

GRADE

10

## What's my child learning in school?

### *Reading, Writing, and Math*

*An Introduction to  
Washington's Grade Level Expectations*



Washington State

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# Introduction

The joke you've probably heard is that if you ask a young teen what happened at school, the answer is always the same: *Nothing*.

This publication offers a different answer: examples of the learning that should be going on in your child's school.

Washington state has put a lot of time and effort into deciding exactly what students should know when they graduate from high school. You may know a teacher, parent, or community member who was involved in this important and complex work. All of the state's schools and teachers are working hard to help students achieve these Grade Level Expectations, sometimes called G-L-Es.

Teachers use a variety of ways to measure student learning in their own classrooms. The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) is a test used all across the state as a way to confirm that students have developed strong skills and knowledge. **High school students must achieve proficiency on the 10th-grade WASL in reading, writing, and math to graduate from high school. Beginning in 2010, they also must show proficiency in science.**

We know from research that when parents take an interest in their children's education, ask questions about their learning, and show that they have high expectations, their children achieve more.

The more you learn about the Grade Level Expectations, the better prepared you will be to help your child succeed.



# Reading

In 10th grade, your young person will become a skilled reader who can understand challenging materials, use several sources of information to develop a better understanding of a literary work, and analyze and interpret complex ideas and arguments.

## Here are some of the things your child should be able to do:

- Explain the meaning of words that are found in reading materials required for other subjects, such as *regeneration, isolationism, emancipation, polarized*.
- Given several choices, choose a title that best fits an essay or article, and give details that support the choice.
- Compare and contrast how a theme such as moving from childhood to adulthood is treated by different authors in different genres.
- Identify the intended effect of vocabulary used to persuade, such as loaded words, exaggeration, emotional words, and euphemisms.
- Use different reading strategies for different purposes: skimming for big ideas, close reading for details, and drawing conclusions from graphs and charts.

## ***You can help***

High school students are always on the go. Make time with the family a priority, and use some of that time to read together.

Ask your young person to read once in a while to a younger brother, sister, or neighbor.

Choose a movie your family loves that is based on a book, and then read the book and discuss together how it compares with the movie.

It's not too early to begin the application process for a summer job, community college, or university admission. Spend some time together reading want ads or college catalogs.

# Writing

In 10th grade, your young person will become a confident and proficient writer, capable of choosing the most appropriate form of writing to achieve the desired result for a specific audience. You can expect to see work that demonstrates the ability to develop ideas clearly while using vivid vocabulary and complex forms of punctuation.

## Here are some of the things your child should be able to do:

- Analyze a draft to decide if another draft is needed, and justify the decision.
- Write to meet a deadline.
- Understand and identify a specific audience with respect for different cultural backgrounds and differences of opinion.
- Write in a number of forms, such as a parody, editorial, proposal, résumé, and memoir.
- Know correct usage for words such as *who* vs. *whom*, *that* vs. *which*, and *either/or* vs. *neither/nor*.

## ***You can help***

Ask your young person to write a letter predicting the future, and put it in a time capsule.

Have each member of the family write a synopsis of the year. Use everyone's contributions in cards or letters you send to relatives and friends.

Take turns being critic of the month, with each family member writing a review of a book, TV program, or movie. Share the reviews around the dinner table.

Like the development of any skill, writing takes practice. Encourage your young person to keep a diary or journal of experiences, ideas, goals, and dreams.

# Mathematics

In 10th grade, your young person will become a proficient mathematician — one who can work with very large and very small numbers; solve multistep equations; use both the U.S. and metric systems of measurement; use a variety of methods and formulas to find the area, volume, and shape of a line; and analyze statistical arguments for accuracy and bias.

## Here are some of the problems your child should be able to solve:

- The U.S. population is approximately 281 million, and the national debt is approximately 6 trillion. If this debt were shared equally, what would be the debt in dollars per person? Use scientific notation to find and explain a solution.
- Given three points on the coordinate plane, locate a fourth point to form a parallelogram. Find more than one solution.
- Solve  $4x + 2 = 4(3 - 5x)$ .
- Design two packages for a given volume. Solve for and compare the surface areas required for the two packages.
- Select two different polling processes to apply to a single question for a survey. Compare the two processes, and recommend one.

## ***You can help***

Give your young person math problems that have to be solved in your household: the percent of the budget spent on groceries, interest earned on a savings account over the course of the year, or the number of quarts needed to paint a room or the outside of the garage.

Math is essential in many occupations. Help your young person identify jobs that require strong math skills and jobs that call for basic math skills. The list for either category should be long.

About 48 percent of Washington 10th graders achieved proficiency on the math WASL in 2005. Passing this test may require extra effort on your child's part. Ask your child what he or she needs in the way of support and encouragement from you.

# Learning more

Your child's school is the place to start to get better informed about Grade Level Expectations. Each school in the state has copies of subject area manuals published by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction that show the progression of what students learn from kindergarten through 10th grade. These manuals provide several examples of "evidence" for each GLE: ways your child may show what has been learned. You can make an appointment to get better acquainted with what's being taught or ask for more information at a parent-teacher conference or school open house.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find all of the Grade Level Expectations for reading, math, writing, communications, and science, along with helpful examples and definitions of terms such as *genres* in literature and *bivariate data* in probability. To access this information:

- go to [www.k12.wa.us/ealrs](http://www.k12.wa.us/ealrs),
- click a circle to show the grade level you want, and
- choose a subject area from the drop-down menu.

If a word in a description is underlined, you can click on it to learn the word's meaning. Many of the descriptions also have examples. To view these, click on the *e*.

There is no shortage of online resources to refresh your memory of what you learned in school so that you can reinforce your child's studies. Two that offer specific help with definitions of terms and sample problems are <http://homeworkhelp.aol.com> and [www.math.com](http://www.math.com).

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