

Culture Matters

Teachers must be able to *CONNECT* with their learners before they can share core content. Teachers teach learners, not subjects. To truly engage learners, we must reach out to them in ways that are culturally & linguistically responsive and appropriate, and we must examine the cultural assumptions and stereotypes we bring into the classroom that may hinder interconnectedness.



Parents' Guide to Support Learner Success

EMPOWERING PARENTS TO SUPPORT THE COMMON CORE CHALLENGE AT HOME

4TH GRADE

As practitioners in education and facilitators of cultural competency training, we know that in order for learners to be successful in today's schools, parents need to be knowledgeable of the most effective ways to support learning at home. Educators can work collaboratively to assist their learners to be more successful, by tapping into support from home. This guide, which provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of each grade level in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, prepares your child to be ready to succeed in the next grade level. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by 44 states (*at time of publication*). The Common Core State Standards are much more rigorous than the previously held standards amongst the states. In order to compete globally, our nation needs to increase critical thinking skills in our children.

This guide is designed to offer parents with creative ways to become involved in supporting their child's education as well as ways to communicate the expectations of the Common Core State Standards. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be prepared for the 5th grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

The academic standards are important because they help ensure that all learners, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and in their chosen careers. Rigorous standards provide an important first step – a clear roadmap and process for learning – to be utilized by a collaborative team of facilitators of learning, parents, and learners. Having clearly defined goals helps families and facilitators of learning work together to ensure that learners succeed. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.



A Snapshot of What Your Child Will Be Concentrating on in 4th Grade

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 4th grade, learners will continue to build important reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. They will read more challenging literature, articles, poems, and other sources of information and continue to extend their vocabulary. The expectation will be for them to clearly explain in detail what they have read by referring to details or information from the text. Through the writing process, learners will organize their ideas and develop topics with reasons, facts, details, and other information. Activities in these areas will embrace:

- Identifying the theme or main idea of a story, play or poem
- Describing the basic elements of stories – such as characters, events, and settings – by drawing on specific details in the text
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: this includes explaining how an author uses facts, details, and evidence to support their points; being able to compare and contrast information
- Reading and understanding information presented in charts, graphs, timelines, and other illustrations
- Learning the rules of spoken and written English
- Learning and using new words, including words related to specific subjects (such as science words)
- Participating in class discussions by listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, and building on the ideas of others
- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points
- Giving a class presentation on a topic or telling a story using relevant, organized facts and details and speaking clearly
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling
- Writing stories with dialogue and descriptions of character's actions, thoughts, and feelings
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (*synonyms*) and to their opposites (*antonyms*)
- Taking notes and organizing information from books, articles, and online source to learn more about a topic
- 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
- Writing research or opinion papers over extended periods of time



Partner with your child's teacher to have a focused conversation about learning

When you talk with your child's teacher keep in mind that you and your child's teacher are partners; a part of a team which includes your child. You are an important part of your child's education. Time may be limited and you can't cover everything. Therefore, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 4th grade for literacy, 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
- Be prepared to ask the teacher questions like:
 - Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
 - How is my child doing in writing?
 - In what areas is my child excelling?
 - What do you suppose is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
 - What can I do to help my child with upcoming work?
 - If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside of the classroom?

Mathematics

In 4th grade, learners will use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to solve word problems, including problems involving measurement of volume, mass, and time. Learners will continue to build their understanding of fractions – creating equal fractions, comparing the size of fractions, adding and subtracting fractions, and multiplying fractions by whole numbers. They will also begin to understand the relationship between fractions and decimals. Activities in these areas will embrace:

- Adding and subtracting whole numbers up to 1 million quickly and accurately
- Solving multi-step word problems, including problems involving measurement and converting measurements from larger to smaller units
- Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers
- Extending understanding of fractions by comparing the size of two fractions with different numerators (top numbers) and different denominators (bottom numbers)

Continued...

- Using whole-number arithmetic to solve word problems, including problems with remainders and problems with measurements
- Adding and subtracting whole numbers quickly and accurately (numbers up to 1 million)
- Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers in simple cases (i.e., multiplying $1,542 \times 7$ or 31×17 , and dividing 5,840 by 4)
- Creating equal fractions ($\frac{3}{4} = \frac{3 \times 2}{4 \times 2} = \frac{6}{8}$)
- Adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominator ($\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{4}$)
- Building fractions from smaller fractions ($\frac{3}{8} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8}$)
- Understanding and applying equivalent fractions (i.e., recognizing that $\frac{1}{4}$ is less than $\frac{3}{8}$ because $\frac{2}{8}$ is less than $\frac{3}{8}$)
- Connecting addition and subtraction of whole numbers to multiplying fractions by whole numbers
- Adding, subtracting, and multiplying fractions in simple cases (such as $2\frac{3}{4} - 1\frac{1}{4}$ or $3 \times \frac{5}{8}$), and solving related word problems
- Connecting addition of fractions to the concept of angle measurement
- Measuring angle and finding unknown angles in a diagram
- Representing and interpreting data
- Converting fractions with denominators of 10 or 100 into decimals
- Locating decimals on a number line
- Understanding simple decimals in terms of fractions (i.e., rewriting 0.62 as $\frac{62}{100}$)
- Comparing decimals and fractions using the symbols $>$ (more than), $=$ (equal to), and $<$ (less than)

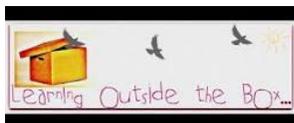
Staying

Partner with your child's teacher to have a focused conversation about learning

When you talk with your child's teacher keep in mind that you and your child's teacher are partners; a part of a team which includes your child. You are an important part of your child's education. Time may be limited and you can't cover everything. Therefore, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 4th grade for mathematics, these include:

- Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with multi-digit numbers
- Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with fractions

- Be prepared to ask the teacher questions like:
 - Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
 - In what areas is my child excelling?
 - What do you suppose is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
 - What can I do to help my child with upcoming work?
 - If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside of the classroom?



All learning does not take place in the classroom, nor should it. Learning must continue at home, encouraging learners to “think outside the box.” Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and set aside time *every day* when your child can concentrate. You should also set aside 15 to 30 minutes each week to sit down with your child, while he or she completes homework. This will help you to stay in tuned with what your child is working on, and it will help you to be the first to know if your child needs assistance with specific topics. Furthermore, here are some activities you can do with your child to support successful learning at home:

English Language Arts & Literacy

- Provide time and space for your child to read independently. This reading time should be free from distractions such as television and gaming activities.
- Ask your child what he or she learned from reading and how that knowledge can be used in real life. Have him or her read the most interesting or useful sections aloud.
- Model reading at home. It is helpful when your child sees other people reading at home. You can share what you have read.
- Keep track of the time that your child spends reading every day. Note what kind of reading materials he or she likes (books, magazines, newspaper articles, the Internet, etc.). Then look for additional materials that would encourage your child to read more.
- Urge your child to use logical arguments to defend his or her opinion. If your child wants a raise in allowance systems and, based on that research, explain reasons why, supported by facts and details.
- Talk about the news together. Select one story in the news, read it together, and discuss with your child what it means.
- Make sure your child has a library card. Take him or her to the library on a weekly basis. Children should select books in which they are interested to develop a love for reading. Many community libraries have book clubs and family activities that make reading fun for the entire family.
- Use technology to help strengthen your child’s interest in reading. Ask your child’s teacher for suggestions of websites where learners can read books or articles on line. The computer will help with words the learner cannot read independently. Libraries also have computers learners can use to access those sites.

Mathematics

- Use everyday objects to allow your child to explore the concept of fractions. An example being, use measuring cups so learners see how many times you have to refill a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to equal a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or how many $\frac{1}{2}$'s are in two cups. Have learners describe two fractions that are equal using a measuring cup (filling a $\frac{1}{4}$ measuring cup four times is the same as filling one 1-cup measuring cup).
- Ask your child to compare numbers using phrases like “times as much.” For example, if the family cat weighs 7 lbs. and the family dog weighs 56 lbs. how many times as much does the dog weigh?
- Have your child write or describe fractions in different ways. For example, what are some ways to make $\frac{3}{4}$? Answers could include $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$)
- Ask your child to create and describe equal fractions. Such as, have learners take a sheet of paper, fold the paper in half, and then unfold and shade $\frac{1}{2}$. Then have learners take the same sheet of paper and fold the paper in a half again. Unfold the paper and have learners discuss the number of parts that are now shaded. Encourage your child to talk about ways to show that $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4}$. (Learners may continue this process creating other equal fractions.)
- Ask your child to help you compare fractional amounts – for example, if one recipe calls for $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of milk, but another recipe calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk, which recipe calls for more milk? (In the 5th grade, your child will learn ways to determine just how much more milk.)
- Encourage your child to persevere, “sticking to it” whenever a problem seems difficult. This will help your child see that **everyone** can learn math.
- Praise for your child’s efforts in solving problems or understanding something for the first time.



For more information go to www.corestandards.org
the official online home of the Common Core State Standards