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California's Common Core State Standards:

A PARENT'S GUIDE

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Why Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

PREPARATION: The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter two- or four-year college programs or the workforce. They promote the use of mathematics and literacy in other subjects and in daily life.

CLARITY:

- Focus—fewer concepts at each grade level at a great degree of mastery.
- Coherent—a solid foundation and new understandings for students through connections to learning across grade levels.

EQUITY: The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and in language and mathematics regardless of the school a student attends.

COLLABORATION: The standards are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills students need in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level to ultimately be prepared to graduate college and be career ready. The standards establish what students need to learn, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach.

COMPETITION: The standards are internationally measured regularly, ensuring our students are globally competitive.

What Does this Mean?

The CCSS Math Content Standards are more rigorous, more coherent, and more focused than most state's previous standards. They are more:

- **FOCUSED:** Delve deeper into the BIG IDEAS of mathematics and help students build a stronger foundation of math. Students will learn fewer concepts at each grade level, but to a greater degree of comprehensive mastery.
- **COHERENT:** Intentionally connect the learning across grades so that students can strengthen their foundation and build new understandings. Help students link major topics and see how other parts of mathematics support these major topics.
- **RIGOROUS:** Require students to learn about how they think, calculate with speed and accuracy, become fluent with basic math facts and operations, and use mathematics in coordination and integration with any subject or technology in daily life.

The English language arts and literacy standards include *reading, writing, speaking & listening, and language* in English language arts as well as in science, social studies, and technical subjects. Expect your child to:

- **BUILD KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CONTENT-RICH NONFICTION** reading in history, social studies, science, and the arts. Reading is crucial for life-long growth and achievement.
- **READ AND WRITE TEXT GROUNDED IN EVIDENCE** rather than asking students to respond to questions that they can answer solely from prior knowledge or experience.
- **PRACTICE WITH COMPLEX TEXT AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE** because the ability to comprehend complex and technical texts is the most significant factor distinguishing a college- and career-ready learner.

HELPFUL LINK ABOUT COMMON CORE:

A Parent's Guide to Student Success in Common Core:
www.pta.org/parents



Mathematics

Math will build on:

- Conceptual development
- Fluency with core skills
- Meaningful learning

STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL CONTENT:

- Grades 6-8: Develop a robust understanding of algebra, geometry, probability, and statistics
- High School: Apply mathematics and mathematical ways of thinking in novel situations, as college students and employees are regularly called upon to do

Making Math a Part of Your Family's Life:

- Always talk about math in positive ways
- Notice mathematics in the world
- Make math an everyday part of your family
- Encourage your child to use technology in math
- Have high expectations for your child

Questions while working on math with my child:

When your child isn't sure how to begin a problem:

What have you tried? What steps did you take?
What do you know about this part of the problem?
Is there a simpler, similar problem we can do first?

While your child is working on a problem, ask:

How did you organize your information? Will a table help?
What would happen if ... ?
Show me what you did that didn't work.
What could you do next? Do you see any patterns?

When your child finds an answer, ask:

Does that answer make sense? Why do you think that?
How did you get your answer? Do you think this is right?
Convince me that your solution makes sense.
Explain it in a different way.
Is that the only possible answer?

HELPFUL LINKS IN MATH:

Parent Roadmaps for Common Core and Mathematics:
www.cgcs.org/Page/244

Math Videos accessible on:
www.teachingchannel.org



English Language Arts

READING:

- A progressive development of reading comprehension ensures students gain more from what they read
- An emphasis on text complexity and sophistication in grade level text promotes necessary rigor

WRITING:

- Focuses on composing different types of writing:
 - Argumentative/opinion pieces
 - Informative/explanatory writings
 - Narrative texts
 - Research projects (brief as well as sustained inquiry)
- Infuses technology into creation, refinement, and collaboration in writing

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:

- Focuses on speaking and listening in a range of settings, both formal and informal academic discussions
- Focuses on evidence-based conversations around text
- Requires interpretation and analysis of the message as presented through oral, visual, and multimodal formats

LANGUAGE:

- Includes conventions for writing and speaking
- Highlights the importance of vocabulary acquisition through a mixture of conversation, direct instruction, and reading
- Requires vocabulary to be addressed in the context of *reading, writing, speaking & listening, and spelling*

Making Language Arts a Part of Your Family's Life:

Encourage your child to read widely—from lots of different sources—in order for them to gain experience and practice reading different types of text.

Topics to discuss while working on language arts with my child:

Question them about what they read including any vocabulary that is required for clear understanding of texts:

Spend time on individual words, and also share your experience with words specific to a particular subject of study.

Discuss words that have multiple or complex meanings. Discuss those words and how they add to what the writer is saying.

Support their reading by encouraging them to work through books that may initially be too difficult:

Read and re-read the books together, taking the time to discuss key details from the text.

Ask “why” and “how” questions that encourage your child to analyze text.

HELPFUL LINKS IN LANGUAGE ARTS:

Parent Roadmaps for Common Core and Language Arts:
www.cgcs.org/Page/328

Language Arts Videos accessible on:
www.teachingchannel.org

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