



## How to Be Ready: A Summer Guide for Every Grade

### Helping Every Student Start Strong

Each school year brings new opportunities for growth, challenge, and discovery. But students don't enter those new grades in isolation. The habits, knowledge, and confidence they carry with them set the tone for what comes next.

The *How to Be Ready* guide is designed to help families support learning during the summer months in simple, meaningful ways. For each grade level, you'll find:

- Key academic and life skills to focus on
- Recommended reading and enrichment ideas
- Practical strategies to strengthen readiness and independence

This isn't about pushing worksheets or replicating school at home. It's about offering students a gentle bridge between grades and a way to keep minds sharp, routines strong, and confidence growing.

Because every student deserves to walk into the new year ready to THRIVE!



## How to Be Ready for Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a big leap both academically and socially. Children entering kindergarten benefit from early literacy exposure, strong fine motor skills, and the ability to follow directions and routines. This guide helps families build a joyful foundation through play, conversation, and curiosity.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters; identify rhyming words; hold a book correctly and track print left to right	Alphabet flashcards, ABC Mouse, Starfall
Math	Count to 20; recognize numbers 1-10; identify basic shapes; compare sizes and quantities	Number songs, shape puzzles, sorting games
Writing	Draw shapes and simple pictures; trace and write first name with a capital letter	Name tracing worksheets, dry-erase boards, fine motor activities
Science	Explore weather patterns, seasons, and living vs. nonliving things. Understand the 5 senses,	Nature walks, simple science picture books, PBS Kids
Life Skills	Follow directions; zip/button clothing; use restroom independently; Should be able to participate in structured, meaningful learning with guided attention	Dress-up play, chore charts, visual routine cards
Reading Suggestions	Listen to stories daily; discuss characters and events; build book-loving habits	The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Brown Bear Brown Bear, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Llama Llama books, Pete the Cat, Owl Babies



## How to Be Ready for 1st Grade

1st grade is a time of big academic leaps. Students begin mastering phonics, writing full sentences, and using numbers with greater fluency. This guide supports continued growth in reading, math, and independence as they move from learning-to-read to reading-to-learn.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Identify all letter sounds; blend simple CVC words (cat, sun); retell stories	Decodable books, Starfall, BOB Books
Math	Count to 100; understand place value (tens and ones); add/subtract within 10	<a href="#">Khan Academy Kids</a> , number games, dice and card math, Khanmigo
Writing	Write full sentences with capitals/punctuation; spell sight words; draw to support	Journaling prompts, handwriting practice sheets
Science	Observe weather/season changes; identify plant and animal needs; explore light and sound	Science museum visits, nature walks, PBS Kids Science
Life Skills	Follow two-step directions; pack a backpack; use words to solve conflicts	Visual schedules, routines, role-play games
Reading Suggestions	Read aloud with an adult daily; build fluency with easy-to-read series	<i>BOB Books</i> , <i>Elephant &amp; Piggie</i> , <i>Frog &amp; Toad</i> , <i>Henry &amp; Mudge</i> , <i>Yasmin</i> , <i>Miss Nelson is Missing</i> , <i>The Snowy Day</i>



## How to Be Ready for 2nd Grade

By 2nd grade, students are building stamina—for reading, writing, and problem-solving. This year deepens their comprehension and introduces multi-step math thinking. Use this guide to keep those growing brains engaged and ready for more independence.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Read and retell short chapter books; identify main idea and details; decode 1- and 2-syllable words	Early chapter books, Storyline Online, Epic!
Math	Add and subtract within 20; understand odd/even numbers; work with place value to 100	<a href="#">Khan Academy Kids</a> , splashlearn.com, card and dice games
Writing	Write complete paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting details; use punctuation correctly	Sentence starters, writing journals, graphic organizers
Science	Understand simple life cycles; explore weather, solids and liquids, and landforms	Science picture books, nature observation logs, PBS Kids
Life Skills	Organize materials; manage time during tasks; work independently for 10-15 minutes	Visual checklists, time timers, responsibility charts
Reading Suggestions	Read aloud and independently every day; begin exploring chapter books with support	Henry and Mudge, Frog and Toad, Magic Tree House, Nate the Great, Amelia Bedelia, Mr. Putter & Tabby



## How to Be Ready for 3rd Grade

3rd grade is often called a pivotal year. Students face higher expectations for reading comprehension, math fluency, and written communication. This guide helps bridge summer learning into confident readiness for more complex academic work.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Read and summarize longer texts; identify character traits, cause/effect, and main idea; expand vocabulary	Chapter books, read-alouds, Newsela, Storyworks Jr.
Math	Master addition and subtraction within 100; begin multiplication and division (2s, 5s, 10s); understand fractions as parts of a whole	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , flash cards, math fact games
Writing	Write multiple paragraphs with clear topic and supporting details; use proper punctuation and transition words	Paragraph organizers, mentor texts, writing prompts
Science	Explore animal and plant adaptations, weather patterns, and simple machines	Science journals, interactive notebooks, Mystery Science
Life Skills	Follow multi-step directions; manage homework independently; ask for help appropriately	Planners, after-school routines, SEL picture books
Reading Suggestions	Build reading stamina with longer books; talk about themes and character growth	Judy Moody, Magic Tree House, Geronimo Stilton, Jake Drake, Cam Jansen, The Boxcar Children



## How to Be Ready for 4th Grade

As readers and thinkers, 4th graders tackle more sophisticated texts and concepts. They begin to compare ideas, explain their reasoning, and take on greater responsibility. This guide offers simple ways to reinforce key academic and life skills.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Read grade-level chapter books; identify theme, point of view, and text evidence; summarize across paragraphs	ReadWorks, Storyworks, graphic organizers, book clubs
Math	Master multiplication and division facts (0-12); understand place value to 1,000; begin working with multi-step word problems and basic fractions	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , flashcards, math puzzle books, Math Playground
Writing	Write multi-paragraph essays with clear introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions; revise for clarity and organization	Writing prompts, checklists, peer-editing guides
Science	Investigate ecosystems, weathering/erosion, energy transfer, and scientific inquiry	National Geographic Kids, simple at-home experiments, Mystery Science
Life Skills	Manage multi-step tasks; plan and track assignments; work independently for 20-30 minutes	Student planners, chore charts, project checklists
Reading Suggestions	Read daily with a mix of fiction and nonfiction; discuss author's purpose and vocabulary	Because of Winn-Dixie, Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Who Was/What Was series, The Wild Robot, The Lemonade War



## How to Be Ready for 5th Grade

5th grade is a year of expansion. Students deepen their thinking, tackle more complex texts and problems, and take greater ownership of their learning. This guide supports academic growth, independence, and the confidence to take on bigger challenges, while still making space for summer curiosity and joy.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
<b>Reading</b>	Read and analyze chapter books and nonfiction; identify main ideas, summarize texts, and cite text evidence	CommonLit, Storyworks, reading journals, graphic organizers
<b>Math</b>	Multiply and divide multi-digit numbers; add and subtract fractions; understand decimals and place value to the thousandths	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , math games
<b>Writing</b>	Write well-organized essays and narratives with strong introductions, supporting details, and conclusions; edit for grammar and clarity	Writing prompts, peer review checklists, mentor texts
<b>Science</b>	Explore phases of the moon, matter, energy, and scientific inquiry; engage in hands-on investigations	Mystery Science, Generation Genius, interactive notebooks
<b>Life Skills</b>	Manage a weekly planner; complete long-term projects; participate in collaborative group work	Time-management tools, goal-setting sheets, reflection journals
<b>Reading Suggestions</b>	Read across genres; build vocabulary and stamina; discuss theme, tone, and perspective	Hatchet, Esperanza Rising, Number the Stars, Holes, I Survived series, Wonder



## How to Be Ready for 6th Grade

6th grade is the final chapter of elementary school and a time to solidify foundational skills and prepare for the transition to junior high. Students are expected to show greater independence, manage responsibilities across subjects, and think more critically. This guide helps students strengthen academic habits and finish their elementary journey with confidence.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
<b>Reading</b>	Read and analyze fiction and nonfiction; identify claims, text evidence, and author's purpose; summarize objectively	CommonLit, ReadWorks, Scholastic Scope, book clubs
<b>Math</b>	Understand ratios and proportions; divide with decimals and fractions; use number lines, area models, and equations	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , IXL, Math Games, Freckle Math
<b>Writing</b>	Write multi-paragraph arguments, narratives, and informative texts; use transitions, evidence, and revision strategies	Essay organizers, student checklists, online grammar tools
<b>Science</b>	Investigate cells, body systems, energy, and scientific method; build data collection and analysis skills	Generation Genius, Crash Course Kids, lab kits, PBS LearningMedia
<b>Life Skills</b>	Use a planner; organize materials; self-advocate in academic settings; manage time and group work	Digital planners, SEL journals, goal-tracking charts
<b>Reading Suggestions</b>	Read daily with attention to theme, perspective, and deeper meaning; engage in book discussions	Percy Jackson series, Out of My Mind, Refugee, Bud, Not Buddy, Hidden Figures (Young Readers Edition)





## How to Be Ready for 7th Grade

7th grade marks the beginning of secondary school, where expectations rise and independence matters more than ever. Students navigate multiple teachers, more rigorous coursework, and a faster pace. This guide supports a strong start by reinforcing core academic skills, building executive function, and helping students grow into confident, self-directed learners.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
<b>Reading</b>	Analyze theme, character development, and argument structure; distinguish fact from opinion; summarize complex texts	CommonLit, Newsela, Scholastic Scope, independent reading journals
<b>Math</b>	Work with ratios, percentages, expressions, equations, and integers; understand proportional reasoning and basic geometry	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , IXL, DeltaMath, Math Nation
<b>Writing</b>	Write structured argumentative, narrative, and informative pieces; use evidence, transitions, and varied sentence structure	Essay graphic organizers, Grammarly, peer editing checklists
<b>Science</b>	Explore ecosystems, genetics, and the scientific method; analyze data and construct evidence-based explanations	CK-12, Mystery Science, BrainPOP, interactive science notebooks
<b>Life Skills</b>	Track assignments, manage long-term projects, ask for help appropriately, and practice digital organization	Google Calendar, student planners, digital folders, goal-setting tools
<b>Reading Suggestions</b>	Read widely across genres; annotate texts; reflect on theme, tone, and author's craft	The Giver, Brown Girl Dreaming, A Long Walk to Water, The Crossover, Uglies, Warriors Don't Cry (Young Readers Ed.)



## How to Be Ready for 8th Grade

8th grade is the final push before high school. It demands sustained focus, stronger analysis, and growing leadership. This guide helps students solidify foundational knowledge while building the confidence and responsibility they'll need in high school.

Category	What to Review	Optional Resources
Reading	Analyze central idea, tone, and author's perspective; compare texts; evaluate arguments and evidence	CommonLit, Newsela, Scholastic Scope
Math	Solve linear equations and systems; understand functions; work with irrational numbers and exponents	<a href="#">Khan Academy</a> , IXL, DeltaMath, Math Nation
Writing	Write thesis-driven essays with strong evidence and commentary; edit for clarity, structure, and grammar	Writing portfolios, graphic organizers, NoRedInk, peer editing protocols
Science	Explore physics, chemistry, heredity, and Earth science; conduct experiments and write lab reports	CK-12, Crash Course Kids, PBS Learning Media, virtual labs
Life Skills	Manage multiple deadlines; self-advocate with teachers; use tech tools to organize work	Digital planners, checklists, goal-setting journals, email etiquette tools
Reading Suggestions	Read novels, nonfiction, and articles for depth; practice annotating and questioning the text	To Kill a Mockingbird, The Hate U Give, Refugee, March (graphic novel), Unbroken (Young Readers Ed.), Fahrenheit 451



## How to Be Ready for 9th Grade

9th grade sets the tone for high school success. Students are building their transcripts, forming academic identity, and learning to manage increased rigor. It is critical that 9th graders receive an A, B, or C in their courses. This guide helps them enter high school with confidence, organization, and a clear sense of what's ahead.

Category	Academic Habits to Strengthen	Core Content to Preview or Maintain	College/Career Readiness Goals
Reading	Read independently for 30+ minutes; annotate for theme, argument, and tone	Analyze fiction and nonfiction; identify central ideas and supporting evidence	Understand expectations for high school English and standardized test reading
Math	Show all work; check answers for reasonableness; ask clarifying questions	Review algebra basics: expressions, linear equations, and graphing	Know your math track (Algebra I, Geometry, etc.); explore STEM career connections, <a href="#">Khan Academy</a>
Writing	Organize essays with clear structure; edit for grammar and clarity	Practice thesis statements, citing evidence, and writing coherent paragraphs	Learn MLA formatting; begin creating a digital writing portfolio
Science	Take structured notes from text and lecture; summarize lab results	Review scientific method, lab safety, and basic biology or physics concepts	Practice writing lab reports and using scientific vocabulary in explanations
Life Skills	Use a planner (paper or digital); set weekly academic goals	Maintain assignment folders and check school email regularly	Understand credit tracking, GPA, and how 9th grade impacts your high school record



## How to Be Ready for 10th Grade

Sophomore year deepens the high school experience both academically and personally. Students are expected to analyze complex texts, manage long-term assignments, and explore future pathways. This guide supports growth in content mastery and college/career awareness.

Category	Academic Habits to Strengthen	Core Content to Preview or Maintain	College/Career Readiness Goals
<b>Reading</b>	Annotate texts for theme, argument, and author's purpose; compare perspectives	Literary analysis, persuasive texts, and nonfiction synthesis	Practice PSAT-style reading questions (The College Board); explore interests through independent reading
<b>Math</b>	Use formulas accurately; explain problem-solving steps in writing	Systems of equations, geometry concepts, basic statistics and probability	Review algebra concepts for PSAT/ <a href="#">SAT</a> ; connect math topics to career applications, <a href="#">Khan Academy</a>
<b>Writing</b>	Write well-supported essays and constructed responses; revise based on feedback	Argumentative and literary essays, using evidence and transitions	Practice timed writing; begin saving strong work for scholarship and college applications
<b>Science</b>	Interpret data in tables/graphs; explain cause-and-effect relationships	Earth science, chemistry foundations, scientific inquiry and experimentation	Prepare for labs and assessments that require scientific writing and data analysis
<b>Life Skills</b>	Track assignments and test dates across multiple courses; self-advocate for needs	Stay organized with binders/folders; prepare for group projects	Understand graduation requirements; research electives, CTE paths, or career clusters



## How to Be Ready for 11th Grade

11th grade is high-stakes and high-impact. This is the year for college prep, ACT/SAT testing, and rigorous coursework. This guide helps students strengthen core skills, balance priorities, and position themselves for postsecondary success.

Category	Academic Habits to Strengthen	Core Content to Preview or Maintain	College/Career Readiness Goals
<b>Reading</b>	Synthesize ideas across texts; analyze bias, tone, and rhetorical strategies	Close reading of complex nonfiction and argumentative texts	Prepare for <a href="#">SAT</a> /ACT reading sections; explore texts related to future college or career interests
<b>Math</b>	Justify solutions; apply math concepts to real-world scenarios	Algebra II concepts, functions, basic trigonometry, data analysis	Focus on math skills relevant for SAT/ACT and postsecondary entrance exams, <a href="#">Khan Academy</a>
<b>Writing</b>	Write persuasive, analytical, and research-based essays with proper citation	Develop strong thesis statements, embed evidence, and refine voice/style	Build writing portfolio for college and scholarship applications
<b>Science</b>	Draw conclusions from experimental data; write lab reports using evidence	Chemistry or physics concepts, including atomic structure, motion, and energy	Explore science electives or dual enrollment aligned to intended college or career pathway
<b>Life Skills</b>	Manage a detailed calendar; juggle academic and extracurricular priorities	Complete summer work or AP prep assignments; maintain organized notes and records	Build/update resume; schedule college visits; research scholarships and application timelines



## How to Be Ready for 12th Grade

Senior year is about finishing strong and planning what comes next. Whether headed to college, career, or training, students need focus, follow-through, and decision-making skills. This guide supports a confident, prepared transition into life after high school.

Category	Academic Habits to Strengthen	Core Content to Preview or Maintain	College/Career Readiness Goals
<b>Reading</b>	Evaluate arguments in complex texts; read critically across disciplines	Nonfiction synthesis, literature analysis, college-level reading expectations	Read sample college essays and scholarship prompts; strengthen academic reading endurance
<b>Math</b>	Apply algebra, geometry, and statistics to real-world problems	Algebra II, financial literacy, pre-calculus or senior math pathways	Practice math for <a href="#">SAT</a> /ACT/placement tests; understand college/career math requirements, Use Khan Academy
<b>Writing</b>	Refine voice and clarity; complete personal, analytical, and reflective writing tasks	College/scholarship essays, research writing, timed essays	Draft college essays early; create a writing portfolio or digital showcase
<b>Science</b>	Conduct independent research or capstone projects; make cross-disciplinary connections	Environmental science, anatomy, or advanced physics/chemistry concepts	Prepare for science coursework or labs in college/CTE programs
<b>Life Skills</b>	Meet deadlines without reminders; communicate professionally with adults	Maintain a resume, organize college/career paperwork	Finalize post-graduation plan; complete FAFSA, applications, and create a transition checklist