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PARENTS' GUIDE TO Student Success

7TH GRADE

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of 7th grade in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. It focuses on the key skills your child will learn in these subjects, which will build a strong foundation for success in the other subjects he or she studies throughout the school year. This guide is based on the new Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by more than 40 states. These K–12 standards are informed by the highest state standards from across the country. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined in these standards, he or she will be well prepared for 8th grade.

WHY ARE ACADEMIC STANDARDS IMPORTANT?

Academic standards are important because they help ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in college and the workforce. They help set clear and consistent expectations for students, parents, and teachers; build your child's knowledge and skills; and help set high goals for all students.

Of course, high standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success. But standards provide an important first step — a clear roadmap for learning for teachers, parents, and students. Having clearly defined goals helps families and teachers work together to ensure that students succeed. Standards help parents and teachers know when students need extra assistance or when they need to be challenged even more. They also will help your child develop critical thinking skills that will prepare him or her for college and career.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

You should use this guide to help build a relationship with your child's teacher. You can do this by talking to his or her teacher regularly about how your child is doing — beyond parent-teacher conferences.

At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and supporting your child in meeting them. If your child needs a little extra help or wants to learn more about a subject, work with his or her teacher to identify opportunities for tutoring, to get involved in clubs after school, or to find other resources.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- An overview of some of the key things your child will learn in English/literacy and math in 7th 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 academic progress

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 7th grade, your child will analyze, define, compare, and evaluate ideas when reading, writing, speaking, and listening. He or she will continue to analyze how themes in fiction and nonfiction develop over the course of a book or article. Readings will include classic and contemporary pieces that represent diverse perspectives. In particular, 7th grade students' ability to cite specific evidence when offering an interpretation of a text matures. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to readers or listeners or constructively evaluating others' use of evidence. This ability will help your child in every facet of his or her studies.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 7th Grade

- Citing several sources of specific evidence from a piece when offering an oral or written analysis of a book, essay, article, or play
- Analyzing works of fiction to see how events advance the plot and how setting shapes the characters
- Determining an author's point of view or purpose in a nonfiction work and analyzing how the author takes a position different from other authors
- Organizing and focusing his or her own writing, including supporting statements and conclusions with evidence and showing that the evidence is accurate and reliable
- Conducting research in response to a specific question by drawing on evidence from several credible literary or informational sources to support an analysis or reflection
- Avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citations (e.g., footnotes, bibliography)
- Evaluating a speaker's key points and reasoning, asking questions, and stating his or her own well-supported ideas in discussions
- Presenting claims and findings to others emphasizing main points, making eye contact, speaking loudly enough, pronouncing words clearly, and using formal English when the situation calls for it
- Using common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to defining the meaning of a word (e.g., *semi-*, *semiannual*, *semicircle*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 7th grade, these include:

- Reading closely and citing several sources of evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction works to support an analysis of what the material says
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Mathematics

In 7th grade, your child will grow in skill and understanding as he or she continues the previous grade's work in proportional relationships, equations, and positive and negative numbers. These topics will remain a major emphasis throughout the middle school years and into high school. A good command of rates and proportional relationships, including percentages, is also an important life skill.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 7th Grade

- Analyzing proportional relationships (e.g., by graphing in the coordinate plane), and distinguishing proportional relationships from other kinds of mathematical relationships (e.g., buying 10 times as many items will cost you 10 times as much, but taking 10 times as many aspirin will not lower your fever 10 times as much)
- Solving percent problems (e.g., tax, tips, and markups and markdowns)
- Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing positive and negative numbers, and solving related word problems
- Solving word problems that have a combination of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals (e.g., a woman making \$25 per hour receives a 10% raise; she will make an additional $\frac{1}{10}$ of her salary an hour, or \$2.50, for a new salary of \$27.50)
- Solving equations such as $\frac{1}{2}(x - 3) = \frac{3}{4}$ quickly and accurately, and writing equations of this kind to solve word problems (e.g., "I knocked over a carton of milk, and 3 cups were spilled before I set the carton upright again. When I poured out the remaining milk equally into two measuring cups, there was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of milk in each one. How much milk was originally in the carton?")
- Solving problems involving scale drawings
- Using statistics to draw inferences and make comparisons (e.g., deciding which candidate is likely to win an election based on a survey)

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 7th grade, these include:

- Analyzing proportional relationships
- Arithmetic with positive and negative numbers
- Solving equations quickly and accurately, and writing equations to solve word problems

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?

Talking to
Your Child's
Teacher

Help Your Child Learn at Home

Learning does not end in the classroom. Children need help and support at home to succeed in their studies. Try to create a quiet place for your child to study, and carve out time *every day* when your child can concentrate on reading, writing, and math uninterrupted by friends, brothers or sisters, or other distractions.

You should also try and sit down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework. This will keep you informed about what your child is working on, and it will help you be the first to know if your child needs help with specific topics. By taking these small steps, you will be helping your child become successful both in and outside the classroom.

Additionally, here are some activities you can do with your child to support learning at home:

English Language Arts & Literacy

- Visit a local art museum together. Take time to closely observe the details of the paintings or other art objects and talk about what you see there.
- Have your child help plan a family outing, using the Internet or library to research a place he or she is interested in.
- Ask your child who his or her favorite authors are. Why does your child like their books? What ideas does the author write about? Who are his or her favorite characters? Why? To find recommendations of books for your child to read, visit www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.

Mathematics

Look for "word problems" in real life. Some 7th grade examples might include:

- Figuring the amount of a 15% tip or determining what percentage of weekly income goes to pay taxes.
- Using a scale diagram in a manual or a newspaper article to determine lengths, areas, distances, or other measures.
- For a long-term project, help your child choose a stock and follow its value on the stock market using the newspaper or the Internet. Have your child calculate the stock's percent increase or decrease each month.

For more information, the full standards are available at www.corestandards.org.

National
PTA[®]
everychild.onevoice[®]

National PTA
1250 N Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Toll-Free: (800) 307-4PTA (4782)
PTA.org • info@pta.org

Middle School End of Year Testing

Students in **Grades 6-8** will be taking the following End of Year Tests:

Grade(s)	Test	Content	Test Date(s)
6-8	PARCC	English Language Arts & Mathematics	PHASE I (PBA): March 16-20, 2015 PHASE II (EOY): May 4-8, 2015
6-7	ILEAP	Science & Social Studies	April 14-15, 2015
8	LEAP		
8	EOC (as applicable)	Algebra I	Fall Window: Dec 1-17, 2014 Spring Window: April 22-May 22, 2015
8	EXPLORE	Reading, English, Math, Science	March 9-13, 2015
6-7	LAA1*	English Language Arts & Mathematics	Window: February 2-March 13, 2015
8		Science	
6-8	ELDA*	English Language	Window: February 2-March 13, 2015

**The following tests are only for students who have been deemed eligible to take those tests.*

PARCC TEST

The **Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)** of the **PARCC TEST** is administered after approximately 75% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy PBA at each grade level will focus on writing effectively when analyzing texts and will include three tasks: a literary analysis, a research simulation, and a narrative task. For each task, students will be asked to read one or more texts, answer several comprehension and vocabulary questions, and write an essay that requires them to draw evidence from the text(s). The Math portion of this assessment will require students to solve real-life problems and to provide reasoning/explanations to support their work.

The **End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)** of the **PARCC TEST** is administered after approximately 90% of the school year is completed. The ELA/Literacy EOY at each grade level will include 4-5 texts, both literary and informational, and the questions will focus on reading comprehension. On the Math portion, students will demonstrate their ability to understand and use Math skills including mathematical fluency.

LAA 1 TEST

Students with the most severe cognitive disabilities are eligible to take the LEAP Alternate Assessment Level 1, known as LAA 1. The assessment is based on Extended Standards which capture the core academic content of academic standards.

Students in 6th through 8th grade are assessed in English language arts and math. Students in 8th grade are assessed in science.

ELDA TEST

This test assesses English language proficiency in the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as comprehension of English for students who are identified as limited English proficient.

EXPLORE TEST

Students in 8th grade will take the EXPLORE Test, to ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school on time and with the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and challenging 21st century careers. These tests assess student achievement of English, reading, math and science. Students earn a score in each subject and a composite score which reflects all subjects. These rigorous and nationally comparable assessments are a key tool to prepare for Common Core assessments, specifically as they allow for consistency in the measurement of college and career readiness from year to year.

EOC TEST

The EOC (End of Course) Test is a computer-based test that 8th grade Algebra I students will take at the culmination of the Algebra I course.

Students can earn the following scores on End-of-Course tests:

- **Excellent:** A student demonstrates superior performance of the course content.
 - **Good:** A student demonstrates mastery of course content and is well prepared for the next level of coursework in the subject.
 - **Fair:** A student demonstrates only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of coursework in the subject.
 - **Needs Improvement:** A student does not demonstrate the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of coursework in the subject.
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Today you will read a passage from *The Count of Monte Cristo* as well as a scene from the play *Blessings*. After you have read the selections and answered some questions, you will write an essay analyzing the themes presented in the two texts.

Write an essay in which you identify a theme from each text and analyze how each theme is developed. Be sure to include specific details from both selections.

from *The Count of Monte Cristo*

by Alexandre Dumas

Suddenly, about nine o'clock in the evening, Edmond heard a hollow sound in the wall against which he was lying.

So many loathsome animals inhabited the prison, that their noise did not, in general, awake him; but whether abstinence had quickened his faculties, or whether the noise was really louder than usual, Edmond raised his head and listened. It was a continual scratching, as if made by a huge claw, a powerful tooth, or some iron instrument attacking the stones.

Although weakened, the young man's brain instantly responded to the idea that haunts all prisoners—liberty! It seemed to him that heaven had at length taken pity on him, and had sent this noise to warn him on the very brink of the abyss. Perhaps one of those beloved ones he had so often thought of was thinking of him, and striving to diminish the distance that separated them.

No, no, doubtless he was deceived, and it was but one of those dreams that forerun death!

Edmond still heard the sound. It lasted nearly three hours; he then heard a noise of something falling, and all was silent.

Some hours afterwards it began again, nearer and more distinct. Edmond was intensely interested. Suddenly the jailer entered.

For a week since he had resolved to die, and during the four days that he had been carrying out his purpose, Edmond had not spoken to the attendant, had not answered him when he inquired what was the matter with him, and turned his face to the wall when he looked too curiously at him; but now the jailer might hear the noise and put an end to it, and so destroy a ray of something like hope that soothed his last moments.

The jailer brought him his breakfast. Dantes raised himself up and began to talk about everything; about the bad quality of the food, about the coldness of his dungeon, grumbling and complaining, in order to have an excuse for speaking, louder, and wearying the patience of his jailer, who out of kindness of heart had brought broth and white bread for his prisoner.

Fortunately, he fancied that Dantes was delirious; and placing the food on the rickety table, he withdrew. Edmond listened, and the sound became more and more distinct.

"There can be no doubt about it," thought he; "it is some prisoner who is striving to obtain his freedom. Oh, if I were only there to help him!" Suddenly another idea took possession of his mind, so used to misfortune, that is was scarcely capable of hope—the idea that the noise was made by workmen the governor had ordered to repair the neighboring dungeon.

It was easy to ascertain this; but how could he risk the question? It was easy to call his jailer's attention to the noise, and watch his countenance as he listened; but might he not by this means destroy hopes far more important than the short-lived satisfaction of his own curiosity? Unfortunately, Edmond's brain was still so feeble that he could not bend his thoughts to anything in particular.

He saw but one means of restoring lucidity and clearness to his judgment. He turned his eyes towards the soup which the jailer had brought, rose, staggered towards it, raised the vessel to his lips, and drank off the contents with a feeling of indescribable pleasure. He had often heard that shipwrecked persons had died through having eagerly devoured too much food. Edmond replaced on the table the bread he was about to devour, and returned to his couch—he did not wish to die. He soon felt that his ideas became again collected—he could think, and strengthen his thoughts by reasoning. Then he said to himself, "I must put this to the test, but without compromising anybody. If it is a workman, I need but knock against the wall, and he will cease to work, in order to find out who is knocking, and why he does so; but as his occupation is sanctioned by the governor, he will soon resume it. If, on the contrary, it is a prisoner, the noise I make will alarm him, he will cease, and not begin again until he thinks everyone is asleep."

Edmond rose again, but this time his legs did not tremble, and his sight was clear; he went to a corner of his dungeon, detached a stone, and with it knocked against the wall where the sound came. He struck thrice. At the first blow the sound ceased, as if by magic.

Edmond listened intently; an hour passed, two hours passed, and no sound was heard from the wall—all was silent there.

Full of hope, Edmond swallowed a few mouthfuls of bread and water, and, thanks to the vigor of his constitution, found himself well-nigh recovered.

The day passed away in utter silence—night came without recurrence of the noise.

"It is a prisoner," said Edmond joyfully. The night passed in perfect silence. Edmond did not close his eyes

from *Blessings*

by Mary Hall Surface

LIGHTS UP on the "looking spot," an outcropping of rock on the peak of a ridge, high above the valley below. JESSE is leading the way. They are just arriving.

JESSE. *(Entering.)* It gets cooler, brighter, right at the bend. See?

RENE. *(Entering.)* And thinner. The air feels thinner.

JESSE. Cause it is.

(RENE reaches the top. She looks out for the first time.)

RENE. Oh my *gosh*.

JESSE. Like it?

RENE. I didn't know sunsets came like this! How high *are* we?

JESSE. High as you can get without ropes. See that ridge? Sheer rock-face. I scale that once a year. Since I was twelve. It's my test.

RENE. Are those little color specks houses?

JESSE. Ben Lomand. And that way, if the fog's up, you can see the ocean and the lighthouse from Seal Rock, flickering, kinda like a heartbeat.

RENE. How'd you find this?

JESSE. Sniffed it out. *(RENE laughs.)* All right. Review. First turn?

RENE. When you smell the *(Proud of remembering.)* "eucalyptus," follow the smell.

JESSE. Good. Next turn.

RENE. At the tallest redwood with the... uh...

JESSE. *Burl*. Think curl. Wood curling.

RENE. *Burl* that looks like a big bump on a giant nose. Then follow the nose.

JESSE. Until—

RENE. You see the blue-gray rock. Then straight up the trail, carpeted with "golden orange-brown" needles, sniffing the air cool. Watch the trees for bright, then Tah-dah!

JESSE. Great map, huh?

RENE. The best! *(RENE crosses to have a seat near the edge.)* Jeez!!

JESSE. Careful. There's no map for gettin' you back up if you fall.

RENE. Sorry.

(They settle into sitting.)

RENE. Man, I've got to bring my paints up here.

JESSE. You paint?

RENE. Watercolor.

JESSE. What of?

RENE. Maps. Picture maps. Of places. Uncle Randy says *you* make amazing mirrors. From redwood.

JESSE. Don't know how amazing they are. But I make 'em. And sell 'em. So people can see themselves in the—through the wood.

RENE. What else do you do?

JESSE. Like to cook. Like poems. Ever written a poem?

RENE. I don't do poems. Too many words. Is that a river?

JESSE. Runs all the way to the ocean. I hike the whole length of it. Ever seen where a river and the ocean meet?

RENE. I'm not sure.

JESSE. Down at Sunset Beach. You can see it flow clear down the mountain 'til it forms a riverbed right on the beach, in the sand. The water looks real clear. Light. Not like the ocean at all. Like it's not really supposed to be there, but it is. Then the waves just lap up and catch it, little bit at a time. Then it all changes.

RENE. What's it like having Uncle Randy live in your house?

(JESSE looks right at RENE, surprised by her directness.)

RENE. Do you wish he'd go away? That it could be all yours again?

JESSE. Don't know how I'm supposed to answer that.

(RENE waits for an answer.)

JESSE. Rene, I've spent a lot of days, nights, too, wishin' that things weren't the way they are. But yeah. I wish I'd never had to sell the cabin and all you people had stayed back in San Francisco—

RENE. San Raphael.

JESSE. Takes away the pattern. New rhythm—gets me off beat.

RENE. *(Getting up.)* I should head back now.

JESSE. Rene—

RENE. I just do the map backwards, right?

JESSE. Rene, wait. Please don't think . . . I'm not used to lots of new people. I'm not . . . wanting to be a . . . I don't know.

RENE. *(Enjoying repeating what he said to her.)* A what?

JESSE. *(Enjoying it, too.)* I don't know.

RENE. You've got stranger-invasion.

JESSE. *(Laughs.)* Will it kill me?

RENE. I don't like them either. Strangers.

JESSE. What *do* you like?

RENE. Being by myself. I understand me when everybody else is lost. *(JESSE laughs.)* Let's go back.

JESSE. Rene, first, would you read this? *(JESSE takes a piece of paper out of his shirt pocket. He hands it to RENE.)* It's a poem. Real short. I wrote it about this place.

RENE. *(Glancing at the page.)* It's nice.

JESSE. No, aloud. I need to hear it.

RENE. I... I'll read it later, Jesse. After dinner. You're gonna eat with us, aren't you?

(JESSE nods)

RENE. Great! Now, sniffin' for that needle carpet.

JESSE. *(As they exit, playfully.)* They're "yellow" orange-brown, you know.

RENE. Golden orange-brown!

JESSE. *(Laughing.)* Whatever!

(RENE and JESSE exit. LIGHTS OUT. Music transition.)

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY

Name _____

Date _____

Lesson 1: Percent

Exit Ticket

1. Fill in the chart converting between fractions, decimals and percents. Show work in the space provided.

Fraction	Decimal	Percent
$\frac{1}{8}$		
	1.125	
		$\frac{2}{5}\%$

2. Using the values from the chart in Problem 1, which is the least and which is the greatest? Explain how you arrived at your answers.