

Student Guide to PA Core Standards

What are the Pennsylvania Core Standards?

The Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted Common Core State Standards in July 2010. In September 2013, the Board adopted PA Core Standards, Pennsylvania's version of the Common Core State Standards that meet the needs of Pennsylvania's students in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as for Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science/Technical Subjects. The PA Core Standards, written by a group of Pennsylvania educators, set high expectations for Pennsylvania students. The expectations are not so high that they cannot be accomplished. The standards expect students to use the learned skills and knowledge to progress through the grades and be ready for a career or college upon graduation from high school.

What will I be learning?

The PA Core Standards focus on the deep understanding of the most important concepts in the subjects you are studying so you can *apply* that knowledge and skills to other subjects and in the real world. All Pennsylvania students, starting from the earliest grades, will be learning advanced skills in English and mathematics that are needed to earn high school and college degrees. These skills include confidence in the ability to read, write, speak, complete projects, work in groups with friends, and use technology.

The PA Core Standards requires attention to helping you become a well-rounded learner who understands what teachers are asking you to do, who can *solve* a problem and explain how you did it - not just memorize and repeat the answer.

In English classes, teachers will ask the you to listen carefully and learn how to ask good questions, be diligent and disciplined in your work by paying attention to the details and writing things down; be able to find information on a subject to show what you think is true and then make an argument backed up by that research; and to have a good vocabulary and great ideas about how to use pictures, video, and other computer tools that help explain what was meant.

In mathematics, you will have to work hard, or persevere, to understand problems and solve them. You will learn how to use imagination to think about ideas and how that relates to problems you confront in everyday life. You will have to show the evidence or the reasons for answers, both by writing them down and by talking about them. You will do experiments and make models that explain how math works in science, engineering and technology.

During your classes, you will learn more than facts and numbers. While you engage in learning facts and numbers, you are also learning how to look at

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the world and become a model citizen of the United States. Don't forget, Pennsylvania Core helps students prepare for going to college and getting a job. Get ready and go get it!

- Talk with the teachers and school staff about the standards and how you are doing in meeting them.

Did you know the PA Core Standards...

....are state-driven?

The PA Core State Standards are a set of identified learning skills in English Language Arts and Mathematics written by Pennsylvania educators to meet the needs of Pennsylvania's students. They set the benchmarks and guidelines for what you should learn and be able to do at each grade level. The PA Core Standards are similar to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and keep the high expectations that are found in the CCSS.

...progress as you move from one grade to another?

What this means is the skills you learn this year will be added to next year and each year as you progress through school. Think of it like a toolbox. You have a toolbox that has been filling with skills you have learned each year you go to school. From that toolbox, you select the best tools to use for your current situation. Each school year you learn more skills to add to that toolbox. Sometimes, you clean the toolbox and get rid of skills that you have made better as you have learned more.

The PA Core Standards set a progression of skills that you learn as you move through school. You learn skills that you can build on and expand on each year.

Be willing to try new things and learn from successes and mistakes.

- Visit pta.org/parents to access Parents' Guide to Student Success for each grade level. These give you specific grade level skills as well as questions and language to use with your teachers.

...dig deeper into the key topics you learn in school?

The PA Core Standards focus on key topics that you need to know. In math, for example, you focus on really understanding numbers in elementary school before you start to apply that understanding of

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numbers to data in middle school.

- Set goals for completing assignments and seek help if needed.
- Think of yourself as a scholar, mathematician, scientist, artist, linguist, etc.
- Use your creativity to think about and solve problems, build strong reading, writing, vocabulary, and computational skills.

...are more complex in English Language Arts?

You will be expected to read more complex text and discuss what you read at a more complex level. To help yourself transition to a more difficult English Language Arts curriculum:

- Use resources to access reading material through electronic readers, Internet, libraries, family centers, etc.
- Challenge yourself to read and write often.
- Manage assignments, class time, and health and wellness to meet school requirements.

...focus on informational text

To prepare you for college-level work, there will be both literary text, but likely more of a focus on informational and expository/explanatory text. In middle school especially, you may be reading more informational text, including original historical documents and speeches.

- Research topics that you are interested in using informational texts, the Internet, and original documents.
- Share your findings and evidence as you learn about your research topics.
- Find out about your family history. Listen to and tell stories about your family history.

...will change the assessments you take in school?

Instead of multiple choice tests, you will be analyzing and synthesizing information, writing essay responses, and answering in-depth questions to show how much you understand. Much more of classroom work, quizzes, and exams will involve computers and

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technology.

- Practice explaining and showing how you are solving problems.
- Think of multiple ways to solve a math problem, answer a reading discussion question, or respond to a news event.
- Think like a scientist, mathematician, artist, speaker, reader, and writer.

...focus on practical skills

PA Core Standards were designed with the college readiness and the workplace in mind. You will be working on taking the role of a scientist, historian, researcher, and more. The focus will be on making sense of problems and critiquing solutions and reasoning.

- As you work through assignments, ask how someone might use what you are working on in “real life.”
- Help connect thinking in school to thinking at work by explaining how you solve problems, or use math and language every day.