

Grade 3: Semester 1 Curriculum Guide

By the end of the first reporting period, these are the ideas, concepts, and skills your child will have learned. We acknowledge that all children learn at different paces and that students take different amounts of time to master skills and concepts. Your child's teacher will update you on their initial social, emotional, and academic progress at October conferences and provide a more formal report card in February.

Approaches to Learning

Grade 3 students are encouraged to practice kindness, respect, responsibility, and integrity, and to demonstrate the courage to act. They learn to consider multiple perspectives and solve problems as they arise. Collaborative skills are fostered through partnerships, small groups, whole-class activities, and grade-level gatherings. Through self-reflection, Grade 3 students continue to develop both a sense of personal identity and a growth mindset.

Reading

Grade 3 students continue to practice reading fluently with accuracy and expression as they move into deeper comprehension work. This year, they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. During the first realistic fiction unit, students analyze character traits and make predictions based on characters' identity, feelings, and motivations. They provide textual evidence to support their inferences. They start to pay attention to how the author's choices impact the story (author's craft). Later, during students' first information reading unit, they learn to summarize texts by focusing on the main ideas and supporting details. They are also introduced to synthesizing information about a subtopic across multiple texts. They begin to engage in critical reading by asking questions of and growing their own ideas about the text. During reading, students learn to prepare for class discussions, gathering the best evidence to support their ideas, and responding to texts both in discussions and in writing.

Writing

Third grade writers move through the writing process: brainstorming ideas, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During the first semester, Grade 3 writers engage in narrative writing. They write a narrative about a main character from the realistic fiction reading unit and a personal narrative about an experience from their own life that has shaped who they are. They plan a story that follows a narrative arc, then elaborate with dialogue, actions, and the character's thoughts. They learn to describe the characters and setting, using descriptive language. They also learn to edit using third grade conventions. During the information writing unit, writers learn to plan informational texts where they organize information into subtopics and paragraphs. They elaborate with facts and observations from their own experience and those gathered from informational texts. Writers show they are experts by writing with a teaching voice and using topic-specific vocabulary to teach about their topic. Writers use what they know about spelling patterns and resources to spell unknown words and to edit before making a final draft. Students are introduced to keyboarding, focusing on learning to type lowercase letters on the QWERTY keyboard. At the end of Grade 3, the goal is for a student to type an A4 page at 10 words per minute with 85% accuracy.

Speaking and Listening

Grade 3 students develop listening and speaking skills by engaging in meaningful experiences with a variety of audiences. Students practice listening and speaking across the curriculum to communicate ideas and deepen their understanding. Through class discussions, oral presentations, and group activities, students work toward developing confidence to speak in a variety of contexts. Active listeners are expected to embody the core values of kindness and respect as they demonstrate whole-body listening.

Math

In Grade 3, students extend their understanding of numbers by counting to 1,000 and beyond, representing numbers with base-10 blocks and abacus models, and using strategies such as decomposition and number-line jumps to add and subtract larger quantities. They begin building multiplication through equal groups and arrays, constructing concrete models for multiples of 2, 5, 4, 8, 3, 6, and 9, and are introduced to division as the inverse of multiplication. In measurement, students compare and estimate length, weight, capacity, and time using standard units, practice precision with tools such as scales and stopwatches, and explore how to generalize formulas when tools are unavailable. Data work includes creating and interpreting scaled bar graphs to solve comparison problems. Together, these experiences strengthen place value, fact fluency, and problem-solving as students transition toward more complex operations.

Social Studies

Grade 3 students foster their curiosity and wonder while building their research skills, which will enable them to pursue their interests about the world. At the beginning of the year, students learn about culture and how the cultural diversity of each member contributes to the classroom community. Students then engage in a geography and culture-focused unit, learning about the ways that the continent of Africa is multicultural. Through expert interviews, reading primary and secondary sources, and analyzing different types of maps, including infographics, they delve deeply into cultures other than their own to challenge the idea of stereotypes and single stories.

Science

Grade 3 students use the science practices of questioning, developing models, and planning and conducting investigations to identify evidence and create explanations. Through observations, analysis, and data interpretation, students investigate the relationships among forces, motion, and magnetism, as well as the patterns and characteristics of life cycles and organism traits. For example, similarities and differences are identified by comparing the life cycles of a turtle, a fish, an oak tree, and a moth to determine features common to all life cycles. Student-led investigations, such as the effect of force magnitude on the distance an object travels, encourage students to apply the crosscutting themes of cause and effect and patterning to generate evidence-based explanations. In the October design project, students will explore the force and movement of wind through testing and creative challenges. Using their discoveries and a design process, students will build their own models that move and come to life with the force of the wind. Students have three 60-minute lessons every eight days.

Art

Grade 3 students start the year by learning basic Color Theory. They design ephemeral collaborative sculptures, eco-art, and papier-mâché 3D work, inspired by various contemporary artists, including Chila Burmani. They study a variety of techniques from different cultures and then create a final food model of their choice using the papier-mache technique. Students apply and practice their knowledge of lines, patterns, and colors to their work. They also give their inventions a name, a story, and a setting. Students have opportunities to engage in free inquiry, comparing and contrasting 3D vs 2D work. Lessons begin with inquiry-based questions, and all students are encouraged to stretch, engage, envision, and express their original ideas. Students have two 50-minute lessons every eight days.

Music

The Grade 3 music curriculum emphasizes active participation, creativity, and elemental music-making. Students delve into rhythmic exploration, performing complex patterns through body percussion and group improvisation with classroom percussion instruments. Melodic development incorporates solfeggio and the pentatonic scales, fostering individual and group improvisation. Percussion ensemble activities explore various instruments, enhancing coordination and creative expression. Movement and creative dance integration help to build whole-body musicality. Listening exercises and music appreciation broaden students' understanding of genres and composers. Collaborative projects, such as group compositions, foster creativity and peer collaboration. Ongoing assessments, including self-reflection and performance-based evaluations, guide individual progress. The curriculum includes an informal performance in the first semester. Students attend three 35-minute lessons every eight days.

PE

Grade 3 students develop their fundamental motor skills and movement patterns, application of concepts and strategies, and social skills such as communication, collaboration, and teamwork, through a variety of activities and games. The dance and gymnastics unit develops and applies foundational movements of jumping, balance, rolling, weight transfers, and rhythms through skills practice and routine development. The invasion games - basketball skills unit develops hand dribbling, passing, and shooting while building teamwork and strategy play through small-sided games. The aquatics unit focuses on water safety, swimming technique, endurance, and enjoyment. Grade 3 students have four 40-minute lessons every eight days.

Spanish

Grade 3 students continue to develop their Spanish skills through exposure to authentic language, learning about the culture of different Spanish-speaking countries, and comparing them with their own. We start the semester by reviewing fundamentals from previous years. Then, students work on an identity share in Spanish and how to ask questions to learn about each other. The program has a strong focus on speaking and listening skills, but also gives students the chance to read and write at various levels. Students have three 35-minute lessons every eight days.