

# Parents' Guide to Student Success

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.

## 3RD GRADE

### Why Are Academic Standards Important?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. Standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

## English Language Arts & Literacy

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

# Mathematics

## A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 3rd Grade

- Multiplying and dividing up to  $10 \times 10$  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  $9 \times 80$ )
- 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  $9 \times 7$ ?)



### 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:

- Multiplication and division
- Fractions

## Help Your Child Learn at Home

Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time *every day* when your child can concentrate. You should also try to 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. Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

### English Language Arts & Literacy

- Make reading for fun a part of your child's daily routine.
- 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.

For more information, the full standards are available at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).



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