

# HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD IN FIFTH GRADE?

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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### **Save Favorite Books**

Don't be too quick to store away or discard books that your child enjoyed when he was younger. Plenty of older kids love to revisit their early favorites.

### **Visit the Library**

Visit the library often with your child. Help him sign up for a library card and encourage him to borrow books regularly. Set a target for the number of books he will read in a year and reward him with a special treat if he reaches her goal.

### **Encourage Reading A Range of Materials**

Provide books that match your child's interests and encourage him to read in a variety of formats, including comics and magazines, and online books. Ask your child's teacher about his reading level and seek out corresponding material. Reading level is often indicated on the back of paperback books, although several formats are used. RL5 means reading level five, while 5.2 is a bit more specific, meaning a level equivalent to fifth grade, second month. Some publishers also use age guidelines, with 009-0011 meaning a book is appropriate for ages 9 to 11. You can always ask your librarian for guidance.

### **Read Aloud**

You should continue reading aloud to your child as long as you both still enjoy the experience and you have the time. By this point, reading aloud should be a much more collaborative experience than it was when he was younger. You could take turns reading pages or have him do most of the reading. Reading aloud has been shown to build reading comprehension and a strong vocabulary, so try to continue providing this experience for your child, even if it's through books on tape that you listen to together in the car.

### **Discuss Reading**

Talk to your child about what he's reading. Ask him to tell you what that book is about and who the main characters are. Ask him what he's enjoying about the book. Having him talk about what he's reading prompts him to analyze the text as he's learning to do in school and to ask the kinds of questions that are being discussed in class.

### **Discuss Different Points of View**

Your child's classroom discussion of reading is starting to focus on how different points of view can influence and shape perceptions. You can help develop his understanding of this concept with your conversations at home, whether you're talking about what happened that day at school or about stories that are on the news. Ask him to tell you not just what happened, but why he thinks someone acted in the way they did.

### 11. Multiplying by Fractions

Fifth graders understand that multiplying a number by a fraction less than one will result in an answer less than the number – for example,  $12 \times \frac{3}{4} = 9$ . They understand that multiplying a number by a fraction greater than “1” will result in an answer greater than the number – for example,  $12 \times 2\frac{1}{2} = 30$ .

## DATA & MEASUREMENT

### 12. Converting Units and Fractions

Fifth graders convert units and fractions of units within the same system of measurement.

#### EXAMPLE:

How many minutes is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an hour? Explain or illustrate how you solved this problem.

### 13. Multi-Step Unit Conversion Problems

Fifth graders solve multi-step word problems using conversions of different-sized standard measurement units.

#### EXAMPLE:

I have 75 cm of ribbon. I need seven times as much ribbon to complete a project. How many more meters of ribbon do I need? Explain or illustrate how you solved this problem.

### 14. Using a Line Plot

Fifth graders solve problem using information (in fraction units) presented in a line plot.

## GEOMETRY

### 15. Understanding Volume

Fifth graders understand volume as the measurement of the space inside a three-dimensional or solid figure. They use the formulas **length  $\times$  width  $\times$  height** or **base  $\times$  height** to measure the volume of a three-dimensional or solid object with rectangular sides like a cube. Fifth graders measure volume to solve real-world problems.

#### EXAMPLE:

A rectangular container of ice cream has a length of eight inches and a height of four inches. What is the volume of the container expressed in cubic inches?

### **Discuss Familiar Stories Through Different Points of View**

Make a game out of exploring different points of view in familiar stories. Follow the example of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by John Scieszka – a popular book that tells the well-known tale of the destruction of the pigs' houses from the viewpoint of the wolf. According to this book, it turns out the wolf just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and ended up being blamed for poorly timed sneezes. See how inventive your child can be at coming up with alternate versions of other children's favorites. This is a fun way to pass time in the car.

### **Look Up Answers**

When family conversation leads to questions that require looking up an answer, challenge each person to use a different print or digital resource to quickly find an answer to the question.

### **Spot Metaphors and Similes**

As your child learns about new concepts like metaphors ("He has a heart of gold") and similes ("She's busy as a bee"). Make a game out of identifying examples in everyday conversation, on television, or in print.

### **Find Writing Projects**

Keep an eye out for fun projects that involve writing. If your child put together a family tree when he was younger, he can update it with a companion piece of writing in which he provides short biographical entries about each person. He can make these as simple or as lengthy and involved as he likes.

### **Use Social Media to Practice Writing**

If your family uses social networking sites, such as Facebook, ask your child to become a regular contributor to status updates. Writing short summaries of important family events or weekly activities will help him practice his writing skills and develop good social networking skills. Make sure to check his posts and to discuss concerns about content or language that you have with him.

## **MATH**

### **Highlight Real-World Uses of Math**

As the math they're learning becomes more complicated and less obviously connected with their everyday experience, some children start to develop math anxiety. It's important to keep your child engaged with math and to help him understand the real-life applications of the concepts he's learning in school. Coming up with a budget for back-to-school supplies or for his monthly allowance is one way for him to practice addition and subtraction. Asking him to help you with cooking or baking shows him how fractions work. Helping you calculate prices when you're grocery shopping is also good practice.

### **Help Prepare for Math Class**

Help your child reduce stress over math by familiarizing him with the concepts he will be covering in class. Ask his teacher for a syllabus and refer to this to preview each evening the material that will be covered in the following day's math class. Skim over these pages with your child. There is no need to spend time working out the meaning of concepts or trying sample problems although you can consult a dictionary for definitions of unfamiliar words. Even this slight increase in familiarity with the terms that will come up the next day will help your child approach math with more confidence.

### **Read Problems Out Loud**

If your child is struggling with math problems, have him read each problem out loud slowly and carefully so he can hear the problem and think about what is being asked. This helps him break down the problem and come up with problem-solving strategies.

### **Keep Math Positive**

Speak positively about math and reward effort rather than grades or ability. Think about how important reading is and how we are told to model this behavior for our children. We need to place math in the same category. Don't discount the importance of math by saying, "I'm not a math person, I was never good at math." Help your child read books that incorporate math, such as *Millions of Cats* by Wanda Gag or *On Beyond a Million: An Amazing Math Journey* by David Schwartz.

### **Consult Online Resources**

Familiarize yourself with the range of online resources that can help your child practice and review the math concepts she is learning.

### **Practice Calculations Using Decimals**

Connect the work with decimals that your child is doing in class to the real world by encouraging him to shop for bargains. Have him divide the cost of bulk-packaged items by the number of single items to find the cost per item. So how much are you paying per roll of paper towel or per can of soda when you buy in bulk? Ask him to calculate how much of a savings you'll make per item with sale prices offering volume discounts.

### **Practice Using Fractions**

Help your child familiarize himself with fractions by asking hi to scale recipes for your family. Have him start by halving or doubling a recipe. When he feels comfortable doing this, ask him to convert it by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , allowing a recipe that is supposed to feed a family of four to work for a family of six.

### **Set Up A Bank Account**

Set up a bank account for your child. Before you do this, discuss with him the basic concepts of banking – interest, checking and saving accounts, credit and debit cards, etc. The experience will help get your child excited about saving and increasing her money.

### **Highlight Math in Sports**

Sports provide a fun and engaging way of exploring a host of mathematical concepts, starting with basic addition. Any hard-core baseball fan knows that the game can't truly be appreciated without an understanding of some essential statistics, like a player's batting average and runs batted in. If your child is passionate about a sport, encourage him to explore it through math.

### **Play Games That Use Math**

Play family games that help foster math skills. These include card games like Go Fish, which requires counting and sorting cards into sets, or board games like Monopoly.