

A Quick Reference Guide to Third Grade at Hopewell Area School District Elementary Schools



Welcome to Third Grade!

By far, this is the most challenging grade your child will experience since beginning school. For the most part, children are making a transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Great importance is placed upon listening skills, following directions, written expression, and developing responsibility and accountability. Be prepared, also, for a more challenging curriculum. Your child will also meet the demands of standardized performance assessments by completing the PSSA Tests. We must all work together to make this transitional year an exciting one for every child.

Language Arts

Reading instruction is provided through the use of a basal reading series, with supplemental books that reinforce vocabulary, comprehension, and themes as presented by the basal reader. This strategy-based program teaches reading as a process of constructing meaning. The children will demonstrate their story comprehension by summarizing, predicting, comparing and contrasting, using cause and effect, and making inferences. Each year the child will build on previous years of instruction and develop more sophistication in applying these strategies. Textbook-provided performance assessments will evaluate the children's progress. Our belief as educators is that reinforcing phonetic skills is still important and effective in third grade. The Hopewell Area School District has adopted McGraw-Hill Reading Wonders as the reading/language arts program for our Kindergarten through Grade 6 students. This language arts program incorporates reading, writing, grammar, spelling and phonics, and is comprised of all of the essential learning tools that students need to become literate adults. As the students progress into Grades 3-4, the focus shifts from learning to read towards reading to learn.

Various types of genre add interest, while helping students to read fluently, increase vocabulary development, and use strategies to improve reading comprehension. Besides learning to read, good writing and grammar skills are key components of the program. Third grades begin to read for pleasure and choose books based on personal preference, topics, and author. Third graders will also begin small group instruction by participating in a guided reading program that will be an essential literacy program. Guided reading is focused in small group format in order to meet the diverse levels and needs of the students within our classrooms. Teachers will learn their students' strengths and weaknesses. Each instructional action a teacher takes with the students, is focused on increasing their students' ability and building skills needed to succeed.

Everyday Mathematics

As they come to third grade knowing place-value concepts and basic addition and subtraction facts, they are now expected to demonstrate and explain their work. They will learn how to interpret data and graphs, increase knowledge of place-value, time, and addition and subtraction with renaming. Most importantly, they will understand and be committing to memory multiplication and division facts. Many other concepts in math such as basic geometry and algebra will be taught, and again, students will be required to demonstrate, accurately explain, and analyze problem-solving strategies so they will learn how and when to use them. Hopefully, this newly acquired knowledge will promote more savvy thinkers who can solve increasingly more complex problem. Our Everyday Math program addresses these goals and prepares the children exceptionally well for the PSSA Tests.

Science

The third grade science curriculum emphasizes units of study relating to Earth, Life, Physical, and Space Sciences. Hands-on lessons enhance these environmental studies. Study guides, standardized book tests, and teacher-prepared evaluations will be used to measure the child's progress.

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and practice skills that have been taught in the classroom. A weekly homework sheet is provided by the teachers to inform the parents on upcoming tests or quizzes, and to keep the students current with work to do throughout the week. Homework at the third grade level is given in all subject areas on a regular basis.

Computers

Students begin to learn formal keyboarding skills, with a focus on finger placement. Students use Microsoft Office tools as well as varying other apps and websites as presentation resources. Coding skills are also continuing to be developed in third grade as students program using a variety of web-based tools, robots and unplugged activities. Students continue to develop an understanding of being a good Digital Citizen and how they can protect not only themselves online, but others as well.

Social Studies

The third grade social studies curriculum provides our children with a basic understanding of how communities live and work together. Our curriculum stresses the natural resources of the different areas in our country, including how basic needs are met. Comparisons are made between colonial times and present-day life. Geography and map skills are emphasized. The children are also given an overview of how our federal government was formed and how democracy works. Our children are taught to complete a study guide for each lesson, study for standardized book tests, and how to competently answer short essay questions.

Library

Children in third grade use the library each week to find books for leisure reading and for classroom projects. They learn about the arrangement of books in the library, both fiction and non-fiction, and the use of the card catalog. Children are introduced to a number of authors through the author's books and some biographical information. They practice finding books on the shelves and become independent library users.

Music

The students in third grade sing songs, enjoy listening selections and continue to read music through notation, create percussion accompaniments with rhythm instruments, and sing the scale using syllables. They use different dynamic levels in unison or two-part singing, and explore movement. The students sing songs related to special holidays. They

demonstrate their musical talents at special performances throughout the year. The students study and develop music that can form a foundation for a lifelong interest in Music.

Physical Education

Students will learn to use basic and sport-specific skills for a variety of physical activities such as basketball chest pass, soccer and hockey dribble, volleyball serve, and fielding skills for kickball. Students will also use mature form and appropriate sequence in combination with loco-motor object control and rhythmical skills. These skills are components of selected modified games, sports, and dances. Students will learn to combine running, stopping, throwing, shooting, and kicking. Students begin using strategies for invasion games and mature forms in balance activities on a variety of apparatus.

Art

Students learn to perceive and describe subtle visual qualities such as lines, colors, shapes, textures, and patterns in a natural or constructed environment. They learn to portray details in 2-d and 3-d art forms. The concept of living with art is developed in lessons on crafts, architecture, and other related art. Students begin to use formal terms to describe and interpret visual qualities of artwork.

