



# The Guide to 3rd Grade

Review general curricula for third grade, including what to expect for each subject. Plus, get ideas for at-home activities to support learning in the classroom.

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Your child has mastered the fundamentals in **1st grade** and **2nd grade**, and is now ready to thrive through 3rd grade! But it's not just another year: This grade is a very important time in your child's education, because it's when students transition from what are often known as the "lower grades"

to the “upper grades.” It is a crucial period in students’ learning as they become more independent and mature learners.

In 3rd grade, students progress from practicing basic skills to mastering them, and move on to develop more complex skills. For instance, your third grader will become a savvier reader, writer, mathematician, and thinker this year, digging deeper into topics and analyzing what she learns.

The 3rd grade classroom itself likely won’t seem that different: It is structured like most elementary school classrooms, with desks or tables for the students and usually an area for lessons and class meetings. As with previous grades, there are often also areas dedicated to different subjects of learning. For instance, there may be a spot for math tools and supplies, plus a class library dedicated to reading. However, this year, technology becomes an even more important part of the classroom as students use it for writing and research.

Read on for what to expect this year, or jump straight to your **3rd grade shopping list**.

## Reading in 3rd Grade

After mastering literacy skills in earlier grades, 3rd graders become better and more independent readers. Third grade reading focuses on teaching kids how to think and talk about what they read in deeper and more detailed ways. Students read longer texts, and most read fictional chapter books.

Many reading lessons in 3rd grade are dedicated to writing and talking about the meanings, lessons, and important ideas in texts. Third graders are encouraged to develop their own points of view about books they read, and to discuss their ideas about a text or characters. Series books are important in 3rd grade, because they allow students to make connections between different books and talk about how certain characters develop. As 3rd graders explore a greater range of books and longer texts, they become more fluent readers and learn to read, define, and pronounce complex words.

### To build reading skills, your 3rd grader:

- Reads multi-syllable and grade-appropriate, irregularly spelled words (ask your child’s teacher for a list of these words).
- Reads grade-level text with appropriate pace, accuracy, expression, and understanding.
- Self-corrects mistakes and re-reads when necessary.
- Talks about and answers questions about a text using specific examples from the text and connects different parts of a text.
- Reads a variety of texts including, fiction, non-fiction, fables, and poetry, and understands and talks about their main ideas and lessons.

- Begins to understand the difference between literal and non-literal text such as metaphors and analogies.
- Uses the text and context to determine the meaning of words.
- Is able to express his own point of view about characters or a text.
- Makes comparisons between books written by the same author and books in series that are about the same characters.

### Your 3rd Grade Book Checklist for Reading

***Scholastic Success with Reading Comprehension: Grade 3*** — Prime your third grader for a year of successful reading ahead with these 36 interesting stories paired with comprehension-building puzzles, brain teasers, and activities. This book will help your little one distinguish between fact and opinion, understand cause and effect, develop vocabulary, learn about story elements, make inferences, and draw conclusions.

***What Would She Do? 25 True Stories of Trailblazing Rebel Women*** — An inspiring and empowering guide for your third grader's nonfiction collection, this book features 25 diverse women (from early world leaders such as Cleopatra to modern heroes like Malala Yousafzai!) and shares how they overcame huge obstacles to accomplish great things.

***Charlotte's Web*** — By 3rd grade, your child is ready to dive into this timeless book about the unlikely friendship between a bashful pig and a protective spider! Your reader will be just as enchanted as you were by this unforgettable story.

***Pippi Longstocking*** — This parent favorite about the little girl with vibrant red pigtails and a flair for the outrageous is now available once again for you to share with your third grader. It's a humorous classic that is particularly effective for instilling the love of reading in this age group.

***Dog Man: The Epic Collection*** — Any avid third grader needs to have this Dog Man collection on hand! This series is wildly popular with this age group, and follows the adventures of a half-dog, half-man hero as he fights crime. It also explores universally important themes, such as kindness, persistence, empathy, and staying true to yourself.

### Bonus Reading Activities

**Get Serious About Series:** Find a series (like one of those listed above!) that interests your child and begin to read it together. You can read to your child, your child can read to you, or he can read a chapter independently. You can even interview each other as you read — ask about main ideas, events, and thoughts you each have about the books and characters.

**Look It Up:** When your child encounters a word she doesn't know the meaning of, look up the meaning together. Use a grade-appropriate tool like the **Scholastic Children's Dictionary** — or you can even keep your own family dictionary, recording words and their definitions. Use the word yourself, or encourage your child to use that word in a sentence sometime during the day.

**Learn About an Author:** As your child develops favorite authors, look online for that author's website. He can email or write a letter to the author (under your supervision), or the author may even be at a book signing or other events in your neighborhood that your family can attend. You can also try **this Author Hunt Printable** to find facts and record what you learn.

## Writing in 3rd Grade

Third graders continue to practice writing the pieces they learned to do in 2nd grade, but now also write longer ones with more detail. What's more, 3rd graders learn increasingly sophisticated language, using phrases and terms to provide examples and make connections within their writing.

More time is spent on planning, revising, and editing texts in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade — and as a result, your child learns the "writing process" authors go through. Students may spend a long period of time (say, a few weeks) working on one piece. They also practice writing pieces in shorter periods of time in class and through homework. Third graders continue to use and become comfortable with technology as they employ computers for writing pieces and doing research.

### To build writing skills, your 3rd grader:

- Writes a variety types of texts including:
  - *Opinion Pieces*: Students introduce their opinions, note the reasons for those opinions, and provide a conclusion.
  - *Narrative Pieces*: Students write about an event, using descriptive details, feelings, and proper order — and ultimately provide a conclusion.
  - *Informative/Explanatory Pieces*: Students introduce a topic and use facts, definitions, and, if helpful, illustrations to further explain the topic, eventually leading to a conclusion.
- Uses terms such as: *because*, *since*, *for example*, *also*, *another*, and *but* to elaborate on and make connections in her writing.
- Plans, revises, and edits her writing, going through the same process that most writers do.
- Uses digital tools (under the guidance of the teacher) to publish her writing and interact and communicate with others.
- Begins to take notes and do research for short research projects.

- Spends various amounts of time writing a piece, ranging from a short period of time (such as 30 minutes) to working on one piece over the course of a few weeks.

## Your 3rd Grade Book Checklist for Writing

**Scholastic Success with Grammar: Grade 3** — This fun, engaging workbook gives your third grader valuable reinforcement in writing topics such as sentence types, parts of speech, verb tenses, common and proper nouns, subject-verb agreement, and other skills outlined in common standardized tests.

**Scholastic Success with Writing: Grade 3** — Equip your third grader with the tools to become an incredible writer with this activity book! It stimulates and encourages kids with grade-appropriate strategies and skills that can be used in daily writing activities like letter writing, story writing, and journaling.

**Scholastic Learning Express: Grammar and Writing** — These teacher-approved activities will help your third grader make great strides as a writer this year by teaching the spelling of words with long and short vowels, irregular plural forms of words, and commonly misspelled words—plus the rules of good writing!

***A Home for Mr. Emerson*** — Teach your child about one of history's great writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, with this moving biography that shows the rewards of a life built around creativity and community. Before Emerson was a writer, he was a city boy who longed for the woods of the country, and then a young man who treasured books, ideas, and people—and with this read, your child will learn about the author behind the pen.

**Wacky Word Wedgies and Flushable Fill-Ins** — Make writing irresistibly fun for your third grader with this book featuring more than a dozen silly fill-in stories with George, Harold, the Amazing Captain Underpants, and other favorite characters—plus *tra-la-la-riffic* stickers!

## Bonus Writing Activities

**Write About Your Lives:** When your family experiences an enjoyable or important moment, you and your child can write about it together in a narrative piece. Describe the events that occurred using details and emotion, then send the piece to family members or friends to share the event and the writing.

**Get Technical:** Help your child use a computer to research a topic or communicate with friends and family. Your third grader can also use the computer to write her own pieces or pieces you write together.

**Learn How to Do Something New:** Pick something fun you and your child want to learn how to do, like drawing cartoons (**How to Make Awesome Comics** is a great 3rd grade resource for that!). Research the topic online or in a book together and create an informative piece, explaining

the subject. You can then do the project yourselves or teach another family member or friend using the piece you and your child wrote.

**Make Your Own Magazine:** Read magazines for children, such as *Scholastic News*, to familiarize your child with the format of magazines. Then work together to create your own magazine about your family, topics of interest, or anything you'd like!

## Math in 3rd Grade

Third grade is a very important year for students to flex their math muscles as they dive into multiplication and division. Specifically, students use math tools such as number rods (units of blocks that represent a certain number), base blocks, and tiles or marbles. This helps them to understand the concepts behind multiplication and division as they combine and divide different groups of objects. As a result, students don't just memorize multiplication tables, but also understand what it *means* to multiply.

Third graders also practice explaining these concepts by showing how they solved a problem, both out loud and through writing, and begin to study fractions.

### To build math skills, your 3rd grader:

- Multiplies and divides numbers up to 100 and understands the relationship between multiplication and division.
- Understands that  $3 \times 5 = 15$  and  $5 \times 3 = 15$  (this is the commutative property of multiplication).
- Begins to memorize the product of one-digit numbers so that he knows them all by the end of 3rd grade.
- Solves word problems that require two steps and more than one mathematical action. For example: If Scott has 9 cupcakes and 12 candies, how many cupcakes and pieces of candy can he give to 3 people so that each person has the same number?
- Rounds numbers to the nearest tens or hundreds.
- Adds numbers up to 1,000.
- Understands and creates fractions and uses number lines to represent and compare different fractions.
- Solves problems involving time and measurement.
- Creates and uses graphs to represent data and answer questions.
- Learns about shapes (and specifically quadrilaterals) and their features.

- Learns about and calculates the area of an object using multiplication and addition (specifically by multiplying the lengths of the sides of an object).

## Your 3rd Grade Book Checklist for Math

***Scholastic Success with Multiplication Facts: Grades 3-4*** — In this helpful workbook, third graders will practice the multiplication concepts they're learning in school. They will work on basic multiplication, improve speed and accuracy, notice multiplication patterns, and solve problems — and probably ace their next math quiz.

***Scholastic Success with Math: Grade 3*** — Reinforce your third grader's math know-how with the story problems, equations, measurements, fractions, geometry, graphs, and much more in this invaluable workbook, which is designed to teach skills needed for common standardized tests.

***Morning Jumpstarts: Math: Grade 3*** — Give your child a head start at the beginning of the day with this book of two-page activities that help third graders build math skills such as understanding place value, using critical thinking, and interpreting data.

## Bonus Math Activities

**Create a Multiplication Collage:** Have your child look through magazines and newspapers to find around 20 pictures of one type of subject (for example, animals with four legs or red cars). Then help your child practice his math skills by asking him to group the objects to solve a multiplication problem. He can use the collage to explain how he solved the problem.

**Take a Poll:** Ask family members a question and create a graph of the answers using numbers and pictures. Ask your child questions about the different "data" you collected and create a graph based on it. Your child can then report the findings to your family like a news reporter.

**Cook with Fractions:** Make foods such as parfaits, sandwiches, or pizzas using fractions. For example, ask your child to help you make a pizza, and ask that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of it be covered in a specific topping. Or when you're serving food such as pizza or a pie, your child can help you slice it into parts and serve it (you can also do this with play food, like that in the **Klutz Mini Bake Shop**).

**Time It:** Toward the middle and end of the school year, when your child has become more familiar with multiplication, time how long it takes him to do multiplication tables by heart one number at a time. For example, work on 2, then 3, then 4. Track his progress, encouraging him to break previous records.

## Science in 3rd Grade

In 3rd grade, students learn about the physical and living world as they make observations, experiment, research, record, and present what they learn. Children may work in small groups or as a class to conduct experiments.

As in other grades, the specific topics studied in science vary according to state. However, common topics studied in 3rd grade include earth and space, plants, the cycle of life, animals, electricity and magnetism, and motion and sound. Consult your child's teacher or research your state's science standards for more details.

### To build science skills, your 3rd grader:

- Observes living and non-living things and makes inferences about the observations.
- Researches information on a variety of topics using both text and digital resources.
- Collects and uses data to support experiments and what she learns.
- Records her observations both through writing and talking, and uses those observations to explain and make conclusions.
- Understands what living things need (air, water, and food) and what they do (grow, move, and reproduce).
- Studies and observes life cycles.
- Experiments with different types of materials and different matter such as solids, liquids, and gas.
- Works in groups and as a class to conduct experiments and create projects.

### Your 3rd Grade Book Checklist for Science

**The Science of the Body Bundle** — Teach your child about the fascinating, seemingly gross characteristics of the human body in this pack of four books about acne and warts, poop and farts, scabs and pus, and snot and phlegm — and the surprisingly important role each plays!

**Who Would Win? Value Set (Pack of 8)** — This set is a must-have for getting kids excited about animal science. Your third grader will learn all about the characteristics of super cool animals (like hammerhead sharks, tarantulas, killer whales, and grizzly bears!) as they discover who would win in a battle. It's an active way to engage kids in science, and with this pack of eight books, it's a total steal.

### Bonus Science Activities

**Research Your World:** Choose something your child likes — for example, animals, plants, cooking, weather, or the body. Your child can come up with a list of questions she has about a topic, and then you both can work together to find the answers, experiment, and observe that topic. (**My Encyclopedia of Baby Animals** is a super-cute reference guide for animal topics!)



**Plant Something:** Grow a flower or another plant and ask your child to observe what she sees, recording the growth and life cycles. Once the plant has grown, help your child identify the different parts of it and talk and learn about what those parts do.

**Experiment with Motion:** Pick out any variety of objects (such as a ball, balloon, paper airplane, or toy car) and ask your child to move them in various ways. She can slide them down a ramp, a hill, or stairs; push or throw them with different levels of force; or blow air on them. As your child does this, talk about the different speeds of the objects, what makes them go faster and slower, and why this might be.

**Picture Science:** Team up with your child to take close-up pictures of objects, such as animal body parts, fur, plants, trees, or different materials (like wood, rubber, and metal). Use your observation skills to take turns guessing what is in each other's pictures.

**Quiz Show:** Find either actual objects or pictures of objects that are both "alive" and "not alive." Show your child one object at a time and ask her to answer "alive" or "not alive." Make this feel like a quiz show, asking your child to answer as quickly as possible. You can even time how long it takes. After a round of play, look at the different objects and talk about the similarities and differences between the living and non-living objects.

## Social Studies in 3rd Grade

Third grade social studies often emphasize and teach students about different communities, including details about citizenship, leaders and governments, and economic systems in different communities. As students compare these aspects of different communities, they learn more about the world around them while improving their analyzing, writing, and reading skills.

Third graders have the ability to understand the communities beyond their own, as well as question and examine the facts they learn, making social studies an ideal outlet for them to develop their critical thinking skills. Consult your child's teacher to find out which specific communities and which aspects of those communities will be covered.

### To build social studies skills, your 3rd grader:

- Learns about global and historical communities.
- Learns about the connection between a culture and its environment.
- Studies and uses maps to gain a deeper understanding of geography and how it affects a community.
- Learns about basic financial needs, such as how different communities support and sustain themselves.
- Learns about how different communities govern themselves and their leaders.

- Compares both the similarities and differences between different cultures with an emphasis on accepting and understanding why these differences exist.
- Uses graphic organizers and charts to make comparisons between cultures and communities.
- Uses different media such as literature, art, writing, film, and museum visits to deepen her understanding of concepts and portray what he has learned.
- Discusses American holidays and important days and events as they approach.

### Your 3rd Grade Book Checklist for Social Studies

***A True Book: North America*** — Our continent is one of contrasts — there are icy Arctic terrains and deserts hot enough to cook an egg in the sand. There are wild animals ranging from the tiny bee hummingbird to the leatherback turtle. Your child will learn about it all in this fun-filled read detailing the history and geography of North America.

***Esperanza Rising*** — Esperanza thought she'd always live on a luxurious ranch in Mexico, until an unexpected event forces her and her family to flee to a camp for workers in California during the Great Depression. Not only will third graders learn important facts about the Great Depression in this work of historical fiction, but they'll gain an entirely new perspective of what it means to rise above difficult circumstances and persevere for the sake of those you love.

### Bonus Social Studies Activities

**Keep Up with Current Events:** Read local newspapers, magazines, and websites with your child. Look at the pictures and talk about important events or news. Even if your child doesn't read the articles, you can summarize the subjects for him.

**Learn about Your Local Government:** Visit your town hall and talk about your local leaders — your child could even write a letter or email to one! Sometimes, it's also possible for children to meet with them.

**Form a Family Government:** Assign different roles to family members, vote on family decisions or rules, or hold meetings to discuss decisions and issues that come up at home.

**Pick a Place:** Have your child pick a place on the map he would like to learn about. Use the internet and/or books to learn more about that particular place and its community. Alternatively, ask someone you know who lives in a different town to send you pictures of and facts about that place. Then work together with your child to create a collage or magazine about the community using text and art.

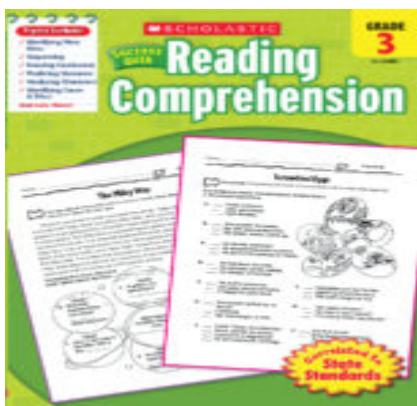
**Find a Pen Pal:** If you know of another child who lives somewhere else, coordinate with a parent to set your children up as pen pals, using technology (under your supervision) when possible. Your child can use email, letters, and phone or video calling to communicate. Have the kids send pictures of their communities to each other.

**Find the Historical Figures You Know:** You and your child can interview older family members or friends about an important or historical moment they experienced. This can be filmed or recorded, or you can even put together a poster or book of what you learned together.

**Map It Out:** When visiting a new place, look at a map and show your child your planned route and important locations on it. When you are given a map somewhere (such as in an amusement park, department store, zoo, or museum), help your child read the map and let him lead the way.

## Your 3rd Grade Reading Checklist

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ACTIVITY BOOK

**Scholastic Success With Reading Comprehension: Grade 3**

GRADES  
**3**

Just for third grade: thirty-six high-interest stories, paired with comprehension-building puzzles, brain teasers, and activities! This valuable resource gives kids practice with: • main idea and details • ...

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