

Hi Parents!

I hope you all received report cards today and I wanted to address any concerns and offer suggestions/tips on ways you can help prepare students for the End of Grade tests. First of all, I will be sending home the Practice EOG test questions for Reading and Math in the Wednesday folders next week. We did not have them ready in time to get them out with report cards; however, the score sheets that did come home today will probably make more sense when you see the actual tests.

I put together a list of ideas so you can continue their learning at home. A lot of these suggestions you have probably heard before, but I find them useful, so hopefully you will too. While we are rigorously reviewing and revisiting topics that students tend to have more difficulty with, it is important that parents also support student learning at home on a regular basis. Please let me know if you would like additional resources or if you have any questions about how to help at home.

### **Tips for Math:**

1. **Study Island** – [www.studyisland.com](http://www.studyisland.com)
  - a. Students are familiar with this site, as we use it frequently in the classroom.
  - b. Students simply log on to Study Island from anywhere. All they need is an Internet connection
  - c. Students master topics built from the **North Carolina Standard Course of Study** and tested on the **EOG test**.
  - d. Each topic is built from one of the objectives within the Standard Course of Study.
  - e. Each topic contains a straightforward lesson and assessment questions with detailed explanations that provide automated instruction.
  - f. Students can choose between traditional tests or interactive games as their learning method.
  - g. I have set a goal for the students, to aim for 90% or higher on each objective, both in math and reading. Often, students rush through the quizzes, without taking the time to read each lesson, which ends up making the quizzes more of a guessing game. Taking the time to review the lessons, then take the quizzes or play the games is a much better approach to Study Island.
  - h. Many of the quizzes can also be print out, so students can take them the traditional paper/pencil method.
  - i. Please make sure students are not taking quizzes in math on concept we have not reviewed yet this year, such as measurement and geometry.

2. One area I find all students could work on is **showing their work** in math. While they will say it is much easier to solve the problems mentally, I find that students generally do much better when working out problems on paper. This also helps me see where there is a lack of understanding. Sometimes it is a simple error in computation, rather than a lack of understanding.
- When it comes to word problems, drawing the problems out, using pictures, charts, and symbols, is a great way to help them visualize the multiple step problems that are found throughout the EOG tests.
3. Practice **multiple-step word problems**
- In 4<sup>th</sup> grade, students are required to solve word problems that require more than one step in computation. Often, students assume that there is one quick way to solve the problem and without organizing the information provided, it is all too easy to make careless mistakes or overlook the problem.
  - The first step to effectively working word problems is to read the problem entirely. Sometimes students read half a sentence and begin solving the problem. It is better to get a feel for the whole problem, and try to see what information is provided, and what information is still needed.
  - The second step is to work in an organized manner. Label variables with what they stand for, draw and label pictures neatly, and explain their reasoning as they go along. And it is also imperative that students determine what the problem is actually asking for. (What kind of math do I need to use?)
4. Familiarize students with **key words**
- Certain words indicate certain mathematical operations. Below is a partial list. Students shouldn't always rely on these words, but generally they can help in solving problems.

<b>Addition</b>	increased by more than combined, together total of sum added to
<b>Subtraction</b>	decreased by minus, less

	difference between/of less than, fewer than
<b>Multiplication</b>	of times, multiplied by product of increased/decreased by a factor of (this type can involve both addition or subtraction <i>and</i> multiplication!)
<b>Division</b>	per, a out of ratio of, quotient of percent (divide by 100)
<b>Equals</b>	is, are, was, were, will be gives, yields sold for

5. Practice in the **Math Workbook**

- a. All students should have a workbook and can bring it home to work in whenever they would like. While some homework does come straight from the workbook, there are plenty of word problems covering all concepts covered this year. Also, reviewing concepts from earlier in the year, like multiplication and division, are always valuable.

6. Download **sample EOG tests online:**

- a. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog/sampleitems/math4>
- b. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog/sampleitems>
- c. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog/reading/>

7. **Other resources/publications:**

- a. <http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=332caf5e44df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=8b0d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

## Tips for Reading:

1. Explore **different genres** at home. Non fiction and poetry are important as well as different types of fiction. Students tend to stick to one genre, but the more exposure to various types will help them identify the different strategies author's use in writing, depending on the genre. (Author's purpose)
2. Familiarize your students with using **dictionary/thesaurus**.
3. Try and identify difficult vocabulary and work with your child in using text and **context clues** to determine word meaning.
4. **Read along** with your child, so you can share in discussions about the text.
5. There are many types of **questions** you can use related to text.
  - a. Right There questions

Right there questions will have answers in the textbook in the same sentence. Right there questions often begin with "Who is", "What is", "When is", "What kind of", "Name", or "List"

These questions are answered by locating and copying the information
  - b. Think and Search

Think and search questions require you to read several sentences or sections of text and combine the information together.

The questions often begin with "Summarize", "What caused", "Contrast", "Compare", or "Explain"

You need to put information from several locations together in a way that is meaningful to you to answer the question.
  - c. Author and Me

Author and Me questions require you to answer with information beyond what is in the text.

The basic material to be elaborated on must be read and understood before you can add additional information to it.

A typical question in Chemistry might be "How could you tell if a substance is a metal or nonmetal?"

The question assumes you know the properties of metal and nonmetals and will be able to generate lab test based on these properties.
  - d. On My Own

On my own questions require answers not in the book at all.

The questions require that you use background knowledge to support your opinions.

A typical On My Own question might be "How can plastics be most effectively designed to serve society rather than harm it?"