

# New Jersey's CommonCore

## *What the Common Core Means for Students in Grades K-2*

The Common Core State Standards were developed by states and written by educators and education experts to provide a consistent, clear and rigorous set of learning expectations for all students. New Jersey adopted the standards in 2010, and for the past four years, our educators have been transitioning classroom instruction to align to the Common Core State Standards. The standards define what students are expected to know and do in each grade. New Jersey school districts continue to develop curriculum and choose the books that may be used for instruction. Teachers maintain control over their lessons and plans.

New Jersey adopted these standards to make sure students graduate with the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed in life. The standards are based in research on other high-achieving countries and were created to meet the expectations of college coursework and career demands. New Jersey students will graduate ready for college or their chosen career path due to the deeper learning achieved through instruction aligned with these stronger standards.

### IN THE CLASSROOM

New Jersey's Common Core State Standards are changing the way our students learn by developing and reinforcing core knowledge and skills across grade levels and subject areas. More importantly, the Common Core State Standards focus on the deep analysis and critical thinking skills that are crucial in the 21st century. For teachers, the New Jersey Common Core State Standards provide fewer, clearer standards and the opportunity for instructional shifts in both mathematics and English language arts (ELA).

Here are a few examples of what K-2 teaching and learning now look like in New Jersey classrooms under the Common Core: <sup>1</sup>

#### KINDERGARTEN

- Naming and printing letters, and matching them with sounds
- Comparing character experiences in stories
- Understanding how to use question words (who, what, when, where, why, and how) in discussions
- Using drawing, writing, and speaking to describe an event
- Participating in classroom discussions and following the designated rules
- Counting to 100 by ones and tens and writing numerals from 0-20
- Comparing groups to determine which has a greater number of objects
- Adding and subtracting small numbers quickly and correctly
- Naming shapes accurately, regardless of their orientation
- Using diagrams and word problems to practice addition and subtraction

#### FIRST GRADE

- Using phonics and word analysis skills to determine unfamiliar words in reading
- Gathering facts from different sources
- Practicing structure of writing short stories or essays
- Participating in group discussions and responding to questions or comments from others
- Identifying word meanings from context clues
- Learning to make clearer distinctions between synonyms
- Developing a variety of strategies to add and subtract whole numbers
- Comparing whole numbers by reasoning about the tens and ones
- Understanding place value with two-digit numbers
- Developing an understanding of measuring and measuring lengths of objects with non-standard units
- Making composite shapes by joining other shapes

#### SECOND GRADE

- Paying attention to details in stories to answer who, what, when, where, why, and how questions
- Determining morals or lessons of stories
- Determining the meaning of a word through prefixes or suffixes
- Writing stories with event sequences and clarity
- Practicing sentence structure by expanding or arranging sentences
- Expanding group discussion with new information
- Developing fluency with addition and subtraction within 100 and using strategies to solve problems within 1,000
- Building and analyzing 2-D and 3-D objects to set a foundation for learning about volume and area
- Understanding place value with three-digit numbers
- Using rulers to measure lengths in standard units (centimeter and inch)



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Beyond content changes in the classroom, New Jersey's Common Core State Standards provide the opportunity for new instructional practices that foster student engagement in our classrooms through lessons that include project-based learning and peer discussions. Student-led and small group work are emphasized to build strong communication and collaboration skills. The instructional shifts are focused on building students' critical thinking and communication skills, as well as helping students understand how classroom learning relates to the real world.

Below are the main instructional shifts in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The chart provides guidance on how each shift should look in the classroom, and lists a few examples of available resources teachers can utilize in the classroom.



INSTRUCTIONAL SHIFT	IN THE CLASSROOM	LEARN MORE
ELA – Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction	Students should read and write about real-life events, such as historical events, science experiments, biographies and news articles, in addition to grade-appropriate literature.	<a href="#">EngageNY Focus Standards RI.1, RI 1.5–Demonstrates using nonfiction texts in a first grade classroom.</a>
ELA – Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and nonfiction	Students should be able to identify facts and information in a text to support their opinions or answers. Prompts such as, “How do you know that?” or “Where did you find that information?” should be used in class discussions.	<a href="#">Investigating Animals: Using Nonfiction for Inquiry-Based Research–Sample lesson plans to introduce research concepts.</a>
ELA – Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary	Students should read increasingly complex texts that focus on building a strong vocabulary and understanding words that appear across content areas or with multiple meanings. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to determine word meaning when sufficient context is provided by the text. Some academic vocabulary will need to be explicitly taught.	<a href="#">Our Community: Creating ABC Books as Assessment–Model lesson plans to develop student vocabulary.</a>
Math – Focus	Students should understand the logic and processes of addition and subtraction, including problem solving and place value.	<a href="#">Helping Teachers: Coherence and Focus–Explains focus in mathematics for classroom teachers.</a>
Math – Coherence	Students should understand how different math topics relate to others within a single grade and across grade levels. Collaboration among all grade-level teachers should be encouraged so that they are aware of the foundations set in the previous grades and the expectations for later grades.	<a href="#">Beyond Fingers: Place Value &amp; the Numbers 11 - 19–Demonstrates understanding place value and mathematical reasoning.</a>
Math – Rigor	Students should apply their understandings to solve appropriately complex real-world problems. Instruction should place an emphasis on integrating conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency.	<a href="#">Solving a Comparison Number Story–Illustrates problem solving skills.</a>

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## LEARN MORE

- [New Jersey Department of Education Common Core State Standards Video](#)
- [Council of the Great City Schools' Three-Minute Video](#)
- [National PTA Parents' Guide to Student Success](#)
- [Council of the Great City Schools' Grade by Grade Roadmaps](#)  
[English language arts](#)  
[Mathematics](#)

## NEW JERSEY EDUCATOR RESOURCE EXCHANGE

New Jersey, in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), has created the New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange at [NJCore.org](#). The New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange is New Jersey's central resource for:

- Learning about New Jersey's Common Core State Standards, New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, and Model Curriculum Framework;
- Uploading and sharing lesson plans and other instructional resources with fellow educators throughout the state;
- Accessing high-quality instructional resources tagged to each standard in each grade level;
- Spreading awareness about the standards and sharing resources with parents to extend students' learning at home.

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

[New Jersey's Model Curriculum Framework](#) provides educators a suggested way to incorporate the standards into five units across each grade level.

[The EQuIP \(Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products\) Rubric](#) created by Achieve is an evaluation tool to determine lesson and unit alignment to the Common Core State Standards.

- [AchievetheCore.org](#)
- America Achieves' [commoncore.americaachieves.org](#)
- [BetterLesson.com](#)
- [LearnZillion.com](#)
- [Readwritethink.org](#)
- [ShareMyLesson.com](#)
- [TeachingChannel.org](#)

