

In 6th grade, students apply skills they learned in earlier grades to make sense of longer, more challenging books and articles. That includes learning about how authors try to influence readers and find reasons to support their ideas. Focusing on how authors make their points and support their arguments with evidence and reasoning helps 6th grade students sharpen their ability to write and speak with more clarity and coherence. Students also will expand their vocabularies and use new words in their stories, reports, and essays. To meet these literacy goals, students must devote significant attention to precise details in their reading and when writing.

## Skills Your Child Will Be Working On

- Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their themes or main ideas
- Identifying and judging evidence that supports particular ideas in an author's argument to change a reader's point of view
- Integrating information from several print and digital sources to answer questions and solve problems
- Writing opinions that offer reasoned arguments and provide facts and examples that are logically grouped to support the writer's point of view
- Writing stories, real or imaginary, that unfold naturally and developing the plot with dialogue, description, and effective pacing of the action
- Coming to classroom discussions prepared, then engaging fully and thoughtfully with others (e.g., contributing accurate, relevant information; elaborating on the remarks of others; synthesizing ideas)
- Reporting on a topic or presenting an opinion with his or her own words, a logical sequence of ideas, sufficient facts and details, and formal English when appropriate
- Expanding, combining, and reducing sentences to improve meaning, interest, and style of writing
- Building knowledge of academic words with an emphasis on those that signal a contrast in ideas or logical relationships, such as on the other hand, similarly, and therefore
- Producing writing on the computer

## Learning Activity to Use at Home

### READING ACTIVITY

Create a "Vocabulary" jar out of a large box or glass jar. When family members find a word they did not know, have them write it on a piece of paper and put it into the Vocabulary jar. At the end of the week give a special reward for the family member who placed the greatest number of new words they discovered into the jar.

### WRITING ACTIVITY

Collaborate with your child to create a persuasive writing argument on whether he/or she should be able to have a cell phone or not for safety reasons (or discuss another important privilege). Discuss together the positives (i.e. access to help in emergencies) and negatives (i.e. misuse of the phone to call friends). Once your child has taken a stance for or against having a cell phone (or other privilege), work with your child to brainstorm and list out reasons to defend this point of view. Next, allow your child to write out their argument and to develop 2-3 clear reasons with examples to defend their point of view. Make sure to include a strong conclusion to make the argument most convincing. Afterwards, ask your child to present and discuss their point of view, as an entire family and provide helpful suggestions to make the argument most effective.

**Teacher and Parent Conferencing** - Topics for ongoing conversations throughout the school year with your child's teacher.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In sixth grade, these include:

- Is your child producing clear and coherent writing assignments that are well developed, organized, purposeful and grade level appropriate
- Is your child participating and engaged in collaborative discussions with his/her peers and building on other's ideas and expressing his/her own

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?