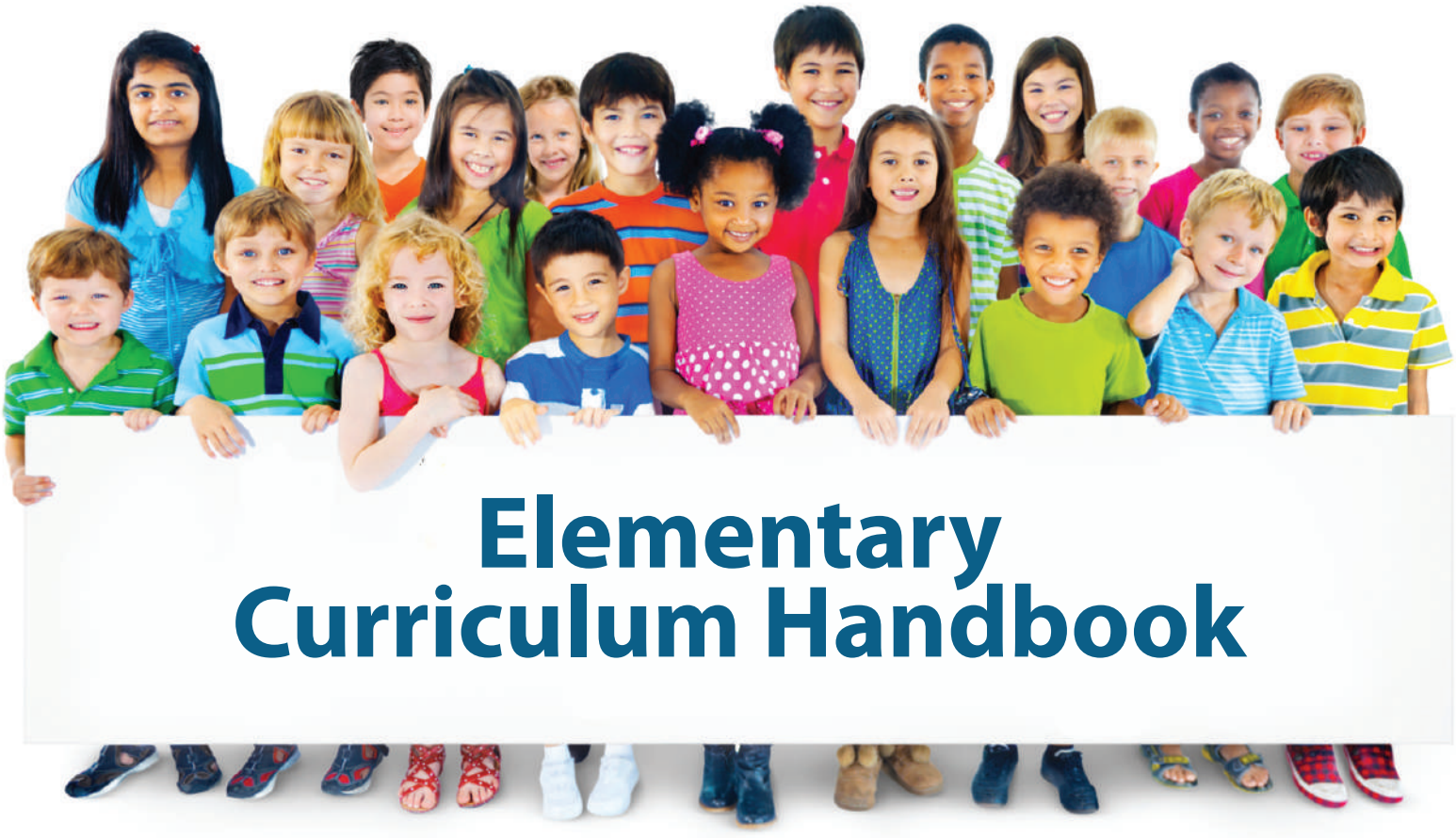


Elementary Curriculum Handbook

A Publication of the Simsbury Public Schools

Revised August 2021

Grade 5

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.

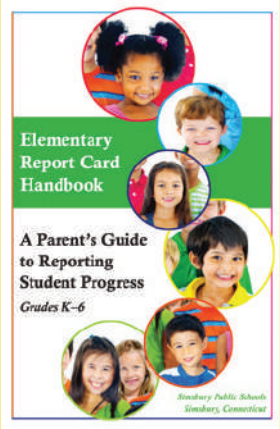
This curriculum handbook is one of the many ways the Simsbury Public Schools supports communication between home and school. We hope that the information will enhance your understanding of the elementary school curriculum and will enrich your role as an active participant in your child's education.

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.

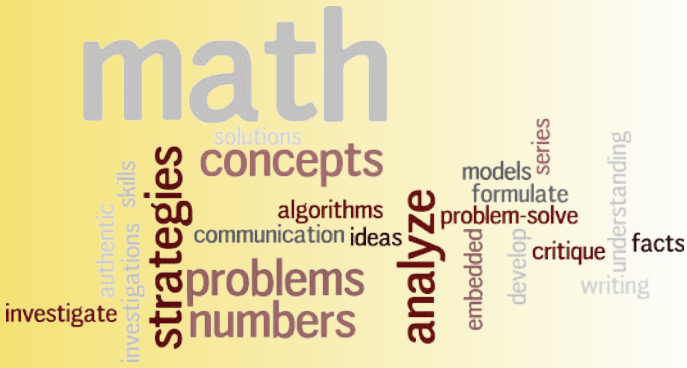
The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' comprehensive language arts program include:

- 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 5 Language Arts

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 5

Grade 5
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.

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…*
Interpretation Book Clubs	• read thoughtfully and strengthen reading strategies of analyzing characters and identifying themes in literature • talk and write in meaningful ways about books • create a year-long reader's notebook to record their thinking in independent reading and their thinking about class read aloud books • create personal reading goals
Tackling Complexity—Nonfiction	• identify how texts at this level become more complex and develop reading strategies to deal with the difficulties they encounter • determine multiple main ideas and key details in nonfiction texts in order to summarize learning • build independent nonfiction reading lives outside of school • follow their interests and be a strong reader of nonfiction • learn how to be an independent researcher • become critical readers by not taking facts for face value, but making their own connections, raising their own questions, and growing their own ideas from the text

READING

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Argument and Advocacy—Nonfiction Research	• read across a variety of nonfiction texts to research a specific topic and compare information • develop specific questions to guide and deepen research focus • acquire and apply specific vocabulary when speaking and writing about research topics • determine multiple main ideas and key details • integrate information from multiple sources to synthesize learning • identify and think critically about the author's point of view and bias • share research-based learning with others
Short Text	• closely read and respond to a variety of short texts (poems, short stories, pictures books, articles) in conjunction with independent reading books • use comprehension strategies (rereading, questioning, inferring, making connections, envisioning, synthesizing, monitoring for understanding) • identify themes in literature • demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
Fantasy Book Clubs	• engage in book club conversations with increasing independence and purpose • navigate the other worlds of their novels (complicated settings, multiple characters, multiple plotlines, etc.) • trace the way characters change • analyze techniques authors use and how those techniques impact the story • explore quests and themes that reveal themselves within and across novels • come to an understanding that fantasy has parallels with the real world • interpret symbolism and allegory to help understand underlying themes in a story

Fifth-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	• implement the structures, rituals, and routines of writing workshop • recognize the importance of writing in their lives and the lives of others • recall and apply previous learning and knowledge about writing • share important elements of identity through writing various types of texts
Narrative	• implement the structures, rituals, and routines of the workshop • create a writer's notebook • implement strategies for finding topics • focus stories on small moments, expanding actions, dialogue, thoughts, and feelings • write with clear organizational structures, developing the beginning and providing a meaningful resolution or story message • include precise and sensory details and figurative language to bring stories to life
Information	• identify and develop areas of expertise and develop questions to extend knowledge through research and exploration • write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly through various text features and organizational structures • incorporate and blend known information with newly learned facts, details, research, and quotes • identify and attend to audience, using specific vocabulary, varied sentence structure, and precise language
Research-Based Essay	• write opinion pieces on debatable topics supporting a point of view with reasons • learn from each other through debate and collaboration in order to strengthen or restructure claims • engage in research, categorizing, organizing, and integrating evidence • organize information into reasons with supporting evidence that address the claim

Grade 5 Mathematics

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 5

Grade 5
Art, Music, PE

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

What is the Simsbury Grade 5 Mathematics Program?

In fifth grade...

Students will build their understanding of place value by working with decimals to the thousandths place. Students will extend their fraction work to include multiplying fractions and dividing fractions with whole numbers. They will continue to expand their understanding of measurement and geometry by learning about volume (and how to measure the volume of a solid figure) and how to convert units of measure. The chart below provides an overview of the broad areas of mathematics students will be studying in fifth grade. In addition to these broad concepts, instruction in discrete math skills will be provided as well.

Areas of Focus	*Students will...*
Operations and Algebraic Thinking • Whole Number Multiplication and Division, including Exponents and Order of Operations	• write and interpret numerical expressions • generate numerical patterns
Number and Operations – Base Ten • Whole Numbers • Whole Number Multiplication and Division, including Exponents and Order of Operations • Decimals • Adding and Subtracting Decimals • Multiplying and Dividing Decimals	• understand the place value system • multi-digit multiplication using the standard algorithm • multi-digit division using strategies based on place value and the relationship with multiplication • compare and round decimals in thousandths • extend place value understanding to add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals
Number and Operations – Fractions • Fractions and Mixed Numbers • Multiplying and Dividing Fractions and Mixed Numbers	• solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of fractions with unlike denominators • apply and extend previous understanding of multiplication and division to multiply and divide fractions and mixed numbers by fractions or whole numbers
Measurement and Data • Volume • Conversion of Measurements	• understand the concept of volume and relate volume to multiplication • find the volume of right rectangular prisms • convert among different-sized standard measurement units and use these conversions in solving real-world problems
Geometry • Graphs • Properties of Triangles and Four-Sided Figures	• graph points on the coordinate plane to solve real-world problems • classify two-dimensional figures into categories based on their properties

Grade 5 Science

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 5

Grade 5

Art, Music, PE

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

What is the Simsbury Grade 5 Science Program?

In fifth grade...

Fifth-graders focus on the components, patterns, and features of the solar system. In addition to the unit of study, students have 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 measurement tools, mathematics, and technology

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Stars and the Solar System	• understand that differences in the apparent brightness of the sun compared to other stars is due to their relative distances from Earth • investigate patterns in the daily, monthly, and seasonal changes of shadows, day/night, and climate • develop a model to describe that matter is made of particles too small to be seen • measure quantities to provide evidence that regardless of the type of change that occurs when heating, cooling, or mixing substances, the total weight of matter is conserved • identify materials based on their properties

Grade 5 Social Studies

Elementary Report Cards

Grade 5

Grade 5
Art, Music, PE

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

What is the Simsbury Grade 5 Social Studies Program?

In fifth grade...

Students will learn, explore, and analyze events, people, documents, and historic trends that led to the establishment of the United States. Beginning with the Age of Exploration, students will continue by studying American colonization. The integration of social studies with reading, writing, speaking, and listening promotes students' continued development of integrating information and asking questions in order to deepen their learning.

Unit of Study	*In this unit students will…*
Exploration	• understand how exploration and colonization of North America transformed human history • describe how global trade and cultural exchanges alter the lives of people around the world • identify personal freedoms among individuals and groups that significantly affect us today • recognize that conflicts between cultures and countries contrast with trade and development of self-rule • learn that geography is the foundation for civilization, settlement, and culture
The American Colonies	• learn the relationships that exist between individuals and government • explain the need to organize in order to survive in new places • compare and contrast how where people live impacts how they live • trace the evolving relationship between England and its American colonies

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

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