



Parent's Backpack Guide to The New Illinois Learning Standards

3rd – 5th 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.

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. If you know what these expectations are, then you can work with the teacher and help your child prepare. This guide is designed to help you understand how the standards affect your child, what changes you will see and what you can do at home to help your children succeed in the classroom.

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. The chart below explains the shifts, provides examples of what you might see in your child's backpack and what you can do to help your child. Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions about the shifts as they happen in the classroom.

3rd – 5th Grade English Language Arts

What's Shifting	What to Look for in the Backpack	What Can You Do
Reading more non-fiction texts will help your child learn about the world through reading.	Look for your children to bring home more fact-based book/texts about the world.	Find non-fiction books that are appropriate and make sure your child has access to such books.
Your child will read and/or listen to texts very closely, so they can make sense of what they read and draw their own conclusions.	Your children will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book.	Provide more challenging texts for your child to read. Show them how to dig deeper into difficult pieces by helping them reread difficult parts and talking with you about them.
When it comes to writing or retelling a story, your child will use "evidence" gathered from the text to support what they say.	Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from that text that serve as evidences. Evidence means examples from the text that your child will use to support a response or conclusion.	Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements.
Your child will learn how to write from what they read.	Look for writing assignments that ask your child to state opinions in writing using evidence.	Encourage writing at home. Write together using evidence and details.
Your child will have an increased academic vocabulary.	Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary.	Read often to babies, toddlers, preschoolers and children.

3rd – 5th Grade Math

What's Shifting	What to Look for in the Backpack	What Can You Do
Your child will work more deeply in fewer topics, which will ensure full understanding. (less is more!)	Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain in writing how they arrived at an answer.	Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.
Your child will keep building on learning year after year starting with a strong foundation.	Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions.	Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas.
Your child will spend time practicing and understanding math facts.	Your child might have assignments that focus on understanding and mastering basic math facts, which are important for success in more advanced math problems.	Help your child know and understand basic math facts. Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.
Your child will understand why the math works and be asked to talk about and prove their understanding.	Your child might have assignments that include demonstrations of the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These are the same for all grades and describe a set of skills and processes that all students should develop as part of their study of mathematics.	Ask your child to explain to you how they solved problems. Encourage them to find another way to solve the problem and to explain that way too.
Your child will now be asked to use math in real-world situations.	Look for math assignments that are based on real world.	Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

The New Illinois Learning Standards

What Every 3rd – 5th Grade Parent Needs to Know about the New Illinois Learning Standards

Be sure to ask your child’s teacher how you can help reinforce classroom learning when helping your child at home. While every classroom will learn skills and knowledge through different lessons, here’s a look at some of what you can expect your 3rd – 5th grade students to know and do by the *end* of the school year.

Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading closely to find main ideas and supporting details in a story • Describing the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in stories • Comparing the most important points and key details presented in two books on the same topic • Writing opinions or explanations that group related information and develop topics with facts and details • Solving word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division • Beginning to multiply numbers with more than one digit • Understanding fractions and relating them to the familiar system of whole numbers • Reasoning about shapes (e.g all squares are rectangles but not all rectangles are squares) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing the basic elements of stories – such as characters, events, and settings – by drawing on specific details in the text • Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different countries • Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with facts, details, and examples • Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details • Using whole-number arithmetic to solve word problems, including problems with remainders and problems with measurements • Adding and subtracting whole numbers quickly and accurately (numbers up to one million) • Understanding single decimals in terms of fractions and place value • Measuring angles and finding unknown angles in a diagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their own themes or main ideas • Identifying and judging evidence that supports particular ideas in an author’s argument to change a reader’s point of view • Expanding, combining, and reducing sentences to improve meaning, interest, and style of writing • Producing writing on the computer • Adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators and solving word problems of this kind • Understanding the concept of volume, and solving word problems that involve volume • Graphing points in the coordinate plane (two dimensions) to solve problems • Analyzing mathematical patterns and relationships

1: Adapted from National PTA’s Guide to Student Success, www.pta.org