

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

7TH 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 8th 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 7th Grade

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 7th grade, learners will continue to develop the ability to cite relevant evidence when interpreting or analyzing a text or supporting their points in speaking and writing. Your child will also build academic vocabulary as he or she reads more complex texts, including stories, plays, historical novels, poems, and informational books and articles. Activities in these areas will embrace:

- Analyzing how the form or structure of a play or poem contributes to its meaning
- Analyzing how particular elements of a story or play interact (like how the setting shapes the character or plot)
- Determining how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text
- Conducting short research projects, drawing on several sources and identifying related questions for further research and investigation
- Engaging in a variety of classroom discussions on topics and texts, expressing ideas clearly and building on ideas of others
- Identifying a speaker's argument and specific claims and evaluating the reasoning and evidence behind these claims
- Using clues such as word roots or add-ons to a word (such as the prefix *hyper-*, which means 'excessive' in the words *hyperactive* and *hypersensitive*) to determine the meaning of a word
- Interpreting figures of speech or references to literature or mythology in a text (an example, "*a heart of gold*")
- Writing for a variety of purposes and audiences

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 7th grade for literacy, these include:

- Reading closely and citing several sources of evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction works to support an analysis of what the material says
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently
- 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 7th grade, learners will further develop their understanding of rates and ratios, using tables, graphs, and equations to solve real-world problems involving proportional relationships. Learners will focus on working quickly and accurately solving multi-step problems involving positive and negative rational numbers; any number that can be made by dividing one integer by another, such as $\frac{1}{4}$, 0.50, or 2. Additionally, learners will expand their knowledge of geometry and apply the properties of operations to solve real-world problems involving the measurement of multi-dimensional objects. Activities in these areas will embrace:

- Determining whether two quantities are in a proportional relationship and using knowledge of rates, ratios, proportions, and percentage to solve multi-step problems (for example, buying 8 times as many items will cost you 8 times as much, but taking 8 times as many aspirin will not lower your fever 8 times as much)
- Identifying the unit rate of change (the constant rate at which the value of a variable changes) in tables, graphs, equations, and verbal descriptions
- Calculating the unit rates associated with ratios of fractions, including quantities measured in different units (for example, the ratio of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile for every $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour means that you travel 2 miles in an hour)
- Solving problems using equations to find the value of one missing variable
- Applying the properties of operations to generate equivalent mathematical expressions (An **equation** is a mathematical statement where letters [known as **variables**] are used to represent unknown numbers, such as $4x + 4 = 12$. An **expression** is an open-ended sentence, such as $2x + 6$ or $5 - y$. In this expression, the variables are "x" and "y.")
- Solving multi-step word problems by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing positive and negative rational numbers in any form (including whole numbers, fractions, or decimals)
- Understanding that numbers cannot be divided by 0
- Converting rational numbers to decimals using long division
- Describing situations in which positive and negative quantities combine to make 0
- Finding the area of two-dimensional objects and the volume and surface area of three-dimensional objects
- Solving problems involving scale drawings
- Using statistics to draw inferences and make comparisons (i.e., deciding which candidate is likely to win an election based on a survey)

Continued...

- Solving word problems that have a combination of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals (i.e., a woman making \$25 per hour receives a 10% raise; she will make an additional $\frac{1}{10}$ her salary an hour, or \$2.50, for a new salary of \$27.50)
- Solving equations such as $\frac{1}{2}(x-3) = \frac{3}{4}$ quickly and accurately, and writing equations of this kind to solve word problems

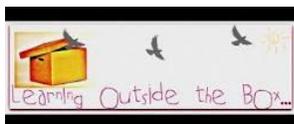
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- Analyzing proportional relationships
- Arithmetic with positive and negative numbers
- Solving equations quickly and accurately, and writing equations to solve word problems
- Be prepared to ask the teacher questions like:
 - Is my child at the level 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 topics, events, or activities he or she likes. Based upon that information look for books, magazines, or other materials about those topics that would motivate your child to read.
- Model reading at home. It is helpful when your child sees other people reading at home. You can share what you have read.
- Make time for conversation at home. Discuss what is current in the news, shared interests, and your child's future aspirations as to where to attend college and careers.
- Visit a local art museum together. Take time to closely observe the details of the paintings or other art objects and talk about what you see there.
- Ask your children who his or her favorite authors are. Why does your child like their books? What ideas does the author write about? Who are his or her favorite characters? Why? To find recommendations of books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.
- 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

- Ask your child to calculate the unit rates of items purchased from the grocery store. For example, if 4 pounds of sugar cost \$3.00, how much does sugar cost per pound?
- Use store advertisements to engage your child in working with numbers. For example, if a store advertises 20% off, have your child estimate the dollar amount of the discount, as well as the sale price of an item.
- Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 7th grade examples might include:
 - Figuring the amount of a 15% tip or determining what percentage of weekly income goes to pay taxes.
 - For a long-term project, help your child choose a stock and follow its value on the stock market using the newspaper or the Internet. Have your child calculate the stock's percent increase or decrease each month.
- Have learners use 4's and any of the four arithmetic operations to write the numbers from 0 to 20 (such as, $44-44=0$; $4 \times 4 - 4 \times 4 = 0$. How do you get 1? $4/4 + 4 - 4 = 1$).
- 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