

What to Expect in 5th Grade

Skills Required at the Beginning of 5th Grade

Reading

- Read a newspaper or grade-level book
- Produce projects demonstrating reading comprehension (e.g. a book report, poster, diorama, skit, mobile, or book jacket)
- Differentiate between fiction and nonfiction
- Ask and answer critical questions about characters and plot that explore similarities, contrasts, and hypothetical scenarios
- Integrate reading skills with science, social studies, and math

Writing and Verbal Communication

- Write in cursive (longhand) as requested
- Accurately take notes from reference materials
- Write papers, ranging from three to four pages, that require research
- Use higher-level vocabulary words, including synonyms and antonyms
- Write for a purpose: to explain, to describe, to persuade, to entertain, to list, to express an opinion, and so on.
- Produce polished assignments that have been self-edited for grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes
- Present oral reports

Math

- Solve long-division math problems with double-digit divisors
- Multiply two- and three-digit numbers
- Work with fractions and decimals
- Calculate perimeter and averages
- Use a calculator
- Understand that there is more than one way to solve a math problem; know when and how to incorporate various methods of calculation
- Do "mental math" (calculating without paper; ability varies widely among students)

Science

- Analyze, predict, observe, and think scientifically
- Explain how an answer to a scientific question is found
- Retain science facts from previous year

History and Social Studies

- Know home state history
- Understand the branches of the U.S. government
- Retain history facts from previous year
- Know U.S. geography

Naturally, 5th grade will be more academically challenging than the earlier grades. Not only is this the final year of elementary school, but teachers are preparing your child for the rigors of middle school. Help him begin with a positive attitude by encouraging him to keep up the good work in the subjects he enjoys, while still motivating him to improve in areas that are more difficult. If he lags in reading or math skills, you may want to consider consulting with a tutor or other educational specialist, since the work only gets more demanding.