



# PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

## 3RD 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. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 4th 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. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But 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. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

### HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

### THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 3rd grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her academic progress

# English Language Arts & Literacy

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 multisyllable 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.

## 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

#### Keeping the conversation focused.

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

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

# Mathematics

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.

## 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  $\frac{3}{3}$  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  $9 \times 7$ ?)

### Keeping the conversation focused.

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

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?



Talking to  
Your Child's  
Teacher

# Help Your Child Learn 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.

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. 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](http://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.

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

**National  
PTA<sup>®</sup>**  
*everychild.onevoice.<sup>®</sup>*

**National PTA**  
1250 N Pitt Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Toll-Free: (800) 307-4PTA (4782)  
PTA.org • [info@pta.org](mailto:info@pta.org)



# parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE THREE  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**





*America's schools  
are working  
to provide higher  
quality instruction  
than ever before.*

The way we taught students in the past simply does not prepare them for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. Your school and schools throughout the country are working to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

In English language arts and literacy, this means three major changes. Students will continue reading and writing. But in addition to stories and literature, they will read more texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas including science and social studies. They will read more challenging texts and be asked more questions that will require them to refer back to what they have read. There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that students can read and understand challenging material.

## *What your child will be learning in grade three English language arts and literacy*



In grade three, students will build important reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. They will think, talk, and write about what they read in a variety of articles, books, and other texts. In their writing, students will pay more attention to organizing information, developing ideas, and supporting these ideas with facts, details, and reasons. Activities in these areas will include:

- Reading a wide range of stories and describing how a story teaches a lesson
- Describing characters in a story and how their actions contributed to events
- Reading texts about history, social studies, or science and answering questions about what they learned
- Referring to information from illustrations such as maps or pictures as well as the words in a text to support their answers
- Learning the rules of spoken and written English
- Learning and using new words, including words related to specific subjects (such as science words)
- Participating in class discussions by listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, and building on the ideas of others
- Giving a class presentation on a topic or telling a story using relevant facts and details and speaking clearly
- Writing stories with dialogue and descriptions of character's actions, thoughts, and feelings
- Gathering information from books, articles, and online sources to build understanding of a topic
- Writing research or opinion papers over extended periods of time

## *Partnering with your child's teacher*

Don't be afraid to reach out to your child's teacher—you are an important part of your child's education. Ask to see a sample of your child's work or bring a sample with you. Ask the teacher questions like:

- Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
- What do you think is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
- Where is my child excelling? How can I support this success?



*In grade three, students will read stories, plays, and poems. Additionally, they will read to learn information about history, the world, science, and other areas. Here are just a few examples of how your child will develop important reading skills across grade levels.*

#### READING LITERATURE

##### **Grade Two Reading**

- Students retell stories and determine the central message, lesson, or moral.
- Students acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

##### **Grade Three Reading**

- Students recount stories and determine the central message, lesson, or moral, explaining how it is developed in the text.
- Students distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

##### **Grade Four Reading**

- Students determine the theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text and summarize the text.
- Students compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are told, including the difference between first- and third-person accounts.

#### READING FOR INFORMATION

##### **Grade Two Reading**

- Students ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- Students explain how specific images or illustrations (such as a diagram of how a machine works) are useful.

##### **Grade Three Reading**

- Students ask and answer questions about what they read by referring directly to parts of the text.
- Students use information gained from images or illustrations.

##### **Grade Four Reading**

- Students refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- Students interpret information presented in charts, graphs, or other visual sources of information and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text.



*As they progress through grade levels, students will be asked more questions that require them to cite details or information from increasingly challenging texts. This will encourage them to become observant and analytical readers.*



*Writing tasks in grade three may include stories, essays, reports, and opinion papers. Here are just a few examples of how your child will develop important writing skills across grade levels.*

### **Grade Two Writing**

- Students introduce a topic and use facts and definitions to develop their points.
- Students provide a concluding statement or section.

### **Grade Three Writing**

- Students introduce a topic and use facts, definitions, and details to develop points.
- Students provide a concluding statement or section.
- Students group related information together.
- Students use linking words and phrases to connect ideas, such as *also*, *another*, and *but*.

### **Grade Four Writing**

- Students introduce a topic clearly and develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information.
- Students provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- Students group related information in paragraphs and sections and use formatting (such as headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful.
- Students link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases such as *another*, *for example*, *also*, and *because*.
- Students use precise language and subject-specific vocabulary.



*Some writing guidelines may seem similar from year to year. However, with practice at each grade level, students continue to learn and apply the rules of standard written English and to strengthen and expand their vocabulary, use of language, and organization of ideas.*

## *Helping your child learn outside of school*



1. Provide time and space for your child to read independently. This time should be free from distractions such as television.
2. Ask your child what topics, events, or activities he or she likes. Then look for books, magazines, or other materials about those topics that would motivate your child to read.
3. It is also helpful when your child sees other people reading at home. You could share what you have read.
4. Start a family book club. Let different members of the family pick the book. This could be a good way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together!
5. Be sure your child has a library card. Children should select books they are interested in to develop a passion for reading. Many libraries have book clubs and family activities that make reading fun for the entire family.
6. Use technology to help build your child's interest in reading. There are several websites where students can read books or articles online. The computer will help with words the student cannot read independently. Libraries also have computers students can use to access those sites. Feel free to ask a librarian or teacher for suggestions.

## *Additional Resources*



For more information on the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/key-points-in-english-language-arts> or <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>.



# parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE THREE  
**MATHEMATICS**





*America's schools  
are working  
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The way we taught students in the past simply does not prepare them for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. Your school and schools throughout the country are working to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

In mathematics, this means three major changes. Teachers will concentrate on teaching a more focused set of major math concepts and skills. This will allow students time to master important ideas and skills in a more organized way throughout the year and from one grade to the next. It will also call for teachers to use rich and challenging math content and to engage students in solving real-world problems in order to inspire greater interest in mathematics.

## *What your child will be learning in grade three mathematics*



In grade three, students will continue to build their concept of numbers, developing an understanding of fractions as numbers. They will learn the concepts behind multiplication and division and apply problem-solving skills and strategies for multiplying and dividing numbers up through 100 to solve word problems. Students will also make connections between the concept of the area of a rectangle and multiplication and addition of whole numbers. Activities in these areas will include:

- Understanding and explaining what it means to multiply or divide numbers
- Multiplying all one-digit numbers from memory (knowing their times table)
- Multiplying one-digit numbers by multiples of 10 (such as 20, 30, 40)
- Solving two-step word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Understanding the concept of area
- Relating the measurement of area to multiplication and division
- Understanding fractions as numbers
- Understanding and identifying a fraction as a number on a number line
- Comparing the size of two fractions
- Expressing whole numbers as fractions and identifying fractions that are equal to whole numbers (for example, recognizing that  $\frac{3}{1}$  and 3 are the same number)
- Measuring weights and volumes and solving word problems involving these measurements
- Representing and interpreting data

## *Partnering with your child's teacher*

Don't be afraid to reach out to your child's teacher—you are an important part of your child's education. Ask to see a sample of your child's work or bring a sample with you. Ask the teacher questions like:

- Is my child at the level where he/she should be at this point of the school year?
- Where is my child excelling? How can I support this success?
- What do you think is giving my child the most trouble? How can I help my child improve in this area?
- What can I do to help my child with upcoming work?

Here are just a few examples of how students will develop and use their understanding of place value in grade three.

### Grade Two Mathematics

- Understand that 100 can be thought of as a bundle of ten tens—called a “hundred”
- Understand that the three digits of a three-digit number represent amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones (place value)
- Add and subtract numbers through 1000 using what students have learned about place value

### Grade Three Mathematics

- Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100
- Quickly and accurately add and subtract numbers through 1000 using knowledge of place value
- Use place value understanding to multiply and divide numbers up through 100
- Multiply one-digit whole numbers by multiples of 10 between 10 and 90. For example,  $9 \times 80$  or  $5 \times 60$

### Grade Four Mathematics

- Use place value understanding to round multi-digit whole numbers to any place
- Use place value understanding to find the product of two multi-digit numbers
- Recognize that in a multi-digit whole number, a digit in one place represents ten times what it represents in the place to its right
- Compare two multi-digit numbers based on the meanings of the digits in each place, using the symbols  $>$  (more than),  $=$  (equal to), and  $<$  (less than)

*Students understand that 15 tens = 5 tens + 10 tens (or 1 hundred).*

$$\boxed{5} \times \boxed{30} = 5 \text{ groups of } 3 \text{ tens} = 15 \text{ tens}$$

$$\boxed{15} = \boxed{1} \boxed{5} \boxed{0}$$

tens                      hundreds    tens            ones



*Students use their understanding of place value as a strategy for multiplying one-digit numbers by multiples of ten. This will prepare them to multiply two multi-digit numbers in grade four.*

Here are just a few examples of how students will learn about and work with fractions in grade three.

### Grade Two Mathematics

- Break circles and rectangles into two, three, or four equal parts
- Describe parts of a whole using the words halves, thirds, half of, a third of, etc.
- Describe a whole as two halves, three thirds, four fourths

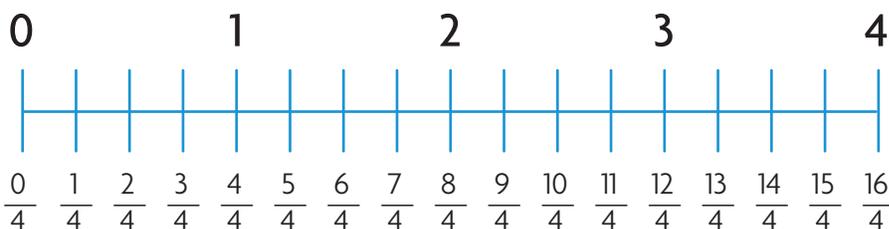
### Grade Three Mathematics

- Determine a fraction's place on a number line by defining the length from 0 to 1 as the whole and "cutting it" into equal parts
- Understand two fractions as equal if they are the same size or at the same point on a number line
- Compare the size of two different fractions of the same size object. For example, which is bigger,  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a pizza or  $\frac{1}{6}$  of that same pizza?

### Grade Four Mathematics

- Break down a fraction into smaller fractions with the same denominator, or bottom number, in more than one way ( $\frac{3}{8} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{8} = \frac{2}{8} + \frac{1}{8}$ )
- Explain why a fraction is equal to another fraction
- Add and subtract mixed numbers (whole numbers mixed with fractions, such as  $1\frac{1}{3}$ ) with the same denominators
- Multiply a fraction by a whole number

*Using a number line helps students think of a fraction as a number.*



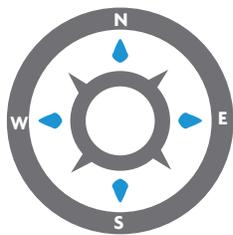
Students begin to understand that fractions are sometimes the same quantity as a whole number ( $\frac{8}{4} = 2$ ) and whole numbers can be expressed as fractions ( $3 = \frac{12}{4}$ ).

## Helping your child learn outside of school



1. Play math games with your child. For example, “I’m thinking of two numbers whose product is between 20 and 30. How many pairs can you think of that would satisfy this problem?” Have your child explain the solutions. How does he or she know that all the number pairs have been identified?
2. Encourage your child to write or describe numbers in different ways. For example, what are some different ways to make 1450?  $1450 = 1$  thousand, 4 hundreds, 5 tens, and 0 ones, or  $1000 + 450$ , 14 hundreds and 50 ones, 13 hundreds + 15 tens, etc.
3. Use everyday objects to allow your child to explore the concept of fractions. For example, use measuring cups to have students demonstrate how many  $\frac{1}{3}$ 's are in a whole, how many  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups you need to make  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups, and how many times you have to refill a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup measure to make  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups.
4. Encourage your child to stick with it whenever a problem seems difficult. This will help your child see that **everyone** can learn math.
5. Praise your child when he or she makes an effort and share in the excitement when he or she solves a problem or understands something for the first time.

## Additional Resources



For more information on the Common Core State Standards for mathematics, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/key-points-in-mathematics> or <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>.

For more information on the standards in mathematics related to place value (Number and Operations in Base Ten) or fractions, go to <http://commoncoretools.me/category/progressions/>.

For more information on helping your child learn mathematics (with activities from pre-school to grade five), go to <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/math/index.html>.