

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICS

Standards for Mathematical Practice

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These practices rest on important “processes and proficiencies” with longstanding importance in mathematics education. The first of these are the NCTM process standards of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation, and connections. The second are the strands of mathematical proficiency specified in the National Research Council’s report *Adding It Up*: adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding (comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations and relations), procedural fluency (skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately), and productive disposition (habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one’s own efficacy).

1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Mathematically proficient students:

- explain to themselves the meaning of a problem and looking for entry points to its solution.
- analyze givens, constraints, relationships, and goals.
- make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt.
- consider analogous problems, and try special cases and simpler forms of the original problem in order to gain insight into its solution.
- monitor and evaluate their progress and change course if necessary.
- transform algebraic expressions or change the viewing window on their graphing calculator to get the information they need.
- explain correspondences between equations, verbal descriptions, tables, and graphs or draw diagrams of important features and relationships, graph data, and search for regularity or trends.
- use concrete objects or pictures to help conceptualize and solve a problem.
- check their answers to problems using a different method
- ask themselves, “Does this make sense?”
- understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems
- identify correspondences between different approaches.

2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

Mathematically proficient students:

- make sense of the quantities and their relationships in problem situations.
 - ✓ *Decontextualize* - abstract a given situation and represent it symbolically and manipulate the representing symbols as if they have a life of their own, without necessarily attending to their referents
 - ✓ *Contextualize* - pause as needed during the manipulation process in order to probe into the referents for the symbols involved.
- use quantitative reasoning entails habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand; considering the units involved; attending to the meaning of quantities, not just how to compute them
- know and flexibly using different properties of operations and objects.

3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

Mathematically proficient students:

- understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments.
- make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures.
- analyze situations by breaking them into cases
- can recognize and use counterexamples.
- justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others.
- reason inductively about data, making plausible arguments that take into account the context from which the data arose.
- compare the effectiveness of two plausible arguments
- distinguish correct logic or reasoning from that which is flawed, and—if there is a flaw in an argument—explain what it is.
 - ✓ elementary students can construct arguments using concrete referents such as objects, drawings, diagrams, and actions. Such arguments can make sense and be correct, even though they are not generalized or made formal until later grades.
 - ✓ later students learn to determine domains to which an argument applies.
- listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments.

4 Model with mathematics.

Mathematically proficient students:

- apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace.
 - ✓ In early grades, this might be as simple as writing an addition equation to describe a situation. In middle grades, a student might apply proportional reasoning to plan a school event or analyze a problem in the community.
 - ✓ By high school, a student might use geometry to solve a design problem or use a function to describe how one quantity of interest depends on another.
- make assumptions and approximations to simplify a complicated situation, realizing that these may need revision later.
- identify important quantities in a practical situation
- map their relationships using such tools as diagrams, two-way tables, graphs, flowcharts and formulas.
- analyze those relationships mathematically to draw conclusions.
- interpret their mathematical results in the context of the situation
- reflect on whether the results make sense, possibly improving the model if it has not served its purpose.

5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

Mathematically proficient students:

- consider the available tools when solving a mathematical problem. These tools might include pencil and paper, concrete models, a ruler, a protractor, a calculator, a spreadsheet, a computer algebra system, a statistical package, or dynamic geometry software.
- familiar with tools appropriate for their grade or course to make sound decisions about when each of these tools might be helpful, recognizing both the insight to be gained and their limitations. For example, mathematically proficient high school students analyze graphs of functions and solutions generated using a graphing calculator.

- detect possible errors by strategically using estimation and other mathematical knowledge. When making mathematical models
- know that technology can enable them to visualize the results of varying assumptions, explore consequences, and compare predictions with data.
- identify relevant external mathematical resources, such as digital content located on a website, and use them to pose or solve problems.
- use technological tools to explore and deepen their understanding of concepts.

6 Attend to precision.

Mathematically proficient students:

- try to communicate precisely to others.
- use clear definitions in discussion with others and in their own reasoning.
- state the meaning of the symbols they choose, including using the equal sign consistently and appropriately.
- specify units of measure, and labeling axes to clarify the correspondence with quantities in a problem.
- calculate accurately and efficiently, express numerical answers with a degree of precision appropriate for the problem context.
 - ✓ In the elementary grades, students give carefully formulated explanations to each other.
 - ✓ In high school they have learned to examine claims and make explicit use of definitions.

7 Look for and make use of structure.

Mathematically proficient students:

- look closely to discern a pattern or structure.
 - ✓ Young students, for example, might notice that three and seven more is the same amount as seven and three more
 - ✓ sort a collection of shapes according to how many sides the shapes have.
 - ✓ Later, students will see 7×8 equals the well remembered $7 \times 5 + 7 \times 3$, in preparation for learning about the distributive property.
 - ✓ In the expression $x^2 + 9x + 14$, older students can see the 14 as 2×7 and the 9 as $2 + 7$.
- recognize the significance of an existing line in a geometric figure and can use the strategy of drawing an auxiliary line for solving problems.
- step back for an overview and shift perspective.
- see complicated things, such as some algebraic expressions, as single objects or as being composed of several objects. For example, they can see $5 - 3(x - y)^2$ as 5 minus a positive number times a square and use that to realize that its value cannot be more than 5 for any real numbers x and y .

8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Mathematically proficient students:

- notice if calculations are repeated
- look both for general methods and for shortcuts.
 - ✓ Upper elementary students might notice when dividing 25 by 11 that they are repeating the same calculations over and over again, and conclude they have a repeating decimal.
 - ✓ By paying attention to the calculation of slope as they repeatedly check whether points are on the line through (1, 2) with slope 3, middle school students might abstract the equation $(y - 2)/(x - 1) = 3$. Noticing the regularity in the way terms cancel when expanding $(x - 1)(x + 1)$, $(x - 1)(x^2 + x + 1)$, and $(x - 1)(x^3 + x^2 + x + 1)$ might lead them to the general formula for the sum of a geometric series.
- maintain oversight of the process, while attending to the details.
- evaluate the reasonableness of their intermediate results.