

## The Common Core State Standards

*What Every Grade 9-12 Parent Needs to Know about the Common Core*

The Common Core State Standards were developed by states and written by educators and education experts, including teachers from our state, to provide a consistent, clear and challenging set of learning expectations for all students. Why? By raising student expectations and focusing on critical skills for the future, these standards make sure students graduate with the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college, careers, and life.

Our state adopted the standards in 2010, and our educators have been transitioning to the Common Core standards ever since. While our state Board of Education adopts standards for our schools, it's up to our districts and teachers to develop their lesson plans and decide on curricular materials. That's why it's important to ask your child's teachers, principals and school officials about their preparation and planning for this school year.

The standards are research-based to incorporate findings from other high-achieving countries and the expectations of today's college coursework and career demands. Our students will graduate ready for college or their chosen career path because these stronger standards lay the foundation for their success.

### In the Classroom

The Common Core Standards will change the way our students learn math and English language arts because these standards focus on fostering and strengthening essential knowledge and skills that are used across grade levels and subject areas. Changes in classroom instruction focus on developing students' critical thinking and communication skills, as well as helping students understand how classroom learning relates to the real world. Student-led and small group work is emphasized to foster strong communication and collaboration skills, which are critical to success in everyday life and the workplace.

The chart below identifies the main instructional changes in English language arts and mathematics, and provides guidance about how each shift looks in the classroom.

Instructional Shift	In the Classroom
ELA – Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction	Reading and writing on real-life events, such as historical events, science, biographies and news articles
ELA – Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and fictional	Students should be able to point out facts and information in a text to support their opinions or answers. Prompts such as, "how do you know that?" or "where did you find that information?" should be used in class discussions.
ELA – Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary	Students should read texts that focus on building a strong vocabulary and understanding words that appear across content-areas or with multiple meanings. For instance, when reviewing a class reading assignment, explain the meaning of a new word and encourage students to use the word in classroom discussion.
Math – Focus	Students should understand the logic and processes of addition and subtraction, including problem solving and place value.
Math – Coherence	Collaboration among all grade level teachers should be encouraged to build on the foundations set in previous grades and expectations of later grade levels. In addition, students should understand how different math topics relate to others.
Math – Rigor	Students should show all of their work and explain their process for arriving at an answer. Instruction should place an emphasis on seeing structure in expressions, reasoning with equations and inequalities, the ability to interpret functions and build functions, express geometric properties with equations, interpret categorical and quantitative data, and using probability to make decisions.

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Be sure to ask your child's teacher what his or her plans are for lessons and how you can help reinforce classroom learning when helping your child at home. While every classroom will learn skills and knowledge through different lessons, here's a look at what<sup>1</sup> you can expect your high school student to know and do by graduation:

- Understanding more from and making fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of evidence to support an analysis
- Making more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within a book, essay, or article
- Evaluating arguments and specific claims; assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient; and detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities
- Making an argument that is logical, well-reasoned, and supported by evidence
- Writing a literary analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea and coherent focus and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details
- Conducting several research projects that address different aspects of the same topic, using more complex sources
- Responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesizing comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; and resolving contradictions when possible
- Sharing research, findings, and evidence clearly and concisely
- Making strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding of findings and to add interest
- Determining or clarifying the meaning of words and phrases, choosing flexibly from multiple strategies, such as using context, Greek and Latin roots, and consulting specialized reference materials.
- Interpreting figures of speech in context and analyzing their role in the written materials
- Working with rational and irrational numbers, including working with rational exponents
- Solving problems with a wide range of units and solving problems by thinking about units
- Solving real-world and mathematical problems by writing and solving nonlinear equations, such as quadratic equations
- Interpreting algebraic expressions and transforming them purposefully to solve problems
- Analyzing functions algebraically and graphically, and working with functions presented in different forms
- Working with function families and understanding their behavior
- Analyzing real-world situations using mathematics to understand the situation better and optimize, troubleshoot, or make an informed decision
- Proving theorems about triangles and other figures
- Solving applied problems involving trigonometry of right triangles
- Using coordinates and equations to describe geometric properties algebraically
- Making inferences and justifying conclusions from sample surveys, experiments, and observational studies
- Working with probability and using ideas from probability in everyday situations