

Resources

Oakmont Carnegie Library

Kerr Museum

Verona Historical Society

Oakmont Historical Society

Local Galleries

Steel City Rowing

WQED

Carnegie Museums/Science Center

Andy Warhol Museum

Frick Art and Historical Center

Mattress Factory

Children's Museum

Pittsburgh History and Landmarks
Foundation

Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium

Cathedral of Learning Nationality Rooms

Three Rivers Arts Festival

Heinz History Center

Phipps Conservatory

Pittsburgh Symphony (Fiddlesticks)

Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (Byham, Benedum,
Heinz Hall, Civic Light Opera)

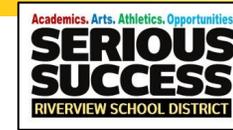
Pittsburgh Aviary

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Strategies for Parents: Helping Your Child to Be an Effective Writer



This pamphlet is intended to provide parents with an overview of expectations for their children as writers, and to provide strategies that parents can use at home to help their students to engage in pre-writing and writing strategies.

The suggested conversations, activities and experiences are intended to reinforce what your child is learning in school with regard to literacy. Research shows that children of all ages benefit from experiences with culture and literacy outside of school. Any time you spend reading to or with your child, or discussing their experiences and thoughts is an important investment in their learning.

"Serious Commitment to Student Success"



What are the PA Core Standards?

Children across Pennsylvania are expected to learn new strategies and stronger academic standards called the PA Core Standards. These standards are not curriculum, but rather an outline of what students should know by the end of each grade level. To measure the progress that students are making toward achieving the standards, schools assess student performance on the PSSA Test in Grades 3-8 and the Keystone Exams in high school. This year, the new English Language Arts component of the test will require students to demonstrate the ability to analyze passages, think deeply, and activate prior knowledge in their written responses.

PA Core
Writing
Requires
Analysis!

Analysis is identifying the elements of a reading or problem, examining their meaning or relationships, and using prior knowledge to understand the reading or problem.

Writing : PA Core Text Dependent Analysis Prompt Examples

4th Grade English Language Arts Sample Prompt:

Write an essay analyzing how the author's organization of the passage helps the reader to understand the tasks. Use the information from the passage to support your response.

6th Grade English Language Arts Sample Prompt:

The passage and the poem address a similar theme. Write an essay analyzing how the passage and the poem develop this theme. Use evidence from both the passage and the poem.

8th Grade English Language Arts Sample Prompt:

The editorial focuses on teen use of text messaging. Write an essay analyzing how the author develops the main argument in the editorial. Use evidence from the editorial to support your response.

In order to earn a score of proficient on a written response, a student will need to demonstrate the following in their writing:

The subject of the response is clear, concise, and specific, the essay is well organized, it is clear the student completely understands the passage, there are examples and citations from the text, there are clear and effective transitions between ideas or paragraphs, and there are no or very few mistakes and they do not interfere with the meaning.



How Can I Support My Child's Skills as a Writer at Home?



Supporting your child as a writer doesn't always mean practicing writing!

There are many ways you can assist your child with developing the critical thinking skills he/she will need in order to be a successful writer. Here are some "do and discuss" approaches you can engage in with your child at home to develop critical thinking skills that will benefit their writing:

Support Student's Ability to Navigate Multiple Texts:

- Read a book; also watch it as a movie and discuss
- Mini-Author Study at Home: read a variety of books by the same author or multiple authors and discuss characteristics together
- Watch the news; read the newspaper

Support Student's Ability to Activate Prior Knowledge and Increase Vocabulary:

- Watch the news; read the newspaper
- Encourage cultural experiences: visit museums, libraries, science and history centers, attend theatre productions

Support Student's Ability to Compare and Contrast:

- Read a book; watch it as a movie and discuss
- Compare and contrast everyday experiences through discussions (restaurants, foods, activities, sporting events, places)

Support Student's Ability to Identify, Consider, and Evaluate Main Idea/Theme and Supporting Details:

- Create! Draw, build, write, or perform in order to develop skills in synthesis and articulation of ideas
- Ask your child to complete this thought: "The lesson/moral of the story is..." and explain why by providing evidence

Support Student's Ability to Think Critically Across A Range of Disciplines and Contexts and Present Evidence to Support Their Writing

- Use everyday experiences and discussion to explore science, history, math, arts: read nutrition labels, watch the weather channel, discuss illustrations in a book, budgeting, read manuals
- Encourage cultural learning experiences: visit museums, libraries, science and history centers, attend theatre productions in order to broaden background knowledge
- Watch and discuss documentaries (for example: NOVA, PBS, American Experience) on television and discuss (consider perspective, conflict, and various movements in history)