



WELCOME TO 6TH GRADE

The following pages focus more specifically on the Massachusetts learning standards for **6th GRADE**.

OUR VISION IS THAT:

All students in Massachusetts, particularly students from historically underserved groups and communities, will have equitable opportunities to excel in all content areas across all grades. Culturally and linguistically sustaining classroom and school practices will support students to thrive by creating affirming environments where students have a sense of belonging, engage in deeper learning, and are held to high expectations with targeted support.



HERE ARE SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR STUDENT'S SCHOOL:

- What curriculum are you using to support instruction?
- How can I support my student outside of school?
- My student can struggle with _____. How do you support them with this?



HERE ARE SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR ELEMENTARY STUDENT:

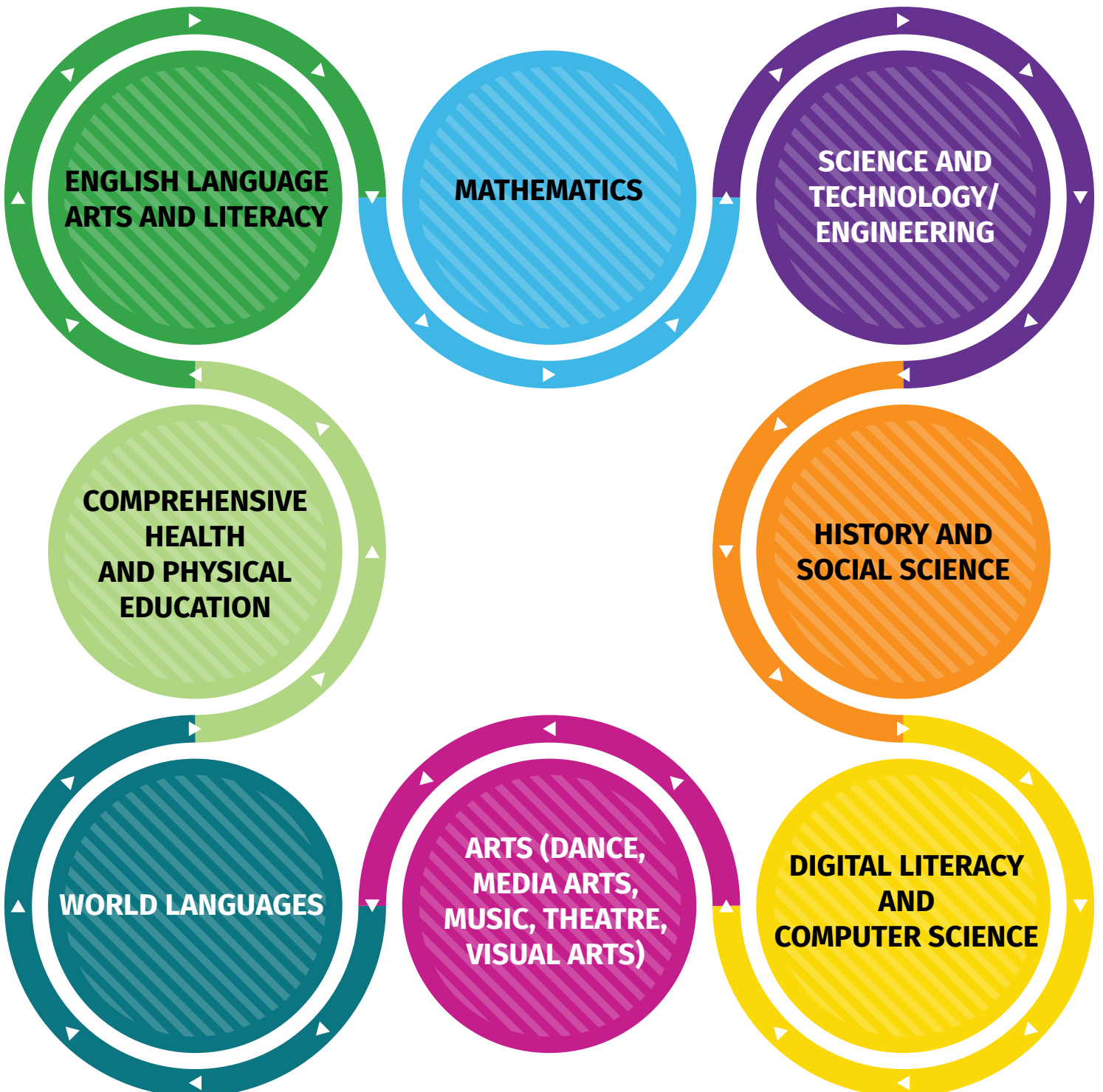
- What do you enjoy about school?
- What is one activity you did today in class? What did you learn from that activity?
- Do you know who to go to when you need help?



HERE ARE SOME GENERAL QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR SECONDARY STUDENT:

- What do you enjoy about school?
- What is an activity you did in class recently? What did you learn from it?
- Do you know where to get support when you need it?

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES MORE DETAILS ABOUT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS IN THIS GRADE FOR:



FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Demonstrate advanced word recognition and decoding strategies, including the application of knowledge of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, suffixes, and syllable patterns.
- Read a variety of grade-level texts, including diverse literary and informational texts from different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives on the same topic, with fluency, expression, and comprehension.
- Analyze and interpret complex texts, identifying main ideas, themes, characters, and central concepts. Use evidence from texts to draw conclusions, make inferences, and compare and contrast multiple perspectives or sources on the same topic. Summarize key details and evaluate text structures.
- Engage in collaborative discussions on grade-level topics by listening actively, asking probing questions, and articulating ideas clearly, supported by evidence. Use appropriate discussion techniques, including posing and responding to questions, and contribute to building on others' ideas in both formal and informal settings.
- Write for a range of purposes (opinion, informative, narrative) with a clear and sophisticated structure. Support writing with well-organized evidence, precise language, and cohesive ideas. Revise and edit for clarity, coherence, and fluency while demonstrating command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Read and analyze texts from diverse genres, cultures, and perspectives, connecting them to personal experiences and multiple disciplines.
- Compare and contrast themes, ideas, and perspectives across different texts.
- Read grade-level texts fluently and with expression
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words using context, synonyms, antonyms, or tools like dictionaries.
- Analyze an author's word choice to understand its impact on meaning and tone.
- Use background knowledge to make connections between new ideas and prior learning, especially through texts that connect to multiple disciplines and personal experiences.
- Introduce claims and support them with evidence from literary and informational texts, considering diverse genres, cultures, and perspectives.
- Participate in discussions, building on others' ideas and presenting information in an organized way, tailored to the audience.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How do you think the story or topic you're reading about connects to something in your own life or to the world around you?
- Do the books you're reading feature characters or perspectives similar to yours? How does that affect your connection to the story?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Topics your child is learning about through the stories, articles, and books in class
- Strategies for discussing and writing to link classroom learning to current events and global issues

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Solve word problems with ratios and rates. For example, use ratios to compare how many votes two candidates received in an election.
- Understand and use negative numbers. For example, explain which temperature is colder: -9 degrees or -20 degrees.
- Use variables (like x) and write expressions (like $8x + 7$) and equations to solve problems. For example, use a formula to find the volume of a swimming pool.
- Understand and use language related to basic statistics. For example, ask questions like *How much water do people use in my town?*
- Solve real-world problems related to area, surface area, and volume. For example, find how much paint is needed to paint a room.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Explain the concepts of ratio and unit rate.
- Solve problems by finding the percentage of a quantity (like 70% of 280).
- Divide fractions by other fractions: for example, $\frac{2}{3} \div \frac{3}{4}$.
- Fluently (quickly and correctly) divide multi-digit numbers (like 684) using the standard algorithm.
- Fluently (quickly and correctly) add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimal numbers (like 47.06) using the standard algorithms.
- Place negative fractions, positive fractions, and whole numbers on a number line.
- Compare and find the value of algebraic expressions (like $y + y + y$ and $3y$).
- Use a grid (graph) to show how two variables (like distance and time) are related.
- Find the median (middle number), mean (average), mode (most common number), and range (distance between the lowest and highest numbers) of a data set.
- Create visual displays of data: for example, dot plots, histograms, and box plots.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How long will it take to drive home if we go 30 miles per hour?
- How many goals does your soccer team typically score?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Ways to practice using ratios and rates at home
- Your child's fluency with basic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division)

FOCUS AREAS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL: GRADES 6 - 8

The science and technology/engineering (STE) standards for middle school integrate science concepts with the scientific and engineering practices. The four core science domains are Earth and space, life, physical, and engineering. Districts have flexibility in designing course sequences for middle school science that align with their specific program model or curriculum.

The eight **science and engineering practices** are:

- Asking questions and defining problems
- Developing and using models
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Engaging in argument from evidence
- Using mathematics and computational thinking
- Constructing explanations and designing solutions
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

BY THE END OF MIDDLE SCHOOL, STUDENTS CAN:

- Define the criteria (requirements) and constraints (limits) of a design problem with precision.
- Develop or revise a visual model to describe how matter, like carbon or water, cycles through living and nonliving things on earth.
- Conduct an investigation to show relationships between the speed, mass, and amount of force of an object.
- Examine and interpret data to describe the role human activities have played in the rise of global temperatures over time.
- Use data, such as fossil evidence, to describe how modern organisms evolved through natural selection.
- Write an explanation using evidence for how chemical reactions can cause a temperature change.
- Construct an argument based on evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence the way living things grow and change.
- Obtain and communicate information on how past geologic events are analyzed to make future predictions.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- Why do we have seasons like winter and summer, and why are seasons different in other places?
- What are some examples of chemical reactions we can see in our home?
- What are some ways that you can investigate changes in your local ecosystem(s)? How can you help reduce human impact in those areas?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Places in the community (museums, universities, businesses) where your child can learn science by visiting, volunteering, or working
- Your child's interests and readiness for future science or engineering courses

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Study places and peoples from the perspectives of different social scientists (like geographers and economists).
- Understand how humans first began to form complex societies.
- Explore the peoples and physical environments (geographies) of ancient societies in the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South America.
- Explain how geography and climate affect how people live and work.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Give examples of what work can look like in different social sciences (like political science, economics, geography, history, and archaeology).
- Make a timeline to show how human society began and developed and identify key developments in early human history such as the use of tools, development of agriculture, and growth of complex societies.
- Describe ancient societies in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phoenicia, Israel, the Arab Peninsula, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central and South America.
- Describe the origins and key beliefs of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- Describe the cultures and ways of life of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.
- Find important physical features (like rivers) and political features (like cities) on maps of Western Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.
- Explain how aspects of the climate and geography of different regions have affected where people live and move.
- Explain how early societies interacted through trade and how this trade contributed to the spread of culture and ideas.
- Use information from a variety of sources to make an argument about a history or social science topic in speech or writing.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How do archaeologists try to figure out how ancient people lived?
- What is an ancient society you find interesting? Why?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Books about ancient societies and events to look for at the library
- Nearby museums with ancient artifacts from around the world

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Define problems more precisely and conduct a more thorough process of selecting the best devices, tools, and solutions for the problem.
- Learn to determine problems that are best solved by using computers and those best solved by humans.
- Further develop computational thinking problem solving skills with the use of computer technology.
- Have opportunities to develop the skills necessary to engage in reasoning, which is critical to success in civic life, post-secondary education, and career.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Understand online safety and how to deal with cyberbullying and inappropriate content.
- Demonstrate responsible use of technology and laws, for example copyright and plagiarism.
- Understand consequences of inappropriate technology use, including harassment and sexting.
- Examine the impact of emerging technology in their schools, communities, and society.
- Use a variety of digital tools to create projects, for example online surveys and webpages.
- Demonstrate online communication skills, for example writing and replying to emails.
- Use the Internet to research, analyze, and summarize information from digital sources.
- Describe how the parts of a computing system work together, including the inputs, outputs, processing, and storage.
- Explain how local wireless networks connect to wired networks around the world.
- Take a big problem (e.g. cleaning the house) and create solutions for smaller sub-problems (clean the bathroom, do the laundry, wash the dishes, etc.).
- Use database tools to analyze information and visualize data with charts, tables, and graphs.
- Write programs with more sophisticated structures such as functions, loops, and variables.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How can technology and digital media affect society?
- What did you learn about being safe online and keeping your data safe?
- What tools can you use to analyze data?
- What programs did you write today? Tell me about the debugging process.

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Places in the community where your child can advance their DLCS knowledge by working or volunteering.
- Your child's interest in different college/career options and which DLCS courses are offered in high school that support these interests.

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Deepening understanding of various art forms through extended practice
- Expand a repertoire of concepts and skills within each art form to express specific artistic ideas
- Study different works of arts from diverse cultures and periods of time
- Continue to develop their own choices and preferences for artistic expression

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

For Dance:

- Discover a variety of ways the muscles and bones in the legs or arms can move in space (e.g., parallel and rotation).
- Perform a short, self-created dance solo that conveys intent to an audience

For Media Arts:

- Describe and demonstrate one's own artistic style, and preferences in media arts.
- Generate integrative approaches to produce media arts content for different audiences.

For Music:

- Document original simple melodic ideas with standard notation.
- Improvise and compare different versions of a single musical idea.

For Theatre:

- Collaborate with others by taking on a specific theatrical role (director, actor, set designer, etc.)
- Analyze theatrical texts and stories and identify significant moments for voice and body choices.

For Visual Arts:

- Discuss how selecting and using materials can reflect the student artist's preferences and style.
- Investigate and invent new techniques and approaches using two- and three-dimensional materials.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- Can you tell me how you created your picture/song/play, etc.?
- What do you think the artist intended when you saw or heard their work of art?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Artists and artworks that are developmentally appropriate to share with your child
- How to provide experiences that will support your child's artistic preferences

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Use the target language to understand diverse viewpoints in written, spoken, or signed messages, and to create with language to authentically express themselves and present information in written, spoken, or signed conversations and presentations
- Analyze products, practices, and perspectives of the varied cultures that use the studied language and compare them to their own
- Use the language in authentic ways, such as expanding upon grade-level content from other courses and engaging with speakers/signers of the language in the community
- Begin or continue the development of language proficiency which will lead to the Massachusetts State Seal of Bilingualism.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Understand the main ideas, supporting details, and attributes of the culture when reading, viewing, or listening to authentic texts
- Engage and ask questions in everyday conversations about themselves, their lives, and their interests
- Present information and support a viewpoint
- Communicate in ways (such as gestures) and about topics which are authentic to the target language and enhance their communicative abilities
- Analyze products, practices, perspectives and identity factors which comprise culture and cultural identity
- Compare products, practices, perspectives, identity features, and linguistic features
- Use the language to expand understanding of other grade-level content and to obtain diverse viewpoints
- Use the language to engage with community and/or family members, to make or strengthen friendships, for personal enjoyment, and to set linguistic goals, such as obtaining the MA State Seal of Bilingualism.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- How do the cultural practices of the language you're learning differ from or relate to our own culture?
- What kinds of topics can you talk about in the target language?
- What are some ways we can use your language at home or in our community?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- How language proficiency is measured and how your child can make progress
- Resources or activities your child can engage in at home or in the community to practice authentic communication and cultural understanding in the target language
- How to prepare your child to earn the State Seal of Bilingualism when they graduate.

FOCUS AREAS FOR SIXTH GRADE:

- Set goals, engage in health-promoting behaviors, and avoid risky behaviors.
- Enhance relationships, personal health, and the health of others through social awareness and effective communication.
- Examine how emotions, thoughts, needs, values, and beliefs influence behaviors and articulate how these influences impact health behavior and outcomes.
- Demonstrate competence in a variety of physical fitness components and principles in order to engage in health-promoting physical activity.
- Promote personal, family, and community health and well-being.

BY THE END OF SIXTH GRADE, STUDENTS CAN:

- Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills that foster healthy relationships, communicate boundaries, and show respect.
- Understand and accept others' differences during a variety of physical activities.
- Analyze how people from diverse groups can learn from each other and how this can enhance emotional well-being.
- Analyze a variety of influences on nutrition-related beliefs and behaviors, and today's society.
- Demonstrate the ability to create or maintain positive relationships with people of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations.
- Articulate the benefits of postponing sexual activity and setting personal limits.
- Summarize and communicate the effects of using legal and illegal drugs on brain development and multiple dimensions of health.
- Analyze how environmental factors and types of pollution affect health.
- Analyze internal and external influences that have an impact on an individual's sexual behaviors.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHILD:

- What are some examples of teamwork?
- How do you know whether to believe what someone says? What kinds of evidence do you use to decide?

TOPICS YOU CAN DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER:

- Ways of applying what your child learns in Health/P.E. to everyday situations
- Places in the community that can help your child learn about Health/P.E.