

SPECTRUM

Common Core Language Arts and Math

Grade

6

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SPECTRUM[®]
Common Core
Language Arts and Math

Grade
6



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Introduction to the Common Core State Standards

Grade 6

Why Are Common Core State Standards Important for My Child?

The Common Core State Standards are a set of guidelines that outline what children are expected to learn at school. Most U.S. states have voluntarily adopted the standards. Teachers, principals, and administrators in these states use the standards as a blueprint for classroom lessons, district curriculum, and statewide tests. The standards were developed by a state-led collaboration between the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA).

The Common Core Standards set high expectations for your child's learning. They are up-to-date with 21st century technology and draw on the best practices of excellent schools around the world. They focus on important skills in reading, language arts, and math. Common Core State Standards aim to ensure that your child will be college and career ready by the end of high school and able to compete in our global world.



What Are the Common Core State Standards for My Sixth Grade Student?

Common Core State Standards for your sixth grader are designed to strengthen reading and writing skills and deepen mathematical understanding. On practice pages in this book, you will find references to specific Common Core Standards that teachers will expect your child to know by the end of the year. Completing activities on these pages will help your child master essential skills for success in sixth grade.

A Sample of Common Core Language Arts Skills for Grade 6

- Provide a summary of a story or article that does not include personal opinions or judgments.
- Explain how an author uses point of view in a story.
- Use information presented in different ways (in charts, graphs, text, etc.).
- Think about the reasons an author gives to back up his or her points.
- Conduct research and write short research reports.
- Make sure pronouns agree with the nouns that precede them.
- Use commas, parentheses, and dashes to set off less important information in a sentence.
- Study Greek and Latin word roots.
- Learn about metaphors, personification, and other figures of speech.

A Sample of Common Core Math Skills for Grade 6

- Write ratios and proportions to show relationships between numbers.
- Work with percentages of whole numbers.
- Divide fractions by fractions.
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide numbers with decimal points.
- Understand negative numbers.
- Write and solve simple algebraic equations.
- Find the area, surface area, and volume of shapes.
- Given a set of data, find the mean, median, and range.

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How to Use This Book

In this book, you will find a complete **Common Core State Standards Overview** for sixth grade English Language Arts (pages 6–9) and Math (pages 64–67). Read these pages to learn more about the Common Core Standards and what you can expect your child to learn at school this year.

Then, choose **Practice Pages** that best address your child's needs for building skills that meet specific standards. Help your child complete practice pages and check the answers.



At the bottom of each practice page, you will find a **Helping at Home** tip that provides fun and creative ideas for additional practice with the skill at home.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts*

The following parent-friendly explanations of sixth grade Common Core English language arts standards are provided to help you understand what your child will learn in school this year. Practice pages listed will help your child master each skill.

Complete Common Core State Standards may be found here: www.corestandards.org.

RL/RI.6 Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

(Standards: RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RI.6.1, RI.6.2, RI.6.3)

After reading, your child will find evidence in the text to answer questions and back up observations. He or she will use information that is directly stated and make inferences, or reasonable conclusions, about what is not directly stated.

• Practice pages: 10–15, 20–22, 26, 27

After reading, your child will decide on the main idea or theme of the text and explain how it is supported by details. He or she will summarize only what the text says without including personal opinion.

• Practice pages: 10–15, 18, 19, 21–24, 28, 29

Your child will notice what changes during the course of a story or a nonfiction article. For example, your child will think about how characters respond to events in a story and change as a result or how a series of discoveries led to a scientific theory.

• Practice pages: 10–15, 20, 21, 23, 24

Craft and Structure

(Standards: RL.6.4, RL.6.5, RL.6.6, RI.6.4, RI.6.5, RI.6.6)

Your child will find unknown words and phrases in a text and use strategies (examples: searching for context clues, asking questions) to find their meanings. He or she will investigate words that create images, evoke emotions, or have specialized or technical meanings.

• Practice pages: 12–15, 18, 19, 22, 25–29

Your child will look closely at a particular sentence, paragraph, scene, chapter, stanza, or section and think about how it contributes to the overall meaning of the text.

• Practice pages: 26, 27

Your child will think about who is telling the story or explaining an idea. He or she will think about an author's purpose and consider how point of view affects the way a story is told.

• Practice pages: 10, 11, 16, 17, 26, 27

Integration of Knowledge and Skills

(Standards: RI.6.7, RI.6.8)

Your child will read and analyze information presented in a variety of formats: in text, charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, etc. • Practice pages: 28, 29

Your child will think about the claims or arguments an author makes and decide if they are supported by valid reasons and evidence explained in the text. • Practice pages: 22, 23

W.6 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes

(Standards: W.6.1, W.6.2, W.6.3)

Your child will write arguments, supporting claims with sound reasons and trustworthy evidence. • Practice pages: 30–33

Your child will write to provide information in articles and research reports. He or she will organize information using strategies such as categorization, compare/contrast, and cause/effect. • Practice pages: 34–37

Your child will write real or fictional stories that include dialogue and well-developed characters, settings, and plots. • Practice pages: 38–41

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

(Standards: W.6.7, W.6.8)

Your child will conduct research projects to answer questions using several sources. • Practice page: 34

Your child will gather information from a variety of print and digital sources and determine whether each is a reliable and trustworthy source of information. • Practice page: 36

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts*

L.6 Language Standards

Conventions of Standard English

(Standards: L.6.1a, L.6.1b, L.6.1c, L.6.1d, L.6.1e, L.6.2a, L.6.2b)

Your child will practice using pronouns carefully and correctly in different parts of sentences. He or she will learn to check pronouns when proofreading and ask, “Does this pronoun take the place of a noun that came before it? Does it match the noun that it replaces?”

• Practice pages: 42, 43, 45, 46

Your child will learn to use intensive pronouns such as myself and ourselves. These pronouns refer back to the subject in sentences like this: We cleared the trail ourselves.

• Practice page: 44

Your child will consider the differences between informal and formal speaking and writing. He or she will think about ways to use Standard English, such as avoiding double negatives (example: She doesn't have any instead of She doesn't have none). • Practice page: 47

Your child will learn to use punctuation to set off less important information in sentences. He or she will use commas (example: Our teacher, Ms. Hall, is absent), parentheses (example: The party (for sixth graders only) is tonight), or dashes (example: The strawberries—my favorites—are ripe) around non-essential information. • Practice pages: 48–50

Your child will learn to check writing carefully for spelling. He or she will learn the spellings of words that are frequently confused (such as effect and affect) or frequently misspelled (such as column). • Practice page: 51

Knowledge of Language

(Standard: L.6.3a)

Your child will learn to mix up long and short sentences and sentences that begin in different ways in order to make his or her writing more lively and interesting. • Practice page: 52

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
(Standards: L.6.4a, L.6.4b, L.6.4c, L.6.5a, L.6.5b, L.6.5c)

Your child will use context clues to figure out the meanings of unknown words. He or she will search the surrounding text for clues to the new word's meaning. • Practice pages: 18, 19, 25

Your child will study Greek and Latin word roots. He or she will learn that many words have roots that provide clues to their meaning. For example, since the root man means "hand," the related word manual means "by hand." • Practice pages: 53–56

Your child will learn the habit of looking up words in a dictionary or thesaurus to check their meanings, pronunciations, or parts of speech. • Practice page: 57

Your child will look for and understand examples of figurative language, or words that create images. Figurative language techniques include metaphors (example: The dancer was a floating petal) and personification (example: The sun smiled at me). • Practice pages: 58, 59

Your child will find relationships between words to study their meanings. He or she will solve analogies and other word puzzles by thinking about how words are alike or different and asking, "Do the words belong to the same category? Do they show cause and effect? Are they opposites?" • Practice pages: 60, 61

Your child will think about the differences between what words actually mean and what feelings they evoke. He or she will notice words that have positive connotations (such as relaxed) and negative connotations (such as lazy) and think about how to use them carefully in writing. • Practice pages: 62, 63

Making Inferences

Read the story. Answer the questions that follow.

It's Not My Fault

Almost every day, I eat lunch with Heather. Tracy is my friend, too, but she usually eats with Jordan. Every now and then, I eat lunch at their table, but not today. Tracy was angry at me. I needed Heather's advice.

"Tracy says I'm a liar," I said as I took a bite of my sandwich.

"About what?" Heather asked.

"It doesn't matter. I'm honest, right?"

"Honest about what?" Heather sipped her milk.

"Honest. You know, trustworthy, direct, truthful," I smiled.

Heather hesitated and then nodded. "Yeah, except the time you lied to your parents about your grades. And then the time you . . ."

"Grades don't count, and going shopping with Tracy doesn't count, either."

"Shopping with Tracy?" Heather looked confused.

"It's not my fault Tracy didn't want you to come. I didn't want to hurt your feelings. So, she told me to tell you I was sick."

"So you lied to me," Heather accused, raising her voice.

"I didn't lie. Tracy made up the lie."

"Don't blame Tracy because you lied to me," Heather said as she ripped the wrapping off her brownie.

"It's not my fault. You're way too sensitive," I said, gulping my milk.

"Maddie, the point is simple. You lie to your friends and then blame them for your mistakes. So, no, you're not really honest."

I could see that Heather was still hurt about Tracy. She didn't understand my problem. "I gotta go," I said. "See you tomorrow."

1. The story is told from the point of view of
 - A. Heather.
 - B. Maddie.
 - C. Jordan.
 - D. Tracy.

2. Which detail from the story is true?
 - A. Heather and Tracy went shopping together.
 - B. Heather needed Maddie's advice.
 - C. Maddie always eats lunch with Tracy.
 - D. Maddie usually eats lunch with Heather.

3. Maddie lied to Heather when she
 - A. told Heather about a test grade.
 - B. told Heather about her problems with Tracy.
 - C. told Heather that she was sick.
 - D. invited Heather to go shopping.

4. The title of the story is "It's Not My Fault" because
 - A. Maddie thinks she is not at fault.
 - B. Maddie is not at fault.
 - C. Heather is confused.
 - D. Tracy is angry.

5. When Maddie says, "Grades don't count," the reader knows that
 - A. Maddie doesn't care about grades.
 - B. Maddie is an honest person.
 - C. Maddie doesn't understand that a lie is a lie.
 - D. Maddie always gets good grades.

6. At the end of the story, the character with the best understanding about the problem of lying is
 - A. Maddie.
 - B. Jordan.
 - C. Heather.
 - D. Tracy.

7. The theme of this story is
 - A. a friend doesn't care if you tell an occasional lie.
 - B. no matter how you explain it, lying is lying.
 - C. some lies don't count.
 - D. it's OK to lie to keep from hurting someone's feelings.



Ask your child to think about what each character might do and say at lunchtime the next day. Who will Maddie sit with? What will she and her friends talk about? Your child may wish to continue the story and write the next event.

Making Inferences

Read the story. Answer the questions that follow.

Standing Up

Kerry rode into shore, hopped off her board, and jogged over to where her cousins were sitting. “Are you two ready to give it a try?” she asked.

Miles took a deep breath and nodded. He was worried about looking silly, but he had a feeling he was going to love doing this. He expected it to feel like flying through the water or riding his bike down a steep hill without using the brakes.

Sophie looked up at Kerry with an eager expression. She loved to try new things and was usually good at them. She learned quickly and wasn’t afraid to plunge in. Miles admired these characteristics, but knew he just wasn’t as adventurous as his sister.

“OK,” Kerry began, “let’s start on long boards because they catch waves easily, giving beginners more time to stand. Just remember, never paddle out farther than you can swim back in. Pay attention to the weather. And always respect the ocean.”

Kerry showed how to stand in the center of the board, between the nose and the tail. “Try to remember where the sweet spot is on your board,” she explained. “When a wave catches the tail, start paddling.”

“I had no idea this was so technical,” Sophie said. “I’m ready to jump on and ride.”

“Whoa, there,” said Kerry. “Why don’t we start by standing up a few times on the sand, where the board is stable? Then, we can head for the water. Who wants to go first?”

“Me,” said Miles, standing up. “I’m ready to try.”

1. Miles and Sophie are Kerry’s
 - A. friends
 - B. cousins
 - C. students
 - D. siblings

2. Miles and Sophie are learning to
 - A. swim
 - B. sail
 - C. surf
 - D. float

3. Why does Miles think he is not as adventurous as his sister?
 - A. because he is too afraid to try surfing
 - B. because he thinks surfing will be too technical
 - C. because he can't find the sweet spot
 - D. because he feels nervous

4. What are the surfing terms for the front and back ends of a surfboard?
 - A. *nose and tail*
 - B. *head and foot*
 - C. *up and down*
 - D. *forward and aft*

5. Which is an unbiased summary of the story?
 - A. Surfing is a lot of fun.
 - B. Surfing is a difficult and dangerous sport.
 - C. For beginners, surfing can be challenging but rewarding.
 - D. Surfing is easy and fun.

6. Which is a simile?
 - A. long board
 - B. sweet spot
 - C. plunge in
 - D. like flying though the water

7. Why is the story titled "Standing Up"?
 - A. because Miles will try to stand up and surf, even though he is nervous
 - B. because Sophie already knows how to stand on a surfboard
 - C. because Miles and Sophie are sitting on the beach
 - D. because waves can knock you off a surfboard



Talk about what it means to make inferences. It can also be described as *reading between the lines* or *drawing conclusions*. Describe a sport or activity without naming it. Can your child guess what you are talking about? Take turns.

Making Inferences

Read the story. Answer the questions that follow.

Shanda

When Shanda first arrived at her new school, she discovered to her dismay that a freckle-faced boy in her sixth-grade class was smitten with her. He didn't offer his name, just a handful of pretty flowers picked from outside.

Shanda soon learned the boy's name, Tommy. Whenever the class lined up for assembly or gym, he always smiled crookedly at her. Shanda did not like the attention. Why did he like her anyway? On several occasions, Shanda tried to start a conversation with Tommy. But he just blushed, put his hands in his pocket, and looked down in embarrassment.

Gradually, Shanda made friends and felt happy at her new school. The only thing that still made her uncomfortable was Tommy with his crooked, shy smiles.

One day in the hallway, Tommy came up to her. "Do you like animals?" he asked shyly. Shanda was shocked that Tommy had spoken to her.

"Hi, Tommy," she said. "Yes, I love animals. How about you?"

Tommy looked very nervous. He whispered something about a dog and then hurried away. Shanda wondered if she had hurt his feelings by calling him Tommy. Maybe he liked to be called Tom.

A week later, Tommy reverently handed Shanda a photo of a beautiful collie. She had sleek fur and intelligent eyes. Her ears were alert, and her face tilted as if she were asking a question. Shanda could tell that this dog was important to Tommy. "What's her name?" she asked softly.

"Sh-, sh-, she was Shanda...like you. We had her since I was in kindergarten. Sh-, she's gone now."

1. From whose point of view is this story told?
 - A. Tommy's
 - B. the teacher's
 - C. Shanda's
 - D. Shanda's friend

2. Which word best describes Shanda's attitude toward Tommy at the beginning of the story?
 - A. smitten
 - B. annoyed
 - C. angry
 - D. hopeful

3. Which word best describes Shanda's attitude toward Tommy at the end of the story?
 - A. annoyed
 - B. sad
 - C. dismissive
 - D. sympathetic

4. We can conclude that
 - A. Tommy's dog died, and he misses her.
 - B. Tommy's family now has a cat.
 - C. Tommy likes the name Shanda.
 - D. Tommy wants Shanda to be his girlfriend.

5. What probably caused Tommy to give Shanda flowers?
 - A. He felt sorry for her because she was new.
 - B. She and his dog shared a name.
 - C. She had the same hair color as his collie.
 - D. She was an animal lover like him.

6. In this story, what does *smitten* mean?
 - A. struck by
 - B. attacked by
 - C. attracted to
 - D. bothered by

7. Which is an unbiased summary of the story?
 - A. A terribly shy boy makes a friend.
 - B. A new girl is unfriendly to a shy boy.
 - C. A boy's love for his dog helps him make a new friend.
 - D. Moving to a new school is the worst.



Ask your child to think about how the story would be different if it were told from Tommy's point of view. Together, brainstorm a good first sentence for the new story. Encourage your child to write it down and continue the new story.

Point of View

When a writer writes a story, he or she chooses a narrator to tell the story. In some stories, the narrator is one of the characters in the story. Words such as *I*, *me*, and *my* let readers know that this is happening. This is called **first-person point of view**. Here is an example from the science fiction story "The Colony."

As I followed the track, I realized that I was tight all over. My toes, fingers, and even my teeth were clenched. I jogged a few steps and shook my arms out. In training, they had always told you to stay relaxed. If you were tense, you couldn't respond as quickly. *Respond to what?* I thought. *Who in the world could be out here?*

I suppose the jogging and unclenching distracted me. It wasn't until I was fully at the top of the hill that I saw the crater and what was in it. I automatically held my Telewave up to my mouth.

"Jasper Colony, this is Morgan. Get me the Chairman," I said. A crackle assured me that my call was being transmitted. Then, the abrupt bark of the Chairman's voice made me jump.

"Morgan, what are you doing out there?" the Chairman asked.

Here is the same scene, but it is written in **third-person point of view**. Readers see words such as *he*, *she*, *him*, *her*, *his*, *they*, and *them* in stories that are written in third person. The narrator is not a character in the story. The main character is the same, but the **omniscient**, or all-knowing, narrator "reports" to readers what the character says, thinks, and does.

As he followed the track, Morgan realized that he was tight all over. His toes, fingers, and even his teeth were clenched. He jogged a few steps and shook his arms out. In training, they had always told him to stay relaxed. If he were tense, he couldn't respond as quickly. *Respond to what?* he thought. *Who in the world could be out here?*

He supposed the jogging and the unclenching distracted him. It wasn't until he was fully at the top of the hill that he saw the crater and what was in it. He automatically held his Telewave up to his mouth.

"Jasper Colony, this is Morgan. Get me the Chairman," he said. A crackle assured him that his call was being transmitted. Then, the abrupt bark of the Chairman's voice made him jump.

"Morgan, what are you doing out there?" the Chairman asked. He felt that things were beginning to get out of hand.

Point of View

Look back at the story part on page 16. What do you think is in the crater? What happens next? Write the next paragraph in first-person point of view. Remember, in first person the narrator is a character in the story. Readers learn what he or she is thinking and feeling. The narrator does not know what other characters are thinking and feeling.

Now, write that same scene in third-person point of view. Remember, Morgan is still the main character. The all-knowing narrator is not a character, but will tell what Morgan says, thinks, and does. The narrator will also tell what any other character says, thinks, and does.

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Read the story versions your child wrote on this page and talk about the effect that point of view has on you as a reader. How does it change the way you think about the story and characters? Do you prefer one version? How about your child?

Word Choice

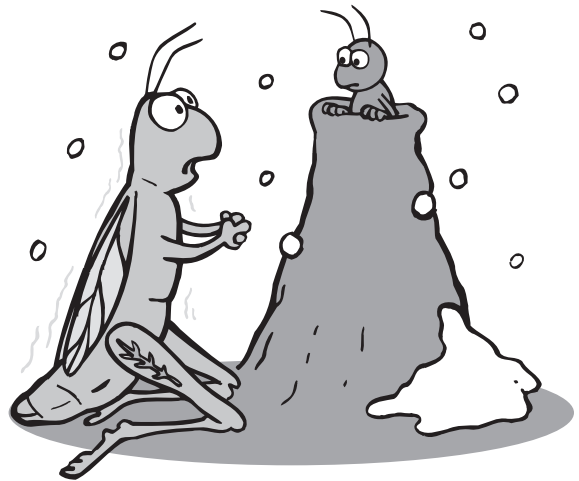
Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

The Ant and the Cricket

A silly young cricket, who decided to sing
Through the warm sunny months of summer and spring,
Began to complain when he found that at home
His cupboards were empty and winter had come.

At last by starvation the cricket made bold
To hop through the wintertime snow and the cold.
Away he set off to a miserly ant
To see if to keep him alive he would grant
Shelter from rain, a mouthful of grain.
“I wish only to borrow—I’ll repay it tomorrow—
If not, I must die of starvation and sorrow!”

Said the ant to the cricket, “It’s true I’m your friend,
But we ants never borrow, we ants never lend;
We ants store up crumbs so when winter arrives
We have just enough food to keep ants alive.”



1. What is the definition of *cupboards* in the poem?

- where books are stored where food is stored where shoes are stored

2. What is the definition of *miserly* in the poem?

- selfish/stingy generous/kind mean/ugly

3. What is the definition of *grant* in the poem?

- to take away to belch to give

4. In two sentences, describe what the poet is trying to say.



Encourage your child to share with you when he or she learns a new word such as *miserly*. Make a game of trying to use the new word in conversation with your child three times in one evening. If your child can't think of a word, suggest one.

Word Choice

Personification is a figure of speech in which human characteristics are given to an animal or object.

Example: The trees danced in the wind.

Trees do not dance; therefore, the trees are being personified.

Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands:
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson



1. What is the correct definition of *crag*? _____

2. What is the correct definition of *azure*? _____

3. Which phrases in the poem show personification? _____

4. Explain what one of these phrases actually means. _____

5. What is the author trying to say in the last line of the poem? _____



Encourage your child to search for and read the poem "The Tyger" by William Blake. Can he or she find examples in that poem of personification and other vivid language? What other animals would make good subjects for poems? Why?

Making Inferences

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

Sydney, Australia



- Sydney is the capital of New South Wales, Australia.
- Manufacturing is a strong industry in Sydney. The city is also the headquarters of many large companies.
- Sydney is the major port of southeastern Australia.
- Sydney is Australia's largest city.
- The discovery of gold in 1851 increased Sydney's population. The population today is over 3 million people.
- Interesting sites in Sydney include the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the Australia Square Tower, which is the country's largest skyscraper.

1. Why do you think large companies might choose to have their headquarters in Sydney?

2. Gold was discovered in Australia in what year? _____

3. Explain how the discovery of gold increased Sydney's population. _____

4. Would you like to visit Sydney? Why or why not? _____



Ask your child if the answer for question #2 can be found in the text. (Yes.) Is the answer for #1 found in the text? (No.) Talk about the differences between the questions and how to answer them. Ask similar questions about the place where you live.