

Common Sixth-Grade Milestones

Reading, writing, and talking help your child grow and learn in many ways. While you're home together, watch for some of the key milestones in growing sixth-grade readers. On the back, you'll find ideas for supporting these literacy developments at home.

Language

Using Powerful Words

- ▶ Understand figurative language (such as *it's raining cats and dogs*).
- ▶ Identify words with Greek and Latin origins (such as *bicycle* and *language*).
- ▶ Break apart words with more than one syllable in order to pronounce them correctly, or close to correctly (such as *ingenious* and *continent*).
- ▶ Self-correct when necessary.

Discussing Texts

- ▶ Be respectful and polite during a discussion.
- ▶ Ask for further explanation when things are unclear.
- ▶ Use facts and opinions to make strong statements.
- ▶ Be thoughtful and mature when dealing with sophisticated or sensitive themes.
- ▶ Recognize when a claim is not supported with enough facts, or is supported with inaccurate claims.

Reading

Connecting to Texts

- ▶ Understand longer pieces of text.
- ▶ Determine the themes and morals of a story.
- ▶ Compare and contrast two or more story elements, such as characters, settings, or plots.
- ▶ Compare and contrast two or more stories from the same genre.
- ▶ Understand perspectives and events that are very different from their own experiences.

Reading With Purpose

- ▶ Recognize styles of writing by noticing the author's word choices and structure decisions.
- ▶ Recognize when a claim is supported with evidence.
- ▶ Compare and contrast texts to other forms of media, such as audio or video recordings.
- ▶ Compare and contrast different genres of text.

Writing

Writing With Purpose

- ▶ Understand that the introduction sets the tone of a piece of writing.
- ▶ Include a meaningful conclusion that wraps up his or her ideas well.
- ▶ Use facts and quotations to strengthen ideas.
- ▶ Include historical context, facts, and science in both fiction and nonfiction pieces.

Enhancing Meaning

- ▶ Format the text so that ideas flow logically.
- ▶ Use varied sentence length and structure to build tension.
- ▶ Use language that causes an emotional response in the reader.



Literacy Grows at Home

Children also become stronger readers the more time they spend reading. That includes choosing their own books and rereading favorites over and over again. Seeing you read encourages them, too, as does having books and magazines available to explore.

Sharing Books

Your sixth grader has a lot of experience reading independently, but many children this age secretly admit that they miss the experience of being read to as they were when they were younger.

Make time to read together. Pause once in a while to help your child figure out the meaning of a puzzling word or surprising detail. Checking for meaning is part of being a strong reader. Take turns reading to each other or just sit back and listen as your child reads to you! Encourage your child to relax, have fun, and read with expression.

Supporting Independent Reading

Your sixth grader may already love to read on his or her own or may need encouragement. Invite your child to choose a new book, revisit a book you have read together, or finish a book you may have started as a read-aloud.

When school is in session, ideally a sixth grader will spend 20 minutes per day or more reading independently in school, and an equal amount of time reading at home. Today, reading at home is even more important. Split up the time or binge-read—just get those eyes on the page!



Making Connections

As important as reading time is, so is talking about what your child reads. Conversations can happen anytime—while you cook, fold laundry, or share a meal. Bond with your child about events and people in books that remind you of events and people from your own lives.

Literacy Builders

Encourage your child to use reading as a springboard into other enjoyable literacy-building activities like these.

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB With your approval, your child can use social media to connect with friends and classmates to talk about their reading. What characters do they admire? What is the biggest challenge that the characters face?

SAY IT WITH STYLE Authors have a way with words! Ask your sixth grader to share some favorite descriptive phrases or sentences from his or her reading. As a family, try to copy the author's style as you make up your own descriptions of people, places, and things around you.

WHAT'S THE REAL DEAL? Have your sixth grader create book-based true-or-false questions to ask family and friends. Whether or not people answer the questions correctly, they may become interested enough to want to read the book to find out more for themselves!

CREATE A JOURNAL Create a reader's journal using a notebook or stapled-together paper so your child can jot down thoughts about his or her daily reading. What impressed your child the most? What words or details does he or she want to remember? What thoughts or discoveries does he or she want to share with family or friends?

