

## Preparing for Middle School

Watch for these academic milestones while your child is preparing for middle school.

Preparing for middle school is a crucial point in a lifetime of learning. While elementary school focuses on the student, and high school solidifies his skills, middle school is when your child will decide how important education is to him. Middle-school lessons will not simply teach facts — they will also teach how these facts carry over into real life. Long-term interdisciplinary units will call for creative, agile thinking. Block scheduling (a series of longer class sessions spread over a one- or two-week period) will let your child immerse himself in complex, multi-dimensional topics.

Depending on your district, middle school will begin and end at different grades. Read on for more specific outlines of preparing for middle school in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

### Preparing for Middle School: Grade 6

Suddenly, nothing is sacred. To the 6th grader, the world is meant to be picked apart and questioned. Worksheets will be replaced by more challenging and open-ended assignments.

Preparing for Middle School: In **language arts**, he will:

- Read nonfiction history books, especially biographies
- Conduct interviews for research
- Learn how to read and compose footnotes and bibliographies

Preparing for Middle School: In **math and science**, he will:

- Format numbers through scientific notation
- Use computers for calculations, graphing, etc.
- Untangle complicated word problems
- Learn about probability, statistics, and percentages

Preparing for Middle School: In **history and social studies**, he will:

- Engage more closely with ideas by using primary documents
- Consider world events through various perspectives
- Complete current events assignments
- Look beyond himself by performing community service

### Preparing for Middle School Grade 7

Adolescence has truly arrived, and with that, mood swings, identity crises, and social drama. Seventh grade schoolwork will help your child transition into adulthood through tasks that demand reaching out and connecting with society.

Preparing for Middle School: In **language arts**, she will:

- Read longer books, many involving issues of fairness
- Learn to appreciate the merits of essay revision and polishing
- Discuss literary elements of books like setting, character, plot, and themes
- Acquire a rich and varied vocabulary

In **math and science**, she will:

- Interpret charts and graphs
- Explore the microscopic world
- Solve problems involving decimals, fractions, percentage, and geometry
- Utilize geometrical tools like the compass and protractor
- Begin learning algebra, the concept of zero, and negative numbers

In **history and social studies**, she will:

- Increase her interest in politics and social justice through lessons on the environment, historical conflicts, and ethics
- Exhibit early stages of abstract reasoning

### **Preparing for Middle School: Grade 8**

No getting around it — the 8th grader will rebel passionately and frequently. Teachers will try to channel this teenage discontent into assignments that let your child make decisions about his own life and identity.

In **language arts**, he will:

- Construct lengthier, more structured research reports
- Experiment with wordplay and the different purposes of writing
- Use literature and writing to express and understand himself
- Explore aesthetic techniques in literature

In **math and science**, he will:

- Become interested in psychology and questions of the self
- Interpret a greater range of graphical representations
- Solve basic algebra equations with one unknown variable
- Inquire about technology and how things work

In **history and social studies**, he will:

- Discuss how current events relate to various studies
- Investigate solutions for the world's problems
- Demonstrate an interest in or devotion to customs and cultural traditions