

English Language Arts & Literacy

In 6th grade, students apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of longer, more challenging books and articles. That includes learning about how authors try to influence readers and find reasons to support their ideas. Focusing on how authors make their points and support their arguments with evidence and reasoning helps 6th grade students sharpen their ability to write and speak with more clarity and coherence. Students also will expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. To meet these literacy goals, students must devote significant attention to precise details in their reading and when writing.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 6th Grade

- Analyzing how chapters of a book, scenes of a play, or stanzas of a poem fit into the overall structure of the piece and contribute to the development of ideas or themes
- Gaining knowledge from materials that make extensive use of elaborate diagrams and data to convey information and illustrate concepts
- Evaluating the argument and specific claims in written materials or a speech, and distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not
- Presenting claims and findings to others orally, sequencing ideas logically, and accentuating main ideas or themes
- Writing arguments that provide clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources
- Writing brief reports that examine a topic, have a clear focus, and include relevant facts, details, and quotations
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and sharpening the focus based on the research findings
- Reviewing and paraphrasing key ideas and multiple perspectives of a speaker
- Recognizing variations from standard English in his or her own and others' writing and speaking, and using this knowledge to improve language use
- Determining the correct meaning of a word based on the context in which it is used (e.g., the rest of the sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 6th grade, these include:

- Reading closely and citing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction to support an analysis of what the materials say
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?