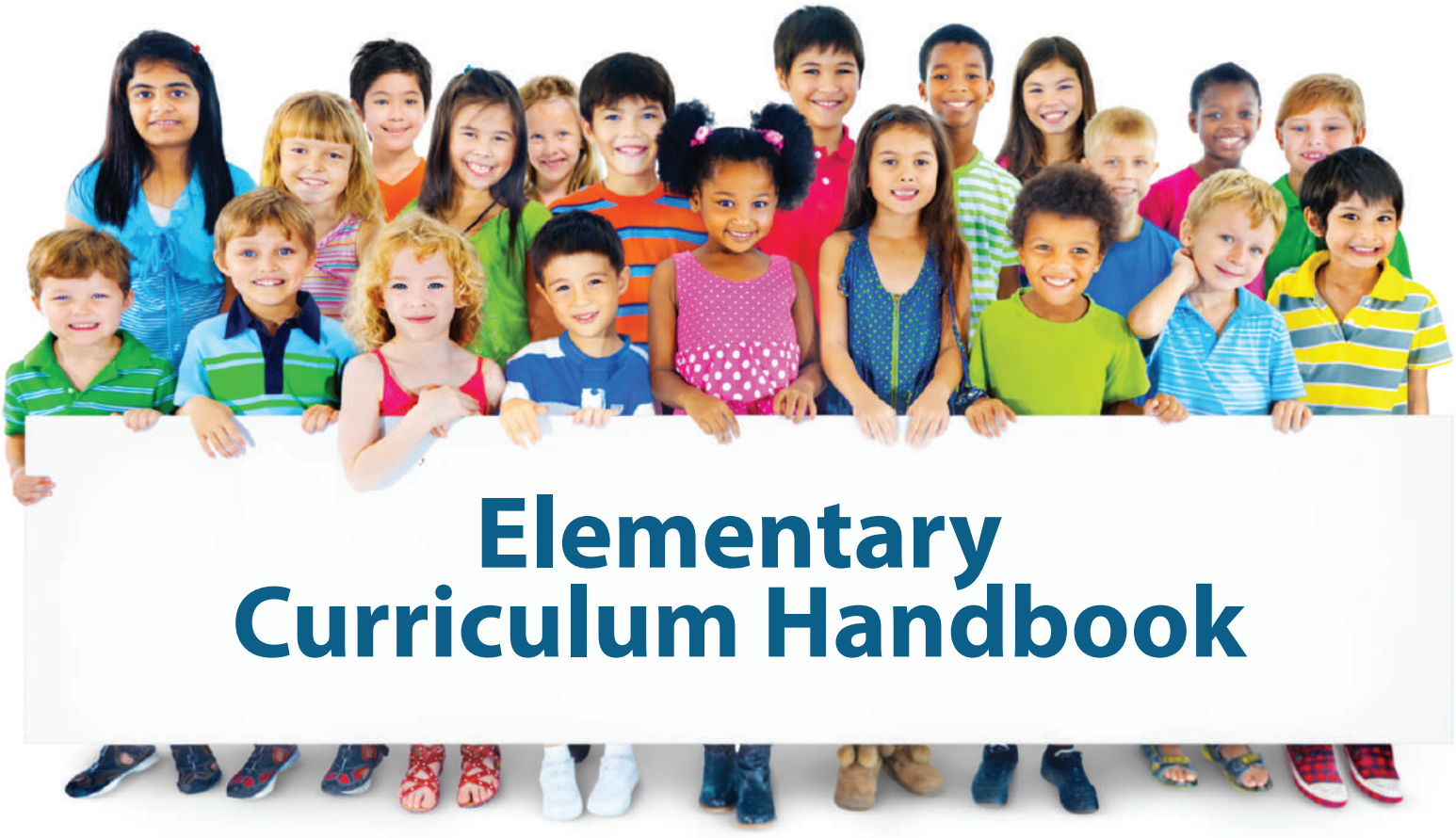


Elementary Curriculum Handbook

A Publication of the Simsbury Public Schools

Revised August 2021

Grade 1

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The *Elementary Curriculum Handbook* presents an overview of each subject and reflects the district's commitment to equity for every student, defining the expectations for achievement and providing a description of the curriculum at each grade level.

Simsbury Public Schools implements a standards-based curriculum that builds students' competencies of our Vision of a Graduate (VoG). The curriculum incorporates sequential instruction, enduring ideas, and discrete skills that students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Learning encompasses students' cultures, languages, and life experiences. Teachers use student work and a variety of assessments to individualize instruction and guide decisions to maximize student learning.

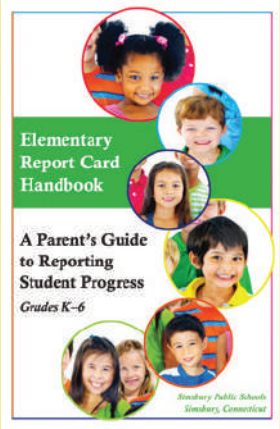
This curriculum handbook is one of the many ways the Simsbury Public Schools supports communication between home and school. We hope that the information will enhance your understanding of the elementary school curriculum and will enrich your role as an active participant in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Betsy Gunsalus
Director of Elementary Curriculum
and Student Assessment

Table of Contents

Elementary report cards



Click on the above image to view a pdf of the file.

Sample report cards are available via the grade level sections in this book.

Formal assessments (K-6)

Assessment	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
NGSS						x	
STAR Reading & Math			x	x	x	x	x
SBAC				x	x	x	x

What Is Assessment?

Assessment is the process of gathering evidence in order to document the learning and growth of each child. Teachers assess student performance every day, integrating assessment and instruction continually. It is this constant overlap between questioning, responding, observing, and evaluating student progress that determines further instructional needs. Assessments include universal screenings, informal and formal measures, and summative assessments.

Why do we need assessments?

- to help educators set standards
- to create instructional goals
- to motivate performance
- to provide feedback to students
- to evaluate progress
- to communicate progress to others

How do we use universal assessments?

- to use as diagnostic screenings prior to instruction
- to inform teaching and learning
- to help identify students who might benefit from extra support *(see graphic at left)*

How do we use informal assessments?

- to assess student performance every day, integrating assessment and instruction continually

Informal assessment occurs when teachers:

- observe students working
- write anecdotal notes that describe learning behaviors
- hold reading and writing conferences to record student strengths and weaknesses
- analyze projects, portfolios, and notebooks

How do we use formal assessments?

- to provide an academic measure of knowledge, concepts, and skills
- to adjust instructional goals and practices

How do we use summative assessments?

- to determine achievement levels for meeting learning standards
- to give teachers and parents/guardians a better picture of where students are succeeding

What Is the Simsbury Language Arts Program?

- a series of developmentally appropriate units, based on the work of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program, which align with national and state standards for reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening
- a comprehensive language arts program, aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards, which provides a continuum of reading and writing skills and strategies across the grades that appropriately challenges all students, highlighting the essential concepts and skills that will make students effective, independent readers, writers, speakers, and listeners
- a structured curriculum that balances the components of literacy and fosters the integration and transfer of learned strategies and skills for all students across multiple genres and subjects

What makes this program unique?

- Students play an active role in their learning: choosing writing topics, selecting books for independent reading, reflecting on their work, and discussing their ideas with others.
- Students' academic needs drive instruction; teachers use whole-class instruction, small groups, and individual conferences so that all students experience academic success.
- Students develop an appreciation of different points of view through book conversations with partners or in book clubs with other students.
- The learning environment fosters risk taking and expands students' knowledge of literature, nonfiction, and writing through specific units of study.
- The program builds confidence in readers, writers, speakers, and listeners through productive and interactive activities.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students read books that correspond to their instructional reading level, participating in class discussions, book conversations, and structured book clubs in order to deepen comprehension.
- Students read a variety of genres, including fiction and nonfiction reading selections, reflecting a diversity of authors and genres with a balance of classic and contemporary works.
- Students cycle through the writing process, generating ideas, planning new pieces, drafting, revising, and editing across various genres of writing that include narrative, informational, and opinion units.
- Students share and celebrate their written work with authentic audiences.
- Students confer with both teachers and peers about their reading and writing.
- Students participate in conversations about their reading and writing lives in order to gain ideas from each other and set learning goals for themselves.

Language Arts Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong language arts curriculum provides explicit instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. Our K-12 program prepares students to comprehend and communicate effectively, in order to understand themselves, others, and their society.

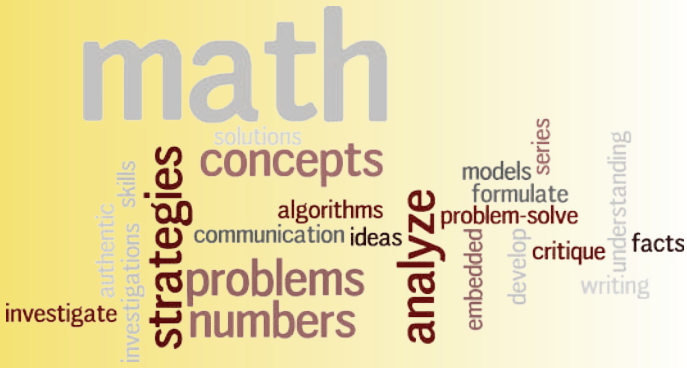
The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' comprehensive language arts program include:

- instruction to develop proficient readers who understand, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts;
- opportunities for student choice and collaboration to meet a variety of needs and interests;
- fiction and nonfiction texts, both rigorous and accessible, that reflect diversity of authors and genres and that balance classic and contemporary works;
- authentic tasks and activities that are challenging and have personal value to students;
- a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society;
- assessments that are frequent and varied, and are used to inform instruction, measure student performance, and provide students with feedback about their own strengths and needs so they can reflect upon and take control of their own learning; and
- a commitment to providing ongoing professional development opportunities to support teacher knowledge of best practices related to curriculum, instruction, and student achievement.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- read and respond to a variety of authors, texts and genres, including theatre, film, and art;
- apply strategies and skills to enhance their understanding of multiple types of text;
- develop and communicate informed opinions and arguments through interpreting and evaluating various texts;
- recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts;
- appreciate the influence that contemporary and classical authors have on human thought;
- use the traits of writing to communicate effectively for a specific purpose and audience;
- contribute, respond to, and develop what others have said in conversations and discussions;
- write and speak in acceptable standard English; and
- transfer literacy skills across multiple content areas.

- Teachers structure and manage reading and writing workshops so that students receive grade-level skill and strategy instruction, with adequate time for practicing these new skills.
- Teachers provide direct, explicit strategy instruction to develop proficient readers and writers who understand, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and create texts.
- Teachers provide authentic tasks and activities that are challenging and engaging to students.
- Teachers provide a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting, viewing, and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society.
- Teachers read aloud and model how to actively use comprehension strategies to demonstrate what proficient readers do.



What Is the Simsbury Mathematics Program?

- a comprehensive K-8 nationally recognized mathematics program, *Math in Focus*, aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards, in which important mathematical concepts are embedded in authentic, real-world problems

What makes this program unique?

- Students work collaboratively to grapple with problems and develop mathematical ideas.
- Students solve problems, construct arguments, and share their thinking, strategies, and solutions with others.
- Students use mathematical language to communicate their thinking through dialogue and in writing and use mathematical tools to enhance their understanding and communication.
- Students build fact fluency and other foundational skills, including the use of US algorithms, to solve more sophisticated mathematical problems and make connections with other mathematical ideas.
- Students develop flexibility and confidence in investigating mathematical concepts, persevering to solve problems, and attending to precision.
- Students analyze and solve problems which emphasize depth in mathematical thinking rather than surface exposure to a series of fragmented topics.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students explore mathematics using concrete, pictorial, and abstract representations to develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Students learn a variety of problem solving strategies, including model-drawing, to solve real world problems.
- Students develop a positive mathematical mindset, emphasizing the importance of attitude and habits of mind to achieve success in math.
- Students work in groups, pairs, or individually to engage and/or reason about mathematical ideas.
- Teachers differentiate instruction for students based on learning styles, and/or depth of understanding of the concept.

Mathematics
Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong mathematics program develops lifelong critical thinkers and learners whose confidence and interest in mathematics will promote college and career readiness. The program guarantees every student a rigorous, coherent, and focused standards-based curriculum where conceptual understanding and acquisition of basic skills serve as the foundation for complex problem solving and critical thinking. Using the Connecticut Core Standards as a foundation, the Simsbury Public Schools believes that all students will attain the mathematical knowledge necessary to persevere as they reason through problems, communicate their thinking, and justify their conclusions.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' mathematics program include:

- opportunities to build towards an increasingly deep and complex understanding of important mathematical ideas;
- opportunities for students to make connections among mathematical topics and ideas;
- experiences with a wealth of complex problems and real world situations that can be solved numerous ways;
- tasks that cover a range of difficulty and complexity;
- experiences that draw on and relate to students' personal experiences and knowledge;
- opportunities for students to see connections between multiple representations: e.g., the story, the table, the graph, and the equation;
- opportunities for student collaboration and differentiated instruction to meet a variety of needs;
- time for students to reflect on their own thinking and learning and to communicate their ideas orally and in writing;
- opportunities for students to develop both computational proficiency and to build problem-solving skills;
- a commitment to providing ongoing professional development opportunities to support teacher knowledge of best practices related to curriculum, instruction, and student achievement.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them;
- discuss, explain, and demonstrate understanding of a mathematical situation in multiple ways;
- analyze problems and use stated mathematical assumptions, definitions, and established results in constructing arguments and justifying mathematical ideas, as well as evaluating the reasoning of others;
- select and use a variety of models, tools, symbolic representations, and technology to solve mathematical problems and to communicate ideas orally and in written form;
- use mathematical skills and concepts with proficiency and confidence, while attending to precision;
- transfer mathematical skills across multiple content areas;
- identify and use connections within mathematics to identify interrelationships and equivalent representations (numeric, verbal, visual, etc.) to construct mathematical models, and to investigate and appreciate mathematical structure; and
- use mathematical skills and concepts to make and justify decisions and predictions, to identify patterns and trends, to pose questions from data and situations, and to formulate and solve problems.

What Is the Simsbury Science Program?

- a combination of teacher created and published science units that emphasize content knowledge and inquiry skills while providing opportunities for critical thinking and hands-on learning
- units of study and experience that relate to themes of life science, earth science, and physical science, as well as science and technology in society
- a curriculum that aligns with and expands upon the standards outlined by national and state frameworks

What makes this program unique?

- Students have the opportunity to interact directly with materials in a hands-on approach to learning.
- Students learn in an environment where they can act like scientists.
- Teachers encourage students to question, analyze, explain, and interpret scientific phenomena and processes.
- The elementary science curriculum provides a strong foundation of science and engineering concepts.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students explore, ask questions, make observations, design investigations, propose solutions, and communicate their findings using a variety of methods.
- Students develop a scientific vocabulary and begin to talk like scientists.
- Students learn to use research skills and technology to access relevant information.
- Teachers create an environment that fosters students' natural curiosity and guides them through the process of inquiry.

Science
Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong science education program promotes student understanding of the natural and human built worlds. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to engage in scientific and engineering practices within core content areas so that students become competent problem solvers, capable of making informed and logical judgments using sound, scientific principles as citizens of the world.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' Science program include:

- opportunities to master a core sequence of science study based on the state standards that cover four major domains: physical sciences; life sciences; earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology and applications of science;
- opportunities to develop science literacy and inquiry skills by using a variety of books, resources, and hands-on experiences;
- authentic learning tasks and assessments that connect to real world problems and topics that are relevant to students;
- learning environments that provide opportunities to work individually, collaborate in small groups, and work as a class to speculate, investigate, discuss, question, observe, collect data, and debate conclusions;
- technology that is integrated throughout the program to enhance learning and support investigations;
- to the extent possible, meaningful opportunities to interact with a wide range of science professionals for the purpose of enriching the classroom experience and for exploring and inspiring possible career pursuits; and
- a wide variety of science elective opportunities at the high school level allowing students to explore personal scientific and career interests.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- acquire new knowledge and continually deepen understanding of core science and engineering concepts;
- apply scientific literacy skills in order to research, understand, and communicate major science concepts and theories;
- construct explanations and design solutions through scientific exploration, formulating hypotheses, designing experiments, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions;
- make claims and argue their validity based on the analysis of data and other available evidence;
- build models and theories about the world, design prototypes, and build systems to solve problems;
- apply mathematical concepts to enhance scientific reasoning; and
- understand the possibilities and limitations of science and technology in order to make informed decisions.

What Is the Simsbury Social Studies Program?

- a K-12 curriculum that aligns with and expands upon the standards outlined in state and national frameworks, emphasizing history, government and civics, geography, and economics
- interdisciplinary units that incorporate the use of primary and secondary sources, nonfiction and fiction texts, and various emerging technologies to bridge the gap between the past, present, and future
- a series of units for each grade that are unified by grade-specific social studies themes, emphasizing the consideration of diverse perspectives and cultures

What makes this program unique?

- Each unit integrates subject areas of reading, writing, technology, and media.
- Students investigate essential questions based on individual behaviors, geography, cultures, history, and political and economic structures.
- Students make connections between the units of study and the grade-specific guiding theme.
- Teachers use the inquiry method to ensure understanding of each concept.
- Teachers encourage students to question, analyze, explain, and interpret historical and cultural events.
- The program fosters critical, creative, and ethical thinking so that students consider diverse perspectives and cultures and recognize the impact of ther actions and civic decisions.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students read a collection of primary and secondary sources and nonfiction texts to build knowledge of each unit.
- Students work collaboratively to understand the impact of the unifying theme.
- Students discuss, debate, write persuasively, and conduct research.
- Teachers use multiple texts, media, and technology to explore concepts in each unit.
- Teachers facilitate student thinking by asking probing questions that examine the enduring understandings.
- Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual students.

Social Studies
Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong social studies program develops all students' capacities to know, analyze, explain, and argue within the disciplines of history, geography, civics, economics, and behavioral sciences. A balanced repertoire of content and skills, focusing on rights and responsibilities, interdependence, authority, conflict, and uniqueness of place, develops global citizens who are equipped with the critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills necessary for the 21st century workplace, as well as for civic and economic responsibility.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' comprehensive social studies program include:

- integration of literacy and communication skills within the content and units;
- independent and collaborative learning opportunities that promote an understanding of how to acquire, integrate, and apply knowledge;
- authentic tasks and activities that engage, challenge, and have personal value to students;
- assessments that are frequent, varied, and used to inform instruction, measure student performance, and provide students with feedback about their own strengths and needs so they can reflect upon and take control of their own learning;
- multiple opportunities for students to write in argumentative and informational genres;
- texts from primary and secondary sources that are rigorous and accessible, reflect diversity of authors and sources, and develop students' awareness of the biases that exist inherently in all documents; and
- a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting, creating, and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

Through Inquiry:

- analyze patterns, connections, causes, and effects in order to strengthen inquiry, literacy, communication, and action; and
- develop meaningful questions to deepen content knowledge through independent research, allowing students to take action as informed citizens.

Within the discipline of history:

- demonstrate knowledge of the structure of United States and world history to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to students' own life experiences; and
- analyze the historical roots and current complexity of international relations and globalization in an increasingly interdependent world.

Within the discipline of geography:

- integrate geographic knowledge, skills, and concepts to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.

Within the discipline of civics:

- explain how people create rules and laws to preserve the delicate balance between individual rights and societal needs; and
- evaluate how ideas, principles, and practices of citizenship have emerged and are maintained over time and across cultures.

Within the discipline of economics:

- explain how people organize systems for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Within the disciplines of other key social sciences:

- apply concepts from the study of history, culture, economics, and government to form an understanding of the interrelationships between science, technology, and society;
- describe how the study of individual development and identity contributes to the understanding of human behavior; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture and how gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class influence personal perspectives.

Grade 1
Language Arts

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 1

Grade 1
Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Language Arts Program?

The Simsbury Language Arts Program is a balanced approach to literacy instruction, fostering the integration and transfer of strategies and skills across multiple genres and subjects. Inspired by the ongoing research of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, teachers provide daily reading and writing experiences.

In reading, students participate in varied instruction, read alouds, and practices that include: teacher-led minilessons, small group instruction, individual conferences, and independent reading/ book clubs. Within specific units, students select independent books of various genres; choice, differentiation, and student engagement are hallmarks in every classroom.

In word study, children are taught phonics, spelling, and handwriting in an explicit, multisensory, and systematic way. Students actively engage in their learning, and these skills are reinforced in both reading and writing.

Our writing workshops emphasize independence and repertoire, as students generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit written pieces. With a balance of writing genres, our curriculum develops six traits of writing: focus, organization, fluency, elaboration, voice, and conventions.

READING

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Building Good Reading Habits	• review the routines and expectations of reading workshop • develop habits for before, during, and after reading • increase reading volume and stamina • use multiple word solving strategies • practice how to engage in meaningful conversations with a partner • work with a partner to strengthen skills
Word Detectives (Print Strategies)	• monitor reading for understanding • use a variety of print strategies • increase bank of high frequency words • use syllables to read words

READING

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Readers Get to Know Characters	• get to know characters as friends • use the title, cover illustrations, title page, and back of the book to prepare for reading • use the pictures and words in books to learn important information about characters • imagine what characters are thinking and what they would say • work meaningfully with a partner
Learning About the World **Nonfiction**	• integrate knowledge from print, grammar, and meaning • solve increasingly complex words • learn content-specific vocabulary • look for keywords, words that are important to understanding the topic • develop fluency and comprehension by rereading and acting out nonfiction books
Fluency, Phonics and Comprehension	• read increasingly complex texts with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension • monitor reading and apply strategies when problem solving unknown words • use meaning, syntax, and visual strategies • develop efficient strategies for word solving • maintain comprehension in longer texts
Learning Lessons from Characters	• get to know stories and show understanding through, retelling, and talking about peers • determine importance by separating big events from tiny details • notice how characters change throughout the story • think about life lessons in books • share opinions about books
Mystery	• apply comprehensive strategies to build an understanding to solve the mystery • read and notice elements of a mystery • read with partners to discuss and solve mysteries

First-grade students experience priority writing units in the three core genres: narrative, information, and opinion. Additional units may be taught as time permits, and writing will be integrated into other content areas so that students have opportunities to practice and develop their skills.

In all three units, students will learn to generate ideas, plan the structure of their piece, and then develop their ideas through drafting and revision. Conventions, spelling, and grammar are taught explicitly and reinforced as students write.

WRITING	
Unit of Study	***In this unit students will…***
Launching Writing Workshop with Narrative Writing	• understand the structures, rituals, and routines of the workshop • participate in teacher and peer conferences • explore ways to find writing topics • create personal narratives focused on small moments
Information: All-About and How-To Books	• identify areas of personal expertise and write to teach readers about those subjects • organize writing with specific sections • include various facts, text features, and vocabulary related to the topic • draft with an awareness of audience and purpose
Opinion: Opinions and Reviews	• recognize the different genres of writing • write opinion pieces about collections, places, and books • develop a reason for an opinion • organize written pieces with introductions, details, and ending statements

Grade 1 Mathematics

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 1

Grade 1
Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Grade 1 Mathematics Program?

In first grade...

Student will work with whole numbers and place value as they extend their understanding of addition and subtraction. Students will learn the importance of the numbers 10, and 100 in our place value system and will begin to break numbers apart into 10s and 1s. Students will use this understanding to order and compare two-digit numbers. Students will deepen their understanding of addition and subtraction by exploring the meaning of the equal sign (=) and by learning the rules of addition and subtraction. Students will be solving word problems and adding one and two-digit numbers together. Students will also use tables, charts, and diagrams to help them solve problems. Measurement and geometry are explored through comparing objects and lengths, while fractions are introduced as students divide rectangles and circles into halves and quarters.

Areas of Focus	*Students will…*
Operations and Algebraic Thinking • Number Bonds • Addition Facts to 10 • Subtraction Facts to 10 • Addition and Subtraction Facts to 20 • Addition and Subtraction to 40 • Addition and Subtraction to 100	• recognize combinations of numbers which add to 10 • add and subtract, using strategies • understand subtraction as an unknown-addend problem • understand the meaning of the equal sign and determine if an equation is balanced • solve addition and subtraction word problems
Number and Operations – Base Ten • Numbers to 10 • Numbers to 20 • Numbers to 40 • Numbers to 120	• understand the value and order of numbers • understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones • solve addition and subtraction problems
Measurement and Data • Length • Picture Graphs and Bar Graphs • Calendar and Time	• measure and order objects by length • organize, represent, and interpret data • read a calendar and tell time to the hour and half hour
Geometry • Shapes and Patterns	• explore, identify, and compare two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes

Grade 1 Science

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 1

Grade 1

Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Grade 1 Science Program?

In first grade...

The first-grade science unit focuses on the properties of light and sound. Through both digital and hands-on platforms, students use their developing inquiry skills to learn about how human beings create fun and useful things.

In addition to the units of study, students have additional opportunities throughout the year to investigate and learn about scientific concepts through reading, videos, and activities that build their abilities to:

- make observations and ask questions
- find information from a variety of sources
- design and conduct investigations
- collect, analyze, and interpret data
- propose and test solutions
- communicate findings
- use appropriate measurement tools, mathematics, and technology

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Light and Sound	• explore, analyze, and identify properties of light and sound • recognize various purposes of light and sound in the world • design solutions to real-life situations that involve the use of light and sound

Grade 1 Social Studies

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 1

Grade 1

Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Grade 1 Social Studies Program?

In first grade...

Students explore and study school and family communities, focusing on themselves and their roles within communities. Through the integration of social studies with reading, writing, speaking, and listening, students learn about what defines a community and the responsibilities that various community members have. Students continue to develop their ability to ask meaningful questions and explore the answers.

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Family	• recognize that in the family community, everyone has roles, responsibilities and rights, all of which provide order, safety and respect so the family can be successful • learn that families have many different cultural traditions and beliefs
School	• learn that within the classroom community, people have roles, responsibilities, and rights, all of which provide order, safety, and respect so the community can be successful • recognize that in the school community, as in the classroom community, people have roles, responsibilities, and rights, all of which provide order, safety, respect so the community can be successful

If you have any questions on the material contained in this handbook, please contact:

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