Guide to Student Learning in Third Grade

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

At primary schools, all students will acquire foundational literacy and math skills in child-centered learning environments. The primary-school program engages students in a variety of literacy experiences and interactions that introduce and reinforce essential literacy skills and strategies.

Classroom instruction is shaped by the guiding principle that all students must acquire the foundational reading and writing skills necessary to be strategic readers, thinkers, and writers. Language, reading, and writing skills are explicitly taught during English Language Arts instruction. Social studies and science instruction are used to apply and reinforce literacy skills as students use oral language, reading, and writing skills to learn essential understanding.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) 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.

English Language Arts (ELA)

Third grade students will continue to refine their reading and writing skills and will use these skills consistently in science, social studies, and health instruction. Students will have ample opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak in order to further understand the grade-level content.

READING: Third-grade students will continue to develop their proficiency in reading and their application of word knowledge will become more seamless and automatic. Students will be able to focus more of their energy on the meaning of text and will be able to read and understand more complex text. Students will continue to use a range of texts and tasks of multiple genres, and will build background knowledge and vocabulary awareness to help to strengthen their understanding of texts.

WRITING: Third-grade students will continue to write in a variety of genres including narrative, informational, and argument. Students are just beginning to learn to write the argumentative piece and will include the use of specific reasons and evidence to support a claim. Students will complete a more complex, guided research piece that incorporates a higher-level application of writing skills and will use their skills in a primary capstone project. Students will also have many opportunities to write to respond to their reading and will create short fictional and narrative pieces.

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, interact socially, extend discussion, and discuss content.

Mathematics

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

Develop an understanding of multiplication and division, and strategies for multiplication and division within 100

- Students develop an understanding of the meanings of multiplication and division of whole numbers through activities and problems involving equal-sized groups, arrays, and area models.
- Students begin to understand that multiplication is finding an unknown product, and division is finding an unknown factor.
- Students use properties of operations to calculate products of whole numbers, using increasingly sophisticated strategies based on these properties to solve multiplication and division problems involving single-digit factors.
- Through the comparison of a variety of solution strategies, students learn the relationship between multiplication and division.

Develop an understanding of fractions, especially unit fractions

- Students develop an understanding of fractions, beginning with unit fractions.
- Students view fractions in general as being built out of unit fractions, and they use fractions along with visual fraction models to represent parts of a whole.
- Students understand that the size of a fractional part is relative to the size of the whole.
- Students connect fractions to the number line and understand that the whole is the interval between 0 and 1.
- Students are able to use fractions to represent numbers equal to, less than, and greater than one.
- Students solve problems that involve comparing fractions by using visual fraction models and strategies based on noticing equal numerators or denominators.

Develop an understanding of the structure of rectangular arrays and of area

- Students recognize area as an attribute of two-dimensional regions.
- Students measure the area of a shape.
- Students understand that rectangular arrays can be decomposed into identical rows or into identical columns. By decomposing rectangles into rectangular arrays of squares, students connect area to multiplication, and justify using multiplication to determine the area of a rectangle.

Describe and analyze two-dimensional shapes

- Students describe, analyze, and compare properties of two-dimensional shapes.
- Students compare and classify shapes by their sides and angles, and connect these with definitions of shapes.
- Students relate their fraction work to geometry by expressing the area of part of a shape as a unit fraction of the whole.

Science

In third grade, students will continue to develop the foundational skills necessary to succeed in the scientific/research process. Emphasis will be placed on the skills of observing, predicting, collecting data, analyzing, and drawing conclusions based on evidence as students participate in a variety of inquiry-based and problem-solving experiences to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the following **core ideas**:

Forces and Interactions

- Identifying various types of forces and interactions
- Observing and measuring forces and interactions
- Predicting future forces and interactions

Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

- Studying groups of animals and the roles/functions each member contributes to the group
- Exploring ways in which animals adapt to their changing environments
- Analyzing fossils to predict the conditions in which life forms lived in long ago

Inheritance and Variation of Traits: Life Cycles and Traits

- Determining how and why some traits get passed down and others do not
- Exploring the connection between environmental conditions and the inheritance of traits
- Analyzing the life cycles of various life forms

Weather and Climate

- Researching various climates around the world
- Analyzing various weather variables that contribute to weather forecasts
- Discussing how humans can prepare for and respond to changes in weather and climate

The crosscutting concepts of patterns, cause and effect, scale/proportions/quantities, systems and system models, interdependence, and the influence of engineering/technology/science on society and the natural world are identified as organizing concepts for the core ideas listed above. The third-grade performance expectations rely heavily on students' abilities to utilize grade-appropriate **science and engineering practices**, such as asking questions and defining problems, developing and using models, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations and designing solutions, engaging in arguments from evidence, and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information. Students are expected to use these practices to demonstrate their understanding of the core ideas listed above.

Social Studies

In third grade, students learn about "World Communities." Students will research and explore different communities from around the world. They learn about the geography, culture, government and economic system of each world community studied. Students bring with them knowledge about their own communities from second grade. Students will study the United States, China, and Kenya. These communities represent different geographical regions of the world, cultures, governmental structures, and economic systems. Students also will explore and research a community of their choice to compare and contrast the culture, government, economy, and geography with the communities studied in class.

Unit topics for 3rd grade social studies include:

- Introduction to World Communities
- United States and the regions of the United States
- China (Geography, Climate, Culture, Government and Economic System)
- Kenya (Geography, Climate, Culture, Government and Economic System)
- World Communities ICT Capstone Research Project (Students select a world community of their choice to research and learn more about the geography, culture, government, and economy).

Health

In third grade, health class will help students learn to respect themselves and to respect others. This is an important component of health education at all grade levels.

There are five units of study.

- Respecting Myself & Others (Violence Prevention Strand, and core elements of Mental Health)
- My Immune System
- My Family, My Self
- Tobacco, Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Safety Rules

Students also will continue to be encouraged to demonstrate effective communication and identify the people or systems they should turn to for support during emotional or physically harmful situations.

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Physical Education

In third grade, students will participate in physical activities to improve body-space awareness, eye-hand coordination, and rhythm. The units of study for third grade are:

- Fitness
- Football
- Soccer
- Orienteering
- Floor Hockey
- Bowling
- Recreational Games
- Movement Skills/Games
- Volleyball
- Lacrosse
- Educational Gymnastics
- Track & Field
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

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.

Music

Third-grade music students continue to develop skills in singing and playing. They read, write, play, improvise, create, and move in response to rhythms and melodies that incorporate duple and triple meter, major and minor tonalities, and explore form. Students in this grade attend a Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra concert. They learn how the different families of instruments come together to make the orchestra, and how musicians of the orchestra work together as a team to make music. Students benefit from live interaction with professional musicians in a professional concert setting. They begin to analyze music, using music vocabulary to discuss the characteristics and expressive qualities of the music they hear, and make informed decisions about the music they choose to experience and perform.

Art

Students in third grade are able to work with greater independence and create art with more detail. They begin to learn how artists make a flat object appear three dimensional and how art can communicate feelings and convey emotions. Students expand on the art elements, creating artworks that use feeling lines, positive and negative shapes, warm and cool colors, real and implied textures, horizon lines, and use clay to create a relief sculpture. Students will analyze the crafts and art works of different cultures, including China and Kenya. They learn that different cultures use tools, mediums, and methods that are influenced by their location, climate, or society to create art with identifiable cultural characteristics.