

# PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN

## GRADE 9

### Your Child's Progress

*A parent resource for understanding what your child should learn and be able to do this year, and helpful suggestions for supporting your child's learning at home.*



CONNECTICUT STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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**W**e owe it to our kids to make sure that they receive an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life. That's why Connecticut raised the bar and issued a new instructional roadmap that will prepare our kids for college and careers.

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Our new roadmap, the Connecticut Core Standards, sets learning expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level so that by the time they graduate from high school, they are ready to succeed in college and the workplace. Local teachers and educators still select and develop curriculum documents and lesson plans.

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#### **New ruler for measuring student success**

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With these new learning expectations, Connecticut needs new ways to measure student progress. The Smarter Balanced assessments have replaced our old state test, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), for Grades 3–8 in English language arts and math. At the high school level, all 11th-grade students will now take the SAT in lieu of the Smarter Balanced exam, which replaced the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, or CAPT. In addition to its traditional role as a college entrance exam, the SAT has been redesigned to align to college- and career-ready standards. You and your child will hear more about the SAT in the coming years.

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With the new tests, students will receive new scores. **Smarter Balanced results will be different.** In many cases, the scores will look lower on the Smarter Balanced tests than what many are used to seeing on the old state tests. This does not mean that students are learning less. Rather, it reflects that we set the bar higher.

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States that made the transition to college- and career-ready standards saw lower scores the first year, but they also saw improvements year-to-year. For example, in Kentucky the percentage of high school graduates ready for college and careers has increased from 38 percent to 62 percent in just four years.

This means that, in the beginning, fewer Connecticut students may score at higher levels. But we expect our students will rise to meet the challenge, as they always do.

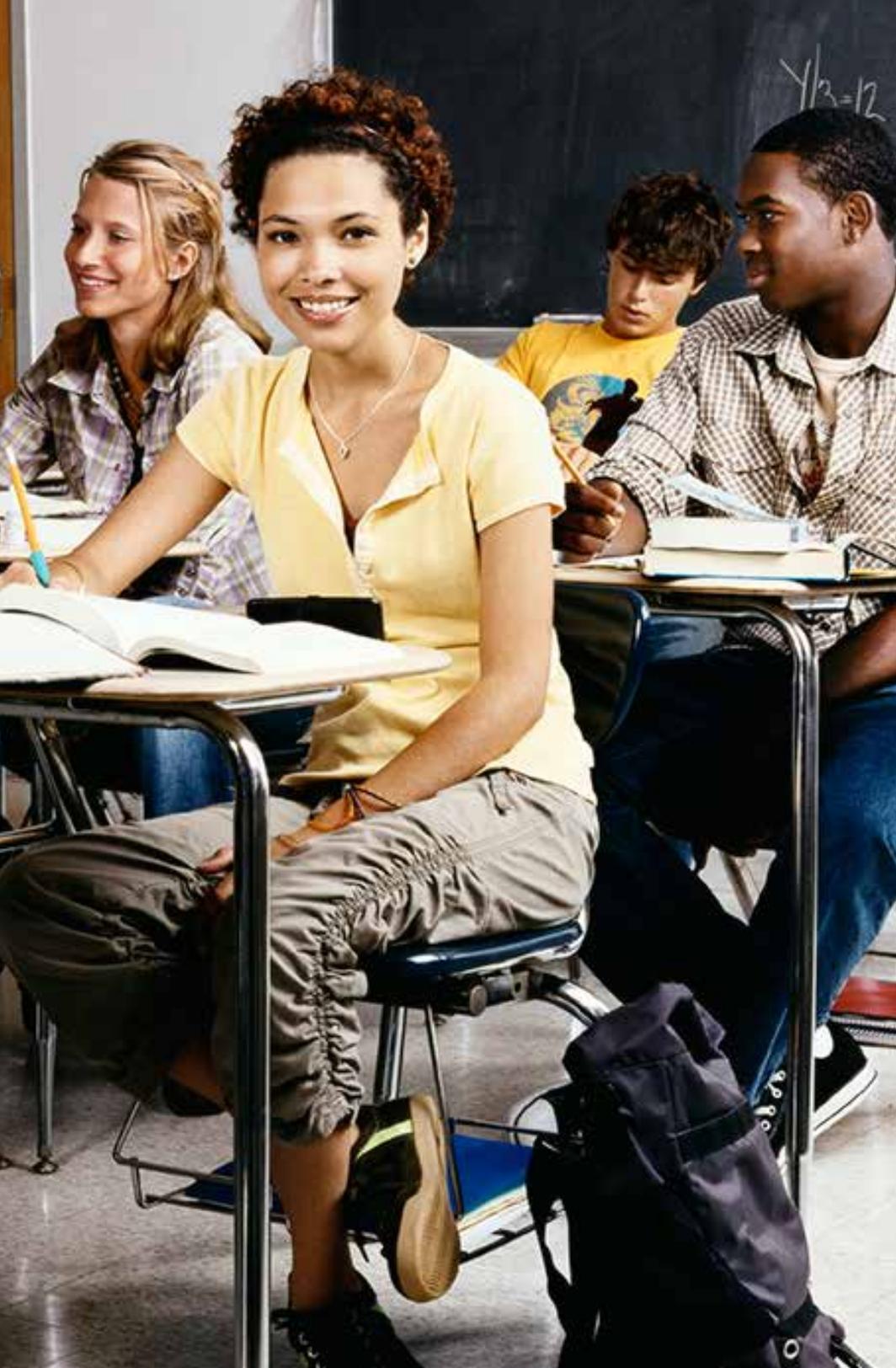
#### **Real-world skills**

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The Connecticut Core Standards focus on critical thinking and problem-solving—the skills students need to be successful in college and careers. The Smarter Balanced assessments are administered on computers and are designed to measure these skills through reading comprehension, writing, and math questions that require students to demonstrate that they truly understand the content—not just fill in a bubble.

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Smarter Balanced will help parents and teachers better understand how the student is progressing, revealing where the student is excelling and where the student needs extra help.



# What Your Child Learned in **Grade 8**

## Mathematics

- Applying what is known about rates (such as miles per hour) and ratios (relationship between two numbers) to determine whether two quantities are in a proportional relationship (have equivalent rates or ratios).
- Using proportionality to solve a variety of percent problems, including those involving discounts, interest, taxes, and tips.
- Graphing proportional relationships and understand the unit rate (amount per 1) informally as a measure of the slope (steepness) of the related line.
- Solving multistep word problems by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing positive and negative rational numbers in any form (whole numbers, fractions, or decimals).
- Solving real world problems that can be modeled with an inequality such as  $x > 8$  or an equation such as  $\frac{1}{4}(x + 5) = 21$  by answering the question: “What number does  $x$  have to be to make this statement true?”
- Solving real-world and mathematical problems involving the area (space inside) and circumference (distance around) of a circle, the area of two-dimensional objects such as triangles, and the volume (capacity inside) and surface area (total of all outside space) of three-dimensional objects such as boxes.
- Using and evaluating probability for single (picking a 4 from a deck of cards) and compound events (picking a 5 and then a 2 from a deck of cards).

## English Language Arts

- Citing several pieces of evidence when analyzing a text.
- Comparing and contrasting a written story, drama or poem to an audio, filmed, or staged version.
- Identifying and evaluating specific claims and arguments in a text.
- Comparing and contrasting various texts, including poems, stories, and historical novels.
- Determining how an author’s word choices affect the meaning and tone of a text.
- Producing writing that is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
- Using technology to produce and publish writing that links to sources.
- Conducting short research projects to answer a question, drawing information from several reliable sources.
- Including multimedia and visuals in presentations to help support their findings.
- Participating in class discussions about various texts and topics in which the student is prepared to refer to evidence in a text when discussing ideas, to restate other people’s ideas, and to understand other perspectives.

*Please note: Text is printed materials (books, newspapers, magazines) as well as graphics, drawings, and multimedia such as audio or visual recordings.*

# What Your Child Will Learn in **Grade 9**

## Mathematics

- Deepening and applying their understanding of previous mathematical concepts from K–8.
- Creating and solving mathematical expressions (relationship using numbers and letters with no equal sign) and equations (relationship using numbers and letters with an equal sign) that describe real world situations.
- Creating and interpreting graphs and their applications.
- Using algebraic and geometric reasoning to model real-life situations.
- Understanding the rules of probability and using them to interpret data and evaluate the outcomes of decisions.
- Distinguishing between correlation (relationship) and causation (having an effect on something.)
- Interpreting graphs as the relationship between, or statistical significance relating, two variables.

## English Language Arts

- Reading closely and critically complex works of literature and informational texts.
- Interpreting what they read and presenting an analysis based on examples and evidence from the text.
- Analyzing how an author's choices create effects such as mystery, tension or surprise.
- Reading texts representative of various times, cultures, and worldviews.
- Analyzing the impact of word choices on meaning and tone.
- Identifying whether the argument in a text has valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.
- Writing literary analyses, reports, and summaries with logical ideas that are well-supported with relevant facts, examples, and details.
- Evaluating the credibility and accuracy of sources.
- Conducting short- and long-term research projects to answer a question or solve a problem.
- Using technology in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, evidence, and to add interest.

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# How You Can Help Your Child

## Mathematics

- Encourage your child to be persistent by reminding them that mathematics requires patience, practice, and time to think and reflect.
- Show enthusiasm for your child's study of mathematics.
- Urge your child to ask the teacher questions either during or after class.
- Encourage your child to review class notes every night and look at the answers to difficult problems to work backwards and determine how the solution was found.
- Notice ways that people in the real world use and apply mathematics every day and point those examples out to your child.

## English Language Arts

- Read and discuss informational texts with your child such as newspapers, magazines, technical manuals, or health, science and social studies articles.
- Compare and contrast movies and videos with previously read books. Discuss with your child which version is better. Your child should use evidence to support his or her claims.
- Watch the news with your child and then discuss the current topics or events. Urge your child to write letters requesting information or praising the actions of a person that is in the news.
- Encourage your child to share opinions on issues, books, and movies. Your child should back up claims with evidence.
- Take advantage of technology and have your child use the Internet to research topics of interest.
- Explore your town or city or a place of interest by reading and researching, visiting, or interviewing local historians. Urge your high-schooler to make a video that could serve as an advertisement for the locale.
- Ask your child about future goals and career interests. Help your child research and gather various sources of information on college and career opportunities and then make informed decisions.

# Resources

## Mathematics

### Khan Academy

This site provides an extensive library of user-friendly content for K–12 mathematics. Students can practice at their own pace and make use of interactive challenges and videos from any computer with access to the Internet.

<https://www.khanacademy.org/commoncore>

### Illustrative Mathematics

This site provides mathematical tasks, task solutions, and commentary on how the tasks illustrate content standards. The site also provides videos and vignettes illustrating mathematical practices. <http://www.illustrativemathematics.org>

## English Language Arts

### ReadWriteThink

This website sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association has resources for parents that include writing activities, projects, podcasts, interactive websites to use for composing, and a variety of other resources.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/>

### NEWSELA

This website provides students with high interest nonfiction articles that are updated daily. Each article offers a choice of five different reading levels, making it just right for each child. <https://newsela.com/>



[CTCoreStandards.org](http://CTCoreStandards.org)

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