



Elementary Curriculum Handbook



A Publication of the Simsbury Public Schools

Revised August 2021

Grade 3

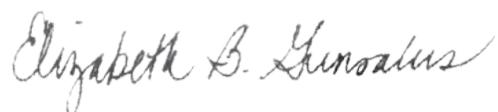
Dear Parent/Guardian,

The *Elementary Curriculum Handbook* presents an overview of each subject and reflects the district's commitment to equity for every student, defining the expectations for achievement and providing a description of the curriculum at each grade level.

Simsbury Public Schools implements a standards-based curriculum that builds students' competencies of our Vision of a Graduate (VoG). The curriculum incorporates sequential instruction, enduring ideas, and discrete skills that students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Learning encompasses students' cultures, languages, and life experiences. Teachers use student work and a variety of assessments to individualize instruction and guide decisions to maximize student learning.

This curriculum handbook is one of the many ways the Simsbury Public Schools supports communication between home and school. We hope that the information will enhance your understanding of the elementary school curriculum and will enrich your role as an active participant in your child's education.

Sincerely,

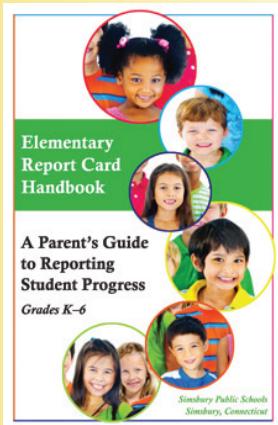
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elizabeth B. Gunsalus".

Betsy Gunsalus
Director of Elementary Curriculum
and Student Assessment

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Elementary report cards



Click on the above image to view a pdf of the file.

Sample report cards are available via the grade level sections in this book.

Formal assessments (K-6)

Assessment	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
NGSS					x		
STAR Reading & Math		x	x	x	x	x	
SBAC		x	x	x	x		

What Is Assessment?

Assessment is the process of gathering evidence in order to document the learning and growth of each child. Teachers assess student performance every day, integrating assessment and instruction continually. It is this constant overlap between questioning, responding, observing, and evaluating student progress that determines further instructional needs. Assessments include universal screenings, informal and formal measures, and summative assessments.

Why do we need assessments?

- to help educators set standards
- to create instructional goals
- to motivate performance
- to provide feedback to students
- to evaluate progress
- to communicate progress to others

How do we use universal assessments?

- to use as diagnostic screenings prior to instruction
- to inform teaching and learning
- to help identify students who might benefit from extra support (see graphic at left)

How do we use informal assessments?

- to assess student performance every day, integrating assessment and instruction continually

Informal assessment occurs when teachers:

- observe students working
- write anecdotal notes that describe learning behaviors
- hold reading and writing conferences to record student strengths and weaknesses
- analyze projects, portfolios, and notebooks

How do we use formal assessments?

- to provide an academic measure of knowledge, concepts, and skills
- to adjust instructional goals and practices

How do we use summative assessments?

- to determine achievement levels for meeting learning standards
- to give teachers and parents/guardians a better picture of where students are succeeding



What Is the Simsbury Language Arts Program?

- a series of developmentally appropriate units, based on the work of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program, which align with national and state standards for reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening
- a comprehensive language arts program, aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards, which provides a continuum of reading and writing skills and strategies across the grades that appropriately challenges all students, highlighting the essential concepts and skills that will make students effective, independent readers, writers, speakers, and listeners
- a structured curriculum that balances the components of literacy and fosters the integration and transfer of learned strategies and skills for all students across multiple genres and subjects

What makes this program unique?

- Students play an active role in their learning: choosing writing topics, selecting books for independent reading, reflecting on their work, and discussing their ideas with others.
- Students' academic needs drive instruction; teachers use whole-class instruction, small groups, and individual conferences so that all students experience academic success.
- Students develop an appreciation of different points of view through book conversations with partners or in book clubs with other students.
- The learning environment fosters risk taking and expands students' knowledge of literature, nonfiction, and writing through specific units of study.
- The program builds confidence in readers, writers, speakers, and listeners through productive and interactive activities.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students read books that correspond to their instructional reading level, participating in class discussions, book conversations, and structured book clubs in order to deepen comprehension.
- Students read a variety of genres, including fiction and nonfiction reading selections, reflecting a diversity of authors and genres with a balance of classic and contemporary works.
- Students cycle through the writing process, generating ideas, planning new pieces, drafting, revising, and editing across various genres of writing that include narrative, informational, and opinion units.
- Students share and celebrate their written work with authentic audiences.
- Students confer with both teachers and peers about their reading and writing.
- Students participate in conversations about their reading and writing lives in order to gain ideas from each other and set learning goals for themselves.

Language Arts

Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong language arts curriculum provides explicit instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. Our K-12 program prepares students to comprehend and communicate effectively, in order to understand themselves, others, and their society.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' comprehensive language arts program include:

- instruction to develop proficient readers who understand, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts;
- opportunities for student choice and collaboration to meet a variety of needs and interests;
- fiction and nonfiction texts, both rigorous and accessible, that reflect diversity of authors and genres and that balance classic and contemporary works;
- authentic tasks and activities that are challenging and have personal value to students;
- a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society;
- assessments that are frequent and varied, and are used to inform instruction, measure student performance, and provide students with feedback about their own strengths and needs so they can reflect upon and take control of

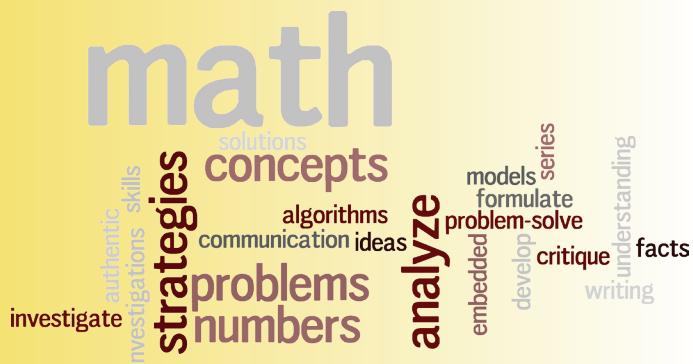
their own learning; and

- a commitment to providing ongoing professional development opportunities to support teacher knowledge of best practices related to curriculum, instruction, and student achievement.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- read and respond to a variety of authors, texts and genres, including theatre, film, and art;
- apply strategies and skills to enhance their understanding of multiple types of text;
- develop and communicate informed opinions and arguments through interpreting and evaluating various texts;
- recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts;
- appreciate the influence that contemporary and classical authors have on human thought;
- use the traits of writing to communicate effectively for a specific purpose and audience;
- contribute, respond to, and develop what others have said in conversations and discussions;
- write and speak in acceptable standard English; and
- transfer literacy skills across multiple content areas.

- Teachers structure and manage reading and writing workshops so that students receive grade-level skill and strategy instruction, with adequate time for practicing these new skills.
- Teachers provide direct, explicit strategy instruction to develop proficient readers and writers who understand, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, and create texts.
- Teachers provide authentic tasks and activities that are challenging and engaging to students.
- Teachers provide a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting, viewing, and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society.
- Teachers read aloud and model how to actively use comprehension strategies to demonstrate what proficient readers do.



What Is the Simsbury Mathematics Program?

- a comprehensive K-8 nationally recognized mathematics program, *Math in Focus*, aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards, in which important mathematical concepts are embedded in authentic, real-world problems

What makes this program unique?

- Students work collaboratively to grapple with problems and develop mathematical ideas.
- Students solve problems, construct arguments, and share their thinking, strategies, and solutions with others.
- Students use mathematical language to communicate their thinking through dialogue and in writing and use mathematical tools to enhance their understanding and communication.
- Students build fact fluency and other foundational skills, including the use of US algorithms, to solve more sophisticated mathematical problems and make connections with other mathematical ideas.
- Students develop flexibility and confidence in investigating mathematical concepts, persevering to solve problems, and attending to precision.
- Students analyze and solve problems which emphasize depth in mathematical thinking rather than surface exposure to a series of fragmented topics.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students explore mathematics using concrete, pictorial, and abstract representations to develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Students learn a variety of problem solving strategies, including model-drawing, to solve real world problems.
- Students develop a positive mathematical mindset, emphasizing the importance of attitude and habits of mind to achieve success in math.
- Students work in groups, pairs, or individually to engage and/or reason about mathematical ideas.
- Teachers differentiate instruction for students based on learning styles, and/or depth of understanding of the concept.

Mathematics

Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong mathematics program develops lifelong critical thinkers and learners whose confidence and interest in mathematics will promote college and career readiness. The program guarantees every student a rigorous, coherent, and focused standards-based curriculum where conceptual understanding and acquisition of basic skills serve as the foundation for complex problem solving and critical thinking. Using the Connecticut Core Standards as a foundation, the Simsbury Public Schools believes that all students will attain the mathematical knowledge necessary to persevere as they reason through problems, communicate their thinking, and justify their conclusions.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' mathematics program include:

- opportunities to build towards an increasingly deep and complex understanding of important mathematical ideas;
- opportunities for students to make connections among mathematical topics and ideas;
- experiences with a wealth of complex problems and real world situations that can be solved numerous ways;
- tasks that cover a range of difficulty and complexity;
- experiences that draw on and relate to students' personal experiences and knowledge;
- opportunities for students to see connections between multiple representations: e.g., the story, the table, the graph, and the equation;
- opportunities for student collaboration and differentiated instruction to meet a variety of needs;
- time for students to reflect on their own thinking and learning and to communicate their ideas orally and in writing;
- opportunities for students to develop both computational proficiency and to build

problem-solving skills;

- a commitment to providing ongoing professional development opportunities to support teacher knowledge of best practices related to curriculum, instruction, and student achievement.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them;
- discuss, explain, and demonstrate understanding of a mathematical situation in multiple ways;
- analyze problems and use stated mathematical assumptions, definitions, and established results in constructing arguments and justifying mathematical ideas, as well as evaluating the reasoning of others;
- select and use a variety of models, tools, symbolic representations, and technology to solve mathematical problems and to communicate ideas orally and in written form;
- use mathematical skills and concepts with proficiency and confidence, while attending to precision;
- transfer mathematical skills across multiple content areas;
- identify and use connections within mathematics to identify interrelationships and equivalent representations (numeric, verbal, visual, etc.) to construct mathematical models, and to investigate and appreciate mathematical structure; and
- use mathematical skills and concepts to make and justify decisions and predictions, to identify patterns and trends, to pose questions from data and situations, and to formulate and solve problems.



What Is the Simsbury Science Program?

- a combination of teacher created and published science units that emphasize content knowledge and inquiry skills while providing opportunities for critical thinking and hands-on learning
- units of study and experience that relate to themes of life science, earth science, and physical science, as well as science and technology in society
- a curriculum that aligns with and expands upon the standards outlined by national and state frameworks

What makes this program unique?

- Students have the opportunity to interact directly with materials in a hands-on approach to learning.
- Students learn in an environment where they can act like scientists.
- Teachers encourage students to question, analyze, explain, and interpret scientific phenomena and processes.
- The elementary science curriculum provides a strong foundation of science and engineering concepts.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students explore, ask questions, make observations, design investigations, propose solutions, and communicate their findings using a variety of methods.
- Students develop a scientific vocabulary and begin to talk like scientists.
- Students learn to use research skills and technology to access relevant information.
- Teachers create an environment that fosters students' natural curiosity and guides them through the process of inquiry.

Science

Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong science education program promotes student understanding of the natural and human built worlds. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to engage in scientific and engineering practices within core content areas so that students become competent problem solvers, capable of making informed and logical judgments using sound, scientific principles as citizens of the world.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' Science program include:

- opportunities to master a core sequence of science study based on the state standards that cover four major domains: physical sciences; life sciences; earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology and applications of science;
- opportunities to develop science literacy and inquiry skills by using a variety of books, resources, and hands-on experiences;
- authentic learning tasks and assessments that connect to real world problems and topics that are relevant to students;
- learning environments that provide opportunities to work individually, collaborate in small groups, and work as a class to speculate, investigate, discuss, question, observe, collect data, and debate conclusions;
- technology that is integrated throughout the program to enhance learning and support investigations;

- to the extent possible, meaningful opportunities to interact with a wide range of science professionals for the purpose of enriching the classroom experience and for exploring and inspiring possible career pursuits; and
- a wide variety of science elective opportunities at the high school level allowing students to explore personal scientific and career interests.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

- acquire new knowledge and continually deepen understanding of core science and engineering concepts;
- apply scientific literacy skills in order to research, understand, and communicate major science concepts and theories;
- construct explanations and design solutions through scientific exploration, formulating hypotheses, designing experiments, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions;
- make claims and argue their validity based on the analysis of data and other available evidence;
- build models and theories about the world, design prototypes, and build systems to solve problems;
- apply mathematical concepts to enhance scientific reasoning; and
- understand the possibilities and limitations of science and technology in order to make informed decisions.



What Is the Simsbury Social Studies Program?

- a K-12 curriculum that aligns with and expands upon the standards outlined in state and national frameworks, emphasizing history, government and civics, geography, and economics
- interdisciplinary units that incorporate the use of primary and secondary sources, nonfiction and fiction texts, and various emerging technologies to bridge the gap between the past, present, and future
- a series of units for each grade that are unified by grade-specific social studies themes, emphasizing the consideration of diverse perspectives and cultures

What makes this program unique?

- Each unit integrates subject areas of reading, writing, technology, and media.
- Students investigate essential questions based on individual behaviors, geography, cultures, history, and political and economic structures.
- Students make connections between the units of study and the grade-specific guiding theme.
- Teachers use the inquiry method to ensure understanding of each concept.
- Teachers encourage students to question, analyze, explain, and interpret historical and cultural events.
- The program fosters critical, creative, and ethical thinking so that students consider diverse perspectives and cultures and recognize the impact of their actions and civic decisions.

What happens in the classroom?

- Students read a collection of primary and secondary sources and nonfiction texts to build knowledge of each unit.
- Students work collaboratively to understand the impact of the unifying theme.
- Students discuss, debate, write persuasively, and conduct research.
- Teachers use multiple texts, media, and technology to explore concepts in each unit.
- Teachers facilitate student thinking by asking probing questions that examine the enduring understandings.
- Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual students.

Social Studies

Philosophy Statement

The Simsbury Public Schools believes that a strong social studies program develops all students' capacities to know, analyze, explain, and argue within the disciplines of history, geography, civics, economics, and behavioral sciences. A balanced repertoire of content and skills, focusing on rights and responsibilities, interdependence, authority, conflict, and uniqueness of place, develops global citizens who are equipped with the critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication skills necessary for the 21st century workplace, as well as for civic and economic responsibility.

The elements of the Simsbury Public Schools' comprehensive social studies program include:

- integration of literacy and communication skills within the content and units;
- independent and collaborative learning opportunities that promote an understanding of how to acquire, integrate, and apply knowledge;
- authentic tasks and activities that engage, challenge, and have personal value to students;
- assessments that are frequent, varied, and used to inform instruction, measure student performance, and provide students with feedback about their own strengths and needs so they can reflect upon and take control of their own learning;
- multiple opportunities for students to write in argumentative and informational genres;
- texts from primary and secondary sources that are rigorous and accessible, reflect diversity of authors and sources, and develop students' awareness of the biases that exist inherently in all documents; and
- a variety of technological and informational resources as a means for collecting, creating, and communicating information to meet the demands of our ever-changing society.

By the end of grade 12, all students will be able to:

Through Inquiry:

- analyze patterns, connections, causes, and

effects in order to strengthen inquiry, literacy, communication, and action; and

- develop meaningful questions to deepen content knowledge through independent research, allowing students to take action as informed citizens.

Within the discipline of history:

- demonstrate knowledge of the structure of United States and world history to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to students' own life experiences; and
- analyze the historical roots and current complexity of international relations and globalization in an increasingly interdependent world.

Within the discipline of geography:

- integrate geographic knowledge, skills, and concepts to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.

Within the discipline of civics:

- explain how people create rules and laws to preserve the delicate balance between individual rights and societal needs; and
- evaluate how ideas, principles, and practices of citizenship have emerged and are maintained over time and across cultures.

Within the discipline of economics:

- explain how people organize systems for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Within the disciplines of other key social sciences:

- apply concepts from the study of history, culture, economics, and government to form an understanding of the interrelationships between science, technology, and society;
- describe how the study of individual development and identity contributes to the understanding of human behavior; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture and how gender, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic class influence personal perspectives.

Grade 3 Language Arts

Elementary Report Cards



Grade 3



Grade 3
Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Language Arts Program?

The Simsbury Language Arts Program is a balanced approach to literacy instruction, fostering the integration and transfer of strategies and skills across multiple genres and subjects. Inspired by the ongoing research of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, teachers provide daily reading and writing experiences.

In reading, students participate in varied instruction, read alouds, and practices that include: teacher-led minilessons, small group instruction, individual conferences, and independent reading/book clubs. Within specific units, students select independent books of various genres; choice, differentiation, and student engagement are hallmarks in every classroom.

Our writing workshops emphasize independence and repertoire, as students generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit written pieces. With a balance of writing genres, our curriculum develops six traits of writing: focus, organization, fluency, elaboration, voice, and conventions.

READING

Unit of Study	<i>In this unit students will...</i>
Building a Reading Life	develop the habits of strong readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ choose books wisely◆ read with volume addressing reading problems along the way◆ talk about books with others◆ apply comprehension strategies, especially envisioning, predicting, and retelling
Launching the Reading Workshop	
Reading to Learn Nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• read long stretches of nonfiction text with fluency• identify main idea(s) and supporting details• pay attention to text structure to understand relationships in the text• strengthen literal comprehension skills (orienting, envisioning, monitoring for sense, word work, and fluency)• develop critical reading skills, such as growing ideas and questioning the text• use text features and context clues to understand vocabulary

READING

Unit of Study	<i>In this unit students will...</i>
Character Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">make careful, close observations of characters to craft theories and predictionsgain an understanding of story structure to make cross text comparisons about characters struggles, motivations, reactions, and the lessons they learn
Research Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">learn how to researchstrengthen reading skills, such as identifying main idea details and summarizing textanalyze parts of a text in relation to the wholecompare and contrast information across textsdevelop critical reading skills by growing ideas and questioning the text
Mystery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">apply comprehensive strategies to build an understanding to solve the mysteryread and notice elements of a mysteryread with partners to discuss and solve mysteries

Third-grade students experience priority writing units in the three core genres: narrative, information, and opinion. Additional units may be taught as time permits, and writing will be integrated into other content areas so that students have opportunities to practice and develop their skills.

In all three units, students will learn to generate ideas, plan the structure of their piece, and then develop their ideas through drafting and revision. Conventions, spelling, and grammar are taught explicitly and reinforced as students write.

WRITING

Unit of Study	<i>In this unit students will...</i>
Launching Writing Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">implement the structures, rituals, and routines of writing workshoprecognize the importance of writing in their lives and the lives of othersrecall and apply previous learning and knowledge about writingshare important elements of identity through writing various types of texts
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">implement the structures, rituals, and routines of the workshopcreate a writer's notebookimplement strategies for finding topics: time line of events, photographs, interviewsfocus stories on small momentswrite with a clear organizational structureadd detail and information to elaboratebegin to add tension to personal narratives
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify areas of personal expertise and develop questions to extend knowledgewrite informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearlyincorporate and blend known information with newly learned facts, details, and researchorganize the presentation of the writingidentify and attend to audience
Opinion (Writing to Make a Real World Difference)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasonsdevelop short- and longer-term writing projectsengage in research, categorizing and organizing evidence

Grade 3 Mathematics

Elementary Report Cards



Grade 3



Grade 3
Art, Music, PE

*Click buttons above to download sample
report cards (PDF format).*

What is the Simsbury Grade 3 Mathematics Program?

In third grade...

Students will continue to build their concept of numbers and develop an understanding of fractions as numbers. They will learn the concepts underlying multiplication and division and apply these new skills in problem-solving situations. Students will also make connections between addition, multiplication, and practical applications like area of a rectangle. The chart below provides an overview of the broad areas of mathematics students will be studying in third grade. In addition to these broad concepts, instruction in discrete math skills will be provided as well.

Areas of Focus	Students will...
Operations and Algebraic Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none">Numbers to 10,000Using Bar Models: Addition and SubtractionMultiplication Tables of 3 and 4Multiplication Tables of 6, 7, 8, and 9MultiplicationDivisionUsing Bar Models: Multiplication and Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none">count and compare numbers to 10,000solve real-world problems involving addition and subtractionmultiply and divide within 100represent and solve real world problems involving multiplication and divisionidentify and explain patterns in arithmetic
Number and Operations – Base Ten <ul style="list-style-type: none">Addition Up to 10,000Subtraction Up to 10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmeticsolve problems involving addition and subtractionuse estimation to check reasonableness
Number and Operations – Fractions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">develop understanding of fractions as numbers and use models to compare, add, and subtract fractions.
Measurement and Data <ul style="list-style-type: none">Area and PerimeterTimeMetric Mass and VolumeCustomary Length, Width, and CapacityBar Graphs and Line Plots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">understand concepts of area and relate area to multiplication and additionmeasure area and perimetersolve problems involving measurement and estimation of intervals of timemeasure and estimate liquid volumes and masses of objects using standard units of grams, kilograms, and litersmeasure lengths using rulers marked with halves and fourths of an inchuse ounce, pound, and ton as units of measurement for weightmeasure capacity with cup, pint, quart, and gallonrepresent and interpret data
Geometry <ul style="list-style-type: none">Two-Dimensional Shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">reason with shapes and their attributes

Grade 3 Science

Elementary Report Cards



Grade 3



Grade 3
Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Grade 3 Science Program?

In third grade...

Students will participate in two major science units. The first unit focuses on animals and their habitats. The second unit focuses on weather and climate, developing the idea that by paying careful attention to clouds, wind, and other weather clues around us, we can predict the daily weather and make sense of why places on earth look and feel the way they do. In addition to the units of study, students have opportunities throughout the year to investigate and learn about scientific concepts through reading, videos, and activities that build their abilities to:

- make observations and ask questions
- find information from a variety of sources
- design and conduct investigations
- collect, analyze, and interpret data
- propose and test solutions
- communicate findings
- use measurement tools, mathematics, and technology

Unit of Study	In this unit students will...
Animals Through Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop an appreciation for how animals and the places they live are not constant• explore fossils of animals and habitats of the past• investigate the domestication of animals
Weather and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• study various types of clouds, winds, and weather clues• predict daily weather• compare and contrast the weather in various parts of the world

Grade 3 Social Studies

Elementary Report Cards



Grade 3



Grade 3
Art, Music, PE

Click buttons above to download sample report cards (PDF format).

What is the Simsbury Grade 3 Social Studies Program?

In third grade...

Students will explore the geography and history of Connecticut. Through a variety of activities and experiences, they will learn that where people live impacts how people live. Students will also analyze how key events, people, and perspectives impact history as well as how history is interpreted and documented.

Units will center on inquiry, developing students' abilities to develop questions, explore resources, evaluate reliability, and take informed action as responsible and responsive citizens.

Unit of Study	<i>In this unit students will...</i>
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">learn how maps and globes help us to understand geography and how it impacts human movement and economyrecognize concepts including geographic features and man-made features, political map, physical map, and population mapcompare and contrast different map types including physical, political, and populationlocate towns and cities on a maplocate the rivers in Connecticut
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">identify differing historical perspectives from Connecticut historical eventsdetermine important people, places and events in Connecticut history

**If you have any questions on the material
contained in this handbook, please contact:**

**Elementary Curriculum Center
(860) 658-3897**

**Director of Elementary Curriculum and Student Assessment
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