

Introduction

Third grade students will be building on the skills and academic goals achieved during second grade, and at the same time using those skills to expand their knowledge and acquire the confidence needed to complete third grade successfully. During this year, students will be learning about Kern County and California and how it relates to them.

In third grade, the development of fluency, comprehension, and writing skills are important to focus on. Your child should focus this year on expanding their reading ability and begin transitioning to longer stories and novels. Additionally, you and your child should focus on comprehension skills. Fluency is important, but equally as important, is making sure your child understands what they've read.

Third grade is a time when students need to begin putting sentences together as paragraphs. Writing can be stressful to a child, however it is crucial that your child writes. Your child needs to write everyday – no exceptions. Your child can write in any subject area. Journaling is a great idea. You and your student will be busy this year. Whether you're following the grid or using your own curriculum – there's lots to do!

Curriculum

Reading

Houghton-Mifflin centers language Arts on the Reading anthologies. In third grade there are two basal readers with correlating practice books.

- Book 1: Rewards
- Book 2: Horizons

Reading is designed to cover approximately one story per week with additional enrichment activities (poetry, art project, art appreciation, cooking, nature etc...) and literature units as time allows. Each week the story should be read daily together with your child. The reading level of the selected stories may be above your child's reading level, however, do not be concerned. These stories are designed to create a challenge and foster growth in your child's reading abilities. The stories are meant to be repeated and re-read so your student can gain confidence and security in his reading ability. Remember that the key to a successful reading lesson is to plan ahead. Know the skills you want to focus on and be prepared to model, guide, and instruct your child rather than just assign.

The following is a sample format with ideas you may want to adopt and modify to fit your lesson plans, as well as your child's needs.

Days 1 and 2: Introduce the story. Work to build on your child's prior knowledge, have him make predictions based on the title, illustrations, take a "picture walk" (go through the story without reading it using the pictures to guess what the story will be about).

Days 3 and 4: Choose sight words for your child to identify. Read the story with funny voices to match the characters. Take turns reading aloud. Make a point of discussing the story. Be sure your student can sequence (tell the order of events). Ask your child questions that will make him think (details, inferences, cause/effect). By the end of the week, your child should be able to read the story without too much help from you, as well as, be able to retell the story in his own words.

Days 1 through 5: Complete corresponding workbook pages in the Practice Book.

Tradebooks

Aside from the reading textbook, your child should read for a minimum of 30 minutes daily. While the reading stories will most likely be above your child's independent reading level, the level of difficulty of reading is not a set standard. Select some books that will challenge his reading ability and some that are easy enough to build self-confidence.

Each reporting period there are a number of books that will connect with, enhance, and enrich the core curriculum (reading, science, social studies) in some way. They are listed on the grid. Books that are available from VOCS are listed as such. You may know of additional books that are theme related. These books are not required reading, however, it is very important that you supplement the textbook with daily free reading. VOCS has made a conscientious effort to procure tradebooks listed in the grids for our library.

Language Arts

Within your Reading Practice Book are sections devoting 2 to 3 pages per week to each of the language arts skills: spelling, phonics, grammar, writing, vocabulary, comprehension, and handwriting.

Spelling: There is a weekly word list at the back of the practice book. This spelling is created to go hand in hand with the reading curriculum. Give a pre-test, do the workbook pages, and by the end of the week administer a final test.

Writing: Refer to the writing section for weekly writing lessons. Often, parents are hesitant to teach writing because they are unsure of the proper procedures and formats. The workbook gives excellent suggestions and is the perfect guide for student writing proficiency. It is a step-by-step process for writing everything from sentences to letters to paragraphs and provides for consistent practice with a goal of published works. You will also receive the Daily 6-Trait Writing Packet to supplement the Houghton Mifflin writing program.

Grammar: The grammar pages in your practice book give writing support as well as teach language conventions for third grade proficiency.

Comprehension: Each week the workbook focuses on a comprehension skill that will improve your student's ability to questions, answer, infer, predict, and ultimately comprehend the stories he is reading.

Handwriting: While the practice book gives some handwriting practice, supplemental handwriting is suggested to improve your student's writing coordination.

CA Summative Tests (CST) - We are providing additional practice for the California Standards Test which students take in the spring of each year. Houghton Mifflin publishes a practice book to prepare students for this test. Pages have been assigned on the third grade grid to give students practice over time. Concepts reviewed will be decoding and word recognition, vocabulary and concept development, reading comprehension – literary response and analysis, writing strategies, and written conventions.

Mathematics

Our school wide recommended curriculum for Math is Macmillan McGraw-Hill. This curriculum is closely correlated to State Standards. The chapters in the book cover place value, number sense, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, measurement, statistics, and fractions. This curriculum offers an abundance of practice to support mastery of concepts. There is an additional Reteach and Skills Practice Workbook available for those students who may need additional support. There will be a Teachers Edition CD included with each book to support instruction. Parents should spend adequate time on instruction and check for understanding prior to student's independent practice. Manipulative kits will be available for check out with each math book.

Mastering the CA Standards (MCS) - **(the blue side of the book)** provides additional practice for the California Standards test students take in the spring of each year. Macmillan McGraw-Hill publishes a practice book to prepare students for this test. Pages have been assigned on the third grade grid to give students practice over time. Concepts reviewed include number sense, algebra and functions, measurement and geometry, and statistics, data analysis, and probability.

Science

Harcourt Brace is the publisher for our Science curriculum. California is the name of the text book. This book focuses on Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth Science. In conjunction with the text, students will work in the Science Content Standards workbook and conduct experiments using the Lab Manual.

Social Studies

Harcourt Brace is the publisher for our Social Studies curriculum. Reflections is the name of the anthology used in third grade. This book focuses on Our Communities. Students will study geography, the environment, American Indian, and US Government.

Map Skill books are available for supplemental teaching.

California Streaming is another online source for video clips on a variety of social studies related topics.

Art

While art is an enrichment subject, it is always a favorite of young students. Art ideas are scattered throughout the Reading anthologies and give both art appreciation lessons as well as creative projects. There are also ideas on your grid to integrate with your studies throughout the year. We do have a collection of seasonal projects if you would like additional activities and numerous books on artists and art appreciation in our library.

Enrichment

You will want to take advantage of the many field trips that are offered throughout the school year. Trips are planned regularly so watch your newsletter for any excursion that you feel will be appropriate for you child or that peaks your interest. Enrichment classes are offered in a block schedule for second and third grades. Students will rotate through a variety of enrichment classes each session.