

While not representing ALL the concepts and skills we teach, these are the performance indicators we are committing to teach for MASTERY at each level. These skills build on those previously mastered and lay the foundation for learning in later schooling and throughout life. We expect that every student will demonstrate mastery of these skills. We will gather sufficient evidence to provide proof of their learning, and communicate their performance with students and families.



Parents'/Guardians' Guide to Fourth Grade

This guide provides an overview of what your student will learn by the end of fourth grade. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in each of the different subject areas, which will build a strong foundation for success as your child progresses through school. The student outcomes outlined in this document reflect the Illinois Learning Standards as they are published at this time, which includes incorporating the Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. As the Illinois Learning Standards undergo revision to reflect the development of new standards in additional subjects, our curriculum will also be revised to support additions or changes to the Illinois Learning Standards. If your child is meeting these end-of-the-year expectations, he or she should be well prepared for the next level of schooling.

Why Are Academic Standards Important?

Academic standards are important because they help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents/guardians, and teachers; build a child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed.

How Can I Help My Child?

Use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. Talk regularly with his or her teacher about how your child is doing.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. Work with your child's teacher to identify opportunities for additional learning or ways you can support your child in their schooling.

This Guide Includes:

- An overview of some of the key concepts and skills your child will learn in fourth grade
- Ideas for activities to help your child learn at home
- Topics of discussion for talking to your child's teacher about his or her progress

Preface and support material adapted from "Parents' Guide to Student Success" published by the National Parent-Teacher Association

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English/Language Arts: Building the stamina and skills to read challenging fiction, nonfiction, and other materials is fundamental in fourth grade. Your child will continue to learn about the world as well as build vocabulary skills by reading more complicated stories and poems from different cultures and a range of books on history, science, art, and music. Fourth grade students also will make important strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what a book says — both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By the end of fourth grade, your child will be writing effective summaries, book reports, and descriptions of characters or events that use correct grammar and punctuation.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

Reading

- Describing the basic elements of stories — such as characters, events, and settings — by drawing on specific details in the text
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: these include understanding the main and supporting ideas; being able to compare and contrast information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Applying a combination of vocabulary strategies (patterns, structural analysis, meaning, previous experience) to accurately read unfamiliar multisyllabic words in and out of context
- Reading with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension

Writing

- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples
- Evaluating own writing and that of others; applying grade level editing and revising checklist
- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the Internet

Speaking and Listening

- Contribute meaningfully to a range of collaborative discussions on fourth-grade topics, paraphrasing and responding to others' ideas, comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points, and expressing one's own ideas clearly and respectfully
- Reporting orally on a topic or text, telling a story or recounting an experience in an organized manner with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace

Language Usage

- Adapting language, and listening/speaking behaviors to a given situation: Standard use of parts of speech, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure
- Using grade-level grammar, mechanics and conventions appropriately
- Spelling grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed
- Using context clues and knowledge of Greek and Latin affixes and roots to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (synonyms) and their opposites (antonyms)
- Acquiring and accurately using general academic and content-specific vocabulary

Mathematics: In fourth grade, your child will gain important new skills while continuing to build on what he or she learned in third grade. One of the main areas studied in fourth grade is arithmetic and applying it to solve problems. This is an important life skill, and your child should make significant strides in this area during the year. Your child will also build knowledge and skills with fractions to prepare for mastering this topic in fifth and sixth grades. These skills will help ensure your child is ready for algebra and advanced math.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

Critical Focus Areas: developing understanding and fluency with multi-digit multiplication, and developing understanding of dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends; developing an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers; 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

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- Using whole-number arithmetic to solve word problems, including problems with remainders and problems with measurements
- Adding and subtracting whole numbers quickly and accurately (numbers up to 1 million)
- Multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers in simple cases
- Understanding and applying equivalent fractions (e.g., recognizing that $\frac{1}{4}$ is less than $\frac{3}{8}$ because $\frac{2}{8}$ is less than $\frac{3}{8}$)
- Adding, subtracting, and multiplying fractions in simple cases (such as $2\frac{3}{4} - 1\frac{1}{4}$ or $3 \times \frac{5}{8}$), and solving related word problems
- Understanding simple decimals in terms of fractions (e.g., rewriting 0.62 as $\frac{62}{100}$)
- Measuring angles and finding unknown angles in a diagram

Science: Science instruction in fourth grade continues to build on your child's natural curiosity. The focus is on close observation, asking good questions, forming hypotheses, and data collection. Students are encouraged to think and act like scientists.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Safely using equipment and materials to engage in the inquiry process to answer a testable question, conduct experiments, collect and record data, draw conclusions and generalize results
- Identifying key concepts in local and global weather systems and their impact on the earth
- Identifying key concepts related to the survival and interaction among living things and their physical environment
- Identifying key concepts of force, motion and energy including gravity, friction, electricity, and magnetism

Social Sciences: Your child will expand their understanding about the world and their place in it. Students will continue to practice critical thinking skills as they research, read and evaluate primary sources of information related to local history, Illinois history, Pre-Columbian Cultures, and Westward Expansion.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Comparing and contrasting structures and functions of local, state, and federal governments
- Explaining evolution of societies, reasons for change, and impacts on governments
- Describing how agriculture, industry, technology and geography impact population distribution and the economy
- Describing how the actions of people and changes in technology, transportation, and communication affect the development of cities, our state, and the nation
- Using maps to explain how topography, natural resources and geographic features impact settlement, culture and history
- Understanding that an individual's actions have an impact on the larger group

Physical Development/Health: The goal of physical development and health programming is physical fitness for all students. Fourth grade students explore the topics of fitness, wellness, teamwork, and cooperation in building a foundation of skills that will enable them to lead healthy and physically active lifestyles.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Sequencing combinations of complex weight transfer and balance movements, and manipulate an object to change direction and/or distance
- Applying effective strategies for successful completion of various physical activities
- Evaluating positive and negative behavioral choices and their impact on wellness levels
- Recognizing when symptoms of illness or other situations require attention from an adult.
- Discussing how to avoid dangers within the home, school and community
- Explaining how health choices affect the performance of the body systems
- Discussing body systems and their relation to how the body functions as a whole

Fine Arts: Your child will explore the four art forms (dance, drama, music, and visual art) as a means of promoting creativity and self-expression. Students will build knowledge of the arts, arts skills, and an appreciation of the arts as a means of communicating ideas and feelings related to the time in which they are created.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Identifying and distinguishing among arts elements and principles when talking about works of art in the four arts disciplines
- Combining elements and principles in each arts discipline to communicate an idea, express a feeling, or solve a creative problem
- Observing and responding to the arts (dance, drama, music, visual art) in a respectful manner.

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Social/Emotional Learning: Your child acquire knowledge and skills needed to recognize and manage his or her emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Monitoring and managing own behavior and emotions in a socially acceptable manner.
- Setting personal goals and monitoring progress for school behavior and academic performance.
- Communicating effectively and working with others productively.
- Applying constructive approaches in resolving conflicts

Technology: Students will apply the use of technology to solve problems, create projects, collaborate, and extend their learning in all subjects.

A sample of the skills your child will be working on

- Describing and illustrating content-related concepts or process using a model, simulation or concept-mapping software.
- Selecting and using appropriate digital tools to investigate a content-related topic, issue, or problem, generate possible solutions, and report results (including collecting, organizing, and analyzing data, examining patterns)
- Performing research-related tasks
- Recognizing age-appropriate issues related to the use of technology and setting personally challenging goals in the area of technology
- Using basic keyboarding skills like touch-typing letters and words and r/l hand zones



Helping your Child Learn at Home

- Try to carve out a quiet place to study, and carve out time every day when your child can concentrate on his or her studies without distractions from friends or family.
- Sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 – 30 minutes while he or she does homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on and help you be the first to know if he or she needs help with a specific topic.
- Urge your child to use logical arguments to defend his or her opinion. If your child wants a raise in allowance, ask him or her to research commonsense allowance systems and, based on that research, explain reasons why, supported by facts and details.
- Talk about the news together. Pick one story in the news, read it together, and discuss with your child what it means.
- Keep books, magazines, and newspapers at home. Make sure your child sees you reading.
- Look for “word problems” in real life.
- Ask your child to compare numbers using phrases like “times as much.” For example, if the family cat weighs 8 lbs. and the family dog weighs 56 lbs., how many times as much does the dog weigh?
- Ask your child to help you compare fractional amounts — for example, if one recipe calls for $\frac{2}{3}$ of a cup of oil, but another recipe calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of oil, which recipe calls for more oil? (In 5th grade, your child will learn ways to determine just how much more oil.)

Tips for Talking with Your Child’s Teacher

- Keep the conversation focused on a few critical areas, like:
 - Comprehending a range of grade-level stories, poems, and informational texts such as biographies, articles, or guidebooks about history, science, or the arts
 - Building understanding of relationships between words and nuances in word meanings — synonyms, antonyms, idioms — and using this knowledge to convey ideas precisely.
 - Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with multi-digit numbers
 - Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with fractions
- Ask to see a sample of your child’s work. Ask the teacher questions such as:
 - Is this piece of work meeting the expectations?
 - Is my child on track?
 - How can I support my child in this area?
 - Are there resources outside the classroom to help his or her learning in a particular area?

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