

# Guide to Student Learning in Fourth Grade



*The student learning guide provides valuable information on what students learn in fourth grade.  
Use this information to support and reinforce learning at home.*

At intermediate schools, all students will strengthen essential literacy and math skills through integrated learning experiences. The intermediate school program provides a learning experience that encompasses all aspects of a comprehensive literacy community and prepares students for independent application of literacy skills and content understandings at the secondary level.

Classroom instruction is shaped by the guiding principle that all students are strategic readers, thinkers, and writers. Literacy skills are explicitly taught during English Language Arts instruction, and embedded within content instruction. This reinforcement model provides meaningful and consistent opportunities for the application of targeted literacy skills.

Information and communication technology instruction is embedded into all content areas. The district provides each student with a device to introduce students to the use of technology tools for communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

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## English Language Arts (ELA)

In fourth grade, students will continue to develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills through a balanced literacy approach that includes instruction focused on modeled, shared, guided, and independent reading and writing experiences. In addition, literacy skills will be integrated into science, social studies and health instruction. Students will have ample opportunities to read, write, listen and speak in order to better understand grade-level content. Fourth graders will spend a significant amount of time using multiple sources to build ideas and information.

**READING:** Students in grade 4 will continue to build advanced strategies that will increase their deep comprehension of text. A variety of text and genres will be used including fiction, informational text, online resources, and poetry. Grade four students continue to build their skills in text analysis and will become proficient at citing evidence from text when responding. In addition, students will continue to analyze both fiction and informational text and will consider the author's craft in these texts, including interpreting themes through dialogue and descriptions. Foundational skills and vocabulary instruction continues in grade 4, where there is a focus on reinforcing the skills of letter-sound correspondences, syllabication, patterns, and morphology.

**WRITING:** Students will use the writing process to write for different purposes and audiences in a variety of genres including narrative, informational, and argument. Grade 4 students will have opportunities to expand these genres of writing as they write a narrative tall tale, an informational biographical spotlight, a news report, and many opinion responses throughout content and texts.

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING:** Students will understand that being competent in speaking and listening will allow them to take advantage of new opportunities for communication. Students will listen and speak to understand, to interact socially, to extend discussion, and to discuss content.

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## Mathematics

In fourth grade, instructional time is focused on three critical areas that will enable students to:

Develop an understanding of and fluency with multi-digit multiplication, and develop an understanding of dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends:

- Students generalize their understanding of place value to 1,000,000, understanding the relative sizes of numbers in each place.
- Students apply their understanding of models for multiplication (equal-sized groups, arrays, area models), place value, and the distributive property, as they develop, discuss, and use efficient, accurate, and generalizable methods to compute products of multi-digit whole numbers.
- Students develop fluency with efficient procedures for multiplying whole numbers; understand and can explain why the procedures work based on place value and properties of operations; and use them to solve problems.
- Students apply their understanding of models for division, place value, properties of operations, and the relationship of division to multiplication as they develop, discuss, and use efficient, accurate, and generalizable procedures to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends.

Develop an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers:

- Students develop an understanding of fraction equivalence and operations with fractions.
- Students recognize that two different fractions can be equal (e.g.,  $15/9 = 5/3$ ), and they develop methods for generating and recognizing equivalent fractions.
- Students extend previous understandings about how fractions are built from unit fractions, composing fractions from unit fractions, decomposing fractions into unit fractions, and using the meaning of fractions and the meaning of multiplication to multiply a fraction by a whole number.

Understanding that geometric figures can be analyzed and classified based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry:

- Students describe, analyze, compare, and classify two-dimensional shapes.
- Students deepen their understanding of properties of two-dimensional objects and the use of them to solve problems involving symmetry.

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## Science

In fourth grade, students are developing their academic skills, independence, and confidence. Allowing students to experiment and engage in activities beyond textbooks provides motivation and encourages creativity.

During fourth grade science, your child will study:

- Rocks and Minerals (Earth's Systems)
- Food Webs, Skeletal Systems & Adaptations
- Energy
- Land & Water (Processes that Shape the Earth)

While engaged in these units, students will be deepening their knowledge of scientific methods by:

- Safely and accurately using scientific tools.
- Observing, analyzing, and recording data.
- Making predictions based on data collected.
- Designing and interpreting charts.
- Conducting experiments.
- Reading for information.
- Measuring and estimating.

Students will also engage in reading informational texts and writing tasks based on their reading. Each child is an active participant in science. Their experiences in science center around a “hands-on” approach using various kits of materials and conducting experiments.

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## Social Studies

In fourth grade, students begin to study United States and New York state history. Students will learn about the geography, history, economics, and government of the United States, with a primary focus on New York State. The course includes history from before the European colonial era to the modern period. Throughout the course students will make connections to present-day New York state and our local community.

Topics students will learn about include: Native Americans of New York State, the colonial and revolutionary time period, forming a new government, the fight for freedom and rights for African Americans and women, industrialization and immigration. Students continue to learn about the delicate balance between rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

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## Health

In fourth grade, the health curriculum will continue to emphasize how lifestyle decisions impact life. Students will:

- Explore the benefits and harmful consequences of behaviors based on personal safety.
- Practice effective refusal skills in health-related situations.
- Identify the attributes of a healthy relationship and compare their own relations to what they learn about healthy relationships.
- Apply a decision-making model to real life health-related situations.

Helping students learn to respect themselves and to respect others is an important component of health education at all grade levels.

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## Physical Education

During physical education class, fourth grade students will participate in physical activities to improve cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, endurance, and body composition. Students will engage in:

- Fitness
- Football
- Soccer
- Orienteering
- Floor Hockey
- Basketball
- Bowling
- Recreational Games
- Movement Skills/Games
- Volleyball
- Lacrosse
- Educational Gymnastics
- Track & Field
- Whiffle Ball/Softball

It is important for children to develop regular exercise habits and activities at an early age that will be continued throughout their lives. In order for your child to become truly fit, these activities need to continue beyond the school day.

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## Music

In fourth grade music, students add to their repertoire of rhythms and pitches and are able to read music on the treble staff. They continue to create music, as a class and as individuals, using the notes and pitches learned throughout their music education. Students continue to build improvisation skills and begin incorporating composition techniques and improvisation practices as part of their regular experience. Students are also able to purposefully incorporate expressive qualities in the music they create to convey mood, emotion, or with intent. They learn that different cultures use the elements of music to create identifiable cultural characteristics.

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## Art

In fourth grade art, students draw objects from observation and explore contour line. They expand their understanding of color to include tints and shades and create more complicated forms, such as cones and spheres. Students create digital art works using traditional art tools in the virtual realm, including learning to use program menus and the management of file storage. Students continue to learn about the art elements and broaden their use of art media and tools as they create art works with implied textures, use techniques to create depth of space, and create pinch pots using clay. Students in this grade also continue to acquire art vocabulary, and begin to apply the art criticism process.

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## Performing Arts

Fourth grade students may elect to participate in chorus, band, or orchestra. Chorus students may also participate in either band or orchestra. Students in band and orchestra will attend one lesson each week, in addition to their regularly scheduled ensemble rehearsals. Students in performing ensembles will learn how to apply the music elements to increasingly difficult levels of music and will be required to participate in at least two concerts each year.

