

What Your Child Will Learn in Pre K

Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, decisions and choices and are respected as individual learners.

Language and Literacy Development

- use one or two words to label objects and express needs and wants
- build an understanding of words through interactions including reading books
- imitate reading behaviors like turning pages and babbling while looking at pictures
- explore writing with scribbles on paper

Executive Function

- remember the location of objects like a specific toy
- follow simple rules some of the time.
- watch and imitate how others use objects or complete tasks
- control impulses some of the time

Social and Emotional Development

- show increased interest in interacting with familiar adults
- show increased interest in interacting with other children
- manage emotions independently or with the help of a familiar adult
- notice when other children are upset and try to help them feel better

Physical Development and Wellness

- learn to walk and start to run
- play games that develop throwing and kicking skills
- show an increasing ability to control their hands
- start to communicate at mealtime using simple words

Cognitive Development

- show interest in counting and start to identify one, two, or three objects
- learn words like up and down and differences in size and volume
- sort and classify objects like helping a teacher make piles of different colored toys
- explore cause and effect by discovering new ways to play with toys

Creative Expression

- create art using materials like crayons and clay
- move creatively with other kids to learn body awareness and build social skills
- enter the world of make believe with simple props like toy phones and puppets
- interact with music through games and simple songs

What Your Child Will Learn in Kindergarten 1

The Basics

In K1, children learn about the world through play. Subject areas aren't separate in their minds or in the classroom. The objects K1 find on a nature walk, like feathers, rocks and leaves, might help them figure out math concepts like "big, bigger, and biggest" or motivate them to visit the book corner to find out more about birds. Teachers may introduce children to basic concepts such as shapes, letters, and colors, but preschool is about learning much more than what a circle looks like. It's where children first develop a relationship with learning.

Language & Literacy

Children spend most of the K1 day working together with classmates. Each conversation, whether talking about the class pet or deciding which color block to put on top of their tower, helps children develop their thoughts and language. K1 teachers read aloud simple stories like "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault and "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle to show children that text runs from left to right, expose them to new vocabulary, point out letter sounds and rhyming words, and help children talk about what they read.

Writing often appears as scribbles in the K1 classroom, but letters or shapes that resemble letters soon pop up as children try to write their own names in creative ways. Teachers model writing for K1 throughout the day. Many children will not be able to write words conventionally. However, every scribble shows that a child understands that the printed word carries messages, and that she is excited to be able to create these messages.

Math

K1 use numbers every day when they count milk cartons for lunch or figure out how many children are at a table. They work with geometric shapes such as triangles, rectangles, and squares in the block center, and through art projects. They measure at the water table when they compare the size of their hands and feet. K1 teachers invite children to arrange items in a series or pattern when they make collages and other art projects. Teachers also use simple graphs to present concepts, for example, determining how many children wear mittens to school and how many wear gloves.

Science

K1 are scientists. They learn about the world by observing and experimenting. Natural things fascinate them, from rocks, to animals, to their baby brothers and sisters. They also notice the many ways that they can influence the natural world. Preschoolers may plant seeds, or watch what happens to an ice cube in a warm room. They'll test what sinks and what floats at the water table, and which blowers make the biggest bubbles. They'll find non-fiction books about animals and nature in the classroom library.

Social Studies

K1 social studies is where children learn about their place in the world. Understanding how to get along with others can often take up the biggest part of K1's day. Children learn how to resolve conflicts and practice skills like sharing, taking turns and cleaning up. They figure out how to express their feelings using words. The class may also explore its community and the people in it by taking short field trips around the neighborhood.

What Your Child Will Learn in Kindergarten 2

The skills learned at this stage -- knowing what sounds the letter A makes or adding $2 + 2$ -- may seem simple but they will set your child up for a lifetime of learning. Kindergarten 2 may look like all fun and games (music, storytime, dancing, art) but there's an intense amount of brainwork going on. Young children learn through play and creative activity, so your preschooler's building blocks and train tracks aren't just entertaining; they're teaching problem solving and physics. K2 is also a time for developing good learning habits and positive self-esteem. Here are the important learning milestones children will typically achieve in preschool, with tips for helping your child stay on track at home.

Letters and Sounds

Kids will learn to recognize and name all 26 uppercase letters and some lowercase letters (lowercase letters are harder to learn at this age). They will recognize their own first name and be able to print it, along with other letters and meaningful words like *Mom*, *Dad*, and *love*. K2 children will also develop a connection between letters and sounds and know some of the sounds that letters make.

Parents: A love of language, reading, and books starts early, and it starts at home, so encourage this by talking with your child and reading to him regularly. Even 10 minutes each night makes a difference; make it a warm, cozy experience by looking at pictures together, pointing out words, and talking about what's happening in the book. Ask questions ("What is this?" "What is she doing?") and discuss your child's observations and thoughts. Songs, nursery rhymes, and tongue twisters also teach your child about how sounds work and get plenty of giggles.

Colors, Shapes, and Objects

K2 students will learn or continue to learn the names of many colors, basic shapes, and body parts.

Numbers and Counting

Teachers will help kids learn to recognize and identify the numbers one through 10 and correctly count 10 or more objects. Learning what numerals 0 to 9 look like and being able to name them correctly is one of the first math skills preschoolers learn. Counting is a separate skill that usually starts with memorization; kids will memorize the order of numbers and say them proudly as they "count" objects. As they advance, they will learn that the numbers and objects actually correspond.

Cutting and Drawing

Before entering kindergarten 3, children should be able to cut with scissors. As they develop better hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, they will start drawing and coloring beyond just scribbles and will learn to use pencils, paintbrushes, and glue.

Socializing and Sharing

Developing important social skills is necessary before starting kindergarten 3; students will learn how to share and cooperate, to work together and take turns, to participate in group activities and follow simple directions, and to communicate wants and needs.

What Your Child Will Learn in Kindergarten 3

Though you may think of kindergarten as a year for play, the actuality is that kindergarten 3 kids work hard and learn a lot in very short time. Not only is kindergarten 3 a year to get used to the routine of school, the idea of being accountable to a new authority figure and to make new friends, but, as kindergarten 3 teachers will tell you, it's a crucial year to build the foundation for learning.

Math

Kindergarten 3 is a year for the basics. While some children will be beyond ready for kindergarten 3 and come to school knowing how to count, recognize numbers to 10 and sort objects, other will not. That's the type of math your child will learn this year. Using concrete, visual props like buttons, cubes and counting bears, your kindergartner will learn the concepts of more and less, ordinal numbers, basic addition and subtraction, creating and recognizing patterns and how to sort using a number of different characteristics.

By the end of the kindergarten 3 year, your child should be able to name the components of a calendar, as well as know how they build upon one another (days make weeks, weeks make months, etc.), recognize numbers up to 100 when they are not in order and count to 100.

Reading

Kindergarten 3 is a year of discovery in reading and literacy. In the first few months of school, your child will learn to recognize simple words in print, including his own name and those of his classmates. Letter-sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, sight word recognition, rhyming and words families and concepts about print are the areas in which your child will expand his knowledge this year. By the end of the year some kindergartners will even be reading a little bit.

Writing

Your child will learn to use writing for a variety of purposes in kindergarten 3, all of them practical. The first thing he's likely to master is how to print his own name correctly, using a capital letter at the beginning and lowercase letters for the rest. He'll learn to write numerals from 1 to 20 and a few core words. Most importantly, he'll be working on developing his fine motors skills as he learns how to write the alphabet in both capital and lowercase letters.

Science

Kindergarten 3 science explores topics that are meaningful to students and can be applied to everyday life. Your child will learn about good health habits, including nutrition and an introduction to dental hygiene. He will spend time learning the process of inquiry as he learns about the five senses.

This year he works on observation and data recording as the class collects weather information for the daily calendar and keeps track of how many days a certain type of weather occurs. He may also discover plant life with a hands-on unit about seeds and plant growth.

Social Studies

In kindergarten 3 social studies mimics your child's developmental progress. At the beginning of the year, students focus on "me," exploring their extended families, learning their phone numbers and addresses and sharing information about themselves with the class.

As the year goes on, the focus moves away from the individual and broadens to look at different types of families and cultures and community workers. You can also expect your child to have a better understanding of the meaning behind federal holidays, instead of thinking they just mean a day off from school.

What Will Kids Learn in 1st Grade?

For many kids, 1st grade is a year to feel "big." They're no longer the youngest in the school, they can read a little bit and they've most likely experienced a physical growth spurt since kindergarten. First grade teachers use that bigness as a way to challenge students to learn bigger things this year. Reading takes off, math becomes more complex and science and social studies explore beyond kids' inner circles. State-by-state, lessons and topics may vary, but there are some common topics 1st grade kids will learn this year.

Math

First grade is a year to explore and introduce a number of different concrete building blocks of math, such as problem solving, operations and number sense. Last year, your 1st grader learned to count with one-to-one correspondence, recognize numerals and sort into groups. This first grade year continues to build on these concepts, using hands-on manipulatives like Cuisenaire rods and snap cubes to more concretely visualize the numbers as your child begins basic addition and subtraction. She will learn to use an analog clock to tell time to the minute, be asked to recognize coins, count money, solve simple word problems, count beyond 100 and understand basic place value.

Reading

First grade is the year when students seemingly begin to read overnight. By now your child is able to recognize her name and some other core words in print, is able to write, recognize and have sound correspondence of most of the letters in the alphabet and, even if she's not reading yet, she has a good grasp on concepts about print.

This year she will continue to build phonemic awareness with more complicated sounds like blends and digraphs. She will be taught a number of strategies for decoding words she doesn't know or is unable to sound out and start to answer questions about the meaning of what she's read.

Writing

Your child's fine motor skills have improved a great deal since she began kindergarten, providing the control she needs to really begin writing. Expect your child to begin formal work on handwriting skills this year in addition to creative writing tasks. Some teachers will focus on inventive spelling, allowing children to write the sounds they hear in words, while also instructing students using weekly spelling words. Your 1st grader will learn how to use punctuation and capitals, but, more importantly, she will start to use writing as a tool for communication.

Science

Like math, science in 1st grade focuses on finding patterns, though in science the patterns explored are in the natural world. Your child will spend time learning about insects and their common characteristics and may even follow the life cycle of a butterfly.

She'll learn about weather patterns and how they contribute to the water cycle, as well as learning how the water cycle is a pattern for sustaining life. Other areas of study include: dental hygiene, magnets and animal and plant life.

Social Studies

Expect your child to begin exploring the concept of community beyond her family this year. She'll learn about how neighborhoods make up cities, cities make up states and states make up nations, with a focus on how all of those components work together to create a cohesive unit.

For many students, this year brings a number of field trips to neighborhood businesses, local government and public institutions like the library.

What is Learned in 2nd Grade?

By second grade, kids will have two years of school under their belt. Routines like working independently and cooperating with others in a group will be familiar. So will sitting quietly and listening to teachers or reading on their own.

For many kids, second grade marks the beginning of being one of the "big kids" in the school. No longer the youngest or just out of kindergarten, second graders are used to their school environment and ready to take on some serious learning.

Your child's attention span is increasing as well. This means he's able to learn more difficult concepts in one setting and apply them to other situations.

What kids learn in 2nd grade isn't the same from school to school, but there are some commonalities that many teachers focus on.

Math

In math this year, your second grader will continue to explore the logic of numbers. She will also start to learn that all the number facts are related in a systematic way. While kindergarten and first grade focused on learning to recognize numbers and numerals, second grade begins to work with those numbers in real-world applications. This year your child will delve further into place value, learning to add and subtract using regrouping. She will explore basic fractions to learn how they relate to a whole and practice "skip counting" as a precursor to learning multiplication tables. Other skills she'll be taught include basic money sense, units of measure and how those units relate to each other (inches make feet, feet make yards, etc.). She'll also learn how to use a thermometer in both Celsius and Fahrenheit.

Reading

Second grade is a pivotal year in reading. This is the year when students are challenged to become more fluent readers. He will move beyond using decoding skills to figure out unfamiliar words and use context clues instead.

Expect to hear retellings of the stories your child has read, as he practices summarizing accurately. By the end of the year, your child will have a strong grasp of suffixes and prefixes, using them to decipher the meaning of words he doesn't know. Other reading skills that are worked in second grade include outcome prediction, self-correction, and using a dictionary.

Writing

By the end of first grade, your child has mastered the ability to write a coherent sentence to convey meaning. Now she will work to put a number of different types of sentences (interrogatory, statements, and exclamations) together to create a descriptive piece of writing.

The phrase she will probably hear most from her teacher this year is "Tell me more about that." This helps her develop and use a more extensive vocabulary of verbs and learn how to use adjectives to bring depth to pieces of writing.

Science

Science curriculum varies a great deal in second grade. Some schools spend a lot of time learning about life cycles, while others covered that in first grade. If your child learns about life cycles this year, he's likely to focus on observable creatures like butterflies and tadpoles. Typically, he will spend time learning about the body this year as well.

Lessons will focus on how to take care of his own in a basic introduction to health, as well as learning about the bones, muscles, and organs and how they function. Other topics explored may include the role of the Earth's orbit in seasonal changes, the solar system, and weather prediction using different types of clouds.

Social Studies

Social studies in second grade is often a continuation of kindergarten and first grade, looking at neighborhood, community, and families.

This year, many teachers will take the opportunity to expand (or shrink, depending on how you look at it) the definition of community to include the classroom. This naturally leads to teaching about the need for rules in society and a comparison of different types of communities. As closer friendships begin to form, they will also, quite naturally, exclude some children. That makes this a good year to begin learning about conflict resolution, on both a global and local scale.

What is Learned in 3rd Grade?

Third grade is a year of great academic growth. Children who were previously very concrete thinkers are steadily becoming more open to the abstract. Though curriculum may vary from state to state there are some commonly taught skills and topics to give you an idea of what your child will learn in 3rd grade.

Math

In second grade, the focus was on learning to subtract two-and three-digit numbers, regrouping, and measurement.

In third grade, it shifts to more complicated topics: advanced multiplication and division, patterns and number sense, geometry and probability. By the end of third grade, your child will have gained the skills to complete mental math, work with fractions, estimate, interpret graphs and predict probability and outcomes.

Reading

Your child now reads with relative fluency, correcting himself when he makes a mistake and figuring out words from context clues. In third grade, he will build on those skills to begin delving into the world of chapter books and non-fiction. It's time to move on from learning to read to reading to learn. New skills he will tackle this year include using graphic organizers; using grammar, text and genre clues to glean information; and summarization.

Writing

In third grade, your child will begin writing more in all of his subjects to convey and summarize information. He will also typically learn how to write in cursive and be expected to do so regularly. Using that new longhand, he will work on using a sophisticated vocabulary to convey information, participate in Writers Workshop and use the writing process to write in a number of different genres.

Science

In third grade, science is not only conceptual but hands-on as well. Typically this is the year that students begin investigating systems, sound, habitats and natural science, all topics that require a lot of observation, measurement, and experimentation. Your third-grader will eagerly learn more about forces of nature, classification, setting up experiments and organisms and their habitats.

Social Studies

Third grade is the year your child starts to learn more about his country and the world around him, gaining a basic understanding of economics and money by learning all about supply and demand. Typically, third-

graders spend a lot of time focusing on their own state, its trade, and unique qualities, but other geography skills are also key. Your child will focus a great deal on map skills.

What is Learned in 4th Grade?

Kids learn a number of new things in 4th grade, both socially and academically. Just as the formation of cliques begins to increase and complicate your child's social life, the academic ante is upped as well, requiring him not only to be responsible for his own work, but to work in groups as well. This year is the genesis of the too-heavy backpack, as each subject in 4th grade usually has its own book and notebook. Curriculum varies from state to state, but many of the skills and topics kids learn in 4th grade are the same.

Math

This year in math, your 4th grader will start learning the processes on which the more complicated branches of math are based. In third grade, the focus was on number sense and patterns. This year your child will learn to use those patterns to find the factors and multiples of numbers, to convert and calculate units of measure (for example, figure out how many minutes in one and a half hours) and to work with fractions. By the end of the fourth grade year, your child should be able to add and subtract fractions, recognize equivalent and non-equivalent fractions, know the characteristics of lines and angles and feel comfortable analyzing, collecting, organizing and presenting data.

Reading

Your fourth grader will begin to branch out a bit in reading. He'll work on gaining a more sophisticated vocabulary, beginning to look at word roots, prefixes and suffixes to figure out unfamiliar words and to associate them with words he already knows. He'll read a variety of new genres including myths and legends, folk tales and fables, learning to connect characters' experiences with events in his own life. This year he will also read different types of non-fiction materials, including encyclopedias, reputable Internet sites and books as he learns to effectively research a topic.

Writing

Fourth grade writing is closely interconnected with reading. If reading fables and folk tales, your child is likely to be writing his own stories with himself as the hero. If it hasn't been before, writing is now a daily activity with a focus on using a variety of different types of punctuation to create sentences. Your child will learn the proper use of quotations marks and the power of dialogue in a story, striving to develop his personal voice and writing style. He will also be taught to use research tools to create a coherent, detailed report.

Science

In science, students are ready to move on to looking at the scientific processes of classification of organisms, arrangement of objects by properties and measuring events. Topics he might explore this year include motion of objects, electricity and circuits, fossils, meteorology and trait inheritance. In learning about these different things, expect your 4th grader to begin asking many questions about the world around him, but don't answer too quickly. Finding ways to answer his own questions is all part of the process.

Social Studies

The 4th grade Social Studies class typically devotes a great deal of learning time to students' home state. Your child will learn about the geographic features of his state, how they've changed over time and what role industry and settlement may have played in those changes. He will learn the history and government of his state and may even take field trips to visit city or state government. By the end of the year, he should have a working knowledge of who's who and what role they play (or played) in creating the home in which he lives.

What's Learned in 5th Grade?

Fifth grade is a year for putting all the academic pieces together. In 5th grade, your child is saying goodbye to elementary school and preparing for middle school. She may have different teachers for each subject for the first time this year and will be expected to take more responsibility for organization and long-term planning. Though curriculum varies from school to school, there are some common skills and concepts to learn in 5th grade.

Math

As your 5th grader is merely a year away from the challenging curriculum of middle school, this is the year that math programs step it up a notch. This year your child will be asked to stretch her brain to come up with solutions to more complicated problems, ones that ask her to use multiplication, division, subtraction and addition all within the same problem. She's likely to learn the phrase "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally" as a way to remember the order in which to perform operations (Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction).

Your 5th grader will begin learning some geometry, including the symmetry of shapes, the roles of perpendicular and parallel lines, as well as how to use the formulas to calculate the volume of geometric shapes. Other skills learned this year include: conversion of fractions, number plotting and the features of data sets.

Reading

By now your 5th grader has grasped many of the mechanical skills of reading and should be reading chapter books with relative fluency. This year she will be challenged to read many different genres with a critical and interpretive eye. Expect your child to be doing a lot of independent reading and writing book reports that analyze the characters, plot and setting as they relate to the author's purpose in writing the book. She will also learn to back up her opinions using examples from the text.

Writing

Fifth grade writing instruction comes hand-in-hand with reading in a combined class known as Language Arts. This year students will be writing every day in a number of different ways. Many teachers will have a time for journaling during which students are asked to write for personal expression, be it poetry, autobiography or fiction. A great deal of emphasis is given to the writing process, as students master the art of editing for punctuation, flow and clarity of thought. This year your child will build a writing portfolio of her best work, a process that allows her to learn to evaluate her own work.

Science

Fifth grade students become hands-on scientists exploring the physical world this year. Areas of study include the solar system, photosynthesis, the digestive system and the chemical properties of elements. In this regard, your child will learn the Scientific Method, measuring the changes to the substances with which her experiments and presenting his findings in a factual manner.

Social Studies

The focus of social studies in fifth is citizenship. Students learn about our nation's history are challenged to analyze what they have learned for the causes, implications and different cultures of the colonies and people who founded them. Your child will learn about the evolution of our government and its branches, as well as spending time learning the geography and unique features of each of the states.

What's Learned in 6th Grade?

For many students, sixth grade marks the transition into middle school. If they were not introduced to the concept in fifth grade, students are now definitely experience different teachers for different subjects.

Subjects are more complex, homework worksheets become longer, and students are faced with new challenges and ideas. Some students excel at these new difficulties, while others can benefit through homeschool worksheets and study at home with parents.

Required reading and in-depth language studies

For many sixth graders, this is the first year that they are exposed to required reading. Many teacher worksheets will cover half a dozen books that students will be required to read on their own time throughout the year.

The language arts class is often split between literature and language chapters, with focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. Printable worksheets may be sent home detailing the written responses that are expected from students. Sixth graders also start participating in projects that incorporate several subjects, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They learn how to brainstorm and how to create different styles of writing, such as a play and poems.

Developing upper level math skills

Sixth grade math goes beyond the basics of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division that were taught in elementary school. Students learn about absolute values, prime factorization, and expanded algebraic problems. Geometry includes a greater focus on measurements and reason, as well as a look at both the U.S. and metric systems of measurement.

Understanding the scientific process

This year, sixth graders will apply the scientific process and how it leads to discoveries. This includes ethics, safety techniques, experiments, and more. They also focus more on the different properties of matter and how liquids differ from gasses and solids and vice versa. Students take a more in-depth look at the solar system, plants, and electricity. They may grow plants and discuss the different functions of specific parts. In energy studies, they will look at how force and motion interact on objects, as well as the use of fossil fuels and electricity. They may also learn about magnets and electromagnetism.

The development of civilization

In Social Studies, sixth grade students learn about early civilizations, such as those in Africa, India, and Rome. They will also be exposed to how the "wild west" was developed, the Industrial Revolution, and a more in-depth look at immigration and its effects on the country. Some classes also review the economic system and political science. Other classes may start to create mock student governments as a better way to understand the political structures.

Becoming increasingly independent

With the start of middle school, many sixth graders are looking for more independence and self-reliance. They are starting to realize that their parents and teachers are not always perfect, and they may question authorities.

Friendships become stronger, and secret clubs and rituals become popular. Both sexes are showing better coordination and reaction time, and they may enjoy participating in competitive sports. There are still

varying levels of maturity between boys and girls, with some sixth graders starting to take notice of the opposite sex.

Sixth grade students are more focused on activities that they enjoy, and may even start having plans for their future schooling and careers. Some of their future pursuits may be prompted by a seed planted in six grade.

What's Learned in 7th Grade?

7th graders are able to focus more on growing the skills they began to develop in the 6th grade without the added stress to adjusting to the new middle school environment. By 7th grade it is expected that students have acclimated to life as a middle school student and are therefore expected to work more independently and organize their time and schedules with less (but still some) guidance. In general, in 7th grade, students build on the skills they learned in 6th grade by writing and reading more complex and longer texts and essays, using more sophisticated language and strategies in their writing, studying more complex topics across all subjects, and solving and studying more complex mathematical and scientific concepts. In addition they are pushed to deepen their analytic skills in both ELA and Social Studies as described below. This work will prepare them for 8th grade where they will cement and further their skills, ultimately setting them up for success in high school.

Reading: 7th Grade

In 7th grade, students deepen their ability to analyze the texts they read and provide evidence from the text to do so. Specifically, 7th graders learn to examine texts more closely and use details from the text in order to develop ideas, analyze, and make inferences. In addition, they analyze the relationships between elements within one text and across multiple texts while supporting this analysis by citing evidence from the text.

In order to build reading skills your 7th grader:

- Analyzes texts using the text as evidence to support the analysis.
- Makes inferences about texts and uses evidence from the text to support the inferences.
- Understands the message or ideas in a text and uses evidence to support these claims.
- Understands, tracks the progress of, and summarizes the main idea of a text, using evidence from the text.
- Analyzes and explains the relationship between different elements such as character and setting.
- Analyzes the impact of specific language and word choice used in a text.
- Understands how the different structures used in a text, such as poetry or drama, affect the text.
- Compares and contrasts the different perspectives and points of views in a text.
- Determines the author's point of view in a text using evidence from the text.
- Compares different versions such as a stage version, film, or audio version of a text, paying specific attention to the way in which elements such as lighting, scenery, or audio sounds affect the message of the text.
- Compares a historical account of an event, person, or place with a historical fiction text about the same period.
- Read a variety of texts, including stories, poetry, drama, non-fiction, or informative texts.
- Compares multiple texts written by different authors about the same topic and determines how their different perspectives are presented through their presentation of facts and the inferences they make.

Writing: 7th Grade

Similar to the work they do in reading, 7th graders deepen their writing skills by using analysis, paying close attention to detail and providing reasons, proofs, and examples for the ideas they express. 7th graders write

a variety of genres, including informative pieces, opinion pieces, and narratives and they complete both short-term and long-term writing assignments. There is also particular attention paid to research and teaching students to do their own independent research and research projects as described below, specifically through the use of digital resources.

In order to build writing skills, your 7th grader:

- Writes arguments that present clear reasons and relevant evidence and include:
 - Introductions;
 - Acknowledgements of opposing claims;
 - Logical and orderly presentations of reasons and evidence;
 - The use of appropriate transitions, words, and phrases to connect claims;
 - A concluding sentence or paragraph which supports the argument made; and
 - A formal tone and style.
- Writes structured and well-organized opinion, research, and informative pieces that:
 - Use supporting claims and evidence that are based on credible texts and resources;
 - Include an introduction that has an explanation of what follows;
 - Develop topics through the use of facts, detailed quotations, and examples and subject specific terms and definitions;
 - Include transitions that connect concepts and paragraphs;
 - Include a conclusion that supports the presented idea(s);
 - Maintain a formal “essay type” style; and
 - Integrate other forms of media and formats, such as graphs, charts, headings, and audio or video when appropriate.
- Writes well-structured narratives (both true and fiction) that include:
 - A narrator, characters, and a point of view;
 - Descriptive detail and sensory language to describe characters, settings, and experiences;
 - Dialogue details and descriptions of characters, setting, and experiences;
 - A clear structure with a logical order and flow, as shown through the use of transition words; and
 - A conclusion that is connected to and builds on the narrative.
 - Plans, revises, and edits writing, specifically with guidance from teachers and peers, focusing specifically on trying new approaches and making sure the writing has a purpose and appeals to its audience.
 - Uses technology and the Internet to produce and publish writing.
 - Works with others and cites sources.
 - Works on multiple, short research projects that answer a specific question and cite multiple sources, while gathering additional questions for later research.
 - Uses both print and digital resources to conduct research, focusing on using appropriate search terms and reliable sources.
 - Uses quotes and a standard format for citation.
 - Uses research to analyze and make inferences.

Math: 7th Grade

In 7th grade, students focus on proportions and proportional relationships; solving linear equations (equations with variables that plot a straight line on a graph) and equations with rational numbers (integers and fractions); finding the area, surface area, and volume of 2- and 3-dimensional shapes; and analyzing data to make inferences. Students also solve more complex, multi-step equations as well as apply them to real-life applications and solve equations that use rational numbers and which include negative numbers.

In order to build math skills, your 7th grader:

- Solves equations using percentages that pertain to real-life examples, such as discounts, taxes, interest, and tips.
- Graphs different proportions in order to compare them and analyze the steepness of the line that is graphed (which is referred to as the “slope”).
- Uses equations to show the relationship between proportions.
- Understands equations related to the distance between positive and negative numbers and negative and negative numbers.
- Understands that a positive and negative number can equal 0. For example, $2 + -2 = 0$.
- Adds, subtracts, multiplies, and divides negative numbers.
- Analyzes scale drawings (drawings that represent real-life objects, such as cars or buildings and their measurements) in order to solve equations about them.
- Understands that an increase by 5 percent is the same thing as multiplying that number by 0.05.
- Solves multi-step equations that include different forms of numbers, such as fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- Uses statistics specifically to understand and infer information about a group or sample as well as compare 2 different groups or samples.
- Graphs statistics and uses the graph to further analyze a group(s) or sample(s).
- Predicts the probability of something based on collected data.

Science: 6th-8th Grade

Neither the Common Core nor National Standards breaks down expectations for middle school by grade. Instead, both institutions specify standards for middle school as a whole. Below is a list of skills covered throughout middle school. Consult your child’s teacher for more specifics pertaining to the topics and skills covered in her science class.

In middle school, students continue to deepen their knowledge and skills in the physical, life, earth, and space sciences. There is a specific focus on explaining and understanding real-life events and processes in relation to the concepts and topics learned. 6th-8th graders also focus on applying scientific methods as described below in order to deepen their understanding and work like actual scientists.

In order to build science skills, your 6th-8th grader:

- Plans and conducts investigations and experiments.
- Applies the scientific method in order to practice like a scientist (there are many different ways people present "the scientific method," but here's a basic example):
 - Questions, observes, and researches.
 - Develops a hypothesis (based on observations and research).
 - Make predictions.
 - Experiments and follows multi-step processes and instructions in order to conduct experiments.
 - Develops a conclusion.
 - Compares the results of an experiment to what is written about the topic in a text.
- Analyzes and interprets data.
- Uses measurement and mathematical computations while working with data.
- Develops and presents explanations for processes and practices used and results obtained.
- Determines the main ideas of a scientific text and cites specific evidence to support ideas and claims about scientific texts.
- Learns topic-specific science vocabulary.
- Analyzes relevant charts, diagrams, and graphs about a scientific topic.

What's Learned in 8th Grade?

This is the last year before high school, the last year you and your child don't have to worry about grades showing up on the high school transcript. Many 8th graders have already started tackling work at the high school level, especially in math. But they are still middle schoolers, and the curriculum, while challenging, is still aimed at the middle school child.

Preparation for High School

In 8th grade, your child may spend time with a guidance counselor, talking about high school, college, and even careers. One of the primary themes of middle school is exploration, and parents needn't freak out about such conversations about the future. The idea isn't to lock a child into one path, it's to make sure your child knows what paths are available.

From Science Labs to Shakespeare

In language arts, you can expect an emphasis on persuasive and expository writing. Many schools place strong readers in honors classes, and these students may tackle more challenging texts such as Shakespeare. Some students may still be struggling with basic reading and writing and may need extra support in preparation for high school.

In social studies, your child will be expected to relate the past to the present in more detail. Kids who are comfortable with class discussion tend to do well, while shy children may need encouragement.

Most science at this age is hands-on, and your child may be introduced to lab reports. Topics may be weighty, such as heredity, reproduction, and adaptation. Often a keen interest in science is piqued in 8th grade.

In math, your child will probably be placed according to ability. As curriculum has been pushed down, with younger children tackling harder work, many middle school students study concepts once taught in high school. In honors math courses, 8th graders may be exposed to geometry and advanced algebra concepts.

Honors Not for Everyone

It's unrealistic to expect all kids, even those who have always excelled in school, to be ready for such high-level work.

Some students will blossom in high school and be able to move up to advanced math classes. Others will excel on the regular track, which is still very challenging because of the curriculum pushdown.

Despite the more difficult curriculum, 8th graders still need to be taught in ways that recognize where they are developmentally. They need to move around a little bit, work together in groups... It's hard for kids at this age to sit in a desk while a teacher lectures.

To that end, 8th graders often are assigned group projects where they research a subject in depth with classmates and make a multimedia presentation. They're often expected to integrate several subjects, such as math, language arts, and science or social studies into one impressive project.

Group projects can be stressful socially, technically, and academically. Many kids thrive, but others will struggle along with their parents, who must walk the fine line between being supportive and taking charge. As they march toward high school, they'll have more opportunities to make choices about their coursework, not just in math but also in areas such as foreign languages. Eighth grade is still a time for exploration, and parents should encourage their child to try different things.

Time To Read

In 8th grade, students are expected to read challenging texts in all their classes, including science, social studies, math, and electives.

In school, students will be expected to read in order to find the right answer, but that's not enough. They also need to be able to infer meaning, to draw conclusions, and to relate one passage to another.

Organization Skills

Eighth grade is the time to shore up deficiencies in all academic areas as well as to get organized and learn the study skills necessary for high school.

Parents can help their children by teaching them how to organize their room, their folders, their notebooks, and even their lockers.

Unity will require students to keep an agenda/planner. This is the time to teach children how to study.

What's Learned in 9th Grade?

The hallways are noisy and chaotic. The class schedule is grueling. Ninth grade is the year every grade suddenly counts, the year of the permanent record. Despite the challenges, most kids and their parents manage to make the transition from middle to high school with just a few hiccups.

It's a transition that prepares children well for the leap from high school to college and even from college to work life.

A major message: Learn good organizational skills so you can live a balanced life, with time for schoolwork, friends, family, and activities.

Choose Courses Wisely

Students quickly realize that high school brings choices in what courses you take, and your schedule can determine how much homework you have every night and even which colleges you can go to.

Parents, please resist the temptation to push your children into the most difficult courses with the hopes that they'll get admitted to Harvard. To be in a course that's too difficult just leads to frustration.

On the flip side, some students are tempted to take the easiest courses possible in hopes of getting straight A's and a high GPA. That robs the student of a feeling of accomplishment and doesn't fool college admissions officers, who look carefully at course difficulty when evaluating a transcript.

Different Academic Tracks

Unity has 2 college paths: a college prep track for students motivated to attend college; an honors/AP track for highly motivated students planning to attend a competitive college.

The goal in 9th grade is to start down the path most likely to be a good fit. But it's possible to switch paths in 10th grade. It's also possible to take some courses in the honors program and others in college prep.

In 9th grade, parents should focus on helping their child figure out the right path while still leaving time for a social life and family. A counselor will help assemble a schedule that includes the right core courses and electives that match the student's goals.

To help students sort it all out, Unity has a school counselors and teachers who are well-equipped to help your child make good decisions.

Still, high school can be a pressure cooker, at Unity we emphasize the importance of personal well-being, including mental and physical health.

Transition for Parents

While students figure out their place in high school, parents have to find their place, as well. Parents tend to visit school less as their kids get older, but parents are needed even more.

Be involved, go to every meeting that's announced, every open house, stay in contact with the teachers and work with the teachers.

Parents who ask their 9th grader what's going on in school will probably get some variation of this response: "I have it covered." Parents need to know who their child's friends are, who the friends' parents are, and where their child is going. They need to know what their child's grades are and whether homework is getting turned in on time.

When kids talk about their social lives, parents may find themselves dragged into the middle of mini soap operas and must be careful not to get sucked into the drama. When a child comes home and says such and such happened, check it out, you want to nip it in the bud as soon as possible.

Take the same proactive steps with academics. Going to a teacher on the last day of the semester is too late. It's easier to help your child when their struggle is small, not after several weeks of missing work.

Some 9th graders can study independently, but others still need to work at the kitchen table with a parent close by. Some kids have an easy time with studying, while others get overwhelmed and don't know where to start.

Ninth grade is a time when kids are figuring out what it means to be a teenager. Moms and dads are figuring out what it means to be the parent of a teenager. It may be time to let children make their own choices and experience a little freedom, but 9th grade is also a time for parents to stay close by and be available when they're needed.

What's Learned in 10th Grade?

Your child has learned his way around the mammoth high school building. He has settled into a group of friends and gotten a handle on the high school juggling act of classes, activities, friends, and family.

Sophomore year is vital in the eyes of the college admissions officer, and it's a time when temptation can steer even a bright and motivated kid off course.

For parents, it's hard to strike the balance of knowing when to let a kid make mistakes and learn from them and when to step in to avert potential disaster.

Staying on Course

By now, a student should be on a path to a technical career, college, or even a highly selective college. Still, students have choices in electives and, more important, the level of challenge in core courses.

Students who breezed through middle school are at particular risk of falling down sophomore year. That's when even the smartest students need to buckle down and study, but some students might not have learned basic study skills.

Tenth-graders often say they don't have any homework in a particular subject because the teacher did not assign a paper or worksheet. But by 10th grade, students should be reviewing what they learned in class in each subject every night.

College Crunch

By sophomore year, many students and their families are already worried about college. At such an early stage, it's not productive to stress out over particular colleges and whether your child will make the cut. It's better to encourage your child to focus on her coursework and do her best. That way, when senior year arrives, they'll have choices.

Colleges expect a student to take four or five academic core classes: English, math, science, social science, and a foreign language.

The biggest pitfall for sophomores is choosing courses that are too easy just to guarantee a high grade. Kids are especially tempted to scale back on math out of fear, which is often shared by their parents. It's better to persevere.

Even students who are sure they're headed for a career in the arts need to take math at least through algebra II, a change from when their parents were able to skate by with far less math. Grade 10 is too early to decide you're "not a math person."

A major milestone of 10th grade is the PSAT or the preliminary ACT, precursors to the big college admissions exams. Although it is not required until their junior year, it's best to take it sophomore year. This gives students 2 years to prepare to pass the real test.

What's Learned in 11th Grade?

For some kids, junior year is time to get serious. For those who have been serious all along, it's important to avoid burnout and stay focused.

Among the milestones you can expect in 11th grade: Your child will take the SAT or the ACT—for the first but not the last time—and will start working on a list of potential colleges or other post-high school opportunities.

Academically, 11th grade is the most rigorous yet for students aiming for selective colleges. Many load up with Advanced Placement and honors courses. Others will be tempted to improve their chances of a perfect GPA by taking easier courses. This is a mistake, students should stay on the path they started, taking the right courses for their post-high school plans and getting the best grades they can. Your junior-year grades are the last grades colleges will have to compute your GPA.

Avoiding Burnout

In addition to core courses in math, English, science, and social studies, students may also be taking a foreign language or electives while juggling drama, band, sports, or other activities. Throw in a social life and junior year can be overwhelming. With juniors, they can become stressed if they haven't kept up their grades, they may realize they might need to change their plan.

A trend of mediocre grades in 9th and 10th grades can be reversed in time for college applications with a support system at home and at school.

Students at this age may groan at the sight of their parents at school, but kids with active parents tend to have an easier time managing the stress of 11th grade.

While some kids need motivation to turn around subpar grades, others who have always worked hard and gotten good grades may need encouragement on the home stretch. Burnout is not uncommon at this age, especially among students who have always strived to participate in everything.

Parents can help their children manage their time and develop effective study skills. It's important keep in close contact with teachers about grades. Unity offers online tools to keep parents in the loop, and many teachers now communicate through email.

High Expectations in Math

Junior-year coursework varies depending on the path to graduation your child chose, but all juniors will be expected to take a challenging math course, regardless of career or college plans. Changing expectations at the college level have led to more rigorous and varied offerings at high school, even for students not considering careers that require math.

Parents should encourage their child to work hard in math even if they don't consider themselves "math people."

What's Learned in 12th Grade?

You made it through elementary school, when your child learned to read. Then middle school, when he decided he hated reading. Then came high school, when you informed him that he absolutely must read if he wanted to get into college, and now, it's senior year.

Whether they love high school or hate it, kids tend to view senior year as a time that can't come soon enough. Either it's the last step before breaking free of high school or it's the most fun year ever, when commencement celebrations start on the first day back.

For parents, senior year may be a time of melancholy and anxiety. You wonder, did I do enough to prepare my child?

The big decision looms large: college. And in the short term, parents may worry that their child will get burned out on academics and their grades will slip. Parents need to help keep kids on track without putting too much pressure on them.

Preventing Senioritis

To find that middle ground, parents and students need to know exactly what the expectations are for senior year. Years ago, 12th grade was about two milestones: sending out college applications and receiving acceptance letters. Once your applications were mailed off, you did the bare minimum in your classes to pass. After you got your acceptance letter, you slacked off even more and assumed your teachers would turn a blind eye.

That was the past. These days, much of the college admissions process happens online. And there's also this thing called schoolwork, which still must get done even once you've been accepted to your first-choice school.

Today's teachers are far more likely to issue grades that reflect the senior's work rather than wave them through just because they're graduating. Yes, colleges can rescind acceptance letters. Even more important, your child could slack off so much that he may not have enough credits to graduate. Poor grades can also cost a student his scholarships and affect college placement. Counselors note that students who coast through senior year have a hard time getting back into the academic groove once they do get to college.