

# Parents' Guide to Student Success



This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 5th grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 6th grade.

5TH GRADE

## 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. 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. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

## English Language Arts & Literacy

### 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

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)

# Mathematics

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

- Adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators (e.g.,  $2\frac{1}{4} - 1\frac{1}{3}$ ), and solving word problems of this kind
- Multiplying fractions; dividing fractions in simple cases; and solving related word problems (e.g., finding the area of a rectangle with fractional side lengths; determining how many  $\frac{1}{3}$ -cup servings are in 2 cups of raisins; determining the size of a share if 9 people share a 50-pound sack of rice equally or if 3 people share  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of chocolate equally)
- Generalizing the place-value system to include decimals, and calculating with decimals to the hundredths place (two places after the decimal)
- Multiplying whole numbers quickly and accurately, for example  $1,638 \times 753$ , and dividing whole numbers in simple cases, such as dividing 6,971 by 63
- Understanding the concept of volume, and solving word problems that involve volume
- Graphing points in the coordinate plane (two dimensions) to solve problems
- Analyzing mathematical patterns and relationships



### TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

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:

- Multiplying and dividing fractions, and solving related word problems
- Decimals (concepts and arithmetic)
- Volume (concepts and problem-solving)

## Help Your Child Learn at Home

Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time *every day* when your child can concentrate. You should also try to sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your child needs help with specific topics. Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

### English Language Arts & Literacy

- Invite your child to read his or her writing out loud to other family members. Ask questions about your child's word choices and ideas.
- Go to a play or musical with your child. Discuss the way the actors bring the words to life.
- Discuss your family stories and history. Encourage your child to ask relatives questions about their lives. Put the information together in an album or brainstorm different ways to tell family tales, such as poems or short stories.

### Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 5th grade examples might include:

- Doing arithmetic with decimals, for example when balancing a checkbook.
- Multiplying with fractions — for example, if you used about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup measure of vegetable stock, then how much stock did you use? About how much is left?
- Using the length, width, and depth of a garden plot to determine how many bags of garden soil to buy.

For more information, the full standards are available at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).



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# COMMON CORE



## 1 What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. The goal of the CCSS is to provide a single set of clear and consistent educational standards in math and English language arts that states can share and voluntarily adopt. A total of 45 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core State Standards.



## 2 Why do we need new standards?

Until now, every state had its own standards and different expectations of student performance. Common standards will help ensure that all students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common Core standards can provide parents with clear expectations for what children should know and be able to do

when they graduate high school or advance to a particular grade level. Common Core standards provide consistency for parents and students during transitions and allow parents to continue to support student learning regardless of changes in ZIP code. In addition, evidence-based standards will more effectively prepare American students to keep up with their peers around the world.



## 3 What does Common Core look like in the classroom?

Common Core standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Common Core standards are not curriculum. Teachers and schools will continue to devise curriculum, including lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and school boards will continue to make curriculum decisions.



## Were teachers and parents involved in the creation of the standards?

Yes. Parents and teachers have been a critical voice in the development of the standards. The National PTA, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English and other organizations have been instrumental in bringing

together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback since the standards were first released in 2010.

### WHY NOW?

- Different standards across states
- Student mobility, military families
- Global competition
- Today's jobs require different skills

### THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

- Prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and work
- Provide educators, parents and students with clear, focused standards or guideposts
- Set consistent expectations, regardless of a student's ZIP code
- Include both knowledge and the application of subject area
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards and standards of top-performing nations
- Are based on real-world application
- Are evidence- and research-based, with guidance on topics to include, when to introduce content, and coherence/focus



## What can parents do to help their child prepare for Common Core learning?



Read a combination of fiction and non-fiction aloud or with your child. Look for subjects that interest your child — from sports heroes to dinosaurs. Select more difficult passages over time.



Read more informational texts including newspapers, magazines, technical manuals, science and social studies articles and books.



Talk with your child and have him or her explain things.



Encourage writing at home.



Help your children know/memorize basic math facts.



Discuss and “do” real life math with your children.



Look for “word problems” in real life.



Encourage a good work ethic.



Let your children see you read and “do” math.



Discuss with your children their performance in school and what they are learning.



Talk about tests with your child and be positive and encouraging.



Talk with your child’s teacher(s) about his or her performance in school.



Talk with your children about the importance of graduating from high school ready for college and career success.

# 3 KEY IDEAS FOR PARENTS about the Common [CORE]

## Thinking Deeply

The Common Core emphasizes critical thinking. It requires students to analyze more, discuss more, evaluate more, justify more and explain their thinking & understanding deeply, especially in writing. *Take-Away: Really thinking deeply is hard. Let it BE hard, help them talk it out.*

## Integrating Learning

The Common Core emphasizes learning across disciplines (reading with math & social studies standards combined into one task). Students spend more time working together with different settings, structures & tools. *Take-Away: Problems & solutions happen everyday in the real world.*

## Showing How They Know

The Common Core emphasizes proof & evidence. Long gone are the days of worksheets, fact memorizations and skill & drill. Students are not taught this way and they are not assessed this way. *Take-away: The new tests will require students to explain how they know.*

## Supporting The Common Core at Home

- 1 Ask **\*why\*** when children tell you they want something or want to do or not do something.
- 2 Use the word **\*because\*** after "No" or "Not tonight..."
- 3 Give reasons—you to them and them to you.
- 4 Encourage questions & explore answers (especially questions whose answers **are not** yes or no.)
- 5 Explain & discuss issues or problems in your house, neighborhood, & community. Brainstorm solutions.
- 6 Compare how things are alike and different—videos, movies, food.
- 7 Look for patterns
- 8 Describe & categorize stuff.
- 9 Tell your children what you value & why.
- 10 Encourage & celebrate opinions.