

New Jersey's CommonCore

What the Common Core Means for Students in Grades 3–5

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 Grade 3–5 teaching and learning now look like in New Jersey classrooms under the Common Core: ¹

THIRD GRADE

- Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story
- Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories
- Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic
- Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details
- Developing an understanding of the meanings of multiplication and division and using a variety of solution strategies to solve problems
- Solving word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Understanding fractions and relating them to the familiar system of whole numbers and comparing fractions using fraction models and other strategies
- Reasoning about shapes (e.g. all squares are rectangles but not all rectangles are squares)

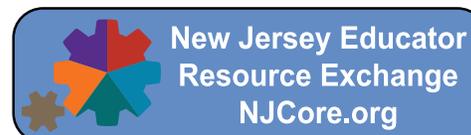
FOURTH GRADE

- Describing the basic elements of stories—such as characters, events, and settings—by drawing on specific details in the text
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details
- Using whole-number operations to solve word problems, including problems with remainders and problems with measurements
- Adding and subtracting whole numbers quickly and accurately (numbers up to one million)
- Recognizing and generating equivalent fractions, adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators, and multiplying fractions by whole numbers
- Measuring angles and finding unknown angles in a diagram

FIFTH GRADE

- Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their themes or main ideas
- Identifying and judging evidence that supports particular ideas in an author's argument to change a reader's point of view
- Expanding, combining, and reducing sentences to improve meaning, interest, and style of writing
- Producing writing on the computer
- Adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators, multiplying fractions, and dividing fractions by whole numbers (and whole numbers by fractions)
- Using the four operations to solve problems with decimals
- Understanding the concept of volume, and solving word problems that involve volume
- Graphing points in the coordinate plane (two dimensions) to solve problems
- Analyzing mathematical patterns and relationships

Source: ¹ National PTA's Guide to Student Success, www.pta.org



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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.	Great American Inventors: Using Nonfiction to Learn About Technology Inventions–Students read biographies and create class presentations about American inventors.
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.	Analyzing Texts: Overview of a Lesson Series–Demonstrates eliciting evidence supported answers in small group and class settings.
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.	Jazz & Similes: Language Meets Music–Students learn to understand and use similes to express ideas in writing.
Math – Focus	Students will focus on the content presented in the following critical areas: Grade 3: Multiplication and division, understanding fractions, and reasoning about shapes, including measuring area Grade 4: Extending understanding of whole number operations, continuing development of fraction operations, and geometry foundations Grade 5: Operations with fractions, operations with decimals, and understanding and calculating volume.	Hunt Institute's Helping Teachers: Coherence and Focus–Explains focus in mathematics for classroom teachers.
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.	Reasoning About Multiplication and Division–Students build on pattern identification to develop understanding of how multiplication and division work together.
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.	Chickens and Pigs–Provides an example of a student explaining the strategy used to successfully solve a word problem.

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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](#)

