

Middletown Township Public Schools

Office of Curriculum and Instruction for Mathematics and Science K-12

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Mifflin
Harcourt.

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Dear Parents,

This year your child is using a new math program called *GO Math!* that offers an engaging and interactive approach to covering the Common Core State Standards. The program emphasizes understanding, computational fluency, and real life applications and is being used by over seven million students across the country. *GO Math!* ©2015 includes:

- a write-in student book which allows students in every grade to problem solve, record, and practice right in their own book, saving time lost by copying from book to paper and giving students an ongoing record of their work. Each lesson also includes two pages of practice and homework;
- *Math On The Spot Videos* featuring *GO Math!* authors providing an engaging instructional tutorial for every lesson to demonstrate important concepts and skills. QR codes in the print student book allow you and your child to view the videos at home by scanning the code with a smart phone or tablet; and
- a variety of online resources for students to access at home as well as in school via the *Think Central* website. Some of these digital resources are: the student “eBook” which is identical to the hardcopy book your child is given for each chapter, “Mega Math” games, “Math Concept Readers”, “Animated Math Models”, and “iTools” virtual manipulatives.

Some of the soon-to-be released features include:

- an *Interactive Student Edition* which works on both computers and tablets to provide an online interactive approach to the lesson and that links to both the *Math On The Spot Videos* as well as to the feature below; and
- the *Personal Math Trainer* which provides personalized practice, homework, and assessment online.

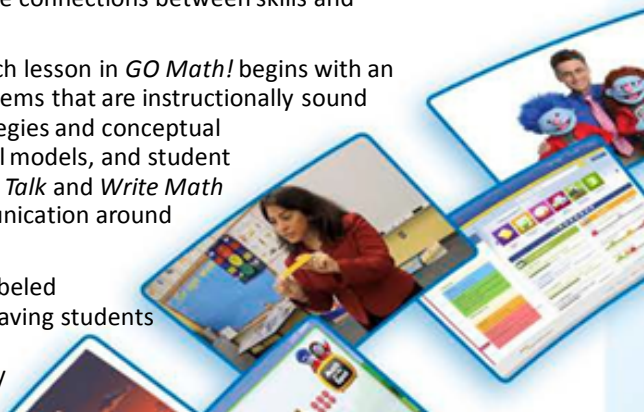
Below are the answers to some of the questions that parents of students who are new to the program sometimes ask.

What are the Common Core State Standards? The Common Core State Standards were developed to establish a clear and consistent set of expectations for student learning. Approximately forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted either the Common Core English Language Arts standards, Mathematics standards, or both. The standards intend to provide a more consistent set of expectations between states, especially helpful given the mobility of families and expectations of colleges and employers in today’s economy.

The mathematics standards ask students to carry out more complex tasks, challenge their higher- order thinking skills, gain and demonstrate in-depth mastery, and explain their solutions. The standards emphasize mathematical practices, understanding of core concepts, and fluency with computation skills—with added importance placed on depth of understanding and ability to apply math in novel situations. A major goal of the standards is to avoid teaching math concepts in isolation in order to help students make sense of math and make connections between skills and applications.

How does *GO Math!* develop a deep understanding of math concepts? Each lesson in *GO Math!* begins with an *Essential Question* that sets the stage for the lesson topic. Real-world problems that are instructionally sound and relevant to students are presented within each *GO Math!* lesson. Strategies and conceptual understanding are highlighted through visual representations, mathematical models, and student explorations. Depth of understanding is reinforced through the use of *Math Talk* and *Write Math* questions provided within the lessons to support verbal and written communication around important mathematical topics.

What is Math Talk? You will notice questions within each lesson that are labeled *Math Talk*. These questions encourage students to explain their thinking. Having students verbalize their thinking is important in developing a deep understanding of concepts. Students who can explain a concept or procedure to others really understand that concept or procedure.



How does GO Math develop math vocabulary? It is important for students to understand the language of math. Each chapter in the *GO Math!* student book includes the vocabulary words for the chapter on cut apart cards. In addition, there are vocabulary activities, games, and writing activities that begin every chapter. New vocabulary is highlighted within the lessons along with writing opportunities for students to use their math vocabulary words.

How does *GO Math!* provide real world connections and applications? Problem solving is practiced daily in lessons that include real life application problems. You will notice the *Real World* problem solving logo used throughout the student book. The problem solving skill or strategy lessons provide strong reading support, and problem solving practice moves from specific strategy practice to mixed strategy practice. Students learn how to use models and representations to help them solve problems.

How can I help my child with math at home?

- Encourage your child to solve everyday problems involving numbers.
- Talk about the importance of math and how it is used in daily life.
- Review your child's homework and ask them to explain how they arrived at their solutions to problems.
- At grades K-2 there is a Home Activity at the bottom of the fourth page of each lesson in the Student Book.
- Have your child practice using the math vocabulary for the chapter.
- Play the math vocabulary game at the beginning of each chapter with your child.
- View the *Math on The Spot* videos with your child for concepts or skills he or she may be having difficulty with.
- Talk with your child's teacher about any questions you have about the math your child is learning.

As some of you may already be aware, the Common Core State Standards for mathematics focus on fewer topics in each grade than prior standards. The mathematics we are teaching is not "new math", rather it is the same mathematics being taught in such a way as to help students gain a deeper understanding of what they are learning so they will be prepared to be successful in the future beyond school and in STEM-related occupations should they choose to pursue them later on.

Middletown Township Public Schools wants to work with you to help your child accomplish all that they can on the road to mathematical proficiency, confidence, and enjoyment. In addition to the videos we began to place on the district website last year in which our students are featured explaining some of the newer methods and strategies we are using, you will also find there a list of questions to consider asking your child should you be working with him or her on homework or some other real-life math-related experience.

Fully recognizing the value of a united effort between home and school, we thank you for your support of our efforts to provide the best education in mathematics that we can for your child.

Sincerely,

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