

Parent's Backpack Guide to The New Illinois Learning Standards



9th – 12th Grade

In 2010 Illinois adopted the New Illinois Learning Standards (Common Core) to make sure all students succeed once they graduate from high school. These standards were written by educators and education experts, including teachers from our state, to provide a consistent, clear and challenging set of learning expectations for all students. The standards are research-based to incorporate findings from other high-achieving countries and the expectations of today's college coursework and career demands. While our state Board of Education adopts standards for our schools, it's up to our districts and teachers to develop their lesson plans and decide on curricular materials.

Why Are the New Illinois Learning Standards Important?

The New Illinois Learning Standards are important because they will help all children learn the skills and knowledge to help them become college and career ready when they graduate. The new standards set clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics.

These standards raise the bar for student expectations at each grade level and ensure classroom learning builds on the prior year's learning and prepares students for the next year.

What changes are occurring in your child's classroom?

The New Illinois Learning Standards make several important changes to previous standards. These changes are called shifts. Changes in classrooms focus on developing students' critical thinking and communication skills, as well as helping students understand how classroom learning relates to the real world. Student-led and small group work is emphasized to foster strong communication and collaboration skills, which are critical to their success in subsequent grades and everyday life. And just as important, these standards will encourage deeper understanding of concepts, leading your child to be more engaged with his or her own learning – asking more questions, basing arguments on evidence, making connections to other disciplines, and understanding the “why” and the “how” in addition to the “what.”

The chart below shows what these shifts change and what you might see in students' backpacks.

9th – 12th Grade English Language Arts

What's Shifting	What May Be In Their Backpack
Building Knowledge through content-rich non-fiction.	Reading and writing tasks on real-life events, such as historical events, science, biographies and news articles.
Reading, writing, and speaking and listening grounded in evidence from text, both literary and non-fiction	Assignments that require students to point out facts and information in a text to support their answers and opinions. Expect to see prompts such as, “how do you know that?” or “where did you find that information?” on assignments.
Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.	Texts that focus on building a strong vocabulary and understanding words that appear cross-content-areas or with multiple meanings. Students will read and build perseverance with complex text.

9th – 12th Grade Math

What's Shifting	What May Be in Their Backpack
Focus	Tasks to help students understand the logic and processes of addition and subtraction, including problem solving and place value.
Coherence	Tasks that build on the foundations set in previous grades and expectations of later grade levels.
Rigor	Tasks where students will show all of their work and be able to explain their process for arriving at an answer. Students will be working on ratios and proportional reasoning, early expressions and equations, arithmetic of rational numbers, linear algebra and linear functions.

The New Illinois Learning Standards

What Every 9th – 12th Grade Parent Needs to Know about the New Illinois Learning Standards

While every classroom will learn skills and knowledge through different lessons, here's a look at some of what you can expect your 9th – 12th grade students to know and do by the end of the school year.

9th – 12th Grades

ELA & Literacy in All Content Areas	Math
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding more from and making fuller use of written materials, including using a wider range of evidence to support an analysis • Making more connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within a book, essay, or article • Evaluating arguments and specific claims; assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient; and detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities • Making an argument that is logical, well-reasoned, and supported by evidence • Writing a literacy analysis, report, or summary that develops a central idea and coherent focus and is well supported with relevant examples, facts and details • Conducting several research projects that address different aspects of the same topic, using more complex sources • Responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesizing comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; and resolving contradictions when possible • Sharing research, findings, and evidence clearly and concisely • Making strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding of findings and to add interest • Determining or clarifying the meaning of words and phrases, choosing flexibly from multiple strategies, such as using context, Greek and Latin roots, and consulting specialized reference materials • Interpreting figures of speech in context and analyzing their role in the written materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with rational and irrational numbers, including working with rational exponents • Solving problems with a wide range of units and solving problems by thinking about units • Solving real-world and mathematical problems by writing and solving nonlinear equations, such as quadratic equations • Interpreting algebraic expressions and transforming them purposefully to solve problems • Analyzing functions algebraically and graphically, and working with functions presented in different forms • Working with function families and understanding their behavior • Analyzing real-world situations using mathematics to understand the situation better and optimize, troubleshoot, or make an informed decision • Proving theorems about triangles and other figures • Solving applied problems involving trigonometry of right angles • Using coordinates and equations to describe geometric properties algebraically • Making inferences and justifying conclusions from sample surveys, experiments, and observational studies • Working with probabilities and using ideas from probability in everyday situations

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