

GEMS American Academy Qatar

A Parent's Guide to Grade 3

GEMS prides itself on offering an outstanding educational program where highly effective classroom teachers use an engaging and challenging curriculum to help students meet or exceed grade-level standards. Academic progress is measured in two ways: by monitoring student learning to provide for ongoing dialog (formative assessment) and by evaluating student progress against standards and benchmarks using tests, assignments, and projects (summative assessment). The GAAQ report card is designed to show how well a student is doing in relation to grade-level standards, and also illustrates that by the completion of the academic year, the student will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed at the next grade level.

This guide will help parents understand the concepts and skills that are the focus of instruction in the Grade 3 classroom, as well as the broader academic and thinking skills that will lead to college readiness and beyond. And because parental involvement is a key factor in a student's academic success, this guide also offers suggestions about how parents can support their child's learning at home. A concise overview cannot fully represent the comprehensive curriculum and all units of study in Grade 3, so parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have questions.

Language Arts

Reading – Writing – Speaking – Listening - Language

What your child will learn:

Grade 3 is often considered a pivotal year as instruction in phonics is phased out of the formal curriculum. In third grade, increased emphasis is placed on vocabulary acquisition, comprehension strategies, text analysis, language conventions, and writing. Students learn to use context as an independent vocabulary strategy. They learn to refer to information in the text when asking and answering questions about texts they have read. They apply analysis strategies to determine the theme or central message of text. They learn about subject and verb agreement and verb tenses, and use that knowledge to write and speak in correct, complete sentences. As students learn more English language conventions and acquire new vocabulary, they practice them in their writing assignments.

What you can do at home:

Reading at home is critical to the development of early literacy skills, so visit the school library often and read, read, read every day. Encouraging reading is one of the most important things a parent can do to help their child develop language acquisition skills and a love of learning. When you are reading with your child, discuss the book, the characters, and the important details. Make predictions as you read and create different endings to stories. Ask your child questions about the book and have them retell the story to you. Talk about the book and the words in it. Identify words that your child may already know, and pick out new and unfamiliar words to expand language acquisition and a love of learning.

Mathematics

Overview	
<p>Grade 3 students deepen their understanding of place value and their knowledge of and skill with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers. Students develop an understanding of fractions as numbers, concepts of area and perimeter of plane figures, and attributes of various shapes.</p>	
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Number Operations in Base 10 Fractions
<p>What your child will learn: Students fluently multiply and divide (within 100) and use simple multiplication and division to solve word problems (using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem). They understand division as an unknown-factor problem (e.g., find $32 \div 8$ by finding the number that makes 32 when multiplied by 8), and use the inverse relationship between multiplication and division to compute and check results. Students apply their knowledge and skills with the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) to solve word problems. By the end of Grade 3, students will know from memory all products of numbers from 1 to 9. Students discover that the associative and commutative laws reduce the number of multiplication facts they need to learn. For example, if a student knows 5×9, then they also know 9×5.</p>	<p>What your child will learn: Third-grade students extend their understanding of place value to include numbers with four digits. They round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100, a critical prerequisite for working estimation problems. Students also apply their understanding of place value as they fluently add and subtract (within 1,000) numbers in which regrouping or composing a ten (i.e., carrying and borrowing) is required in more than one column. Students use visual models to represent fractions as parts of a whole. They also use visual models and a number line to represent, explain, and compare unit fractions (fractions with a numerator 1), equivalent fractions (e.g., $1/2 = 2/4$), whole numbers as fractions (e.g., $3 = 3/1$), and fractions with the same numerator or the same denominator ($3/3$).</p>
Measurement and Data	Geometry
<p>What your child will learn: Students measure lengths (using a ruler), liquid volume (using standard units), and the area of plane figures (by counting unit squares). Students demonstrate an understanding of fractions as they measure lengths by using rulers. Students solve problems involving the perimeter of polygons. They relate the concept of area to the operations of multiplication and division and show that the area of a rectangle can be found by multiplying the side lengths.</p>	<p>What your child will learn: Students compare common geometric shapes (e.g., rectangles and quadrilaterals) based on common attributes (e.g., having four sides). Students also relate their work with fractions to geometry as they partition shapes into parts with equal areas and represent each part as a unit fraction of the whole.</p>

What you can do at home:

Make math fun and meaningful for your child by looking for real world math problems in your daily life. Emphasize problems that include multiplication, division, and measurement. Use everyday objects for reinforcing the concept of fractions—great than/less than/equal to—and creating story problems. Ask questions that require mathematical thinking (e.g., estimation, greater/less than, word problems). Encourage your child to keep trying even when a problem may be challenging, talk to them about how they find an answer to a problem, and praise them for effort, resiliency, and perseverance even if they aren't getting the “right” answer.

Integrated Content

Science	Social Studies
<p>What your child will learn: GAAQ uses the FOSS or Full Option Science System. The program design is based on learning progressions that provide students with opportunities to investigate core ideas in science in increasingly complex ways over time. The target goals are to help students know and use scientific explanations of the natural world and the development of scientific knowledge and technological capabilities, and to participate productively in scientific and engineering practices.</p> <p>There are three FOSS units of study in Grade 3:</p> <p>Physical Science – Properties of Sound Earth Science – Investigating Earth Materials Life Science – Structure and Responses of Organisms</p>	<p>What your child will learn: In third grade, students begin to explore more complex concepts and ideas from civics, economics, geography, and history as they study the varied backgrounds of people living in Qatar, the Arab Gulf region, and the United States. Students examine these cultures from the past and in the present and the impact they have had in shaping our contemporary society. They begin to look at issues and events from more than one perspective.</p>

What you can do at home:

Foster your child’s interest in science by encouraging them to wonder, observe, ask questions, hypothesize, and experiment. Encourage problem solving with everyday tasks (e.g., cooking and gardening). Visit parks, science museums, and zoos. Use technology as a resource to enhance the understanding of scientific concepts.

What you can do at home:

Take opportunities to talk about civics, civil rights, and civic responsibilities. Read the local newspaper, watch the local news together, or find articles of interest to discuss. Family excursions to local governmental and historical sites can also be fun ways to support social studies curriculum.

Art

What your child will learn:

Elementary art education encompasses several key components and students observe and comprehend various types of art. In art classes, students invent, create, and critique works of art, and they relate, connect, and transfer the skills that they learn into other content areas.

In Grade 3, students learn about the intent and purpose of various works of art. They identify characteristics and expressive features in works of art and design in order to determine artistic intent. They use precise art vocabulary to respond to their own art and the art of others, and they make connections among the characteristics, expressive features, and purposes of art and design. Third grade students begin to understand some of the historical and cultural ideas that are evident in works of art. They utilize basic media and studio skills in the art-making process.

What you can do at home:

Art activities are important for fine motor development. Encourage drawing and ask questions about your child's artwork. Pay attention and support your child's artistic interests. Design a space for creativity and encourage art activities and imaginative play. Visit local art museums and galleries during family outings.

Music

What your child will learn:

The elementary school general music curriculum is built on 12 themes. Each curriculum theme is tailored to match the cognitive development of the students in each of the grade levels. Each lesson addresses specific goals outlined in national standards. The thematic threads in elementary music include:

- Singing/Movement
- Playing Instruments
- Composing/Improvising
- Listening/Analyzing/Describing
- Evaluating Music
- Theory/Notation
- Instrument/Ensembles
- Musical Styles
- Music History/Famous Composers
- World Music/Cultures
- Cross Curriculum Connections
- Life Connections

What you can do at home:

Expand and support the musical experiences and background knowledge of your child by exposing them to a wide variety of musical genres. Attend the opera, symphony, or other musical events. Listen to a variety of types of music in your home or car. Urge your child to explain and discuss what they like and dislike about various types of music. Encourage and foster your child's interest in both vocal and instrumental music.

Health and Physical Education (P.E.)

What your child will learn:

While P.E. includes movement patterns, motor skills, and physical activities, both disciplines teach safe physical, emotional, and social behaviors, and emphasize prevention and risk management for students, both within and outside of the school community.

Grade 3 students continue to learn how daily activities and healthy behaviors promote overall personal health and safety. They demonstrate a variety of motor patterns in simple combinations while participating in activities, games, and sports, and they perform movements that engage the brain to facilitate learning. They identify the benefits of sustained physical activity that causes increased heart rate and heavier breathing, and they learn about the human body and its composition. Students also work to demonstrate positive social behaviors.

What you can do at home:

Strong and healthy children become strong and healthy learners. Many studies have shown a compelling correlation between physical activity and student achievement. At home, provide opportunities for physical activities (e.g., after-school sports and classes). Expose your child to a wide variety of physical activities, and keep in mind that this may also include limiting television and/or computer screen time. Offer healthy snacks and plan healthy meals. Be a role model for your child and engage in healthy activities together. Whether you are preparing nutritious meals or enjoying a walk together, make an effort to integrate wellness into your family's daily practices.

Talking to your child's teacher:

Parental involvement in a child's education is crucial, so it's important to build a healthy, collaborative relationship between home and school by establishing good communication with your child's teacher. We encourage you to reach out to the teacher early in the year. Learn about the academic standards your child will be aiming for and discover ways you can support them in their studies. The first step in being able to follow the academic road map is to begin with a solid understanding of what your child will be expected to know by the end of the school year and keep the goal in sight.

Teachers monitor and evaluate student academic progress and achievement on an ongoing basis in many different ways, so parents are encouraged to stay in regular contact with their child's teacher beyond parent-teacher conferences. As the school year progresses, ask to see samples of your child's work to determine, in concert with the teacher, your child's advancement toward grade-level standards. Discuss areas of strength your child exhibits in the classroom as well as areas that may be targeted for growth. Inquire about how you can best help your child at home, and ask the teacher for recommendations and resources. Find out details about specific classroom activities and discuss ways that you may be able to volunteer your time and talents to support classroom activities or units of study.

Growth and learning during the school year doesn't end in the classroom—parents and teachers must work together all year long for the success of each student. We ask that you partner with us in creating an optimal learning experience for your child.