

Parents' Guide to Student Success

Panama-Buena
Vista Union
School District



Third Grade

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 3rd 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 4th grade.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school.

Since 2010, 45 states have adopted the same standards for English and math. These standards are called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Having the same standards helps all students get the same high quality education, even if they change schools or move to a different state. Teachers, parents, and education experts designed the standards to prepare students for success in college and the workplace.

(Taken from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>)

English Language Arts & Literacy

Overview

Third grade is a pivotal year for your child. Learning to read with fluency and confidence will serve as a foundation for the reading demands in later grades. By practicing with learning-to-read strategies, your child will reliably be able to make sense of multi-syllable words in books. He or she will come to appreciate that words have meanings that are not literal (e.g., a piece of cake) and have relationships to other words (e.g., company and companion). Recognizing and understanding words will help your child read increasingly challenging stories and books and build knowledge about the world around him or her. By the end of the year, your child also will be writing clear sentences and paragraphs on a range of topics, drawing on an expanding vocabulary (taken from [PTA.org](http://www.pta.org)).

A sample of what your child will be working on in 3rd grade:

- Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story
- Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories (e.g., first, second, third; cause and effect)
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details
- Writing stories that establish a situation and include details and clear sequences of events that describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters
- Independently conducting short research projects that build knowledge about various topics
- Asking and answering questions about information he or she hears from a speaker or while participating in classroom discussions, offering appropriate elaboration and details that build on what others have said
- Reading stories and poems aloud fluently, without pausing to figure out what each word means
- Distinguishing the literal and nonliteral meanings of words, such as something's fishy and cold shoulder
- Spelling correctly and consulting dictionaries to clarify meanings of words

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 3rd grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level books, stories, poems, and articles with fluency
- Writing and speaking well, following rules of punctuation and grammar
- Building a foundation of knowledge through reading and listening to books in history/social studies, science, and other subjects

Mathematics

Overview

The CCSS for mathematics include two types of standards: one for mathematical practice (how students are able to apply and extend math principles) and one for mathematical content (what students know about math). The two are linked together while students are learning (taken from www.readingrocket.org/article/54153).

In 3rd grade, your child will learn important new ideas and gain important new skills. One of the most important topics this year is multiplication and division. Another is fractions. Multiplication, division, and fractions are the building blocks for many life skills that students will learn in later grades, such as percentages. Students also need to master these topics to be ready for algebra and advanced math, so it is essential to get a good start with these topics in 3rd grade (taken from PTA.org).

A sample of what your child will be working on in 3rd grade:

- Multiplying and dividing up to 10×10 quickly and accurately, including knowing the times tables from memory
- Solving word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Beginning to multiply numbers with more than one digit (e.g., multiplying 9×80)
- Understanding fractions and relating them to the familiar system of whole numbers (e.g., recognizing that $\frac{3}{1}$ and 3 are the same number)
- Measuring and estimating weights and liquid volumes, and solving word problems involving these quantities
- Reasoning about shapes (e.g., all squares are rectangles but not all rectangles are squares)
- Finding areas of shapes, and relating area to multiplication (e.g., why is the number of square feet for a 9-foot by 7-foot room given by the product 9×7 ?)

How to Help Your Child at Home

Learning does not end in the classroom. Children need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time every day when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions.

You should also try and 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. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your child become successful both in and outside the classroom.

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Make reading for fun a part of your child's daily routine. Set aside quiet time, with no phones, computers, or other distractions, when your child can read for pleasure, books such as *Amos & Boris* by William Steig or *The Fire Cat* by Esther Averill. To find more books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.
- Encourage your child to find a picture from a newspaper or magazine, cut it out, paste it on paper, and write a story about it.
- Start a family vocabulary box or jar. Have everyone write down new words they discover, add them to the box, and use the words in conversation.

Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 3rd grade examples might include:

- Notice those everyday occasions when you find yourself using your times tables — such as to determine how many days there are in four weeks. Ask your child for the answer.
- Involve your child when you notice yourself using division to "work backward" in the times tables — such as determining how many candies each child will get if 36 candies are shared equally among nine children at a party, or determining how many six-inch lengths can be cut from a string 18 inches long.

Helpful Websites:

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>

<http://www.pta.org/index.cfm>

Visit the District's website for additional information helpful to parents @ <http://www.pbvusd.k12.ca.us/Page/7094>