

Grade Three Standards for Mathematical Practice

The K-12 Standards for Mathematical Practice describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. This page gives examples of what the practice standards look like at the specified grade level.

<i>Standards</i>	<i>Explanations and Examples</i>
Students are expected to: 1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.	In third grade, students know that doing mathematics involves solving problems and discussing how they solved them. Students explain to themselves the meaning of a problem and look for ways to solve it. Third graders may use concrete objects or pictures to help them conceptualize and solve problems. They may check their thinking by asking themselves, “Does this make sense?” They listen to the strategies of others and will try different approaches. They often will use another method to check their answers.
Students are expected to: 2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.	Third graders should recognize that a number represents a specific quantity. They connect the quantity to written symbols and create a logical representation of the problem at hand, considering both the appropriate units involved and the meaning of quantities.
Students are expected to: 3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.	In third grade, students may construct arguments using concrete referents, such as objects, pictures, and drawings. They refine their mathematical communication skills as they participate in mathematical discussions involving questions like “How did you get that?” and “Why is that true?” They explain their thinking to others and respond to others’ thinking.
Students are expected to: 4. Model with mathematics.	Students experiment with representing problem situations in multiple ways including numbers, words (mathematical language), drawing pictures, using objects, acting out, making a chart, list or graph, creating equations, etc. Students need opportunities to connect the different representations and explain the connections. They should be able to use all of these representations as needed. Third graders should evaluate their results in the context of the situation and reflect on whether the results make sense.
Students are expected to: 5. Use appropriate tools strategically.	Third graders consider the available tools (including estimation) when solving a mathematical problem and decide when certain tools might be helpful. For instance, they may use graph paper to find all the possible rectangles that have a given perimeter. They compile the possibilities into an organized list or a table, and determine whether they have all the possible rectangles.
Students are expected to: 6. Attend to precision.	As third graders develop their mathematical communication skills, they try to use clear and precise language in their discussions with others and in their own reasoning. They are careful about specifying units of measure and state the meaning of the symbols they choose. For instance, when figuring out the area of a rectangle they record their answers in square units.
Students are expected to: 7. Look for and make use of structure.	In third grade, students look closely to discover a pattern or structure. For instance, students use properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide (commutative and distributive properties).
Students are expected to: 8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.	Students in third grade should notice repetitive actions in computation and look for more shortcut methods. For example, students may use the distributive property as a strategy for using products they know to solve products that they don’t know. For example, if students are asked to find the product of 7×8 , they might decompose 7 into 5 and 2 and then multiply 5×8 and 2×8 to arrive at $40 + 16$ or 56. In addition, third graders continually evaluate their work by asking themselves, “Does this make sense?”