

THE CORE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

Our school is part of a growing network of schools across the country — public, charter and private — that use the Core Knowledge curriculum and are finding great success as measured both by standardized tests and by the students' enjoyment of learning. The Core Knowledge network also includes preschools that have a similarly sequenced program devoted to physical, linguistic, social, and emotional development.

RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CORE KNOWLEDGE CURRICULUM

The Core Knowledge Sequence:

Content Guidelines for Grades K-8

A comprehensive outline of the curriculum.

The Core Knowledge Grader Series: *What Your Kindergartner–Sixth Grader Needs to Know*

Books to Build On: A Grade-by-Grade Guide for Parents and Teachers

An annotated list of books that complement the Core Knowledge curriculum. Several hundred additions to this list are presented on the web site.

Core Classics®

Illustrated classics abridged for young readers but faithful in style and substance to the original works.

BOOKS BY E. D. HIRSCH, JR.

- *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*
- *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Edited by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph Kett, and James Trefil
- *First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (a resource for elementary school students)
- *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*

At www.coreknowledge.org you can:

- read about the curriculum
- order resource materials
- subscribe to the Foundation's e-newsletter, *Common Knowledge*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL

- Be familiar with the Core Knowledge topics being studied in the classroom and discuss them with your child. You can request a copy of the year-long plan and read books related to the topics together with your child.
- Provide enrichment opportunities to reinforce the curriculum — trips to libraries, museums, music venues, and children's theaters.
- Provide your child's teacher with feedback about circumstances that might affect the classroom learning experience
- Keep a scrapbook of schoolwork and student achievements. Let your child know how important his or her school life is to you.

**For more information or to order books call
Core Knowledge Foundation at 800-238-3233
or consult the web site:
www.coreknowledge.org**



WELCOME TO Core Knowledge®

At our school your child will be offered a very special curriculum called **Core Knowledge**. It is based on some of the ideas presented by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. in his well-known books, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* and *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*, and further developed by the foundation he established in 1986.

In each grade students will be exposed to a broad range of historical, scientific, and cultural topics that will build on one another to prepare them for later educational success. This wide array of subject matter will not only develop cultural literacy but also will build the strong vocabulary necessary for *true* reading comprehension.

Core Knowledge tries to develop cultural literacy in a way that is systematic but leaves room for creativity for both teacher and student. This curriculum eliminates the gaps and repetition that characterize a curriculum in which textbooks and programs are selected more or less at random.

Your cooperation and support of your child's education is crucial. Parental involvement can make the difference between success and failure.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MASTER CORE KNOWLEDGE SUBJECTS

Your child will be enthusiastic about learning as the curriculum unfolds. No matter what level of ability a student starts with, he or she will experience a sense of achievement as knowledge and skills are mastered. The **Core Knowledge Curriculum** covers language arts, history and geography, mathematics, science, art, and music and can be complemented by other subjects. To learn more about **Core Knowledge**, please read the series “*What Your Kindergartner through 6th Grader Needs to Know*.” One book is available for each of the first seven years of schooling to enable you to share and reinforce what your child is learning.

THE CORE KNOWLEDGE SEQUENCE: CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR K-8



This book provides the foundation of the curriculum and presents a detailed outline of the content to be taught from kindergarten through grade eight. We have selected programs and materials to complement and develop the curriculum. Music and art are

prominently included in the *Sequence* and integrated whenever possible with history and literature. Even programs not included in the *Sequence*, such as physical education, can be related to various elements of classroom study. We describe our curriculum as **solid, specific, sequenced, and shared**.

SOLID, SPECIFIC

The following sample — one subject for each grade — will give you an idea of the specific content requirements of the curriculum. To learn more about the curriculum, you can read the *Sequence*, ask to see the year-long plan, or consult the **Core Knowledge website**. Teachers are free to teach the subject matter as creatively as they like, but the content is specified and builds from year to year.

Kindergarten: *History*— overview of the seven continents, Native American peoples (past and present), early exploration, presidents



First Grade: *World History*— early civilization; *Ancient Egypt*—the Nile River, pharaohs, pyramids, mummies, and hieroglyphics

Second Grade: *American History*— U.S. Constitution; civil Rights: women’s roles (Susan B. Anthony, Eleanor Roosevelt, et al); equality: (Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, et al.); Geography of the Americas

Third Grade: *Math*— fractions to one-tenth, numerator and denominator, mixed numbers, equivalent fractions; introduction to geometrical concepts

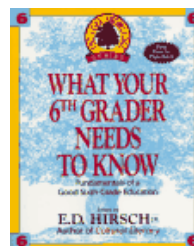
Fourth Grade: *Human body*— circulatory and respiratory systems; *Chemistry*— atoms, matter, elements, solutions; science biographies

Fifth Grade: *American History and Geography* — westward exploration and expansion, Daniel Boone, the Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark, Sacagawea, land and water routes, major rivers, American Indian resistance, Manifest Destiny

Sixth Grade: *Art History* — periods and schools (Classical, Renaissance, Rococo, Romantic, et al.)

Seventh Grade: *Music*— classical music, romantics, and nationalists (Brahms, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, et al.); *American musical traditions*—blues and jazz

Eighth Grade: *Language Arts*— novels and stories such as *Animal Farm*; *The Good Earth*; “The Bet”; “The Open Boat”; *Writing the research essay*— organizing with an outline, quoting materials from secondary sources, summarizing and paraphrasing, acknowledging sources and avoiding plagiarism, preparing a bibliography



SEQUENCED

Here’s how one subject, science, builds from year to year in a sequenced way:

Kindergarten: *Magnetism*— the idea of forces we cannot see, classification of materials according to whether they are attracted to a magnet.

First Grade: *Basic concept of atoms*— names and common examples of the three states of matter, water as an example of changing states of matter in a single substance; *Properties of matter*— measurement

Second Grade: *Lodestone*— naturally occurring magnets, magnetic poles and fields, law of attraction

Fourth Grade: *Atoms*— matter made up of particles too small to see, atoms made up of even smaller particles: protons, neutrons, and electrons, concept of electrical charge; Properties of matter: mass, volume and density. The elements: basic kinds of matter.

Fifth Grade: Atoms in constant motion, electrons, the nucleus, paths called shells (or energy levels), atoms, molecules, and compounds, The Periodic Table

Eighth Grade: *Earth’s magnetism*— connection between electricity and magnetism, electro-magnetic radiation and light.

SHARED

Studying topics together in the same grade can build a sense of community in much the same way that common knowledge can bind the larger society together. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. believes that a diverse society like ours has a special need for commonly shared background knowledge and further that everybody has a right to share it, not just a select few.

Students can also understand the shared dimensions of knowledge, how subjects relate to one another and build over time as well as how history influences contemporary events. They can command the necessary vocabulary to comprehend the complex subjects that lie ahead as well as the increasingly complex world around them. They can, in other words, share the culture of the nation and the world. Even more importantly they can have a share in it.