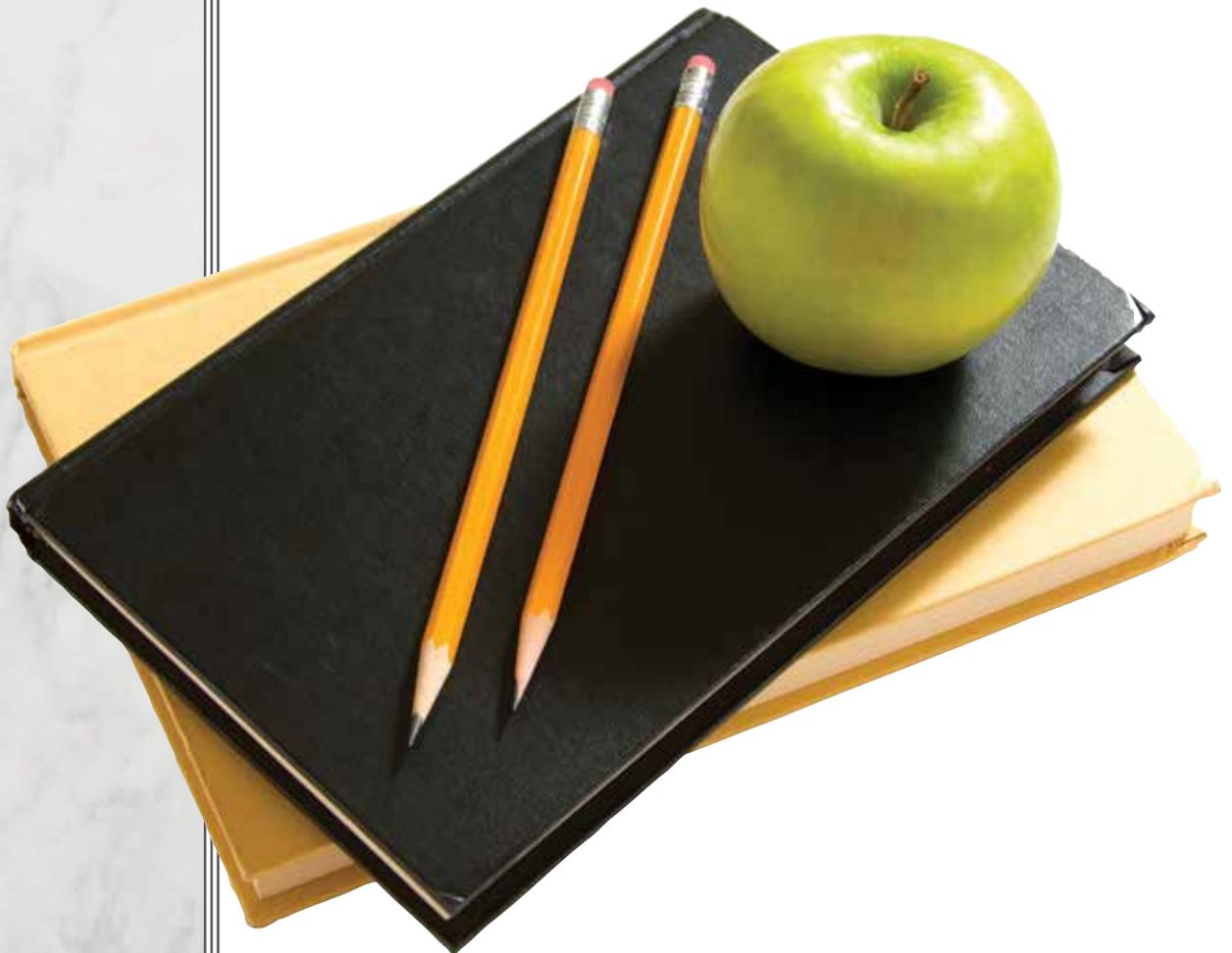


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COMMON CORE STANDARDS:
WHAT EVERY NEW YORKER
NEEDS TO KNOW



Common Core Standards

What Every New Yorker Needs to Know

Today's students are New York's future. They are your future colleagues, and for some of you, they are your children. To ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared with the skills and knowledge they will need in college and careers, the New York State Board of Regents adopted tougher academic standards known as the Common Core in 2010. Like more than 40 other states across the nation, New York recognized the importance of having a set of standards that clearly state what all students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. These standards give parents, students and teachers a common language and help to ensure that we are all working toward the same goals.

Want to learn more about the Common Core? The Public Policy Institute of New York State created this information packet, thanks to a grant from the Committee for Economic Development, so you can get the answers you're looking for.

- Find out how the standards were developed, why New York adopted them, and more on our ***Frequently Asked Questions*** page
- Get the facts about the Common Core on our ***Fact vs. Fiction*** page
- Parents, get ideas to help your kids with the new standards on our ***Shifting Expectations for Students, Ideas for Parents*** pages
- Learn where to find out more on our ***Common Core Resources*** page
- Hear what educators across the state think about the changes in instruction through ***In Their Own Words*** quotes

Common Core Standards:

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Common Core standards?

The Common Core standards show what students in each grade should know and be able to do in mathematics and English language arts (ELA)/literacy. Standards provide the foundation for local decisions about curriculum, assessments and instruction.

How were they developed?

Forty-six states brought together experts, teachers and researchers to write the Common Core State Standards, taking into account almost 10,000 comments and suggestions, including many from New York teachers and parents. The New York State Board of Regents adopted the Common Core standards in 2010, replacing the state's previous standards in ELA and math.

Why did New York choose to adopt the Common Core standards?

New York adopted the Common Core standards to help ensure that all students graduate from high school with the core academic knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, careers and life, for the benefit of their futures and the future of our state.

- Over 50% of students entering two-year colleges in New York State must take remedial courses—relearning at their expense what they should have already learned in high school. To compete in a knowledge-based global economy, New York must improve the educational outcomes of all students.
- Today's—and tomorrow's—jobs value postsecondary education and training more than ever. New Yorkers without the requisite knowledge and skills will struggle to get good jobs in the increasingly competitive global economy.
- A 2009 international assessment (PISA) revealed that 15-year-old students from more than 30 countries were outperforming U.S. 15-year-olds in mathematics. New York scored even worse than the U.S. average, while Massachusetts — which raised academic standards many years ago — now ranks with top 10 countries like Singapore, Finland, and Korea. (Peterson et al., 2011)

What kinds of college- and career-readiness skills do the Common Core standards cover?

The Common Core reflect the knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education, including:

- communications skills
- perseverance in problem solving
- technical reading and writing
- literacy across disciplines
- critical thinking and analytical skills
- research skills
- teamwork
- data analysis
- applied mathematics

■ *Like many Americans, I have relocated several times in order to move ahead in my career. As a California native, I certainly expected things to be different moving to New York City, to Atlanta and to Washington, DC. From weather to clothing styles and customs, things are not the same from one state to the next. But one thing that must be the same regardless of which state you live in is a quality education for our children.... Common Core is the first effort of this kind in the education system and all schools will be better served during this process of aligning standards. We have seen what states can do when they work together. They share resources and best practices, enabling everyone to come out ahead. When schools are working, our children succeed. That is every parent's ultimate goal and one that we can realize with the Common Core State Standards. ■*

Eric Hargis, executive director of the National PTA

■ *As a parent, businessman, and the leader of the nation's largest child advocacy association, I believe the standards are an essential tool to ensure every child receives a high-quality education that prepares him or her for success upon graduation from high school. ■*

Otha Thornton, president, National PTA

■ *The assessments are simply one of multiple indicators used to evaluate our instructional program. As we seek to support students' quest to be college and career ready and to develop grit and perseverance, assessments like these are valuable tools.* ■

Luvelle Brown,
superintendent, Ithaca City Schools

■ *Children get engaged in ideas and love to do projects to extend their learning. Teachers love this too; it gives them a chance to pursue their students' interests in creative ways. Last year, one class of kindergartners was fascinated with recycling after finishing [a Common-Core-aligned unit] called Taking Care of the Earth. Their teacher took them on a walk near the school in which they identified litter that could have been recycled. The next day, the teacher brought in clean examples of all the things they identified. After donning their white lab coats, these little scientists figured out which recycling bin each item belonged in. They also discussed what could have been saved if all the litter they saw outside had been recycled.* ■

Angela Logan-Smith,
principal of PS/MS 333, the Goldie Maple Academy, Queens

Common Core Standards:

Fact vs. Fiction

FICTION: The Common Core standards tell teachers how to teach.

FACT: Decisions about curriculum are made by school districts. The standards are a tool to help teachers prepare the best classroom lessons and activities. The standards also help students and parents by showing them what it takes to be successful in each grade level. They are an important roadmap for teachers, students and parents.

FICTION: The standards require more testing in schools.

FACT: The State of New York has not required more tests with the implementation of the Common Core. The yearly ELA and math tests for students in grades 3-8 were updated to reflect the new standards starting in April 2013. The number of locally-administered tests does vary district by district, however, and in 2014 the New York State Board of Regents approved measures that will help reduce local assessments.

FICTION: Teachers have to "teach to the test" more now.

FACT: The best preparation for testing is good teaching. New York State's updated ELA and math tests measure students' ability to problem-solve, think critically, read analytically, and communicate clearly—i.e., the skills reflected in the Common Core standards. Rather than rote memorization or test-taking tricks, these tests require real analysis of and response to real-world problems and authentic texts.

FICTION: A low score on the annual ELA and math tests will be used against students.

FACT: Parents and educators know that performance on a single assessment does not tell the whole story about what a student knows and can do. State ELA and math assessment results are just one of many ways to help principals and teachers identify students who might need extra support to successfully move on to the next grade level. Placement and retention decisions are made at the district level, and New York State neither requires nor encourages districts to make promotion or placement decisions using student performance on state assessments in grades 3-8. If districts choose to consider state assessments in grades 3-8 when making promotion or placement decisions, they should make adjustments to ensure students are not negatively impacted by the Common Core transition, and they should use multiple measures for this purpose (including the judgments of a student's teacher and principal), not grades 3-8 state assessment results alone.

FICTION: Higher standards will cause more students to drop out.

FACT: It is not more likely that students will drop out of school. Research points out that many factors come together to cause a student to drop out of school. Research also shows that students want to be challenged more in school. For example, 7 in 10 young people who had dropped out said they were not motivated or inspired to work hard in high school. Two-thirds of the dropouts said they would have worked harder if more was demanded of them, such as with higher academic expectations, more studying and more homework. (Bridgeland et al., 2006)

FICTION: Third-party vendors have access to student data now because of the Common Core.

FACT: Using third-party vendors for education data services has been common practice for years. This is not a new development. The federal Family Educational Rights Privacy Act lays out strict guidelines for authorized uses of student data. States and school districts may contract with third-party providers for certain purposes, and those providers must maintain rigorous security protections.

■ *Because my students now closely analyze authors' use of language and the ways these authors unfold their stories, not only are they generating their own ideas and providing evidence to support their claims, but their own creative writing has improved tremendously as well.* ■

Andria Finch, ELA teacher, Franklin, Southern Tier

TIP **Talk with your child about school**

Ask open-ended questions about what they learned each day, read their homework, and attend school events to find out what their teachers expect.

■ *When students know what it means to 'make a claim' in their writing they start to write for a purpose and not just because their teacher assigned it. Students have developed as writers. Now feedback and revisions are key and an essential piece to the writing process. The students' time spent on editing and refining their writing has enabled them to develop a much deeper understanding of content.* ■

Roberta Faery, high school social studies teacher and curriculum facilitator, Newfane, Western New York

Common Core Standards:

Shifting Expectations for Students, Ideas for Parents

If you are a parent, you have likely seen changes in what and how your child is learning in school. This could include what you see when you visit the classroom, the homework assigned to your child, the tests your child takes, and finished work that comes home. These changes may be tough at first as students and teachers adjust to the higher expectations of the Common Core standards. This guide contains ideas for what you can do at home to help your children in the classroom.

English Language Arts/Literacy

What is expected of students?

Read and discuss more non-fiction

- Understand how non-fiction is written and put together
- Learn about the world through reading
- Use "primary source" documents

Read challenging material very closely

- Re-read until they understand
- Read both at and above their comfort level
- Handle frustration
- Keep pushing to improve

Discuss and write about text using evidence

- Find examples in the text to support what they say
- Form judgments and opinions based on evidence in the text
- Discuss what the author is thinking
- Make predictions about what will happen next

Learn the vocabulary they will need in college and career

- Increase their academic vocabulary
- Understand that language is power

What can parents do to help?

- Supply more non-fiction books and articles on topics that interest your child—such as biographies, animals, or how things work
- Find ways to make reading fun

- Know what books are grade-level appropriate
- Provide challenging texts as well as ones they can read easily
- Read challenging material with your child and show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces
- Show that challenging texts are worth reading

- Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements
- Read the same book or article as your child and discuss it
- Discuss predictions

- Read multiple books/articles on the same topic with your child
- Talk to your children from the time they are babies; read often to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes, and play word games

Source: EngageNY.org



Mathematics

What is expected of students?

Work more in depth on fewer concepts

What can parents do to help?

- Know what the priority work is for your child's grade level
- Ask your child's teacher for reports on your child's progress on the important concepts for that grade level

Build skills and learning from grade to grade

- Be aware of what your child struggled with last year and how that will affect ongoing learning
- Advocate for your child to ensure that he or she receives support for skill weaknesses, such as negative numbers, fractions, etc.

Think fast AND solve problems

- Use math facts (such as multiplication tables) fluently
- Practice lots of problems on the same idea
- Push your child to know and memorize math facts
- Know all the fluencies your child should have
- Prioritize learning those your child finds most difficult

Really know it, really do it

- Make the math work, and understand why it does
- Talk about and prove their understanding
- Review homework to see whether your child understands why as well as what the answer is
- Ask your child to teach you new concepts
- Help your child figure out ways to explain their thinking
- Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home

Apply math in real-world situations

- Know which math skills to use for which situation
- Ask your child to do the math that comes up in daily life—measuring, estimating, and comparing quantities or rates, tipping, budgeting, mileage, calculating interest, etc.

TIP **Talk with your child's teacher**

Ask to see samples of your child's work. Does it reflect the Common Core expectations listed on these pages? Try to keep the conversation focused on the most important questions: How is your child performing based on grade-level standards and expectations? What adjustments need to be made at school and at home to help your child achieve success in the classroom?

■ *Parents define the culture of a community, and in order to improve our children's future, Bethlehem parents need to create a culture that values higher learning and rigorous programs.* ■

Kim Namkoong, parent, Bethlehem, Capital Region

Common Core Standards:

Resources

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ant to learn more about the Common Core in your own community? Contact your local principal or superintendent, and check out your local school district's website.

New York Resources

Engage New York

www.engageny.org

This is the official website for resources related to implementation of the Common Core in New York State. Extensive resources include:

- Professional learning tools and materials for educators.
- Downloadable copies of the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards.
- A "Parent & Family Resources" tab linking to a toolkit of guides and activities to help parents better understand how New York is implementing Common Core Learning Standards and how they will look in classrooms.
- Information about Common Core assessments, including test guides and sample questions.

A Parent's Guide to Common Core Learning

http://nyspta.org/pdf/Advocacy/NYSPTA_NYSUT_Common_Core_Brochure_8.13.pdf

The New York State PTA and New York State United Teachers partnered to create this brochure to help parents understand the Common Core.

New York City Department of Education Common Core Library for Families

<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/default.htm>

This site includes resources such as an Overview of Common Core and a script to accompany a brief video in multiple languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

National Resources

National PTA Parents' Guides to Student Success

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?itemNumber=2583>

These short guides explain changes in standards in ELA and Mathematics. Guides are available in English and Spanish for each grade K-8 and for high school by subject. They include:

- What children should be learning in English language arts and mathematics in each grade with the new standards.
- Activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning.
- Methods for helping parents build stronger relationships with their child's teacher.
- Tips for planning for college and career readiness.

■ *The Common Core has allowed me to embrace higher expectations for my students. These kids who come from the most impoverished areas of the city, and who have often faced a track record of failure in school, are now coming in with more knowledge and confidence since they have been exposed to higher level work.* ■

Joshua Cornue, 4th grade teacher, Rochester

■ *Ever since I started teaching over 20 years ago, parents have constantly said to me, 'I can't help my child with his/ her homework.' As a teacher this left me wondering, how can we communicate our teaching methods and lessons to parents who are not sitting in the classroom? The transition to the Common Core Standards presented the perfect opportunity to provide additional resources for parents so they can experience the lessons firsthand and better support their children at home. I did this by creating a math blog.*
Michelle Labuski, 6th grade teacher, Smithtown, Long Island

■ *The introduction of the Common Core has impacted not just what students learn, but how they learn. Over the past several years we have implemented these changes, such as close reading, as a skill that causes students to interact with the text and explore the material in depth.* ■
Middle school teacher,
South Glens Falls,
Capital Region

Council of Great City Schools Parent Roadmap

<http://www.cgcs.org/Domain/36>

The site provides individual roadmaps in English and Spanish for ELA and math for each grade, K-8. These maps help guide parents through what their children will be learning and how they can support that learning. They also provide timelines showing how selected standards change from year to year so that students will be college- and career-ready upon their graduation from high school.

The Council of Great City Schools has also produced a three-minute video explaining the Common Core, available at <http://www.commoncoreworks.org>

Stand for Children Website

<http://stand.org/national/blog/2012/09/10/common-core-standards-building-strong-foundation-our-childrens-success>

The Stand for Children web site includes a brief description of why states have adopted the Common Core, how the Common Core is different from previous state standards, and what will change for students.

Resources for Students

New York Online Virtual Electronic Library

<http://novelnewyork.org/>

NOVELNY is an online library of hundreds of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research and reference books that are available to every New Yorker, free of charge.

Math Magician

<http://resources.oswego.org/games/mathmagician/cathymath>

Online games from Oswego City School District to help students practice addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Khan Academy

<https://www.khanacademy.org/commoncore>

Interactive, Common-Core-aligned math problems and instructional videos, as well as SAT prep materials.



Sources of the information found in this packet

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■ *As a math teacher for twenty-two years, I witnessed first-hand how American students have slipped further and further behind their global competitors.... We, as educators, have been unable to raise student performance in math and have repeatedly found US students near the bottom of the math rankings, despite the disproportionate amount of money spent on educating each child.... I truly believe these standards will result in the curricular and instructional changes that New York students need to become college ready and have an opportunity to participate positively in the global economy they will encounter when entering the workplace. The Common Core Learning Standards will help ensure that students are not hindered by poor qualifications and remediation but rather provide them with the footing they need to have real choices about their education, and careers. Their futures will be in their hands.*

■ **Marylee Liebowitz, math coach, Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, Mid-Hudson Valley**



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