



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PARENT CURRICULUM GUIDE



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GRADE





“WE KNOW THAT EVERY SINGLE PARENT CARES DEEPLY ABOUT THEIR CHILD’S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. THAT’S WHY WE ARE WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH FAMILIES, BECAUSE WE KNOW THEIR INVOLVEMENT IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR CHILDREN, AND OUR SCHOOLS.”
- CHANCELLOR KAYA HENDERSON

How to Use the Parent Curriculum Guide:

This guide gives you the tools you need to support your child at home. In this booklet, you’ll find strategies based on the DCPS curriculum to help your child meet his or her learning goals. You’ll have a better understanding of what your child is learning in school and how you can further learning at home.

In addition, this guide provides specific strategies to implement at home for our Cornerstone assignments. Cornerstone assignments are high-quality, in-depth activities offered across the district that all DC Public Schools students will participate in during each unit of study. We have provided you with four sample Cornerstone assignments that your child may experience along with tips and suggestions on ways to support them at home.

For more information on Cornerstones visit bit.ly/DCPSCornerstonesVid.

What You Can Do:

You play a very important role in your child’s academic performance. Here are some things you can do to support learning at home:

- ▶ Let your child know that education is the foundation for success.
- ▶ Know what your child is expected to learn in the 8th grade.
- ▶ Help your child set high short-term and long-term academic goals.
- ▶ Provide a designated time and location to complete homework.
- ▶ Talk to your child about what is happening in school and constantly monitor progress.
- ▶ Advocate for your child.
- ▶ Share your child’s strengths with your child’s teacher.

Questions to Ask Your Child’s Teacher:

When speaking with your child’s teacher about academic progress, here are a few questions you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ What are the learning goals? Can you show me examples of student work that meets the learning goals?
- ▶ May I see an example of my child’s work? How does it or doesn’t it meet these learning goals?
- ▶ Is my child at or above grade level, what extra support is available? What can I do at home?
- ▶ What classroom routines do you have that should also be used at home?
- ▶ What kinds of questions could I ask my child on a daily basis about your class?

Talking to Your Child:

Good conversations help our children see that we are interested in their lives. Here are a few conversation starters you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ Tell me about the best part of your day.
- ▶ What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- ▶ Can you show me something you learned today?
- ▶ What books are you reading in school? Describe your favorite character? Why do you like that character?
- ▶ What do you think you should do more of at school? What do you think you should do less of? Why?

WHAT MY EIGHTH GRADER IS LEARNING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



MATH



SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES



	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH	SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	
<p>AUGUST– OCTOBER</p> 	<p>Students will explore our nation’s roots by analyzing primary sources, art, poetry and fiction.</p> <p>Students will present evidence-based writing that explains information documented in primary sources.</p> 	<p>Students will learn about irrational numbers.</p> <p>Students will solve real world problems that involve volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.</p> 	<p>Students will analyze interactions and energy.</p> 	<p>Students will examine Colonial America and the American Revolution.</p> 
<p>OCTOBER– DECEMBER</p> 	<p>Students will analyze dialogue from scenes in plays, speeches, and poetry.</p> <p>Students will present evidence-based writing that explains the central idea or theme of a play, speech, or poem.</p> 	<p>Students will use models to understand congruence and similarity.</p> 	<p>Students will analyze interactions and forces.</p> 	<p>Students will investigate the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Early Republic.</p> 
<p>DECEMBER– FEBRUARY</p> 	<p>Students will analyze the tension between conformity and individuality through literary examples.</p> <p>Student will present evidence-based writing that focuses on crafting stories that describe a choice to take the road less traveled.</p> 	<p>Students will solve linear equations and apply the Pythagorean Theorem to find the distance between two points in a coordinate system.</p> 	<p>Students will examine the structure and properties of matter.</p> 	<p>Students will discuss the effects of westward expansion and the industrialization of the Northern states.</p> 
<p>FEBRUARY– APRIL</p> 	<p>Students will analyze the tension between conformity and individuality through literary examples.</p> <p>Student will present evidence-based writing that focuses on crafting stories that describe a choice to take the road less traveled.</p> 	<p>Students will define, evaluate, and compare functions.</p> 	<p>Students will examine the properties of substances before and after a chemical reaction.</p> 	<p>Students will explore the causes of the Civil War and the reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century, including woman’s suffrage, abolitionism and immigration policy.</p> 
<p>APRIL– JUNE</p> 	<p>Students will study an author whose work has a social or political message.</p> <p>Students will present evidence-based writing that focuses on arguing the relative power or persuasiveness of an artist’s message.</p> 	<p>Students will investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.</p> 	<p>Students will examine properties of waves and electromagnetic radiation.</p> 	<p>Students will study the Civil War and the Reconstruction.</p> 

SCIENCE CORNERSTONE

In this Cornerstone, students design an experiment to see if adding energy affects the rate of evaporation. Students look at animations to help explain why heating water increases the rate of evaporation and create 3-D Styrofoam models of water molecules.

How You Can Help Your Child:

- ▶ Boil water at home and study the effects of dissolving different substances such as salt or sugar, on the speed of evaporation. Be sure to first make predictions and challenge your child to provide scientific explanations for your observations. This might sound like “What impact will the addition of salt have on the speed of evaporation of our boiling water?”
- ▶ Encourage your child by letting them know that it’s OK to make mistakes or admit they don’t know something. Rather than saying, “No, that’s wrong,” when they give an incorrect explanation, give your child accurate information or help them to find it.



SOCIAL STUDIES CORNERSTONE

In this Cornerstone, students explore the production of the Declaration of Independence. After reading the Declaration of Independence and other related primary and secondary sources, students write an essay that explores who deserves credit for the ideas and words written into the Declaration of Independence. Students are tasked with answering: “Was the Declaration of Independence a work of plagiarism?”

How You Can Help Your Child:

- ▶ Plan a trip to the National Archives to see the actual Declaration of Independence and check out the accompanying exhibit.
- ▶ Remind your child to use no more than five words in a row from any source without quotation marks. If using a quotation, make sure to link it to the reference right away.
- ▶ Ask your child “Why is it important to cite the work of others?”
- ▶ If your child has borrowed from the work of another author, challenge them to consider how they could re-write the information in their own words.

Year Long Learning Tips:

- ▶ Help your child figure out how to process information by asking questions such as “What was the main idea in the article you just read?” “What are the most important things you want to remember about it?” Learning how to identify and focus on essential information will be an important skill throughout your child’s life. As your child transitions to high school, your child will need to develop these strategies for synthesizing all that he or she is learning.
- ▶ Help your child prioritize tasks. Ask your child to write out all of things he or she needs to do for the week, including non-school related task. Have your child label each task from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most important. Help your child prioritize for better academic success and tell them to rewrite the list with all of the 1’s at the top. Check in frequently to see how the list is evolving over time.
- ▶ Did you know that your school has a new digital grade book called EngradePro? EngradePro allows for parents to monitor student progress in real time. You can view your child’s grades, assignments and send messages directly to the teacher. For more information, and to get your username and password, please contact your child’s school.

MUSIC CORNERSTONE

In this Cornerstone, students focus on how sound is produced and transmitted. Students generate sounds and compositions using found objects and create their own notation to record the composition. Students create compositions for specific spaces and, as a final project, perform those compositions with their peers.

How You Can Help Your Child:

- ▶ Play games at home by using everyday objects to create sound. Families can create recordings of those sounds to share in the classroom.
- ▶ Take your child to see the drummers play outside of the Verizon Center. Ask your child “What did you like about the performance?”, and “How did the performers use their physical environment to make music?”

Year Long Learning Tips:

- ▶ Attend DC Ed Fest with your child in the fall. Consider all D.C. high school options, and determine which schools will be the best fit for your child.
- ▶ Sign your child up for DC Meets Washington. DCMW is a free summer college and career exposure program for middle grade students. Over the course of the three-week program, students will meet with local leaders from engineering, IT, and hospitality career sectors. They will participate in site visits in which they directly experience different professional and postsecondary opportunities. Visit bit.ly/DCMeetsWashington to sign-up.
- ▶ Help with time management. As your child’s workload and extracurricular interests increase, the way your child manages his or her time will become increasingly important to her academic success. Most kids aren’t naturally good at time management and have to be taught effective strategies. Help your child plan ahead and make a schedule of when assignments are due, so that he or she isn’t always racing to complete things at the last minute.

WORLD LANGUAGES CORNERSTONE

In this Cornerstone, students continue their study of global issues, and explore ways to take action. Students find and choose images related to a global environmental issue. In small groups, they brainstorm a list of words and phrases associated with that image. Students share a narrative in the target language about this action in a global forum such as a blog post.

How You Can Help Your Child:

- ▶ Ask your students to share the selected image with you, and discuss how this global environmental issue is reflected in your local community.
- ▶ Go to a restaurant specializing in the cuisine of the country whose language your child is studying, and invite a couple of his or her classmates along. Encourage the waiter to urge them to try out their new language.



ACTIVITIES TO PRACTICE WITH MY EIGHTH GRADER



Read together everyday for 20 minutes.

<p>AUGUST- OCTOBER</p>	<p>Analyze the lyrics of the national anthem with your child and visit the section of the Smithsonian's website dedicated to the history of the anthem. Answer the questions at the end to receive a special reward! bit.ly/1rZmmlU</p>	<p>Conduct the Popsicle Stick Chain Reaction activity with your child bit.ly/DCPSPopsicle to learn about potential and kinetic energy transfer.</p>	<p>Ask students to ponder whether or not a scoop of ice cream, if melted, would be contained in the ice cream cone or if it would overflow. Discuss how one could figure this out exactly.</p>	<p>Keep a journal recording how much time you spend reading each day! List your favorite characters from each story and identify a place in the story where the character shows a quality that you admire.</p>	<p>Take the Myth-Conceptions Quiz (bit.ly/DCPSMyth) with your student to uncover some of the myths and facts many of us still believe about Colonial Americans.</p>
<p>OCTOBER - DECEMBER</p>	<p>Ask students to identify congruent and similar figures in different logos and signs.</p>	<p>Build a roller coaster using simple materials at home. Change the height of the first drop of your roller coaster and discuss its affect on the speed of marble or small ball. For ideas for building your roller coaster, visit bit.ly/DCPSRollerCoaster</p>	<p>Using your roller coaster, try using various sizes of marbles and balls to explore the relationship between mass and motion.</p>	<p>Consider taking your child to the Kennedy Center to see a play of your choosing. After the play, discuss the central idea or theme of the play with your student. Go to www.kennedy-center.org for a listing of free shows.</p>	<p>Watch The American Revolution on the Frontier (http://bit.ly/DCPSRev) to learn about the decisions different groups made in the days and weeks leading up to the war.</p>
<p>DECEMBER - FEBRUARY</p>	<p>Get messy in the kitchen and make your own slime with your child. Find a recipe to explore the structure and properties of solids and liquids. bit.ly/DCPSSlimeTime</p>	<p>Visit the National Museum of the American Indian and check out the exhibit "Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations" bit.ly/DCPSNative. What were the outcomes of these treaties for the groups involved?</p>	<p>Take your student to the Arboretum or the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Take photos and create journal entries to capture the experience. Ask your child to use descriptive writing to illustrate the beauty of the landscape.</p>	<p>Visit your local library to check-out three new books! Visit bit.ly/FindMyLibrary to find your local library branch. Make sure to add the new books you read to your reading journal!</p>	<p>Watch these videos on proofs for the Pythagorean Theorem: bit.ly/DCPSKahn and bit.ly/DCPSKahn2</p>
<p>FEBRUARY - APRIL</p>	<p>Visit the NBC Learn with your child to view the Cheeseburger Chemistry videos and learn about interactions of matter. Check out the videos to learn the connection between chemistry and cooking: bit.ly/DCPSCHEM</p>	<p>Listen to Sojourner Truth's landmark speech "Ain't I a Woman?" as performed by Kerry Washington bit.ly/DCPSTruth. Discuss with your student what Truth may have been trying to accomplish with her speech.</p>	<p>Visit the online exhibit "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A History of American Sweatshops" bit.ly/DCPSSweatshop. Does new technology always lead to progress?</p>	<p>Discuss with students a car's efficiency in terms of miles per gallons of gas. Ask questions such as "if a car typically gets 20mpg, and you put in 10 gallons of gas, how far will you be able to travel?" (200 miles)</p>	<p>Select two authors whose work has a social or political message. Read or watch one of their speeches and discuss with your child how they use persuasion to convey their message.</p>
<p>APRIL - JUNE</p>	<p>Consider asking your student if they feel pressure to "fit in." Ask them to develop a comparison chart about the benefits of being an individual vs conforming. Discuss the chart with your child. Remember to be supportive and model active listening.</p>	<p>Calculate the speed of light using marshmallows and a microwave bit.ly/DCPSSpeedofLight and compare it to the scientifically accepted speed of light (299,792,458 meters per second).</p>	<p>Work with your child to brainstorm ways to make your calculation even more accurate.</p>	<p>Ask students to ponder whether taller people have larger feet. Have them collect data on at least 10 people and see if any patterns of association arise.</p>	<p>Use the PBS interactive site, "Slavery and the Making of America" bit.ly/DCPSMemories to trace the development of slavery in the US. Check out the "Slave Memories" tab to see first-hand accounts from the people slavery directly affected.</p>