

PARENTS' GUIDE TO ARTS LEARNING IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

GRADES 3-4-5

Dance • Media Arts • Music • Theatre • Visual Arts

Snapshot of Arts Learning in Third Grade

Third graders get excited about describing their thoughts orally and in writing, which leads them to more creating, performing, presenting, producing, responding, and connecting in the arts. They use their skills in the arts to portray what they imagine. They create and perform original dance sequences more expressively and also perform dances from various countries with a partner or a group. This adds to their collection of dance movements. They develop multiple ideas for media artworks using a variety of tools, methods, and materials and complete purposeful media arts productions. Their musical knowledge increases as they focus on rhythmic patterns, musical forms, melody, harmony and timbre when reading, writing and performing music. Increased listening skills are applied as they identify those qualities in music selections. Singing from memory helps them improve their accuracy. In third grade, students explore how stories are adapted from literature to produce drama or theatre works. Their visual arts experiences lead them to creating the illusion of depth in a painting and they gain skills in a growing number of media such as watercolor and printmaking. Students also become familiar with local artists and their works as well as artists from throughout California and from various parts of the world.



Snapshot of Arts Learning in Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students have become active participants in their own learning. Building on what they learned and experiences in the arts since Pre-Kindergarten, they recognize the artist within themselves, and they see how they can apply what they have learned in each of the arts to learning in other areas of the curriculum. Project-based learning allows them to, for example, share what they learned through monologues about an important person from history and draw and paint pictures of landscapes or do murals that represent the various biospheres in the world. In media arts, students begin to identify and apply basic criteria for evaluating and improving media artworks. In music, they are ready to present the final version of music they personally created and to explain the expressive intent. In dance, they can present a study that expresses and communicates a significant main idea which is developed and performed.

Students are communicating through the arts as they are expanding their creative expression abilities.

Dance • Media Arts • Music • Theatre • Visual Arts

The key examples of arts learning that follow are based on the California Arts Standards. The purposes of the Arts Standards are to promote students' lifelong appreciation and understanding of the arts in ways that are enjoyable, fulfilling, and transferable to personal, academic, and professional pursuits. Learning outcomes for all students are identified in the standards and they guide teachers to provide a unified quality arts education so that these outcomes are achieved. The Standards build from grade to grade and embody grade- and age-appropriate key concepts, processes, and traditions of study in each of the five artistic disciplines. They are process-oriented, grade-appropriate indicators of what students need to know and be able to do and communicate high achievable aims. Media Arts are now included in the Standards as a distinct, stand-alone arts discipline along with Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts. Media Arts includes photography, imaging, sound, animation, video, web design, graphic design, virtual design, interactive design, as well as their combinations and emerging forms such as multimedia and virtual design.

Snapshot of Arts Learning in Fifth Grade

Fifth-grade students are maturing in their desire and ability to talk about, describe and evaluate their work in the arts and the work of others. They have grown in their sense of what they like and dislike and can substantiate their opinion using specific criteria as they evaluate their own work and the work of others. Fifth graders apply more complex concepts to their creation, performance, presentation, and production in the arts. They use a variety of choreographic devices to develop a main idea when inventing new dance sequences and they envision original ideas and innovations for media artworks based on their personal experiences. In music, they generate musical ideas such as rhythms, melodies and simple accompaniment patterns and can create innovative solutions to technical theatre problems that arise in rehearsals. Fifth graders demonstrate quality craftsmanship through their care and use of materials, tools, and equipment. Along with this, students explore the rich history of the arts in the United States and in various cultures.



Dance Education Grades 3-4-5

Examples of Dance Learning in Third Grade

- Changing the use of energy and dynamics by modifying movements and applying specific characteristics to heighten the effect of their intent.
- Replicating body shapes, movement characteristics, and movement patterns in a dance sequence with awareness of body alignment and core support.
- Adjusting body-use to coordinate with a partner or other dancers to safely change levels, directions, and pathway designs.
- Identifying the main areas of a performance space using production terminology (e.g., stage right, stage left, center stage, upstage, and downstage).

Examples of Dance Learning in Fourth Grade

- Developing a dance study that expresses and communicates a main idea and discussing the reasons and effectiveness of the movement choices.
- Analyzing and refining phrases by incorporating a greater range of energy and dynamic changes to heighten the effect of their intent.
- Finding patterns of movements in dance works that create a style or theme.
- Selecting and describing movements in a specific genre or style and explain how the movements relate to the culture, society, historical period, or community from which the dance originated.

Examples of Dance Learning in Fifth Grade

- Dancing to a variety of rhythms generated from internal and external sources and performing movement phrases that show the ability to respond to changes in time.
- Recalling and executing a series of dance phrases using technical dance skills such as alignment, coordination, balance, core support, and clarity of movement.
- Identifying, exploring, and selecting production elements that heighten and intensify the artistic intent of a dance and are adaptable for various performance spaces.
- Interpreting meaning in a dance based on its movements and explaining how the movements communicate the main idea of the dance using basic dance terminology.

Students with an arts education are 4X more likely to be recognized for academic achievement*

GRADES 3-4-5



*Source: Arts Ed Navigator by Americans for the Arts
[issuu.com/americans4arts/docs/afta_navigator_facts-and-figures](https://www.americans4arts.com/docs/afta_navigator_facts-and-figures)

Media Arts Education Grades 3-4-5



Examples of Media Arts Learning in Third Grade

- Developing multiple ideas for media artworks using a variety of tools, methods and/or materials.
- Forming, sharing, and testing ideas, plans, and/or models to prepare for media arts productions.
- Practicing combining varied academic, arts, and media forms and content into unified media artworks, such as animation, music, and dance.
- Identifying how media artworks and ideas relate to everyday life and culture and can influence values and online behavior.

Examples of Media Arts Learning in Fourth Grade

- Determining and explaining reactions and interpretations to a variety of media artworks, considering their purpose and context.
- Examining and using personal and external resources to create media artworks, such as interests, research, and cultural understanding.
- Explaining verbally and/or in media artworks, how media artworks and ideas relate to everyday life and culture, such as fantasy and reality, and technology use.
- Identifying, describing, and explaining how various forms, methods, and styles in media artworks manage audience experience.

Examples of Media Arts Learning in Fifth Grade

- Creating content and combining components to convey expression, purpose, and meaning in a variety of media arts productions, utilizing sets of associated aesthetic principles, such as emphasis and exaggeration.
- Creating media artworks through the integration of multiple contents and forms, such as a media broadcast.
- Comparing qualities and purposes of presentation formats, associated processes, results, and improvements for presentation of media artworks.
- Determining and applying criteria for evaluating media artworks and production processes, considering context, and practicing constructive feedback.

Creating media artworks through the integration of multiple contents and forms, such as a media broadcast.



Music Education Grades 3-4-5

In elementary school students participate in Music instruction and may also receive instruction in Harmonizing Instruments and Ensembles. A description of learning in each of these areas follows the Music examples of learning.

Examples of Music Learning in Third Grade

- Generating musical ideas (such as rhythms and melodies) within a given tonality and/or meter.
- Demonstrating and describing how intent is conveyed through expressive qualities (such as voice quality, dynamics and tempo).
- Demonstrating and describing how selected music connects to and is influenced by specific interests, experiences, or purposes.
- Identifying and demonstrating how personal interests, experiences, and ideas relate to creating, performing, and responding to music.

Examples of Music Learning in Fourth Grade

- Presenting the final version of personally created music to others and explaining the connection to expressive intent.
- Demonstrating and explaining how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, context, and technical skill.
- Applying teacher provided and collaboratively developed criteria and feedback to evaluate accuracy and expressiveness of ensemble and personal performances.
- Demonstrating and explaining how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context (such as personal, social and cultural).

Examples of Music Learning in Fifth Grade

- Generating musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and accompaniment patterns) within specific related tonalities, meters, and simple chord changes.
- Explaining how context (such as personal, social cultural and historical) informs performances.
- Performing music, alone or with others, with expression, technical accuracy, and appropriate interpretation.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance.

Harmonizing Instruments

Students create and make music with harmonizing instruments, such as ukulele, guitar, and piano. They work either individually or collaboratively with their peers to listen, create, share, and engage in music. While connecting with their musical interests and ideas, students experience music making, arrangement, composition, and performance, while also personally responding and connecting to various current and past genres and styles. Students engage in informal music learning as they explore their instrument to make sounds, sing as they play, improvise, compose, listen to, and learn or perform a piece they have heard.

Ensemble

An ensemble is a group who perform instrumental or vocal music together. Ensemble instruction requires students to generate musical ideas and provides the foundation for music creation, while inviting students to explore sound and its many elements within a diverse ensemble. Students playing within ensembles work collaboratively with their peers to listen, share, and engage in music. While sharing their musical interests, connections, and ideas, students experience music making by arranging, composing, and performing with various instruments and timbres. They play and perform in different genres and in a variety of styles, as well as improvise and create original rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, which are connected to various current and past genres and styles.



Theatre Education Grades 3-4-5

Examples of Theatre Learning in Third Grade

- Creating roles, imagined worlds, and improvised stories in a drama/theatre work.
- Imagining and articulating ideas for costumes, props and sets for the environment and characters in a drama/theatre work.
- Applying the elements of dramatic structure to a story and creating a drama/theatre work.
- Sharing small-group drama/theatre work, with peers as audience.

Examples of Theatre Learning in Fourth Grade

- Collaborating to devise original ideas for a drama/theatre work by asking questions about characters and plots.
- Adapting the dialogue and action to change the story in a drama/theatre work.
- Developing and implementing a plan to evaluate drama/theatre work.
- Imagining and identifying the ways drama/theatre work reflects the perspectives of a community or culture.

Examples of Theatre Learning in Fifth Grade

- Identifying physical qualities that might reveal a character's inner traits in the imagined world of a drama/theatre work.
- Revising and refining an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work through rehearsal, collaborative review, and reflection.
- Creating innovative solutions to design and technical theatre element problems that arise in rehearsal for a drama/theatre work.
- Explaining personal reactions to artistic choices made in a drama/theatre work through participation and observation.

Visual Arts Education Grades 3-4-5

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Third Grade

- Identifying exhibit space and preparing works of art, including artist statements, for presentation.
- Speculating about processes an artist used to create a work of art.
- Determining messages communicated by an image.
- Developing a work of art based on observations of surroundings.

Determining messages communicated by an image.

Examples Visual Arts Learning in Fourth Grade

- Brainstorming individual and collaborative approaches to a creative art or design problem.
- Revising artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussions.
- Comparing and contrasting purposes of art museums, art galleries, and other venues, as well as the types of personal experiences they provide.
- Creating works of art that reflect community cultural traditions.

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Fifth Grade

- Experimenting and developing skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.
- Demonstrating quality craftsmanship through care for and use of materials, tools, and equipment.
- Identifying, describing, and visually documenting places and/or objects of personal significance.
- Identifying how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.



Talking to Your Child's Teacher About Arts Education

Arts education programs vary widely throughout the state as to what is offered, how much time is spent on arts learning and who teaches the arts. When you talk to your child's teacher about the arts program, it will be helpful to get a clear picture of your child's opportunity to engage in arts learning as well as the content and/or focus of the instruction at this grade span. Following are questions that may guide a conversation with your child's teacher.

1. How much instructional time does my child receive per week or month or during the school year in each of the arts: dance, media arts, music, theatre and visual arts? Is this time dedicated to the arts or are the arts integrated into learning in other areas of the curriculum? (Note: The California Education Code requires instruction in dance, music, theatre and visual arts for grades one through grade twelve.)
2. Who teaches each of the arts to my child at this grade level? Here are some examples: the classroom teacher, a credentialed dance, music, theatre and/or visual art teacher, a teaching artist from a community arts organization or a volunteer such as a media artist or a parent.
3. Is arts instruction based on the state standards and is it sequential through the grade levels?
4. What does my child particularly enjoy and/or need to work on in each of the arts disciplines?
5. Reflecting on the list of examples of arts learning provided in this document at my child's grade level, what are two or three of your curricular goals for the students in each of the arts?

Learn more about expanding or improving the Arts Education Program at Your Child's School in Appendix 1.

Find more resources by contacting other statewide organizations that support arts education in Appendix 2.

Helping Your Child Learn in the Arts at School, at Home and in the Community

At school:

- Volunteer your time by assisting in the classroom when the arts are being taught.
- Share your personal expertise in the arts through school or classroom performances, demonstrations and lessons.
- Share your expertise in a folk or traditional art form with your child's class.
- Assist with costumes and props for theatre and dance.
- Offer support for the arts program by donating supplies and/or equipment for the arts program.

At home:

- Talk about good health-related habits that a dancer, like an athlete, would need.
- Ask your child about the media arts techniques he or she is learning and see if you can find a similar learning program to put on your computer.
- Ask your child to teach you a simple song or musical pattern such as ABA.
- After reading a story with your child, ask him/her to talk about the main character, the setting and the conflict in the story.
- Set up an "art space" for your child where she/he can keep a pad of white paper, a box of crayons and a beginner's set of watercolors along with a brush and a plastic cup for water. Don't forget the paper towels.

In the community:

- Support your child's learning in the arts with lessons and experiences outside of school or on-line at art museums or art centers and with community dance, theatre and music groups or teachers.
- See if art museums have free days and activities for families or if performing artists are appearing in a park, library or other public place.
- Take your child to art gallery exhibits and performances of dance, music and theatre that are appropriate for this grade level.
- Ask your teacher if there is a media arts program you can use on your computer at home and work with it alongside of your child at home sharing the experience together.