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# PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

## 1ST GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 1st 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 2nd 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 1st 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

In 1st grade, your child will become a more independent reader and writer. Your child will continue to learn and practice rules for recognizing the sounds that make up words and will be able to sound out more complex words. Such foundational skills are necessary and important components of developing proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend a wide range of materials. Students will learn to think about what they read and talk about the main ideas of simple stories. As they write and speak, 1st graders will learn to use language appropriately; this includes using complete sentences and spelling words with increasing accuracy.

## A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 1st Grade

- Using phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing
- Describing characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details
- Getting facts and information from different writings
- Writing about a topic, supplying some facts, and providing some sense of opening and closing
- Participating in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of “how-to” books and using them to write a sequence of instructions)
- Taking part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions to clear up any confusion
- Describing people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly and with complete sentences
- Producing and expanding complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands, and exclamations
- Identifying the correct meaning for a word with multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (e.g., deciding whether the word *bat* means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball)
- Learning to think about finer distinctions in the meanings of near-synonyms (e.g., *marching*, *prancing*, *strutting*, *strolling*, *walking*)

### 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 1st grade, these include:

- Reading grade-level text with understanding and fluency
- Learning from, enjoying, and getting facts from books he or she reads and listens to

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 1st grade, your child will build on last year's work and gain important new skills. One of the most important outcomes for the year is to improve speed and accuracy adding with a sum of 20 or less and subtracting from a number 20 or less (e.g.,  $17 - 8$ ). Another important goal in 1st grade is adding with a sum of 100 or less; this will rely on understanding what the digits mean in a number such as 63 (namely, 63 is six tens and three ones). Working with multi-digit addition this year will set the stage for 2nd grade, when your child will be working with three-digit numbers and adding and subtracting with larger numbers.

## A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 1st Grade

- Solving addition and subtraction word problems in situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing (e.g., a taking from situation would be: "Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?")
- Adding with a sum of 20 or less, and subtracting from a number 20 or less, for example by using strategies based around the number 10 (e.g., to solve  $13 - 4$ , one can start with 13, subtract 3 to reach 10, and then subtract 1 more to reach 9)
- Quickly and accurately adding with a sum of 10 or less, and quickly and accurately subtracting from a number 10 or less (e.g.,  $2 + 5$ ,  $7 - 5$ )
- Understanding what the digits mean in two-digit numbers (*place value*)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract (e.g.,  $38 + 5$ ,  $29 + 20$ ,  $64 + 27$ ,  $80 - 50$ )
- Measuring lengths of objects by using a shorter object as a unit of length
- Making composite shapes by joining shapes together, and dividing circles and rectangles into halves or fourths

### 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 1st grade, these include:

- Adding with a sum of 20 or less and subtracting from a number 20 or less (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child's progress in this area)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems

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

- Encourage your child to read to you books such as *Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik. Help him or her sound out difficult words. 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).
- Act out stories together from books, television, or your child's imagination.
- Pick a "word of the day" each day starting with a different letter. Have your child write the word and look for other things beginning with the same letter.
- Visit the library with your child every week. Have your child sign up for a library card.

## Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 1st grade examples might include:

- If you open a new carton of a dozen eggs, and you use four eggs to cook dinner, close the carton and ask your child how many eggs are left.
- While putting away toys into bins, count the number of toys in two bins and ask your child how many more are in one bin compared to the other.
- Play the "I'm thinking of a number" game. For example, "I'm thinking of a number that makes 11 when added to 8. What is my number?"

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

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# parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE ONE  
**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 one English  
language arts  
and literacy*



In grade one, your child will build important reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students will continue to learn the letters and sounds that make up words. They will think, talk, and write about what they read in stories, articles, and other sources of information. In their writing, students will work on putting together clear sentences on a range of topics using a growing vocabulary. Activities in these areas will include:

- Reading stories and showing they understand the lesson or moral of the story
- Asking and answering questions about a story, including characters, settings, and major events
- Comparing and contrasting the experiences of different characters
- Identifying the reasons an author gives to support a point
- Explaining differences between texts that tell stories and texts that provide information
- Learning and using new words
- Participating in class discussions by listening, responding to what others are saying, and asking questions
- Describing people, places, things, and events, expressing feelings and ideas clearly
- Learning basic rules of spoken and written English
- Working with others to gather facts and information on a topic
- Writing to describe an event, provide information on a topic, or share an opinion

*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 reading on grade level?
- How is my child doing in writing?
- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
- What can I do at home to make sure that my child is successful?

*In grade one, students will read stories 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

### Kindergarten Reading

- With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details.
- With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

### Grade One Reading

- Students retell stories, including key details, and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story.
- Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

### Grade Two Reading

- Students retell stories and determine their 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.

## READING FOR INFORMATION

### Kindergarten Reading

- With help from the teacher, students ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- With help from the teacher, students identify what person, place, thing, or idea a picture shows.

### Grade One Reading

- Students ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- Students use the illustrations and details in a text to describe key ideas.

### Grade Two Reading

- Students ask and answer such questions as , and 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.



*Students will read more challenging texts and materials as they progress through grade levels.*



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

### **Kindergarten Writing**

- Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing, students name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

### **Grade One Writing**

- Students name a topic and supply some facts about the topic.
- Students provide some sense of closure.

### **Grade Two Writing**

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



*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 reading 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 in which they are interested 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>.

For more information on helping your child become a reader, go to <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html>.



# parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE ONE  
**MATHEMATICS**





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*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 key math concepts 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 one mathematics*



In grade one, students will work with whole numbers and place value—including grouping numbers into tens and ones as they learn to add and subtract up through 20. Students will also use charts, tables, and diagrams to solve problems. Activities in these areas will include:

- Quickly and accurately adding numbers together that total up to 10 or less and subtracting from numbers up through 10
- Understanding the rules of addition and subtraction (for example,  $5+2=2+5$ )
- Solving word problems that involve adding or subtracting numbers up through 20
- Understanding what the different digits mean in two-digit numbers (place value)
- Comparing two-digit numbers using the symbols  $>$  (more than),  $=$  (equal to), and  $<$  (less than)
- Understanding the meaning of the equal sign ( $=$ ) and determining if statements involving addition and subtraction are true or false (for example, which of the following statements are true?  $3+3=6$ ,  $4+1=5+2$ )
- Adding one- and two-digit numbers together
- Measuring the lengths of objects using a shorter object as a unit of length
- Putting objects in order from longest to shortest or shortest to longest
- Organizing objects into categories and comparing the number of objects in different categories
- Dividing circles and rectangles into halves and quarters

## *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?
- 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 the skills and strategies students will develop as they solve word problems in grade one.

### Kindergarten Mathematics

- Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds (such as claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations
- Solve word problems by adding or subtracting numbers up through 10 using objects and drawings



### Grade One Mathematics

- Solve word problems by adding or subtracting numbers up through 20
- Solve addition and subtraction problems for different unknown numbers ( $20 - ? = 15$ ,  $9 + 4 = ?$ )

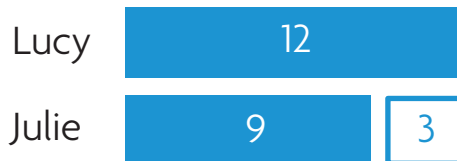
### Grade Two Mathematics

- Solve one- and two-step word problems by adding or subtracting numbers up through 100

## Examples of Grade One Word Problems

 <b>Addition</b>	6 bunnies sat on the grass. Some more bunnies hopped over. Then there were 14 bunnies. How many bunnies hopped over?
 <b>Subtraction</b>	14 bunnies were sitting on the grass. Some bunnies hopped away. Then there were 5 bunnies. How many bunnies hopped away?
<b>Comparison</b>	Lucy has 12 apples. Julie has 9 apples. How many more apples does Lucy have than Julie?

Your child will use pictures and diagrams to show addition and subtraction and to compare amounts.



Lucy has three more apples than Julie.  
Julie has three fewer apples than Lucy.



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

### Kindergarten Mathematics

- Count to 100 by ones and tens
- Understand that numbers from 11 to 19 contain a ten and some leftover ones (for example,  $14=10+4$ )

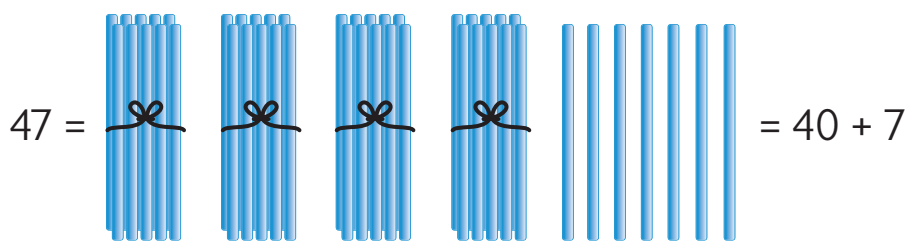
### Grade One Mathematics

- Understand that 10 can be thought of as a bundle of ten ones—called a “ten”
- Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones (place value)
- Add and subtract numbers through 100 using what students have learned about place value

### 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

*Students use models and pictures to show that 47 is the same as 47 ones, or 4 tens + 7 ones, and to better understand the relative size of the units.*



*Your child will use this understanding of place value to add one- and two-digit numbers together.*

$$47 + 2 = 49$$



$$47 + 20 = 67$$



## Helping your child learn outside of school



1. Look for everyday opportunities to have your child do mathematics. For example, if you open a carton of eggs and take out seven, ask, “How many are left in the carton?”
2. Play math games with your child. For example, “I’m thinking of a number. When I add five to it, I get 11. What is the number?”
3. Encourage your child to read and write numbers in different ways. For example, what are some ways that you can make the number 15? 15 can be  $10+5$ ,  $7+8$ ,  $20-5$ , or  $5+5+5$ .
4. Have your child create story problems to represent addition, subtraction, and comparisons. For example, “I have seven pennies. My brother has five pennies. How many pennies does he need to have the same number as I have? He needs two more pennies.”
5. Encourage your child to stick with it whenever a problem seems difficult. This will help your child see that **everyone** can learn math.
6. 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), 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>.