Introduction
to
Common Core State Standards
for
Mathematics
9 –12

Mathematics Standards for High School

The high school standards specify the mathematics that all students should study in order to be college and career ready. Additional mathematics that students should learn in order to take advanced courses such as calculus, advanced statistics, or discrete mathematics is indicated by (+), as in this example: (+) Represent complex numbers on the complex plane in rectangular and polar form (including real and imaginary numbers).

All standards without a (+) symbol should be in the common mathematics curriculum for all college and career ready students. Standards with a (+) symbol may also appear in courses intended for all students.

The high school standards are listed in conceptual categories:
• Number and Quantity
• Algebra
• Functions
• Modeling
• Geometry
• Statistics and Probability

Conceptual categories portray a coherent view of high school mathematics; a student's work with functions, for example, crosses a number of traditional course boundaries, potentially up through and including calculus. Modeling is best interpreted not as a collection of isolated topics but in relation to other standards. Making mathematical models is a Standard for Mathematical Practice, and specific modeling standards appear throughout the high school standards indicated by a star symbol (★). The star symbol sometimes appears on the heading for a group of standards; in that case, it should be understood to apply to all standards in that group.

Mathematical Practices*

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

4. Model with mathematics.

5. Use appropriate tools strategically.

6. Attend to precision.

7. Look for and make use of structure.

8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

For additional information on Designing High School Mathematics Courses based on the Common Core State Standards see Appendix A on the Common Core State Standards website.

Note on courses and transitions

The high school portion of the Standards for Mathematical Content specifies the mathematics all students should study for college and career readiness. These standards do not mandate the sequence of high school courses. However, the organization of high school courses is a critical component to implementation of the standards. To that end, sample high school pathways for mathematics – in both a traditional course sequence (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II) as well as an integrated course sequence (Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Mathematics 3) – will be made available shortly after the release of the final Common Core State Standards. It is expected that additional model pathways based on these standards will become available as well.

The standards themselves do not dictate curriculum, pedagogy, or delivery of content. In particular, states may handle the transition to high school in different ways. For example, many students in the U.S. today take Algebra I in the 8th grade, and in some states this is a requirement. The K-7 standards contain the prerequisites to prepare students for Algebra I by 8th grade, and the standards are designed to permit states to continue existing policies concerning Algebra I in 8th grade.

A second major transition is the transition from high school to post-secondary education for college and careers. The evidence concerning college and career readiness shows clearly that the knowledge, skills, and practices important for readiness include a great deal of mathematics prior to the boundary defined by (+) symbols in these standards. Indeed, some of the highest priority content for college and career readiness comes from Grades 6-8. This body of material includes powerfully useful proficiencies such as applying ratio reasoning in real-world and mathematical problems, computing fluently with positive and negative fractions and decimals, and solving real-world and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume. Because important standards for college and career readiness are distributed across grades and courses, systems for evaluating college and career readiness should reach as far back in the standards as Grades 6-8. It is important to note as well that cut scores or other information generated by assessment systems for college and career readiness

should be developed in collaboration with representatives from higher education and workforce development programs, and should be validated by subsequent performance of students in college and the workforce.