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For many children and preteens, middle school is a tough step. By the seventh grade, children have settled into the new routine of changing classrooms and dealing with adolescent angst. This comfort with routine and independence allows children to concentrate more on the academic demands of their new grade. Take a look at what your child should be learning in seventh grade if you want to be sure they are on track for success this school year. Reading and Composing Language arts is one obvious area that sticks out from prior years of study. Longer passages will be provided to students, requiring more than just basic reading comprehension. Educators will need students to draw inferences about the meaning of the text and to use outside sources to reach their conclusions. This is an excellent opportunity for students to distinguish between different types of texts, such as poetry, theater, and film. They may be exposed to fresh perspectives, assess word choice, and explain how pieces work together to form a tale. During the seventh grade year, writing is also extensively emphasized. Children are asked to provide evidence to back up their claims. Many educators will begin introducing a peer review system, which will allow students to experiment with different writing styles and receive feedback. According to Scholastic, essential writing skills should include: Capability to write an opinion piece, informative essay, or narrative using age-appropriate conventional language Citation of sources Using quotations as evidence Performing research to reach a conclusion and provide a solution to a specific question Science The content of a given science curriculum can vary greatly, but the concepts remain largely consistent. Children are supposed to master the fundamentals of conducting an experiment, developing a hypothesis, and applying the scientific method as a whole. In the end, they will often produce a lab report that reinforces the language arts skills taught. Science will address a variety of topics. Some curriculum experts, however, point out that many schools will include biological themes such as the human body or nature. Math Seventh-grade math lessons lay the groundwork for your child’s future high school courses. Some institutions may focus solely on algebra principles, but the majority offer a well-rounded mix of algebraic and geometric studies. Some of these concepts are covered as part of the seventh-grade math curriculum at Khan Academy: Negative numbers Decimals, fractions, and percentages Proportions and ratios Algebraic equations Volume and area are two examples of geometric shapes and measures. Probability and statistics The Social Sciences The fundamental purpose of social studies is to teach seventh-graders how to take proper notes and study for tests. This fundamental subject is frequently used to reinforce language arts concepts and to help students apply those skills in other areas. Many institutions, on the other hand, will choose to provide students with a crash course in American history. The seventh grade is jam-packed with material that will shape the rest of your child’s high school career. It contains important concepts that teach them academic independence, as well as the core topics for language arts and arithmetic. If your kid is having difficulty meeting these benchmarks by the end of the year, it may be time to consider whether tutoring is necessary to aid them before eighth grade. Anonymous My 11 yr old son is spending the holiday weekend preparing for finals. This seems too young to me. What year does your child’s school start finals? Anonymous High school; but I wish they had at least been exposed to them in middle school at some point. Would have made freshman year midterms less of a shock. That said, stinks that it’s over a holiday weekend and not either before or a weekend after. Anonymous OP, which school is this? Anonymous Field has cumulative finals starting in 7th grade, so some 6th graders who are advanced in math or language might have finals in 6th grade. 6th graders have a cumulative class experience, but most teachers try to make it less stressful than an exam. Anonymous Anonymous wrote:My 11 yr old son is spending the holiday weekend preparing for finals. This seems too young to me. What year does your child’s school start finals? My DD’s Catholic school has cumulative finals for the six core subjects beginning in 6th grade. She is also studying this weekend. Anonymous Hit submit too soon. She also has midterms. The exams are worth as much as a regular test though. Anonymous Our Catholic school also has exams starting in 6th. Midterms and finals. Cumulative for the semester only. Anonymous They start in 6th but are weighted the same as other tests. They carry progressively more weight each year. I like it as a way for students to get used to them with lower stakes, but also prepare for college (where they can be a/the major grade component) with the increasing weight placed on them each year. Anonymous My DS's MS does this beginning in 6th, although some classes do a project so you don't have an exam in every class. The second year around (he's now in 7th) I find it a useful learning experience. I would much rather have my now 7th grader have this experience in MS then have it all be new in HS. Keep in mind, the MS grades don't mean much to anyone, so it's a good learning opportunity. Anonymous Algebra 1 and Geometry have finals so that the grades may be applied to HS transcripts. 7th grade science has a test that includes information learned earlier in the year but isn’t called a final which I think somehow reduces the stress of it. 8th grade has finals. Anonymous I had cumulative finals starting in 5th Grade when I was in school. Nuts. (A private PK-12th, not local.) Anonymous MY DD’s school has them starting in 3rd grade for ELA and math. In 4th, they add on science and in 5th, they add on social studies. In 6th, it is all of those classes plus their foreign language. Anonymous Anonymous wrote:MY DD’s school has them starting in 3rd grade for ELA and math. In 4th, they add on science and in 5th, they add on social studies. In 6th, it is all of those classes plus their foreign language. Yikes. Beginning cumulative finals in middle school is something I understand but 3rd grade seems awfully young even for core subjects. I'm a middle school teacher btw. The only way I could see this process being helpful and not overwhelming for a 3rd grader is if the study guide was basically the test in a study guide format. Anonymous Anonymous wrote: Anonymous wrote:MY DD’s school has them starting in 3rd grade for ELA and math. In 4th, they add on science and in 5th, they add on social studies. In 6th, it is all of those classes plus their foreign language. Yikes. Beginning cumulative finals in middle school is something I understand but 3rd grade seems awfully young even for core subjects. I'm a middle school teacher btw. The only way I could see this process being helpful and not overwhelming for a 3rd grader is if the study guide was basically the test in a study guide format. They pretty much are for many grade levels. The exams count as regular test grades anyway so not a big deal. One of our primary goals throughout a student’s time in middle school is to prepare them for the increasing academic challenges of high school. To this end, we gradually phase in larger, cumulative midterm and final exams. In 6th grade, students do not take any midterms or final exams, while 7th graders have two of each (social studies and science midterms, and language arts and math finals). 8th graders have midterms and final exams in all of their core subjects, except Spanish. While these exams cover a lot of material, they are only worth 10% of a student’s semester average. We hope that this experience will improve students’ study skills and help prepare them for the demands of high school, but in a low stakes environment. We put a number of supports in place to help prepare students for these exams. 7th and 8th graders have had limited homework and extra study hall time over the past week, to allow them additional time to study. They also had an early dismissal today, with the goal of allowing them to study and rest up for their exams tomorrow. The teachers have spent this week reviewing key material, and working on test-taking skills in advisory, with a lesson put together by Mrs. Stewart, our learning specialist. Once midterms are over, students will spend Friday afternoon celebrating the start of break! The 7th and 8th graders will relax with a movie before our annual winter assembly. We’re excited for all the festivities this week and for the conclusion of midterms! I hope all of the TDS families have a wonderful break. Do you recommend midterms and finals for 7th & 8th graders? I prepared my own midterms for my 7th grader for religion, grammar and history from the CHC textbooks. It was a lot of work, but before I do the same process for the end of the year—should I even be doing this for his grade level? This is my first year homeschooling and he is my oldest so I am unfamiliar with what is customary. I’m pretty sure that in the Catholic school we used to attend, the 7th & 8th graders were given midterms and finals but I’m not aware if this is customary for all schools—Catholic or public. Are midterms/finals that the students take in high school enough preparation for college work? My state of NJ requires nothing—I have been doing all my testing on my own just out of concern for “doing the right thing” for my son for the long term. My main concern is on testing for college, like the SAT’s, will he be required to know exact dates and events for which studying/testing is the only way to prepare? I guess my overall fear is that while, yes, we’re learning and having fun – will it be all forgotten without rigorous review & testing? Thanks again for any thoughts you might have. Also, were you yourself homeschooled until college & how did you fare on SAT’s/college admissions? (Unfortunately I have no local Catholic homeschool support. I don’t personally know anyone who has homeschooled through high school in my area). Thank you for your question! The main reason that teachers give midterms and finals is to assess their students’ knowledge on an individual basis. Because you are already teaching on an individual basis, you already have a really good idea as to what your child does and does not know. Ideally your student will be doing weekly assignments and tests that show what he/she is learning on a daily and weekly basis. Because of this fact, you do not need to worry about midterms and finals to test your students’ knowledge if you already know what that is. It does depend on the school, but some high schools don’t give midterms and finals. Remember that what is learned now is foundational to high school and then to college; the student doesn’t have to master everything in seventh grade, but simply needs to get the foundation. Subjects are presented in a spiral fashion throughout the grades. That is, more and more information is gradually added to the knowledge bank. This won’t be the last year that your son will see those topics. Even if he forgets a little, you can be sure that it will be re-taught in high school. However, occasional testing, particularly in science and history, is useful to the extent that students learn how to study for tests. This is why CHC includes tests in science from 5th grade on up. My suggestion would be to teach the student how to study for a chapter test, first by telling him exactly which material will be on the test and then helping him prep by oral quizzing, so he can see what he knows and doesn’t know. Give him about a week to study, then test. [Don’t grade the test, but rather let it be a trial of how well he is learning to study.] His score will then reveal to him whether or not he is studying enough. You can teach him various study tools that will help him prepare for the tests, such as the use of index cards, highlighting important material, outlining, taking notes, etc. When it is time to prepare for the SAT’s, you can use a SAT prep program with your son. You can do this online or check out books at the library that will give you an idea of what is required on the SAT. Your son can also take the pre-SAT, which will give him an idea of how well he might do on the SAT. The SAT doesn’t ask for factual questions except in the Math section. The average SAT score amongst homeschooled students is high. They have a very high success rate. I was homeschooled through high school and did well enough to receive a full tuition scholarship to a local college, but turned it down to attend Franciscan University. Homeschoolers across the country are regularly being accepted into Ivy League schools. Have confidence that you are your child’s best teacher! God bless you and your family! Laura Corrigan Laura Corrigan is a mother of five. She was homeschooled through high school and received her teaching certificate from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. She has also homeschooled her own children. Reddit and its partners use cookies and similar technologies to provide you with a better experience. By accepting all cookies, you agree to our use of cookies to deliver and maintain our services and site, improve the quality of Reddit, personalize Reddit content and advertising, and measure the effectiveness of advertising. By rejecting non-essential cookies, Reddit may still use certain cookies to ensure the proper functionality of our platform. For more information, please see our Cookie Notice and our Privacy Policy. I currently teach in a 7th-8th grade middle school. A few years back the principal decided he wanted to be a mini-high school and he has implemented midterms and finals into our grading system. I was just wondering if that is the norm? He feels like it is a good way for students to get ready for high school, but my students are now overwhelmed with study guides and the thought of taking 6 tests in 3 days this week. Their final exam is also worthe 20% of their second semester grade! Just wondering what your thoughts are on this subject?? Sounds par for the course to me I have taught middle school most of my 17 year career, and have worked in a number of different school districts and different schools. Every school I have ever taught in --- dating back to the beginning of my career --- has had all 7th and 8th graders take midterms and finals in every subject. Sometimes the 6th graders too. I will say, though, that final exams for middle school courses in my schools have really just been second-semester exams; they were rarely comprehensive for the entire year. Exams usually count as 1/4 of their semester grade. Any middle school teacher who teaches a high-school credit course, however, is expected to give a comprehensive exam of all material taught that year, though the emphasis can be placed on second semester. And the final exam counts as one fourth of the FINAL grade for the course, not just for the semester. (Average of all six 6-weeks grades x 3, + final exam. That sum is then divided by 4.) The only middle school classes with final exams are the high-school credit classes. Our middle school students are REQUIRED to take midterms and finals. However, the exams are rarely cummulative and they do not count for more than a regular test grade. Also, our finals are spaced out during the last 2 weeks of school. Our 6-8th graders are required to have semester final exams and it is the same as your school, 20% of their grade, except 5 finals over 3 days. They only take finals in math, sci, hist, ELA and foreign lang. Not their fine art or PE. Don't know the reasoning for that. The art teacher gives a final anyway the week before. The three days are half days, two exam periods each day, so they have one day where they leave early or come to school early (or hang out in the gym--discouraged, but for parents who work). Wed-Fri and we don't give homework M/Tu except study for the Wed final. Then, besides our intensive class reviews they also have the afternoons before their Th & Fri finals. I make mine cumulative but I think others only do 2nd semester for the last one. I like it--it makes them review our main concepts, but it doesn't affect their grade that much unless they were already right on the edge. We are college prep so I think they also think it gets them ready for high school. We don't, but it's been discussed, as our kids are really overwhelmed when they get to high school by finals. When I was in middle school we took semester exams. It was the norm for us. We were also on the 6-week system instead of quarters (3 periods of 6-weeks in each semester), so we didn't do midterms. We don't do midterms at my school but we do have finals. I teach in a small private school so 7th and 8th grades are combined for some classes. For those classes both 7th and 8th grade take exams. For the classes they aren't together for only the 8th graders take exams; preparation for high school. Due to end of year activities our exams are actually spaced out over 2 1/2 weeks. They only have one exam on a given day. One week they had 4 exams, one week they had 2, and the other they had 1; their eighth class is either art, gym, music, or p.e., so no exam. We each count their exams as two test grades. Did your child learn the skills they need to be ready for eighth grade? Here are some of the most important academic skills that kids acquire in seventh grade. If your child hasn’t mastered some of them, don’t worry. The important thing is that your child makes progress toward mastery. Choose a few areas to focus on this summer, but keep things low-key both for you and for your child. It’s more important that at-home learning be an experience that encourages your child to enjoy tackling challenges. By the end of 7th grade, kids should be able to: Evaluate a piece of nonfiction writing and determine whether there is sufficient evidence and logic to support the main idea. Identify themes and central ideas in a work of fiction. Understand and use academic vocabulary words (see word lists for 6th grade, 7th grade, and 8th grade). Proficiently read and understand grade-level novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and nonfiction. Understand that writing involves several steps: planning, revising, giving and receiving feedback respectfully, editing, rewriting and, sometimes, trying a new approach. Be able to identify evidence and make inferences from the evidence presented. (Read more about finding evidence and drawing inferences.) Understand the difference between phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses and use them correctly in writing. Write informative and explanatory papers on science and social studies topics that include academic vocabulary words, concrete details gleaned from research, and reference to cause-and-effect relationships. Express their researched, fact-based opinions in argument papers, in which they also acknowledge — and use facts to argue against — opposing viewpoints. Give oral presentations of their research and writing in which they present their main ideas to their classmates aloud, using formal language, clear pronunciation, and at a volume loud enough for everyone in the class to hear. Solve multi-step math problems that involve negative numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, and rate. Use the four operations (+, -, x, ÷) on decimals, fractions, and percentages in a variety of different types of problems. Solve algebraic equations and inequalities with at least one variable (unknown number) as a prelude to algebra. Fluidly convert decimals to fractions (and vice versa) and place both on a number line. Know the formulas for the area and circumference of a circle. Understand the basics of probability, including the idea of random sampling and how to use that data to produce a “representative sample.” Read more about your seventh grader and reading, writing, and math under the Common Core Standards.