

Back to School Family Guide

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Parents and caregivers have always wanted to know more about what their child is learning in school. After all, families are their child's first – and most important – teacher.

Parents, family members, grandparents, and other caregivers play a critical role in learning at home. So, we include all these people when we talk about how families can support kids.

This guide is meant to support families and students academically in literacy and math. Of course, students will be learning other subjects too, but literacy and math are the building blocks for everything else.

GRADE 5

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- **What Your Child Should Know & Be Able to Do** – What experts say is the most important content (knowledge and skills) for students to learn by the end of fifth grade.
- **Everyday Activities to Support Learning** – We've included some ways you can support your child in learning important content and skills in literacy and math.
- **Education Words** – Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Those words are **bolded**. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language.
- **Tips for Talking with Teachers** – How you and your child's teacher can work together to help your child grow.
- **Tools and Resources to Help** – We've chosen a few internet resources that best match each grade's content.



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LITERACY

WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 5th grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

Reading and writing skills:

- Writing to complete sentences and well developed paragraphs about what they are learning, with mostly correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Reading grade level texts smoothly and with expression, at a **fluency** rate of around 100-150 words per minute.

Learning about the world through text:

- Asking and answering questions about stories and texts read independently. Using specific evidence to support in depth description, to explain how ideas are connected, and to support inferences about the text.
- Figuring out the meaning of unknown words in text by using context, word relationships, or tools such as dictionaries and glossaries. Determining or clarifying the meaning of unknown words such as **synonyms**, **antonyms**, **idioms**, and words with multiple meanings, based on how they are used in context.
- Linking opinions and reasons or ideas within categories using words and phrases (for example, “consequently,” “specifically,” “in contrast,” “especially”).
- Showing something new they have learned from a text or about a topic. This can be in any form: speaking and conversation, illustrations, letters, journals, stories, posters, or essays.
- Writing in response to text. Children should include an introduction with a simple **thesis statement**, examples that are logically ordered and grouped, a conclusion, and mostly accurate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.



EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Turn on the closed captioning while watching TV to allow your child to read along with the dialogue.
- Encourage your child each day to choose a book they want to read on their own. Reading lots of books over time is more important than the type of text. Let your child pick based on their interests and what makes them excited to read.
- Have “book talk” conversations. Ask your child to share the important ideas in their own words and show you what part of the text provided this information.
- Pick a topic to learn about together. Read books, look online, do things together. You can help your child build knowledge and develop a love of learning.
- Encourage your child to use writing in the real world. This can include authentic writing (grocery lists, notes, chore lists, etc.) as well as writing in a journal, book response notebook, or other creative writing opportunities.



MATHEMATICS

WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 5th grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

- Multiplying multi-digit numbers with ease ($1,638 \times 753$). Dividing multi-digit numbers in cases with a limited number of digits ($6,951 \div 63 = 110 \frac{1}{3}$).
- Adding and subtracting fractions with **unlike denominators** ($2 \frac{1}{4} - 1 \frac{1}{3}$), and solving word problems that include fractions with **unlike denominators**.
- Multiplying fractions and mixed numbers, and dividing fractions in special cases. Solving word problems using these operations. (For example, finding the area of a city block that is $\frac{1}{3}$ mile long by $\frac{1}{5}$ mile wide; finding the size of a share if 9 people share a 50-pound sack of rice equally, or if 3 people share $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of chocolate equally.)
- Calculating with decimals to the hundredths place (two places after the decimal).
- Understanding the concept of **volume**, and solving word problems that involve **volume**.
- Graphing points in the **coordinate plane** (two dimensions) to solve problems.



EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Reinforce multi-digit multiplication and division practice without the added pressure of time limits by focusing on your child's accurate and efficient attempts ($4,378 \times 615$; $2,560 \div 24$).
- Practice adding and subtracting fractions with **unlike denominators** ($3 \frac{3}{10} + 7 \frac{2}{5} = 10 \frac{7}{10}$ because $7 \frac{2}{5}$ is the same as $7 \frac{4}{10}$; $\frac{7}{8} - \frac{3}{4} = \frac{1}{8}$ because $\frac{3}{4}$ is the same as $\frac{6}{8}$).
- Practice multiplication and division with fractions. Begin multiplication practice with fractions and whole numbers, before moving on to multiplying a fraction by a fraction.
- Encourage a positive mindset about math in the real world. This can be done by exploring concepts like **volume**. (For example, what's the **volume** of a cereal box?)





EDUCATION WORDS



Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language!

Antonyms

Antonyms are words that mean the opposite. "Big" and "little" are antonyms.

Coordinate plane

A coordinate plane (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/geometry/coordinate-plane>) is a two-dimensional (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/geometry/two-dimensional>) plane formed by the intersection of a vertical number line called y-axis and a horizontal number line called x-axis. These are perpendicular lines that intersect each other at zero, and this point is called the origin (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/geometry/origin>).

Fluency

The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression that shows comprehension of what is being read.

Idiom

A group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (for example, "raining cats and dogs," meaning "to rain heavily;" "piece of cake," meaning "something that is easy to do").

Reading level

Teachers often determine the grade level at which a student is reading. But sometimes, children are then limited to reading texts at that level (typically a letter or number). This practice is one to be wary of, particularly if children are limited to reading only texts that are below the grade level goals.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that mean the same thing. "Big" and "enormous" are synonyms.

Text sets

Text sets are carefully grouped sets of texts and media resources focused on a specific topic designed to help all learners build background knowledge and vocabulary through a lot of reading on science, social studies, and other high-interest topics.

Thesis statement

A thesis statement is one or two sentences that summarize the paper's main point, main idea, or main message.

Unlike denominators

Unlike denominators are two fractions (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/fractions/fraction>) with non-identical denominators (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/fractions/denominator>). For example, $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{4}{10}$ have unlike denominators.

Volume

Volume is the 3-dimensional (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/geometry/3-dimensional>) space enclosed by a boundary or occupied by an object. Finding the volume of an object can help us to determine the amount required to fill that object, like the amount of water needed to fill a bottle, an aquarium, or a water tank. The volume of an object is measured in cubic units (<https://www.splashlearn.com/math-vocabulary/geometry/cubic-unit>) such as cubic centimeters, cubic inch, cubic foot, cubic meter, etc.



TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEACHERS

Literacy

- What are my child's strengths, and how do you use them in instruction?
- How do you select texts? Will my child see characters and topics that represent them, their background, and their identity? Will they learn new perspectives and about new and diverse characters through the texts you use in the classroom?
- What topics are children learning about through reading? What should my child be able to understand, write, and talk about as a result of what they have read? Topics in history? Topics in science?
- Is my child reading Grade 5 text fluently? If not, do they have trouble with decoding? Vocabulary? What supports are being provided to address their needs?
- Is my child able to speak and listen in class discussions and conversations in ways that demonstrate they understand what they are reading and learning? Are they able to use evidence from the text, present their responses in detail, and speak with sufficient depth? If not, what challenges are they facing?
- How frequently does my child read grade level text independently? If they are not reading grade level text independently, why not? How are you supporting any reading needs they have while still allowing for time with grade level text? How can I help?
- What kinds of book(s) is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific reading level?

Math

- What kinds of number problems are children learning to solve this year?
- Ask for specific updates on how your child is progressing in their understanding of the key content of the grade.
- How does my child approach complex math tasks? What are some suggestions for me to encourage them in learning challenging content?
- What should my child be able to understand and talk about as a result of what they have learned?
- Is my child able to demonstrate to you that they understand what they are learning about? If not, what challenges are they facing?
- How can I support a positive approach to learning math?





TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO HELP



Literacy

- What fifth grade writing samples look like from the start of the year to the end
<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/category/milestones-topics/writing-samples/>
- Forty passages to help students build **fluency** over the course of the school year
<https://achievethecore.org/page/886/fluency-packet-for-the-4-5-grade-band>
- Easy-to-use materials that help your fifth grader research and write to inform or explain
<https://www.vermontwritingcollaborative.org/WPDEV/research-packs/>
- Can your fifth grader complete these literacy tasks?
<https://belearninghero.org/readiness-check/ela-quiz/?level=grade-05>
- Use this tool to find out how fluently your fifth grader is reading
http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional_fluency_rubric_4_factors.pdf
- How to use **text sets** to find resources and ideas for learning about any subject through reading
<https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Text%20Set%20Guidance.pdf>



Math

- Parent roadmap: What should children be learning in Grade 5? How can families support their learning?
<https://www.cgcs.org/Page/244>
- Videos and tutorials to help fifth graders understand and practice using decimal place values
<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/cc-fifth-grade-math/imp-place-value-and-decimals>
- **Fluency** resources to practice Grade 5 computations
<https://achievethecore.org/page/2948/fluency-resources-for-grade-level-routines>
- Three fun tasks to engage students with fractions and the concept of **volume**
<https://achievethecore.org/category/416/mathematics-tasks?&g%5B%5D=5&sort=name>
- A readiness check to find out how your child is doing
<https://belearninghero.org/readiness-check/>
- Tasks for a variety of math topics at the 5th grade level
<http://tasks.illustrativemathematics.org/content-standards/5>

MY NOTES AND QUESTIONS
