

## Common Core Standards

In the 2012-13 school year, all teachers in grades PreK-6 are implementing CCLS-aligned instruction. The Common Core standards provide a clear picture of what all students need to learn each year in order to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college and careers. The standards create clear expectations for what any child should know and be able to do in key areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics. The standards demonstrate what children need to succeed in a rapidly changing world, including the ability to think creatively, solve real-world problems, make effective arguments, and engage in debates. There are 12 instructional shifts that will be noticed in the Common Core standards, 6 in ELA and 6 in Math.

## ELA Curriculum

The New York State ELA Curriculum for grades Pre-K-2 is made up of three components: the **Listening and Learning strand** and **Skills Strand** and **Guided Reading and Accountable Independent Reading**.

The **Listening and Learning** strand lessons, comprised of teacher read-alouds, class discussion, vocabulary work, and extension activities, build on the research finding that students' listening comprehension outpaces their reading comprehension throughout elementary school. These read-alouds and exercises are organized in 11 to 12 domains (units) per grade. Each domain is dedicated to a particular topic, and the class stays focused on that topic or theme for 10 to 15 days of instruction. The domains build on each other within and across grades.

The **Skills** strand teaches reading and writing. Children practice blending (reading) and segmenting (spelling) using the sound spellings they have learned through a synthetic phonics approach. Handwriting, spelling, and the writing process are also presented in the Skills strand.

**Guided Reading and Accountable Independent Reading (GRAIR)** is additional literacy time within the school day where teachers can work with students in developmentally appropriate groupings to meet their individual needs. This is an opportunity for the favorite traditional read aloud work, literacy based centers, and immersion in text, where teachers can facilitate student choice from existing leveled libraries based on interest, availability, and readability. The purpose of this time is to build independent, interested, and capable readers.

The New York State Grades 3-12 ELA curriculum include six modules that focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. Each module is intended to last a quarter of a school year; the addition of two extra modules allows for teacher choice throughout the year. The modules will sequence and scaffold content that is aligned to the CCLS for ELA & Literacy and the PARCC Frameworks. Each module will culminate in an end-of-module performance task, aligned to the PARCC Frameworks, which can provide information to educators on whether students in their classrooms are achieving the standards. Modules may include several units and each unit may include a set of sequenced, coherent progressions of learning experiences that build knowledge and understanding of major concepts.

### What's Shifting?

Your child will now **read more non-fiction** in each grade level.

Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child **learn about the world through reading**.

Your child will **read challenging texts very closely**, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.

When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will **use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say**.

### What to Look for in the Backpack?

Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories.

Look for your kids to bring home more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1st Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's *A Tree is a Plant*. This book lets students read and learn about science.

Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2nd or 3rd Grader might be asked to read aloud Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled *What the World Eats* and retell facts from the story.

Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from the opinion questions that have been used in the past.

### What Can You Do?

Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting.

Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books.

Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces.

Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements.

□ Your child will **learn how to write from what they read.**

□ Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4th and 5th graders, this might mean reading and writing about *The Kids Guide to Money*, a non-fictional book by Steve Otfinoski.

□ Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.

□ Your child will **have an increased academic vocabulary.**

□ Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach them that "language is power."

□ Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children.

## Math Curriculum

The New York State Math Curriculum is made up of Modules. Curriculum modules in mathematics are marked by in-depth focus on fewer topics. They integrate the CCLS, rigorous classroom reasoning, extended classroom time devoted to practice and reflection through extensive problem sets, and high expectations for mastery.

### **What's Shifting?**

□ Your child will **work more deeply in fewer topics**, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!)

□ Your child will **keep building on learning year after year**, starting with a strong foundation.

### **What to Look for in the Backpack?**

□ Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer.

□ Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. Building on that, they will then focus on Algebra. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn

### **What Can You Do?**

□ Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.

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□ Your child will **spend time practicing and memorizing math facts.**

□ Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn.

□ Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward.

□ Your child will **understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding.**

□ Your child might have assignments that focus on memorizing and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems.

□ Help your child know and memorize basic math facts. Ask your child to “do the math” that pops up in daily life.

□ Your child will now be asked to **use math in real-world situations.**

□ Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5th graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions.

□ Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

\*For more information please visit: <http://engageny.org>