Department of Education
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Council of the Great City Schools

parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN GRADE SIX

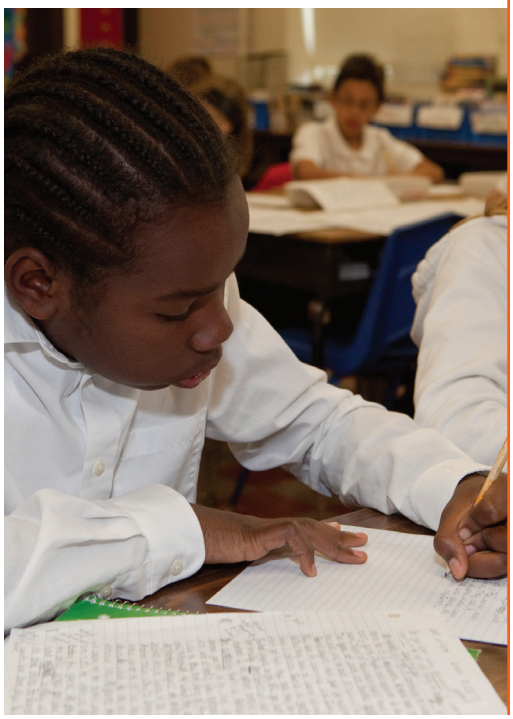
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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 six English language arts and literacy



In grade six, students will read a range of challenging books, articles, and texts, and will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material by answering questions and contributing to class discussions. In writing, students will continue to work on their use of language, sentence structure, and organization of ideas. They will also be expected to integrate information from different sources and respond to challenging content through written interpretation and analysis. Activities in these areas will include:

- Providing detailed summaries of texts
- Determining the theme of a text and how it is conveyed
- Describing how a particular story or play unfolds and how characters respond to plot developments
- Using a range of reading strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words as they are used in a text
- Comparing and contrasting various texts, including poems, stories, and historical novels
- Understanding the figurative and connotative (implied) meaning of words and phrases
- Identifying and evaluating specific claims or arguments in a text
- Supporting written claims or arguments with clear reasons and relevant evidence
- Producing clear and coherent writing appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience
- Participating in class discussions about various texts and topics
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources

The figurative meaning of a word or phrase often goes beyond the literal definition, such as the phrase "raining cats and dogs."

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 six, students will read a wide range of literature, including stories, plays, 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

Grade Five Reading	Grade Six Reading	Grade Seven Reading
• Students determine the theme of a story, play, or poem from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic, and summarize the text. • Students describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.	• Students determine the theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Students also provide an objective summary of the text. • Students explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.	• Students determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. Students also provide an objective summary of the text. • Students analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

READING FOR INFORMATION

Grade Five Reading	Grade Six Reading	Grade Seven Reading
• Students quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. • Students draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.	• Students cite evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Students integrate information presented in different media or formats (such as visually or through numbers) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.	• Students cite several pieces of evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Students compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (such as how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

As they progress through grade levels, students will be asked more questions that require them to cite details or information from increasingly challenging texts. This will encourage them to become observant and analytical readers.

Writing tasks in grade six 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.

Grade Five Writing	Grade Six Writing	Grade Seven Writing
• Students introduce a topic clearly, providing a general observation and focus, and develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information. • Students provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented. • Students group related information logically. • Students link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses such as *in contrast* or *especially*. • Students use precise language and subject-specific vocabulary.	• Students introduce a topic and develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information. • Students provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented. • Students organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. • Students use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. • Students use precise language and subject-specific vocabulary.	• Students introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow, and develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information. • Students provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. • Students organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. • Students use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. • Students use precise language and subject-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

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 sophistication in the development and organization of ideas.

Helping your child learn outside of school

1. Provide time and space for your child to read independently. This 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. Make time for conversation at home. Discuss current events, shared interests, and future aspirations for education and career.
5. Visit museums, zoos, theaters, historical sites, aquariums, and other educational places to help increase your child's exposure to new knowledge and vocabulary.
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.