphics (visual images) and how they provide information that extends the text.

Writing

- When writing, provide details that are important in understanding the relationship between plot, setting and character traits.
- Write opinions about text and evidence to support thinking.
- Use short writes to respond to a text in a variety of ways.

Fifth Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Studying Words

Recognize prefixes and suffixes.
Use correct word endings.
Recognize the base/root of words.

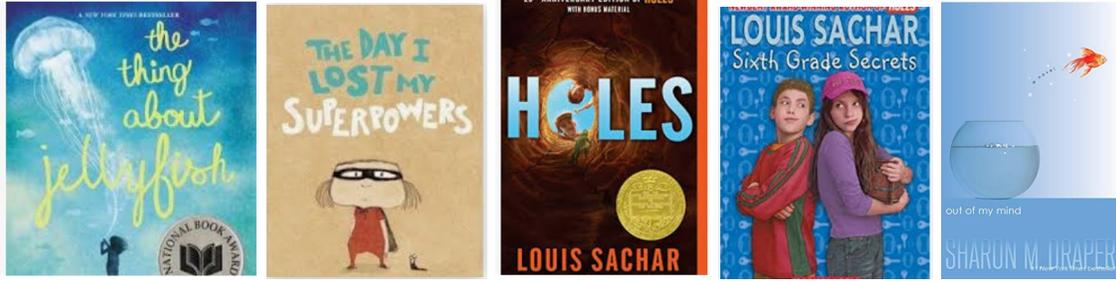
Understanding Reading

Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding.
Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, phrasing, and read punctuation in a way that reflects understanding.
Gain important information from longer texts with multiple characters and longer dialogue.
Examine character traits recognizing that they change over time.
Follow several plots through a story,
Construct summaries that reflect the important ideas in the text.
Discuss the theme of a story.
Infer the big ideas of a text.
Form questions and search for answers while reading.
Notice details in illustrations that provide important information for understanding the text.
Understand texts with a variety of layouts and structures.
Read and understand challenging works that are not defined in the text.
Understand words with more than one meaning.

Writing

Write to respond to a text in a variety of ways.
Write accurate notes to be used in future writings.
Create graphic organizers to show understanding of text.
Write reports that use graphic organizers to present information about a text.
Write and support a central idea of a text.

Sixth Grade



For a suggested book list [click here](#).

Studying Words

Use word parts to figure out the meaning of unknown words.
Understand the relationships between words.
Recognize and use figurative language and word origins.
Recognize and use syllables, plurals, and verb endings.

Understanding Reading

Understand character traits and recognize that they may change throughout the text.
Understand that characters are often slow to know themselves and to reveal themselves.
Analyze the narrator's point of view.
Understand complex themes.
Follow the plot and mini-plots throughout the text.
Follow multiple problems and understand that only some of them will be solved.
Follow events that are connected across hundreds of pages.
Understand themes that require knowledge of today's problems and cultural diversity.
Read texts that contain multiple topics.
Connect knowledge of historical and current events.
Understand text with a variety of structures.
Read a text with a variety of nonfiction formats.
Read and understand words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to solve.

Writing

Write summaries about a text using support from the text.
Write reports that use text and graphic organizers to present information.
Write short responses to a text in a variety of ways (ex: personal response, interpretations, critiques).

Seventh & Eighth Grade



For tips on ELA in 7th grade [click here](#). For tips on ELA in 8th grade [click here](#)

For a suggested book list for 7th grade [click here](#). For a suggested book list for 8th grade [click here](#)

Studying Words

- Understand the multiple meanings of words when reading texts.
- Use knowledge of base/ roots in figuring out the meaning of new words in texts.
- Recognize and use syllables, plurals, and verb endings.

Understanding Reading

- Read regional dialect, statements in languages other than English, and new vocabulary words with fluency.
- Use knowledge of genres and text structures to read difficult texts.
- Follow many characters.
- Follow many conflicting viewpoints.
- Understand characters' flaws and strengths that are often significant to how the events fall out.
- Read knowing that characters take longer to get to know and that they shift subtly throughout the story.
- Draw upon background knowledge and prior reading experiences to think critically about the theme.
- Follow a conflict that is complex and is revealed in parts.
- Understand how a story's structure connects to some of the big ideas.
- Understand that time doesn't always move sequentially, in texts, and may follow different narratives.
- Understand texts with a wide range of challenging themes that may be understood in layers.
- Infer themes in texts that present mature issues.
- Read texts that contain multiple topics that represent a larger topic.
- Connect knowledge of historical and current events.
- Take on diverse perspectives as a reader.
- Understand text with a variety of structures.
- Read a text with a variety of nonfiction structures and formats.
- Read many words requiring background knowledge.
- Read a variety of words that stand for big ideas and concepts.

Writing

- Write about a text using different media and formats (ex: posters, letters, grids, advertisements).
- Write arguments, providing specific examples and evidence from text to support statements.
- Analyze the quality of a text, offering rationales and examples for points made.
- Write reports that incorporate information from multiple resources while supporting a clear focus.

A Parent's Guide to Mathematics

PreK through 8th grade

PreKindergarten



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Counting and Cardinality

Count from 1 to 20.

Write numerals 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Count up to 10 objects drawn or organized in a line, array, or circle to answer questions.

Given a number from 1 to 10, count out that many objects.

Compare two groups of objects and determine which group has more or less, or if the two groups are equal.

Identify the first and last positions in a line.

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Explore addition and subtraction by using objects or fingers to solve questions posed in a situation or story problem.

Kindergarten



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To see what math skills look like in kindergarten, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Counting and Cardinality

- Count from 1 to 100 by ones and tens, starting from any given number.
- Write numerals from 0 to 20.
- Count up to 20 objects drawn or organized in any way to answer questions.
- Given a number up to 20, count out that many objects.
- Compare a group of objects to another, and determine if it has more or less.
- Compare one numeral, from 1 to 10, to another and determine if it is more or less.

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Using various strategies, add and subtract within 10 to solve one-step story/word problems involving addition or subtraction.
- Know addition and subtraction facts within 5 from memory.

First Grade



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For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Using various strategies, add and subtract within 20 to solve one-step story/word problems involving addition or subtraction.

Know addition and subtraction facts within 10 from memory.

Using numbers from 0 to 20, understand that finding a missing part in an addition problem is the same as finding the result of a subtraction problem.

Understand that an equal sign means the quantities on both sides of the equation have the same value.

Solve an addition or subtraction equation with the unknown in any position.

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Understand the value of the tens place and ones place in a two digit number.

Compare 2 two-digit numbers using the symbols $<$ (less than), $=$ (equal to), and $>$ (greater than).

Given a number from 10 to 90, mentally add or subtract 1 or 10.

Given a two-digit number, add or subtract multiples of 10.

Add any two numbers between 0 and 100.

Measurement and Data

Order three objects from shortest to longest, or from longest to shortest.

Measure the length of an object using same size "length units" (like paper clips or blocks) placed end to end with no gaps or overlaps.

Express the length of an object as a whole number of "length units" (i.e. the pencil is about 6 paper clips long).

Second Grade



"Math Meeting Board and Lesson" by Old Shoe Woman is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

To see what math skills look like in second grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Using numbers from 0 to 100, solve one-step *and* two-step story/word problems involving addition and/or subtraction.

Know addition and subtraction facts within 20 from memory.

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Given a number from 100 to 900, mentally add or subtract 1, 10, or 100.

Add up to 4 two-digit numbers.

Using numbers from 0 to 1000, add or subtract two given numbers with or without regrouping.

Explain strategies used for addition and subtraction using place value.

Measurement and Data

Use numbers from 0 to 100 to solve story/word problems involving length.

Represent a whole number as the length from 0 to that given number on a number line.

Measure objects to the nearest whole number using a ruler (inches or centimeters), a yardstick, meter stick, or measuring tape (inches, feet, centimeters or meters).

Use a number line to show sums (addition) and differences (subtraction) within 100.

Third Grade



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To see what math skills look like in second grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Explain the result of a multiplication or division problem.

Use multiplication and/or division (with results within 100) to solve story/word problems in situations involving equal groups or arrays.

Understand that solving for a missing factor in a multiplication problem is the same as finding the result for a division problem.

Solve a multiplication or division equation with the unknown in any position.

Know the products (result of multiplication) of any 2 one-digit numbers from memory.

Solve two-step story/word problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division.

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using various strategies or algorithms.

Number and Operations with Fractions

****Note:** Denominators in 3rd grade are limited to: **1** (whole numbers), **2**(halves), **3**(thirds), **4**(fourths or quarters), **6**(sixths), and **8**(eighths).**

Understand a unit fraction is one part of a whole equally partitioned (i.e., $\frac{1}{4}$ is one of four equal quarters).

Understand the numerator of a fraction is the number of equal parts (i.e. $\frac{3}{4}$ represents 3 equal pieces of $\frac{1}{4}$).

Understand and represent a fraction on the number line.

Explain equivalence of fractions (i.e. why $\frac{2}{3}$ is the same as $\frac{4}{6}$).

Compare fractions by reasoning about their size.

Fourth Grade



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To see what math skills look like in fourth grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Represent and interpret verbal statements of multiplicative comparisons as multiplication equations.
Use multiplication or division to solve problems involving multiplicative comparison.
Distinguish between multiplicative and additive comparison (i.e. 3 times as many versus 3 more than).
Represent problems with an equation using a symbol for the unknown value.
Solve multi-step word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and/or division.
Interpret the remainder of a division problem in the context of that problem.

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Recognize that in a multi-digit number, the value of each place is ten times more than the place to its right (i.e. the 4 in 3,428 is ten times the value of the 4 in 245).
Read and write multi-digit numbers using base ten numerals, number names, and expanded form.
Compare two multi-digit numbers using $>$, $=$, and $<$ symbols to record the results.
Round numbers to any place.

Number and Operations with Fractions

****Note:** Denominators in 3rd grade are limited to: **1** (whole numbers), **2**(halves), **3**(thirds), **4**(fourths or quarters), **5**(fifths), **6**(sixths), **8**(eighths), **10**(tenths), and **12**(twelfths).**
Understand when and why fractions are equivalent, using visual models and/or descriptions.
Compare any two fractions.
Add and subtract fractions with the same denominators.
Use decimal notation for fractions with denominators of 10 or 100.
Compare two decimals to the hundredths by reasoning about their size.

Fifth Grade



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To see what math skills look like in fifth grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Number and Operations in Base Ten

Recognize that in a multi-digit number, the value of each place is one tenth of the place to its left.
Understand each place value as a power of 10.
Read, write and compare decimals to thousandths.
Round decimals to any place.
Fluently multiply multi-digit numbers using a standard algorithm.
Divide numbers into the thousands by two digit numbers.

Number and Operations with Fractions

Interpret a fraction as division of the numerator by the denominator.
Solve word problems involving division that result in fractions or mixed numbers.
Multiply a fraction and a whole number.
Divide whole numbers by unit fractions and divide unit fractions by whole numbers.
Solve real-world problems involving multiplication of fractions and mixed numbers.

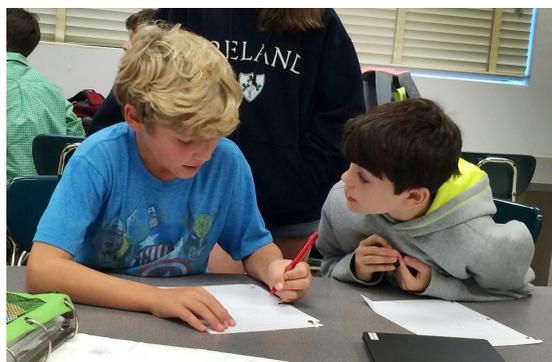
Measurement and Data

Understand volume as space filled with equally sized cubes (i.e. cubic centimeters, cubic inches, cubic feet).
Solve real-world problems involving volume.

Geometry

Understand and graph points in the first quadrant of the coordinate plane.
Interpret points on the graph in context of a given situation.
Represent real-world and mathematical problems by graphing points in the first quadrant.

Sixth Grade



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To see what math skills look like in sixth grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities

Write and evaluate expressions involving exponents.

Write, read, and evaluate algebraic expressions.

Identify and generate equivalent algebraic expressions.

Substitute values into algebraic equations and inequalities to determine whether the value makes it true or false.

Use a variable, or letter, to represent the unknown value in an algebraic equation.

Solve real-world and mathematical problems by writing and solving one step algebraic equations.

Use two variables to represent a given situation or relationship.

Differentiate between dependent and independent variables in a given situation or relationship.

Number System

Compute and solve word problems using division of fractions.

Understand positive and negative numbers describe opposite directions or values.

Describe and represent real-world context using positive and negative numbers.

Use a number line to represent positive and negative numbers and their relationship to zero.

Solve real-world and mathematical problems using graphs and number lines.

Ratios and Proportions

Understand the concept of a ratio.

Understand the concept of a unit rate.

Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Seventh Grade



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To see what math skills look like in seventh grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities

Add, subtract, factor and expand expressions involving whole, fractional, positive and/or negative numbers.
Represent real-world and mathematical problems using algebraic expressions.

Number Systems

Extend understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions.
Use computations with fractions to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
Understand and use positive and negative numbers and fractions to solve problems.

Ratios and Proportional Relationship

Recognize and represent relationships between two quantities.
Use ratios and proportions to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Eighth Grade



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To see what math skills look like in eighth grade, [click here](#).
For ways to make math fun at home, [click here](#).

Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities

Add, subtract, factor and expand expressions involving whole, fractional, positive and/or negative numbers.
Represent real-world and mathematical problems using algebraic expressions.

Number Systems

Extend understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions.
Use computations with fractions to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
Understand and use positive and negative numbers and fractions to solve problems.

Ratios and Proportional Relationship

Recognize and represent relationships between two quantities.
Use ratios and proportions to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Sites Referenced & More Great Resources

ELA Pre K -2

Pre-K Book List

<https://bookriot.com/must-read-preschool-books/>

Talk, Read and Sing Together Every Day

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/early-learning/talk-read-sing/preschool-en.pdf>

Print Awareness

<https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading-basics/printawareness>

Environmental Print

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/environmental-print#:~:text=Cut%20out%20familiar%20words%20from,words%20you've%20cut%20out.>

Dolch Sight Words List

https://www.samsonclassroom.com/resources/dolch_sight_words_list.html

Tips for Talking About Books With Your Child

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/reading-resources/language-and-literacy-milestones/tips-talking-about-books-your-child.html>

Creating Books with Preschool Students

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/cover-story-author-author/>

Kindergarten Book List

<https://www.boredteachers.com/books/books-for-kindergarteners>

Tips for Teaching Your Child About Phonemes

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/tips-teaching-your-child-about-phonemes>

Fundations Letter Cards - ABC's

<https://youtu.be/2MMiie4vNwk>

Letters and Sounds: Practical Ideas for Parents

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/letters-and-sounds-practical-ideas-parents>

Invented Spelling do's and don'ts

<https://www.themeasuredmom.com/invented-spelling-guidelines-for-parents/>

Tips for Talking About Books With Your Child

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/reading-resources/language-and-literacy-milestones/tips-talking-about-books-your-child.html>

Strategies for Teaching Writing in Kindergarten

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/sharon-taylor/strategies-teaching-writing-kindergarten/>

First Grade Book List

<https://k-12readinglist.com/reading-lists-for-elementary-school-children/reading-list-1st-grade-children-age-6-7/>

Tips for Teaching High-Frequency Words and Sight Words

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/tiffani-mugurussa/tips-teaching-high-frequency-and-sight-words/>

Reading Tips for Parents of First Graders

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/reading-tips-parents-first-graders>

Writing: 1st Grade

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/others/articles/writing-1st-grade.html>

Second Grade Book Lists

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ELA Grades 3-5

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Reading Tips for Parents of 4th graders

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-success-guides/guide-to-4th-grade.html>

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ELA Grades 6-8

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<https://k-12readinglist.com/reading-lists-for-middle-school-children/reading-list-for-8th-grade-students-age-13-14/>

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<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-success-guides/guide-to-8th-grade.html>

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PBS Math Club

<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/mathematics/>

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<https://toytheater.com/>

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