Georgia
Standards of Excellence
Course Curriculum
Overview

Mathematics

GSE Grade 8

Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

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These units were written to build upon concepts from prior units, so later units contain tasks that depend upon the concepts addressed in earlier units. All units will include the Mathematical Practices and indicate skills to maintain.							

NOTE: Mathematical standards are interwoven and should be addressed throughout the year in as many different units and tasks as possible in order to stress the natural connections that exist among mathematical topics.

Grades 6-8 Key:
NS = The Number System
F = Functions
EE = Expressions and Equations
G = Geometry
SP = Statistics and Probability**.**

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The Comprehensive Course Overviews are designed to provide access to multiple sources of support for implementing and instructing courses involving the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

GSE Mathematics Grade 8 Critical Areas

In Grade 8, instructional time should focus on three critical areas: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. Descriptions of the three critical areas follow:

(1) Students use linear equations and systems of linear equations to represent, analyze, and solve a variety of problems. Students recognize equations for proportions ($y/x = m$ or $y = mx$) as special linear equations ($y = mx + b$), understanding that the constant of proportionality (m) is the slope, and the graphs are lines through the origin. They understand that the slope (m) of a line is a constant rate of change, so that if the input or x-coordinate changes by an amount A, the output or y-coordinate changes by the amount $m \cdot A$. Students also use a linear equation to describe the association between two quantities in bivariate data (such as arm span vs. height for students in a classroom). At this grade, fitting the model, and assessing its fit to the data are done informally. Interpreting the model in the context of the data requires students to express a relationship between the two quantities in question and to interpret components of the relationship (such as slope and y-intercept) in terms of the situation.

Students strategically choose and efficiently implement procedures to solve linear equations in one variable, understanding that when they use the properties of equality and the concept of logical equivalence, they maintain the solutions of the original equation. Students solve systems of two linear equations in two variables and relate the systems to pairs of lines in the plane; these intersect, are parallel, or are the same line. Students use linear equations, systems of linear equations, linear functions, and their understanding of slope of a line to analyze situations and solve problems.

(2) Students grasp the concept of a function as a rule that assigns to each input exactly one output. They understand that functions describe situations where one quantity determines another. They can translate among representations and partial representations of functions (noting that tabular and graphical representations may be partial representations), and they describe how aspects of the function are reflected in the different representations.

(3) Students use ideas about distance and angles, how they behave under translations, rotations, reflections, and dilations, and ideas about congruence and similarity to describe and analyze two-dimensional figures and to solve problems. Students show that the sum of the angles in a triangle is the angle formed by a straight line, and that various configurations of lines give rise to similar triangles because of the angles created when a transversal cuts parallel lines. Students understand the statement of the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse, and can explain why the Pythagorean Theorem holds, for example, by decomposing a square in two different ways. They apply the Pythagorean Theorem to find distances between points on the coordinate plane, to find lengths, and to analyze polygons. Students complete their work on volume by solving problems involving cones, cylinders, and spheres.

GSE Mathematics Grade 8 Unit Descriptions

The eighth grade standards are designed to prepare students to bridge from middle grades mathematics to high school courses that will ensure all students are college and career ready by the conclusion of their fourth high school course. The Standards for Mathematical Practice are a key component as they are applied in each course to equip students in making sense of problems and building a set of tools they can use in real-world situations.

Rather than racing to cover many topics in a “mile-wide, inch-deep curriculum”, the standards ask mathematics teachers to significantly narrow and deepen the way time and energy are spent in the classroom. Much of the eighth grade mathematics curriculum focuses on functions and linear relationships as building blocks to algebra and geometry.

Unit 1: The first unit centers around geometry standards related to transformations – translations, reflections, rotations, and dilations, both on and off the coordinate plane – and the notion of congruence and similarity. Students will understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software. Students learn to use informal arguments to establish proof of angle sum and exterior angle relationships related to parallel lines and two dimensional polygons.

Unit 2: Students will explore and understand that there are numbers that are not rational, called irrational numbers, and will approximate their value by using rational numbers. Clear understanding of irrational numbers will be demonstrated using models, number lines, and expressions of estimates and approximations. Students will work with radicals and express very large and very small numbers using integer exponents.

Unit 3: Students will extend their work with irrational numbers by applying the Pythagorean Theorem to situations involving right triangles, including finding distance. Proof of the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse allow students to demonstrate understanding of the theorem. Real-world problems are solved involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.

Unit 4: The fourth unit introduces students to relations and functions, and defines a function as a relation whose every input corresponds with a single output. From this understanding, students define, evaluate, and compare functions. Functions are described and modeled using a variety of representations, including algebraically, graphically, numerically in tables, and verbally.

Unit 5: In unit five, functions are further explored, focusing on the study of linear functions. Students will understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations, and solve mathematical and real-life problems involving such relationships. Slope is formally introduced, and students work with equations for slope in different forms, including comparing proportional relationships represented in different ways (graphically, tabular, algebraically, verbally).

Unit 6: Students will extend the study of linear relationships by exploring models and tables. They will use functions to model relationships between quantities and describe the rate of change. The study of statistics expands from more simplistic samples and collections in sixth and seventh grade, to bivariate data, which can be graphed and a line of best fit determined.

Unit 7: The final unit broadens the study of linear equations to situations involving simultaneous equations. Using graphing, substitution, and elimination, students learn to solve systems of equations algebraically, and make applications to real-world situations.

Flipbooks

These "FlipBooks" were developed by the Kansas Association of Teachers of Mathematics (KATM) and are a compilation of research, "unpacked" standards from many states, instructional strategies and examples for each standard at each grade level. The intent is to show the connections to the Standards of Mathematical Practices for the content standards and to get detailed information at each level. The **Grade 8 Flipbook** is an interactive document arranged by the content domains listed on the following pages. The links on each domain and standard will take you to specific information on that standard/domain within the Flipbook.

The Number System 8.NS

Know that there are numbers that are not rational, and approximate them by rational numbers.

MGSE8.NS.1. Know that numbers that are not rational are called irrational. Understand informally that every number has a decimal expansion; for rational numbers show that the decimal expansion repeats eventually, and convert a decimal expansion which repeats eventually into a rational number.

MGSE8.NS.2 Use rational approximation of irrational numbers to compare the size of irrational numbers, locate them approximately on a number line, and estimate the value of expressions (e.g., estimate π^2 *to the nearest tenth). For example, by truncating the decimal expansion of* $\sqrt{2}$ *(square root of 2), show that* $\sqrt{2}$ *is between 1 and 2, then between 1.4 and 1.5, and explain how to continue on to get better approximations.*

Expressions and Equations 8.EE

Work with radicals and integer exponents.

MGSE8.EE.1 Know and apply the properties of integer exponents to generate equivalent numerical expressions. For example, $3^2 \times 3^{(-5)} = 3^{(-3)} = 1/(3^3) = 1/27$.

MGSE8.EE.2 Use square root and cube root symbols to represent solutions to equations. Recognize that $x^2 = p$ (where p is a positive rational number and lxl < 25) has 2 solutions and $x^3 = p$ (where p is a negative or positive rational number and lxl < 10) has one solution. Evaluate square roots of perfect squares < 625 and cube roots of perfect cubes > -1000 and < 1000.

MGSE8.EE.3 Use numbers expressed in scientific notation to estimate very large or very small quantities, and to express how many times as much one is than the other. *For example, estimate the population of the United States as 3×10^8 and the population of the world as 7×10^9, and determine that the world population is more than 20 times larger.*

MGSE8.EE.4 Add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers expressed in scientific notation, including problems where both decimal and scientific notation are used. Understand scientific notation and choose units of appropriate size for measurements of very large or very small quantities (e.g. use millimeters per year for seafloor spreading). Interpret scientific notation that has been generated by technology (e.g. calculators).

Understand the connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.

MGSE8.EE.5 Graph proportional relationships, interpreting the unit rate as the slope of the graph. Compare two different proportional relationships represented in different ways. *For example, compare a distance-time graph to a distance-time equation to determine which of two moving objects has greater speed.*

MGSE8.EE.6 Use similar triangles to explain why the slope m is the same between any two distinct points on a non-vertical line in the coordinate plane; derive the equation $y = mx$ for a line through the origin and the equation $y = mx + b$ for a line intercepting the vertical axis at b.

Analyze and solve linear equations and pairs of simultaneous linear equations.

MGSE8.EE.7 Solve linear equations in one variable.

> **MGSE8.EE.7a** Give examples of linear equations in one variable with one solution, infinitely many solutions, or no solutions. Show which of these possibilities is the case by successively transforming the given equation into simpler forms, until an equivalent equation of the form $x = a$, $a = a$, or $a = b$ results (where a and b are different numbers).
>
> **MGSE8.EE.7b** Solve linear equations with rational number coefficients, including equations whose solutions require expanding expressions using the distributive property and collecting like terms.

MGSE8.EE.8 Analyze and solve pairs of simultaneous linear equations (systems of linear equations).

MGSE8.EE.8a Understand that solutions to a system of two linear equations in two variables correspond to points of intersection of their graphs, because points of intersection satisfy both equations simultaneously.

MGSE8.EE.8b Solve systems of two linear equations in two variables algebraically, and estimate solutions by graphing the equations. Solve simple cases by inspection. *For example, $3x + 2y = 5$ and $3x + 2y = 6$ have no solution because $3x + 2y$ cannot simultaneously be 5 and 6.*

MGSE8.EE.8c Solve real-world and mathematical problems leading to two linear equations in two variables. *For example, given coordinates for two pairs of points, determine whether the line through the first pair of points intersects the line through the second pair.*

Functions 8.F

Define, evaluate, and compare functions.

MGSE8.F.1. Understand that a function is a rule that assigns to each input exactly one output. The graph of a function is the set of ordered pairs consisting of an input and the corresponding output.

MGSE8.F.2. Compare properties of two functions each represented in a different way (algebraically, graphically, numerically in tables, or by verbal descriptions). *For example, given a linear function represented by a table of values and a linear function represented by an algebraic expression, determine which function has the greater rate of change.*

MGSE8.F.3. Interpret the equation $y = mx + b$ as defining a linear function, whose graph is a straight line; give examples of functions that are not linear. *For example, the function* $A = s^2$ *giving the area of a square as a function of its side length is not linear because its graph contains the points* $(1,1)$, $(2,4)$ *and* $(3,9)$, *which are not on a straight line.*

Use functions to model relationships between quantities.

MGSE8.F.4. Construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities. Determine the rate of change and initial value of the function from a description of a relationship or from two (x, y) values, including reading these from a table or from a graph. Interpret the rate of change and initial value of a linear function in terms of the situation it models, and in terms of its graph or a table of values.

MGSE8.F.5. Describe qualitatively the functional relationship between two quantities by analyzing a graph (e.g., where the function is increasing or decreasing, linear or nonlinear). Sketch a graph that exhibits the qualitative features of a function that has been described verbally.

Geometry 8.G

Understand congruence and similarity using physical models, transparencies, or geometry software.

MGSE8.G.1 Verify experimentally the congruence properties of rotations, reflections, and translations: lines are taken to lines and line segments to line segments of the same length; angles are taken to angles of the same measure; parallel lines are taken to parallel lines.

MGSE8.G.2. Understand that a two-dimensional figure is congruent to another if the second can be obtained from the first by a sequence of rotations, reflections, and translations; given two congruent figures, describe a sequence that exhibits the congruence between them.

MGSE8.G.3 Describe the effect of dilations, translations, rotations and reflections on two-dimensional figures using coordinates.

MGSE8.G.4 Understand that a two-dimensional figure is similar to another if the second can be obtained from the first by a sequence of rotations, reflections, translations, and dilations; given two similar two-dimensional figures, describe a sequence that exhibits the similarity between them.

MGSE8.G.5. Use informal arguments to establish facts about the angle sum and exterior angle of triangles, about the angles created when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and the angle-angle criterion for similarity of triangles. *For example, arrange three copies of the same triangle so that the three angles appear to form a line, and give an argument in terms of transversals why this is so.*

Understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem.

MGSE8.G.6. Explain a proof of the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse.

MGSE8.G.7. Apply the Pythagorean Theorem to determine unknown side lengths in right triangles in real-world and mathematical problems in two and three dimensions.

MGSE8.G.8. Apply the Pythagorean Theorem to find the distance between two points in a coordinate system.

Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.

MGSE8.G.9 Apply the formulas for the volume of cones, cylinders, and spheres and use them to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

Statistics and Probability 8.SP

Investigate patterns of association in bivariate data.

MGSE8.SP.1. Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data to investigate patterns of association between two quantities. Describe patterns such as clustering, outliers, positive or negative association, linear association, and nonlinear association.

MGSE8.SP.2. Know that straight lines are widely used to model relationships between two quantitative variables. For scatter plots that suggest a linear association, informally fit a straight line, and informally assess the model fit by judging the closeness of the data points to the line.

MGSE8.SP.3. Use the equation of a linear model to solve problems in the context of bivariate measurement data, interpreting the slope and intercept. *For example, in a linear model for a biology experiment, interpret a slope of 1.5 cm/hr as meaning that an additional hour of sunlight each day is associated with an additional 1.5 cm in mature plant height.*

MGSE8.SP.4 Understand that patterns of association can also be seen in bivariate categorical data by displaying frequencies and relative frequencies in a two-way table.

a. Construct and interpret a two-way table summarizing data on two categorical variables collected from the same subjects.
b. Use relative frequencies calculated for rows or columns to describe possible association between the two variables. *For example, collect data from students in your class on whether or not they have a curfew on school nights and whether or not they have assigned chores at home. Is there evidence that those who have a curfew also tend to have chores?*

Mathematics | Standards for Mathematical Practice

Mathematical Practices are listed with each grade's mathematical content standards to reflect the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in instruction. The BLUE links will provide access to classroom videos on each standard for mathematical practice accessed on the Inside Math website.

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These practices rest on important "processes and proficiencies" with longstanding importance in mathematics education. The first of these are the NCTM process standards of problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation, and connections. The second are the strands of mathematical proficiency specified in the National Research Council's report *Adding It Up*: adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding (comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations and relations), procedural fluency (skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately), and productive disposition (habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy).

1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
In grade 8, students solve real world problems through the application of algebraic and geometric concepts. Students seek the meaning of a problem and look for efficient ways to represent and solve it. They may check their thinking by asking themselves, "What is the most efficient way to solve the problem?", "Does this make sense?", and "Can I solve the problem in a different way?"

2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
In grade 8, students represent a wide variety of real world contexts through the use of real numbers and variables in mathematical expressions, equations, and inequalities. They examine patterns in data and assess the degree of linearity of functions. Students contextualize to understand the meaning of the number or variable as related to the problem and decontextualize to manipulate symbolic representations by applying properties of operations.

3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
In grade 8, students construct arguments using verbal or written explanations accompanied by expressions, equations, inequalities, models, and graphs, tables, and other data displays (i.e. box plots, dot plots, histograms, etc.). They further refine their mathematical communication skills through mathematical discussions in which they critically evaluate their own thinking and the thinking of other students. They pose questions like "How did you get that?", "Why is that true?" "Does that always work?" They explain their thinking to others and respond to others' thinking.

4 Model with mathematics.
In grade 8, students model problem situations symbolically, graphically, tabularly, and contextually. Students form expressions, equations, or inequalities from real world contexts and connect symbolic and graphical representations. Students solve systems of linear equations and compare properties of functions provided in different forms. Students use scatterplots to represent data and describe associations between variables. Students need many opportunities to

connect and explain the connections between the different representations. They should be able to use all of these representations as appropriate to a problem context.

5 Use appropriate tools strategically.
Students consider available tools (including estimation and technology) when solving a mathematical problem and decide when certain tools might be helpful. For instance, students in grade 8 may translate a set of data given in tabular form to a graphical representation to compare it to another data set. Students might draw pictures, use applets, or write equations to show the relationships between the angles created by a transversal.

6 Attend to precision.
In grade 8, students continue to refine their mathematical communication skills by using clear and precise language in their discussions with others and in their own reasoning. Students use appropriate terminology when referring to the number system, functions, geometric figures, and data displays.

7 Look for and make use of structure.
Students routinely seek patterns or structures to model and solve problems. In grade 8, students apply properties to generate equivalent expressions and solve equations. Students examine patterns in tables and graphs to generate equations and describe relationships. Additionally, students experimentally verify the effects of transformations and describe them in terms of congruence and similarity.

8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.
In grade 8, students use repeated reasoning to understand algorithms and make generalizations about patterns. Students use iterative processes to determine more precise rational approximations for irrational numbers. During multiple opportunities to solve and model problems, they notice that the slope of a line and rate of change are the same value. Students flexibly make connections between covariance, rates, and representations showing the relationships between quantities.

Connecting the Standards for Mathematical Practice to the Content Standards

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe ways in which developing student practitioners of the discipline of mathematics increasingly ought to engage with the subject matter as they grow in mathematical maturity and expertise throughout the elementary, middle and high school years. Designers of curricula, assessments, and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in mathematics instruction.

The Standards for Mathematical Content are a balanced combination of procedure and understanding. Expectations that begin with the word “understand” are often especially good opportunities to connect the practices to the content. Students who lack understanding of a topic may rely on procedures too heavily. Without a flexible base from which to work, they may be less likely to consider analogous problems, represent problems coherently, justify conclusions, apply the mathematics to practical situations, use technology mindfully to work with the mathematics, explain the mathematics accurately to other students, step back for an overview, or deviate from a known procedure to find a shortcut. In short, a lack of understanding effectively prevents a student from engaging in the mathematical practices.

In this respect, those content standards which set an expectation of understanding are potential "points of intersection" between the Standards for Mathematical Content and the Standards for Mathematical Practice. These points of intersection are intended to be weighted toward central and generative concepts in the school mathematics curriculum that most merit the time, resources, innovative energies, and focus necessary to qualitatively improve the curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and student achievement in mathematics.

Classroom Routines

The importance of continuing the established classroom routines cannot be overstated. Daily routines must include such obvious activities as estimating, analyzing data, describing patterns, and answering daily questions. They should also include less obvious routines, such as how to select materials, how to use materials in a productive manner, how to put materials away, how to access classroom technology such as computers and calculators. An additional routine is to allow plenty of time for children to explore new materials before attempting any directed activity with these new materials. The regular use of routines is important to the development of students' number sense, flexibility, fluency, collaborative skills and communication. These routines contribute to a rich, hands-on standards based classroom and will support students' performances on the tasks in this unit and throughout the school year.

Strategies for Teaching and Learning

- Students should be actively engaged by developing their own understanding.
- Mathematics should be represented in as many ways as possible by using graphs, tables, pictures, symbols and words.
- Interdisciplinary and cross curricular strategies should be used to reinforce and extend the learning activities.
- Appropriate manipulatives and technology should be used to enhance student learning.
- Students should be given opportunities to revise their work based on teacher feedback, peer feedback, and metacognition which includes self-assessment and reflection.
- Students should write about the mathematical ideas and concepts they are learning.
- Consideration of all students should be made during the planning and instruction of this unit. Teachers need to consider the following:
  - What level of support do my struggling students need in order to be successful with this unit?
  - In what way can I deepen the understanding of those students who are competent in this unit?
  - What real life connections can I make that will help my students utilize the skills practiced in this unit?

Types of Tasks

The following tasks represent the level of depth, rigor, and complexity expected of all eighth grade students. These tasks, or tasks of similar depth and rigor, should be used to demonstrate evidence of learning. It is important that all elements of a task be addressed throughout the learning process so that students understand what is expected of them. While some tasks are identified as a performance task, they may also be used for teaching and learning (learning/scaffolding task).

Scaffolding Task	Tasks that build up to the learning task.
Learning Task	Constructing understanding through deep/rich contextualized problem solving tasks.
Practice Task	Tasks that provide students opportunities to practice skills and concepts.
Performance Task	Tasks which may be a formative or summative assessment that checks for student understanding/misunderstanding and or progress toward the standard/learning goals at different points during a unit of instruction.
Culminating Task	Designed to require students to use several concepts learned during the unit to answer a new or unique situation. Allows students to give evidence of their own understanding toward the mastery of the standard and requires them to extend their chain of mathematical reasoning.
Achieve GSE- CTE Classroom Tasks	Designed to demonstrate how the GSE and Career and Technical Education knowledge and skills can be integrated. The tasks provide teachers with realistic applications that combine mathematics and CTE content.
Short Cycle Task	Designed to exemplify the performance targets that the standards imply. The tasks, with the associated guidance, equip teachers to monitor overall progress in their students' mathematics.
Formative Assessment Lesson (FAL) ***more information on page 11**	Lessons that support teachers in formative assessment which both reveal and develop students' understanding of key mathematical ideas and applications. These lessons enable teachers and students to monitor in more detail their progress towards the targets of the standards.
3-Act Task ***more information on page 12**	A Three-Act Task is a whole group mathematics task consisting of 3 distinct parts: an engaging and perplexing Act One, an information and solution seeking Act Two, and a solution discussion and solution revealing Act Three.

Formative Assessment Lessons (FALs)

What is a Formative Assessment Lesson (FAL)? The Formative Assessment Lesson is designed to be part of an instructional unit typically implemented approximately two-thirds of the way through the instructional unit. The results of the tasks should then be used to **inform** the instruction that will take place for the remainder of the unit.

Formative Assessment Lessons are intended to support teachers in formative assessment. They both reveal and develop students' understanding of key mathematical ideas and applications. These lessons enable teachers and students to monitor in more detail their progress towards the targets of the standards. They assess students' understanding of important concepts and problem solving performance, and help teachers and their students to work effectively together to move each student's mathematical reasoning forward.

What does a Formative Assessment Lesson look like in action? Videos of Georgia Teachers implementing FALs can be accessed HERE and a sample of a FAL lesson may be seen HERE

Where can I find more information on FALs? More information on types of Formative Assessment Lessons, their use, and their implementation may be found on the Math Assessment Project's guide for teachers.

Where can I find samples of FALs?

Formative Assessment Lessons can also be found at the following sites:
Mathematics Assessment Project
Kenton County Math Design Collaborative
MARS Tasks by grade level

A **sample FAL** with extensive dialog and suggestions for teachers may be found HERE. This resource will help teachers understand the flow and purpose of a FAL.

Where can I find more training on the use of FALs? The Math Assessment Project has developed Professional Development Modules that are designed to help teachers with the practical and pedagogical challenges presented by these lessons.

Module 1 introduces the model of *formative assessment* used in the lessons, its theoretical background and practical implementation. Modules 2 & 3 look at the two types of *Classroom Challenges* in detail. Modules 4 & 5 explore two crucial pedagogical features of the lessons: asking probing questions and collaborative learning.

Georgia RESA's may be contacted about professional development on the use of FALs in the classroom. The request should be made through the teacher's local RESA and can be referenced by asking for more information on the Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC).

Spotlight Tasks

A Spotlight Task has been added to each GSE mathematics unit in the Georgia resources for middle and high school. The Spotlight Tasks serve as exemplars for the use of the Standards for Mathematical Practice, appropriate unit-level Georgia Standards of Excellence, and research-based pedagogical strategies for instruction and engagement. Each task includes teacher commentary and support for classroom implementation. Some of the Spotlight Tasks are revisions of existing Georgia tasks and some are newly created. Additionally, some of the Spotlight Tasks are 3-Act Tasks based on 3-Act Problems from Dan Meyer and Problem-Based Learning from Robert Kaplinsky.

3-Act Tasks

A Three-Act Task is a whole group mathematics task consisting of 3 distinct parts: an engaging and perplexing Act One, an information and solution seeking Act Two, and a solution discussion and solution revealing Act Three.

Guidelines for 3-Act Tasks and Patient Problem Solving (Teaching without the Textbook)
Adapted from Dan Meyer

Developing the mathematical Big Idea behind the 3-Act task:

- Create or find/use a clear visual which tells a brief, perplexing mathematical story. Video or live action works best. (See resource suggestions in the Guide to 3-Act Tasks)
- Video/visual should be real life and allow students to see the situation unfolding.
- Remove the initial literacy/mathematics concerns. Make as few language and/or math demands on students as possible. You are posing a mathematical question without words.
- The visual/video should inspire curiosity or perplexity which will be resolved via the mathematical big idea(s) used by students to answer their questions. You are creating an intellectual need or cognitive dissonance in students.

Enacting the 3-Act in the Classroom

Act 1 (The Question):

Set up student curiosity by sharing a scenario:

- Teacher says, “I’m going show you something I came across and found interesting” or, “Watch this.”
- Show video/visual.
- Teacher asks, “What do you notice/wonder?” and “What are the first questions that come to mind?”
- Students share observations/questions with a partner first, then with the class (Think-Pair-Share). Students have ownership of the questions because they posed them.

- Leave no student out of this questioning. Every student should have access to the scenario. No language or mathematical barriers. Low barrier to entry.
- Teacher records questions (on chart paper or digitally-visible to class) and ranks them by popularity.
- Determine which question(s) will be immediately pursued by the class. If you have a particular question in mind, and it isn't posed by students, you may have to do some skillful prompting to orient their question to serve the mathematical end. However, a good video should naturally lead to the question you hope they'll ask. You may wish to pilot your video on colleagues before showing it to students. If they don't ask the question you are after, your video may need some work.
- Teacher asks for estimated answers in response to the question(s). Ask first for best estimates, then request estimates which are too high and too low. Students are no defining and defending parameters for making sense of forthcoming answers.
- Teacher asks students to record their actual estimation for future reference.

Act 2 (Information Gathering):

Students gather information, draw on mathematical knowledge, understanding, and resources to answer the big question(s) from Act-1:

- Teacher asks, "What information do you need to answer our *main question*?"
- Students think of the important information they will need to answer their questions.
- Ask, "What mathematical tools do you have already at your disposal which would be useful in answering this question?"
- What mathematical tools might be useful which students don't already have? Help them develop those.
- Teacher offers smaller examples and asks probing questions.
    - What are you doing?
    - Why are you doing that?
    - What would happen if…?
    - Are you sure? How do you know?

Act 3 (The Reveal):

The payoff.

- Teacher shows the answer and validates students' solutions/answer.
- Teacher revisits estimates and determines closest estimate.
- Teacher compares techniques, and allows students to determine which is most efficient.

The Sequel:

- Students/teacher generalize the math to any case, and "algebrafy" the problem.
- Teacher poses an extension problem- best chance of student engagement if this extension connects to one of the many questions posed by students which were not the focus of Act 2, or is related to class discussion generated during Act 2.
- Teacher revisits or reintroduces student questions that were not addressed in Act 2.

Why Use 3-Act Tasks? A Teacher's Response

The short answer: It's what's best for kids!

If you want more, read on:

The need for students to make sense of problems can be addressed through tasks like these. The challenge for teachers is, to quote Dan Meyer, "be less helpful." (To clarify, being less helpful means to first allow students to generate questions they have about the picture or video they see in the first act, then give them information as they ask for it in act 2.) Less helpful does not mean give these tasks to students blindly, without support of any kind!

This entire process will likely cause some anxiety (for all). When jumping into 3-Act tasks for the first (second, third, . . .) time, students may not generate the suggested question. As a matter of fact, in this task about proportions and scale, students may ask many questions that are curious questions, but have nothing to do with the mathematics you want them to investigate. One question might be "How is that ball moving by itself?" It's important to record these and all other questions generated by students. This validates students' ideas. Over time, students will become accustomed to the routine of 3-act tasks and come to appreciate that there are certain kinds of mathematically answerable questions – most often related to quantity or measurement.

These kinds of tasks take time, practice and patience. When presented with options to use problems like this with students, the easy thing for teachers to do is to set them aside for any number of "reasons." I've highlighted a few common "reasons" below with my commentary (in blue):

- This will take too long. I have a lot of content to cover. (Teaching students to think and reason is embedded in mathematical content at all levels - how can you **not** take this time)
- They need to be taught the skills first, then maybe I'll try it. (An important part of learning mathematics lies in productive struggle and learning to persevere [SMP 1]. What better way to discern what students know and are able to do than with a mathematical context [problem] that lets them show you, based on the knowledge they already have - prior to any new information. To quote John Van de Walle, "Believe in kids and they will, flat out, amaze you!")
- My students can't do this. (Remember, whether you think they can or they can't, you're right!) (Also, this expectation of students persevering and solving problems is in every state's standards - and was there even before common core!)
- I'm giving up some control. (Yes, and this is a bit scary. You're empowering students to think and take charge of their learning. So, what can you do to make this *less* scary? **Do what we expect students to do:**
    - Persevere. Keep trying these and other open-beginning, -middle, and -ended problems. Take note of what's working and focus on it!
    - Talk with a colleague (work with a partner). Find that critical friend at school, another school, online. . .

- Question (use #MTBoS on Twitter, or blogs, or Google: 3-act tasks).

The benefits of students learning to question, persevere, problem solve, and reason mathematically far outweigh any of the reasons (read excuses) above. The time spent up front, teaching through tasks such as these and other open problems, creates a huge pay-off later on. However, it is important to note, that the problems themselves are worth nothing without teachers setting the expectation that students: question, persevere, problem solve, and reason mathematically on a daily basis. Expecting these from students, and facilitating the training of how to do this consistently and with fidelity is principal to success for both students and teachers.

Yes, all of this takes time. For most of my classes, mid to late September (we start school at the beginning of August) is when students start to become comfortable with what problem solving really is. It's not word problems - mostly. It's not the problem set you do after the skill practice in the textbook. Problem solving is what you do when you don't know what to do! This is difficult to teach kids and it does take time. But it is worth it! More on this in a future blog!

Tips:

One strategy I've found that really helps students generate questions is to allow them to talk to their peers about what they notice and wonder first (Act 1). Students of all ages will be more likely to share once they have shared and tested their ideas with their peers. This does take time. As you do more of these types of problems, students will become familiar with the format and their comfort level may allow you to cut the amount of peer sharing time down before group sharing.

What do you do if they don't generate the question suggested? Well, there are several ways that this can be handled. If students generate a similar question, use it. Allowing students to struggle through their question and ask for information is one of the big ideas here. Sometimes, students realize that they may need to solve a different problem before they can actually find what they want. If students are way off, in their questions, teachers can direct students, carefully, by saying something like: "You all have generated some interesting questions. I'm not sure how many we can answer in this class. Do you think there's a question we could find that would allow us to use our knowledge of mathematics to find the answer to (insert quantity or measurement)?" Or, if they are really struggling, you can, again carefully, say "You know, I gave this problem to a class last year (or class, period, etc) and they asked (insert something similar to the suggested question here). What do you think about that?" Be sure to allow students to share their thoughts.

After solving the main question, if there are other questions that have been generated by students, it's important to allow students to investigate these as well. Investigating these additional questions validates students' ideas and questions and builds a trusting, collaborative learning relationship between students and the teacher.

Overall, we're trying to help our students mathematize their world. We're best able to do that when we use situations that are relevant (no dog bandanas, please), engaging (create an intellectual need to know), and perplexing. If we continue to use textbook type problems that are too helpful, uninteresting, and let's face it, perplexing in all the wrong ways, we're not doing what's best for kids; we're training them to not be curious, not think, and worst of all . . . dislike math.

3-Act Task Resources:

- www.estimation180.com
- www.visualpatterns.org
- 101 Questions
- Dan Meyer's 3-Act Tasks
- 3-Act Tasks for Elementary and Middle School
- Andrew Stadel
- Jenise Sexton
- Graham Fletcher
- Fawn Nguyen
- Robert Kaplinsky
- Open Middle
- Check out the Math Twitter Blog-o-Sphere (MTBoS) - you'll find tons of support and ideas!

Assessment Resources and Instructional Support Resources

The resource sites listed below are provided by the GADOE and are designed to support the instructional and assessment needs of teachers. All BLUE links will direct teachers to the site mentioned.

- Georgiastandards.org provides a gateway to a wealth of instructional links and information. Open the ELA/Math tab at the top to access specific math resources for GSE.

- Mathematics Georgia Standards of Excellence (MGSE) Frameworks are "models of instruction" designed to support teachers in the implementation of the GSE. The Georgia Department of Education, Office of Standards, Instruction, and Assessment has provided an example of the Curriculum Map for each grade level and examples of Frameworks aligned with the GSE to illustrate what can be implemented within the grade level. School systems and teachers are free to use these models as is; modify them to better serve classroom needs; or create their own curriculum maps, units and tasks. http://bit.ly/1AJddmx

- The Teacher Resource Link (TRL) is an application that delivers vetted and aligned digital resources to Georgia's teachers. TRL is accessible via the GaDOE "tunnel" in conjunction with SLDS using the single sign-on process. The content is aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence and National Education Technology Standards and is pushed to teachers based on course schedule.

- The Georgia Online Formative Assessment Resource (GOFAR) accessible through SLDS contains test items related to content areas assessed by the Georgia Milestones Assessment System and NAEP. Teachers and administrators can utilize the GOFAR to develop formative and summative assessments, aligned to the state-adopted content standards, to assist in informing daily instruction.

  The Georgia Online Formative Assessment Resource (GOFAR) provides the ability for Districts and Schools to assign benchmark and formative test items/tests to students in order to obtain information about student progress and instructional practice. GOFAR allows educators and their students to have access to a variety of test items – selected response and constructed response – that are aligned to the State-adopted content standards for Georgia's elementary, middle, and high schools.

  Students, staff, and classes are prepopulated and maintained through the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Teachers and Administrators may view Exemplars and Rubrics in Item Preview. A scoring code may be distributed at a local level to help score constructed response items.

  For GOFAR user guides and overview, please visit:
  https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Online-Formative-Assessment-Resource.aspx

- Georgia Virtual School content available on our Shared Resources Website is available for anyone to view. Courses are divided into modules and are aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

- Course/Grade Level WIKI spaces are available to post questions about a unit, a standard, the course, or any other GSE math related concern. Shared resources and information are also available at the site.

- Georgia Milestones Resources are available to provide more information for the Georgia Milestones as provided by the GaDOE.

- Georgia Milestones Assessment System resources can be found at: http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Milestones-Assessment-System.aspx

  Features of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System include:
  - Open-ended (constructed-response) items
  - Norm-referenced items to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison;
  - Transition to online administration over time, with online administration considered the primary mode of administration and paper-pencil as back-up until the transition is complete.

Internet Resources

The following list is provided as a sample of available resources and is for informational purposes only. It is your responsibility to investigate them to determine their value and appropriateness for your district. GaDOE does not endorse or recommend the purchase of or use of any particular resource.

General Resources

Illustrative Mathematics
Standards are illustrated with instructional and assessment tasks, lesson plans, and other curriculum resources.

Mathematics in Movies
Short movie clips related to a variety of math topics.

Mathematical Fiction
Plays, short stories, comic books and novels dealing with math.

The Shodor Educational Foundation
This website has extensive notes, lesson plans and applets aligned with the standards.

NEA Portal Arkansas Video Lessons on-line
The NEA portal has short videos aligned to each standard. This resource may be very helpful for students who need review at home.

Learnzillion
This is another good resource for parents and students who need a refresher on topics.

Math Words
This is a good reference for math terms.

National Library of Virtual Manipulatives
Java must be enabled for this applet to run. This website has a wealth of virtual manipulatives helpful for use in presentation. The resources are listed by domain.

Geogebra Download
Free software similar to Geometer's Sketchpad. This program has applications for algebra, geometry, and statistics.

Utah Resources
Open resource created by the Utah Education Network.

RESOURCES FOR PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Dan Meyer's Website
Dan Meyer has created many problem-based learning tasks. The tasks have great hooks for the students and are aligned to the standards in this spreadsheet.

Andrew Stadel
Andrew Stadel has created many problem-based learning tasks using the same format as Dan Meyer.

Robert Kaplinsky
Robert Kaplinsky has created many tasks that engage students with real life situations.

Geoff Krall's Emergent Math
Geoff Krall has created a curriculum map structured around problem-based learning tasks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Burns, Marilyn. *About Mathematics.* (1992) Math Solutions Publications. Sausalito, California.

Burns, Marilyn (2007). *About Teaching Mathematics: A K-8 Resource.* Sausalito, CA: Scholastic, Inc.

Chapin, Suzanne and Johnson, Art (2006). *Math matters: Understanding the math you teach* 2nd Edition. Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions Publications

Katie Hendrickson, Illuminations Summer Institute., (2012) National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Reston, Virginia.

National Research Council (2001). *Adding it up: Helping children learn mathematics*. J. Kilpatrick, J. Swafford, and B. Findell (Eds). Mathematics Learning Study Committee, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Swetz, Frank and J.S. Hartzler. *Mathematical Modeling.* (1991) National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Reston, Virginia.

Van De Walle, John, *Elementary and Middle School Mathematics, Teaching Developmentally,* (2005).

Van de Walle, John A., Karp, Karen, Bay-Williams, Jennifer (2010). *Elementary and middle school mathematics: teaching developmentally* 7th edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon (Pearson)