



Parent's Backpack Guide

to Montana's New English Standards (Grades 6-12)

In 2011, Montana adopted new, more challenging, English and math standards to ensure that all children graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed. These standards provide clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: **reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics**. This guide is designed to help you understand how the English standards will affect your child, what changes you can expect to see in their homework, and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

For grade-by-grade resources, visit <http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>

What's changing?	What to look for in the backpack?	What can you do?
Students will learn about the world by reading as much non-fiction as fiction.	Look for your student to have more reading assignments from longer and more challenging books and articles.	• Encourage your student to read more fiction and nonfiction books by setting an example. • Visit a library or book store together and ask the librarian or bookseller to recommend age appropriate books.
Students will talk and write about reading using evidence from the text.	Assignments will ask your student to evaluate arguments and specific claims, assess whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is sufficient, and detect inconsistencies. Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence.	• Discuss what you read. • Listen with your child to a television reporter, politician, or other speaker. Ask your child to tell you the speaker's main points. • Encourage writing at home. Check your child's writing for use of evidence and details.
Students will know more vocabulary words. Literacy will be a shared responsibility for all teachers from English to History and Science.	Assignments may ask your student to determine the correct meaning of a word based on the context in which it is used (e.g., the rest of the sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence). Your child will be asked to use strong, active verbs to create a clear picture for the reader (e.g., walk, skip, meander, lurch, limp). Look for content-specific vocabulary from each subject.	• Invite your child to participate in an adult gathering, such as a meal with friends, to practice listening skills and making conversation. • Make time in everyone's busy schedule for family discussions about things going on around the world. • Discuss complex vocabulary from real-world sources, such as news and journal articles.





Parent's Backpack Guide

to Montana's New **Math** Standards (Grades 6-12)

In 2011, Montana adopted new, more challenging, English and math standards to ensure that all children graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed. These standards provide clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: **reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics**. This guide is designed to help you understand how the

Math standards will affect your child, what changes you can expect to see in their homework, and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

For grade-by-grade resources, visit <http://www.pta.org/4446.htm>

What's changing?	What to look for in the backpack?	What can you do?
Students will have a deeper understanding of fewer concepts.	Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer. Look for assignments that build on one another.	- Know what concepts are important for your child based on your child's grade level and spend time working on those concepts. - Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward.
Students will "Really know it, really do it."	Look for assignments that ask your child to go beyond memorization of formulas and into learning the foundations of mathematics.	- Ask your child to share with you any work he or she is doing in math class that strikes him or her as interesting. - Advocate for the time your child needs to learn key math skills. - Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands why as well as what the answer is.
Students will use math in real-world situations.	Look for math assignments that are based on the real world.	- Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life. For example, determine the average speed of a family trip based on the distance traveled and the time taken; or estimate the time that a trip will take, given the distance and an estimate of the average speed. - Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home.

