

Parent's Backpack Guide to Common Core State Standards

FOR PREKINDERGARTEN-12TH GRADE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS

In 2012, Louisiana began implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to make sure that all children succeed once they graduate from high school. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards will affect your child, what changes you will see, and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

Why Are the Common Core State Standards Important?

The Common Core State Standards are important because they will help all children – no matter who they are – learn the same skill. They create clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: **reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, and mathematics**. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

The new Common Core State Standards made several important changes to current standards. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what these shifts change, what you might see in your child's backpack, and what you can do to help your child. If your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
Your child will read more non-fiction in each grade level.	Look for your child to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles, and historical stories.	Read non-fiction books with your children. Find ways to make reading fun and exciting.
Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child learn about the world through reading .	Look for your child to bring home more fact-based books about the world.	Know what non-fiction books are grade-level appropriate and make sure your children have access to such books.
Your child will read challenging texts very closely , so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.	Your child will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book.	Provide more challenging texts for your child to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces.
When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say .	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.	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.	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.
Your child will work more deeply in fewer topics , which will ensure full understanding. (Less is more!)	Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrive at an answer.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.

MATHEMATICS

To improve student learning, the new Common Core State Standards are different from the old ones. These changes are called shifts. The chart below shows what is shifting, what you might see in your child's backpack, and what you can do to help your child. Again, if your child's assignments do not reflect the shifts, then talk to your child's teacher.

What's Shifting?	What to Look for in the Backpack?	What Can You Do?
Your child will keep building on learning year after year , starting with a strong foundation.	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 learned to make them successful in high school math courses. In the upper grades, they will continue to use skills previously learned but take them to a much deeper level of understanding and application.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
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 progression in the topics they learn. In the upper grades, students should have mastered their facts which will enable them to truly understand algebra and geometry concepts. This will help them understand how math works.	Be aware of what concepts your children struggled with last year and support your child in those challenging 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. Students should know why and how math works by explaining in detail how to get the desired outcome.	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 real world. Problems will require students to apply what they are learning to real life situations in order to prepare them for college or a career.	Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

When talking to your child's teacher, try to keep the conversation focused on the most important topics that relate to your child. This means asking the teacher how your child is performing based on grade-level standards and expectations.

Also, ask to see a sample of your child's work. Compare your child's samples to those found at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/classroom-support-toolbox/teacher-support-toolbox/end-of-year-assessments>. Also, feel free to bring those samples to your child's teacher and ask the teacher to explain how the samples are used in the classroom.

This information will enable you to make important adjustments at home that can help your child achieve success in the classroom.