Snapshot of Arts Learning in the Third Grade
Third graders get excited about describing their thoughts orally and in writing, which leads them to more creative expression in the arts. They use their skills in the arts to portray what they imagine: a person, place or thing. They create and perform original dance sequences more expressively and also perform dances from various countries with a partner or a group, which adds to their collection of dance movements. Their musical knowledge increases as they focus on rhythmic patterns, musical forms, melody, harmony and timbre when reading, writing and performing music. Increased listening skills are applied as they identify those qualities in music selections. Singing from memory helps them improve their accuracy. In third grade, students do cooperative scriptwriting by applying the five W’s (who, what, were, when and why). They have many opportunities to demonstrate their problem-solving and cooperative skills when they participate in theatrical experiences. Their visual arts skills lead them to creating the illusion of depth in a painting and they gain skills in a growing number of media such as watercolor and computer-generated prints. Students also become familiar with local artists and their works as well as artists from throughout California and from various parts of the world.

Snapshot of Arts Learning in the Fourth Grade
Fourth grade students have become active participants in their own learning. Building on what they learned and experienced in the arts since Kindergarten, they recognize the artist within themselves, and they see how they can apply what they have learned in the arts to learning in other areas of the curriculum. Project-based learning allows them to, for example, share what they have learned through monologues about an important person from history, create a three-dimensional representation of a California city, learn and perform songs and music from different time periods and cultures and draw and paint pictures of landscapes or murals that represent the various biospheres in the world. They are communicating through the arts as they are expanding their creative expression abilities.

They are communicating through the arts as they are expanding their creative expression abilities.
Snapshot of Arts Learning in the Fifth Grade

Fifth-grade students are maturing in their desire and ability to talk about, describe and evaluate their work in the arts and the work of others. They have grown in their sense of what they like and dislike and can substantiate their opinion using specific criteria as they evaluate their own work and the work of others. Fifth graders apply more complex concepts to their creation and performance in the arts. They invent new dance sequences, compose music, develop plots in theatre and use perspective in the visual arts. Along with this, they explore the rich history of the arts in the United States and in various cultures.

Fifth graders apply more complex concepts to their creation and performance in the arts.
Dance Content

Examples of Dance Learning in Third Grade
- Combining and performing locomotor movements and axial movements, such as walking and turning or stretching and sliding while moving on a specific pathway.
- Improvising multiple possibilities to solve a given movement problem, such as finding four different ways to combine a turn, a stretch and a jump while using different levels in space (high, medium and low).
- Creating, memorizing and performing original movement sequences with a partner or when collaborating in a small group.
- Describing and demonstrating commonalities among basic movements in dances from various countries.

Examples of Dance Learning in Fourth Grade
- Demonstrating increased mental concentration and physical control in performing skills in dance.
- Explaining how the musical accompaniment relates to the movement in a dance they have studied.
- Demonstrating an increased range and use of dance concepts such as space (forward/backward), time (tempo, accent) and energy (sudden/sustained, flowing/sharp).
- Performing folk/traditional and social dances from California history.
- Using dance vocabulary when describing unique characteristic of dances they have watched or performed from countries studied in the history curriculum, such as rhythms, spatial patterns, gestures and intent.

Examples of Dance Learning in Fifth Grade
- Inventing multiple possibilities to solve a given movement problem while incorporating the principles of variety, contrast and unity.
- Demonstrating increased focus, physical control and coordination in performing locomotor and axial movements.
- Identifying and perform folk/traditional, social and theatrical dances done by Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Applying specific criteria to analyzing and assessing the quality of a dance performance by well-known dancers or dance companies.
Music Content

Examples of Music Learning in Third Grade
- Reading, writing and performing simple rhythmic patterns using eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, dotted half notes, whole notes and rests.
- Identifying melody, rhythm, harmony and timbre or tone in selected pieces of music when hearing it played.
- Describing how specific musical elements such as dynamics (changes in the intensity of sound) and tempo (the rate or speed of the music) communicate ideas or moods.
- Identifying simple musical forms such as AABA, AABB and round.
- Identifying, singing and playing songs and music from diverse cultures and identifying differences and commonalities in the music.

Examples of Music Learning in Fourth Grade
- Reading, writing and performing melodic notation for songs in major keys using the note names.
- Composing and improvising simple rhythmic and melodic patterns on classroom instruments.
- Perform a varied repertoire of music from diverse cultures when singing alone and with others or when playing classroom instruments.
- Describing the characteristics that make a musical performance a work of art.
- Evaluating improvement in their personal musical performances after practice or rehearsal.

Examples of Music Learning in Fifth Grade
- Reading, writing and performing melodic notation in treble clef in major and minor keys.
- Analyzing the use of music elements in singing and music from various genres and cultures.
- Composing, improvising and performing basic rhythmic, melodic and patterns of chords independently on classroom instruments.
- Developing and applying appropriate criteria to support personal preferences for specific musical works.

Analyzing the use of music elements in singing and music from various genres and cultures.
Theatre Content

Examples of Theatre Learning in Third Grade

- Extending the use of the vocabulary of theatre, such as character, setting, conflict, motivation, props and blocking, when describing theatrical experiences.
- Participating in cooperative scriptwriting or improvisations that incorporate the five W's (who, what, where, when and why).
- Dramatizing different cultural versions of similar stories from around the world and identifying universal themes from different periods and places.
- Developing and applying appropriate criteria for evaluating a theatrical experience.
- Creating simple scripts for classmates that demonstrate knowledge of plot, characterization, basic blocking (telling actors where they should move for the proper effect) and stage areas, such as upstage, downstage, stage left and stage right.

Examples of Theatre Learning in Fourth Grade

- Designing or creating costumes, props, makeup, or masks to communicate a character in formal (a play done in a public performance) and informal performances (improvisation in the classroom).
- Identifying a character’s objectives and motivations to explain that character’s behavior.
- Demonstrating how voice (diction, pace, emphasis and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. (For example say, “I want you to go, I want you to go, I want you to go.”)
- Identifying and describing theatrical or storytelling traditions in the cultures of ethnic groups throughout the history of California.
- Comparing and contrasting the impact on the audience of live theatre, film, television, radio and other electronic media.

Examples of Theatre Learning in Fifth Grade

- Using the vocabulary of theatre, such as sense memory, script, cue, monologue, dialogue, protagonist and antagonist, to analyze dramatic works and describe theatrical experiences.
- Demonstrating the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.
- Participating in improvisational activities to explore complex ideas and universal themes in literature and life.
- Collaborating as an actor, director, scriptwriter or technical artist in creating formal or informal theatrical performances and in applying appropriate criteria for critiquing the performances.
- Analyzing ways in which theatre, television, video and film play a part in our daily lives.
Visual Arts Content

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Third Grade
- Identifying and describing how foreground, middle ground and background are used to create the illusion of space.
- Identifying and describing the use of all the elements of art in artworks (line, color, shape, texture, space and value).
- Mixing and using various kinds of paints to create tints, shades and neutral colors.
- Comparing and contrasting various works of art that have a similar theme but were created at different time periods or in different countries, such as a Chinese landscape painting by Wang Hui (1691-1698) and “Valley of the Yosemite” by Albert Bierstadt (1864).
- Identifying successful and less successful compositional and expressive qualities of their own works of art and describing what might be done to improve them.

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Fourth Grade
- Using accurate proportions to create an expressive portrait or a figure drawing or painting.
- Using shading (a change in value from light to dark) to transform a two-dimensional shape into what appears to be a three-dimensional form, such as a circle to a sphere.
- Using contrast (light and dark), complementary colors (yellow and purple, red and green, blue and orange) and shading in works of art to show form and emphasis.
- Constructing diagrams, maps, graphs, timelines, illustrations and dioramas (three-dimensional scenes) to communicate ideas or tell a story about a historical event.
- Reading biographies and stories about artists and summarizing the information into short reports that include visual aids, to tell how the artists mirrored or affected their time period or culture.

Examples of Visual Arts Learning in Fifth Grade
- Using their knowledge of all the elements of art and principles of design to describe similarities and differences in works of art and in the environment.
- Identifying, describing and comparing characteristics of representational, abstract and nonrepresentational works of art.
- Demonstrating skills in the manipulation of digital imagery (e.g., computer-generated art, digital photography and videography).
- Identifying, describing and comparing various fine, traditional and folk arts from historical periods worldwide.
- Assessing their own creative works of art, using specific criteria and describing what changes they would make for improvement or innovation.

Assessing their own creative works of art, using specific criteria and describing what changes they would make for improvement or innovation.
Talking to Your Child’s Teacher About the Visual and Performing Arts

Visual and performing arts programs vary widely throughout the state as to what is offered, how much time is spent on arts learning and who teaches the arts. When you talk to your child’s teacher about the arts program, it will be helpful to get a clear picture of your child’s opportunity to engage in arts learning as well as the content and/or focus of the instruction at this grade span. Following are four questions that may guide a conversation with your child’s teacher.

1. How much instructional time does my child receive per week or month or during the school year in each of the arts: dance, music, theatre and visual arts? Is this time dedicated to the arts or are the arts integrated into learning in other areas of the curriculum? (Note: The California Education Code requires instruction in dance, music, theatre and visual arts for grades one through grade twelve.)

2. Is arts instruction based on the state standards and is it sequential through the grade levels?

3. Who teaches each of the arts to my child at this grade level? Here are some examples: the classroom teacher, a credentialed dance, music, theatre and/or visual art teacher, a teaching artist from a community arts organization or a volunteer such as an artist or parent.

4. What does my child particularly enjoy and/or need to work on in each of the arts disciplines?

5. Reflecting on the list of sample arts learning provided in this document at my child’s grade level, what are two or three of your curricular goals for the students in each of the arts?

Helping Your Child Learn in the Visual and Performing Arts at School, at Home and in the Community

At school:
- Volunteer your time by assisting in the classroom when the arts are being taught.
- Share your personal expertise in the arts through school or classroom performances, demonstrations and lessons.
- Share your expertise in a folk or traditional art form with your child’s class.
- Assist with costumes and props for theatre and dance.
- Offer support for the arts program by donating supplies and/or equipment for the arts program.

At home:
- Talk about good health-related habits that a dancer, like an athlete, would need.
- Ask your child to teach you a simple song or musical pattern such as ABA.
- After reading a story with your child, ask him/her to talk about the main character, the setting and the conflict in the story.
- Set up an “art space” for your child where she/he can keep a pad of white paper, a box of crayons and a beginner’s set of watercolors along with a brush and a plastic cup for water. Don’t forget the paper towels.

In the community:
- Support your child’s learning in the arts with lessons and experiences outside of school at art museums or art centers and with community dance, theatre and music groups or teachers.
- See if art museums have free days and activities for families or if performing artists are appearing in a park, library or other public place.
- Take your child to art gallery exhibits and performances of dance, music and theatre that are appropriate for this grade level.
- Participate in the art form alongside of your child sharing the experience together.
Expanding or Improving the Arts Program at Your Child’s School

If you want to support the visual and performing arts program in your child’s school or see what you can do to strengthen arts instruction across the grade levels in your school, here are a few ideas for getting started.

- Go to the California Department of Education’s Visual and Performing Arts pages starting with the following: [www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/vp/vapaguidance.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/vp/vapaguidance.asp)
- Look to the Statewide Arts Education Database to find out how your school district is doing in providing arts education to students in grades 6-12. Visit [createca.net](http://createca.net) to read about the Arts Ed Data Project and search data for your school or district.
- Visit the California State PTA website to learn why a full curriculum that includes the arts is essential for all students. You’ll be able to view and download free resources in multiple languages. [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)
- Join PTA’s SMARTS Parents for the Arts Network to receive newsletters and information directly to your inbox.
- Be a champion for the arts in your school. To get started, download an informational flier. [www.capta.org/smarts](http://www.capta.org/smarts)
- Start or join an “Arts Now” coalition in your community, [www.artsed411.org](http://www.artsed411.org)

Find more resources by contacting other statewide organizations that support arts education such as:

**The California County Superintendents Education Services Association Arts Initiative**
A statewide network of County Offices that believes that the visual and performing arts are an integral part of a comprehensive curriculum and are essential for learning in the 21st century. [www.ccsesaarts.org](http://www.ccsesaarts.org)

**The California Alliance for Arts Education**
The Alliance advocates for high quality arts education for all students by providing policy expertise and by mobilizing a statewide network of advocates and allied partners. [www.artsed411.org/about_us](http://www.artsed411.org/about_us)

**CREATE CA**
CREATE CA is a coalition of dedicated and innovative leaders who understand that together we have the power to create lasting change for every California student. Our mission is to ensure ALL students are able to reach their full potential by advancing an education model that promotes creativity and the arts for the workforce of tomorrow. [www.createca.net](http://www.createca.net)