

# Parents' Guide to Student Success

Panama-Buena  
Vista Union  
School District



*Sixth Grade*

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 6<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of longer, more challenging books and articles. That includes learning about how authors try to influence readers and find reasons to support their ideas. Focusing on how authors make their points and support their arguments with evidence and reasoning helps 6<sup>th</sup> grade students sharpen their ability to write and speak with more clarity and coherence. Students also will expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. To meet these literacy goals, students must devote significant attention to precise details in their reading and when writing (taken from [PTA.org](http://www.pta.org)).

### A sample of what your child will be working on in 6<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Analyzing how chapters of a book, scenes of a play, or stanzas of a poem fit into the overall structure of the piece and contribute to the development of ideas or themes
- Gaining knowledge from materials that make extensive use of elaborate diagrams and data to convey information and illustrate concepts
- Evaluating the argument and specific claims in written materials or a speech, and distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not
- Presenting claims and findings to others orally, sequencing ideas logically, and accentuating main ideas or themes
- Writing arguments that provide clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources
- Writing brief reports that examine a topic, have a clear focus, and include relevant facts, details, and quotations
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and sharpening the focus based on the research findings
- Reviewing and paraphrasing key ideas and multiple perspectives of a speaker
- Recognizing variations from standard English in his or her own and others' writing and speaking, and using this knowledge to improve language use
- Determining the correct meaning of a word based on the context in which it is used (e.g., the rest of the sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence)

### 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 6<sup>th</sup> grade, these include:

- Reading closely and citing evidence from grade-level fiction and non-fiction to support an analysis of what the materials say
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

# 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](http://www.readingrocket.org/article/54153)).

The skills and understanding that your child will gain during 6<sup>th</sup> grade are among the most important foundations for college and career readiness. These include working with ratios and rates and working with variables and variable expressions — the building blocks of algebra. Many of this year's topics will remain a major emphasis throughout the middle school years and into high school (taken from [PTA.org](http://PTA.org)).

## A sample of what your child will be working on in 6<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Understanding ratios and rates, and solving problems involving proportional relationships (e.g., if it took 7 hours to mow 4 lawns, then at that rate, how many lawns could be mowed in 35 hours? At what rate were lawns being mowed?)
- Dividing fractions and solving related word problems (e.g., how wide is a rectangular strip of land with length  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile and area  $\frac{1}{2}$  square mile?)
- Using positive and negative numbers together to describe quantities; understanding the ordering and absolute values of positive and negative numbers
- Working with variables and expressions by generalizing the way numbers work (e.g., when adding numbers, the order doesn't matter, so  $x + y = y + x$ ; likewise, properties of addition and multiplication can be used to rewrite  $24x + 18y$  as  $6(4x + 3y)$ , or  $y + y + y$  as  $3y$ )
- Understanding the process of solving simple equations
- Writing equations to solve word problems and describe relationships between quantities (e.g., the distance  $D$  traveled by a train in time  $T$  might be expressed by an equation  $D = 85T$ , where  $D$  is in miles and  $T$  is in hours)
- Reasoning about relationships between shapes to determine area, surface area, and volume

## 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

- Listen with your child to a television reporter, politician, or other speaker. Ask your child to tell you the speaker's main points. Was the speaker trying to convince the audience of something? How?
- Visit a library or book store together and ask the librarian or bookseller to recommend young adult books, such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain. To find more books for your child to read, visit [www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix\\_B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf).
- Invite your child to participate in an adult gathering, such as a meal with friends, to practice listening skills and making conversation.
- Encourage your child to learn at the library or on the Internet what life in your community was like 100 years ago. Have your child write a story, poem, or play about that time.

### Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 6<sup>th</sup> grade examples might include:

- Determining the average speed of a family trip, based on the distance traveled and the time taken; or estimating the time that a trip will take, given the distance and an estimate of the average speed. (Examples can also come from the news — for example, a swimmer crossing the English Channel or a space probe traveling to another planet.)
- Finding the surface area of the walls and ceiling in a room to determine the cost of painting the room.

### 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>