GEMS American Academy Qatar

A Parent's Guide to Grade 2

GEMS prides itself on offering an outstanding educational program where highly effective classroom teachers use an engaging and challenging curriculum to help students meet or exceed grade-level standards. Academic progress is measured in two ways: by monitoring student learning to provide for ongoing dialog (formative assessment) and by evaluating student progress against standards and benchmarks using tests, assignments, and projects (summative assessment). The GAAQ report card is designed to show how well a student is doing in relation to grade-level standards, and also illustrates that by the completion of the academic year, the student will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to succeed at the next grade level.

This guide will help parents understand the concepts and skills that are the focus of instruction in the Grade 2 classroom, as well as the broader academic and thinking skills that will lead to college readiness and beyond. And because parental involvement is a key factor in a student's academic success, this guide also offers suggestions about how parents can support their child's learning at home. A concise overview cannot fully represent the comprehensive curriculum and all units of study in Grade 2, so parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have questions.

Language Arts

Reading – Writing – Speaking – Listening - Language
What your child will learn: In second grade, fluency, comprehension, and analysis are the focuses of reading instruction. Students apply their knowledge of the basic features of reading to achieve fluency in oral and silent reading. Students ask and answer clarifying questions about text (e.g., who, what, why), use the features of text (e.g., headings, bold type) to locate information in expository text, and consider the author's purpose as they analyze informational text. Students use these strategies to better comprehend their reading in all content areas. In second grade, students learn more sophisticated strategies to analyze literature. For example, they compare and contrast different versions of the same story from different cultures. Students write using correct English conventions and they learn to use reference materials to locate information for their written compositions and oral reports. Students' written products become longer, and they pay more attention to the organization of their compositions. Students develop initial skills in editing and revising text at this grade level. They learn to give and follow multiple-step directions, provide descriptive details when telling stories or recounting events, and structure their oral presentations in a logical sequence. Students learn new vocabulary and academic language as they read and speak about grade-level texts and topics. They learn to use dictionaries and glossaries to clarify the meaning of words and to check and correct their spelling. They use their knowledge of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words. They also use their knowledge of prefixes to determine the meaning of a new word formed when a prefix is added to a known word.

What you can do at home:
Reading at home is critical to the development of early literacy skills, so visit the school library often and read, read, read every day. Encouraging reading is one of the most important things a parent can do to help their child develop language acquisition skills and a love of learning. When you are reading with your child, discuss the book, the characters, and the important details. Make predictions as you read and create different endings to stories. Ask your child questions about the book and have them retell the story to you. Talk about the book and the words in it. Identify words that your child may already know, and pick out new and unfamiliar words to expand vocabulary.

Mathematics

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Overview</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Students in Grade 2 extend their understanding of place value (within 1,000), build fluency in addition and subtraction (within 100), and use simple concepts of multiplication and division. They measure the length of objects by using appropriate tools and identify shapes and their attributes.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Operations and Algebraic Thinking</th><th>Number and Operations in Base Ten</th></tr>
<tr><td>What your child will learn:
Students use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve one- and two-step word problems with unknowns in all positions. They represent problems by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number, use mental strategies to add and subtract within 20, and know from memory all sums of two 1-digit numbers. Students use repeated addition and counting by multiples to demonstrate multiplication and use repeated subtraction and equal group sharing to demonstrate division.</td><td>What your child will learn:
Students extend their understanding of place value as they associate the digits of a three-digit number with amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones. They read, write, order, and compare whole numbers and skip count by 2s, 5s, 10s, and 100s within 1,000. To foster a deep understanding of addition and subtraction, students use concrete models or drawings and strategies (based on place value, properties of operations, and the relationship between addition and subtraction) to solve problems. Second-grade students extend their addition skills as they add up to four 2-digit numbers and mentally add and subtract 10 or 100 from numbers between 100 and 900.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Measurement and Data</th><th>Geometry</th></tr>
<tr><td>What your child will learn:
Students estimate and measure the length of an object by selecting and using appropriate tools such as rulers, meter sticks, and measuring tapes. Students model and solve problems involving amounts of money. Students also use picture graphs and bar graphs to represent and interpret data.</td><td>What your child will learn:
Second-grade students extend their understanding of plane and solid geometric shapes as they recognize and describe shapes by various attributes (e.g., the number of angles and equal faces). Students also learn to draw various shapes and are introduced early to the concept of area as they partition rectangles into rows and columns (and count the number of squares). They also partition circles and rectangles into two, three, and four equal shares and learn the associated fraction vocabulary (thirds, a third of, etc.).</td></tr>
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What you can do at home:
Make math fun and meaningful for your child by looking for real world math problems in your daily life. Use everyday objects for counting, sorting, and creating story problems. Ask questions that require mathematical thinking (e.g., estimation, greater/less than, and basic addition and subtraction problems). Encourage your child to keep trying even when a problem may be challenging, talk to them about how they find an answer to a problem, and praise them for effort, resiliency, and perseverance even if they aren't getting the "right" answer.

Integrated Content

Science	Social Studies
What your child will learn: GAAQ uses the FOSS or Full Option Science System. The program design is based on learning progressions that provide students with opportunities to investigate core ideas in science in increasingly complex ways over time. The target goals are to help students know and use scientific explanations of the natural world and the development of scientific knowledge and technological capabilities, and to participate productively in scientific and engineering practices. There are three FOSS units of study in Grade 2: **Physical Science** – Properties of the States of Matter **Earth Science –** Properties of Air Monitoring the Weather and Moon Phases **Life Science –** Characteristics of Life Cycles of Insects	**What your child will learn:** Students apply their emerging understanding of civics, economics, geography, and history to their communities and others around the world. Students learn about how their community works, as well as the variety of ways that communities organize themselves. To develop conceptual understanding, students examine the geographic and economic aspects of life in their own neighborhoods and compare them to those of people long ago.

What you can do at home: Make a routine of checking, discussing, and perhaps even graphing the weather (temperature, precipitation, etc.). As students study plants and animals in school, caring for indoor plants, outdoor gardens, and even family pets can be great ways to reinforce these units of study.	**What you can do at home:** Talk to your child about the importance of rules both at home and in the community, of citizenship, and of being a productive community member. Expose your child to maps of various kinds. Look for opportunities to share, discuss, and experience different cultures that are both similar and different from your own.

Art

What your child will learn:
Elementary art education encompasses several key components; Grade 2 students observe and comprehend various types of art. In art classes, students invent, create, and critique works of art, and they relate, connect, and transfer the skills that they learn into other content areas. Students learn that artists make choices to communicate various ideas and to convey different meanings. They learn that works of art have identifying characteristics and features. Second-grade students use familiar symbols to identify and demonstrate characteristics and expressive features of art, and they design visual arts that respond to human experience by relating art to the community.

What you can do at home:
Art activities are important for fine motor development. Encourage drawing and ask questions about your child's artwork. Pay attention to and support your child's artistic interests. Design a space for creativity and encourage art activities and imaginative play. Visit local art museums and galleries during family outings.

Music

What your child will learn:
The elementary school general music curriculum is built on 12 themes. Each curriculum theme is tailored to match the cognitive development of the students in each of the grade levels. Each lesson addresses specific goals outlined in national standards. The thematic threads in elementary music include:

- Singing/Movement
- Playing Instruments
- Composing/Improvising
- Listening/Analyzing/Describing
- Evaluating Music
- Theory/Notation
- Instrument/Ensembles
- Musical Styles
- Music History/Famous Composers
- World Music/Cultures
- Cross Curriculum Connections
- Life Connections

What you can do at home:
Expand and support the musical experiences and background knowledge of your child by exposing them to a wide variety of musical genres. Attend the opera, symphony, or other musical events. Listen to a variety of types of music in your home and car. Urge your child to explain and discuss what they like and dislike about various types of music. Encourage and foster your child's interest in both vocal and instrumental music.

Health and Physical Education (P.E.)

What your child will learn:
While P.E. includes movement patterns, motor skills, and physical activities, both disciplines teach safe physical, emotional, and social behaviors, and emphasize prevention and risk management for students, both within and outside of the school community. Grade 2 students continue to learn how daily activities and healthy behaviors promote overall personal health and safety. They demonstrate elements of movement, control and balance in movement, and weight-bearing activities using a variety of body parts. They make choices in participating in a wide range of activities. Students identify good brain health habits, and they demonstrate positive behaviors toward other students by applying rules, procedures, and safe practices to create a safe school environment.

What you can do at home:
Strong and healthy children become strong and healthy learners. Many studies have shown a compelling correlation between physical activity and student achievement. At home, provide opportunities for physical activities (e.g., after-school sports and classes). Expose your child to a wide variety of physical activities, and keep in mind that increasing physical activity may require limiting television and computer screen time. Offer healthy snacks and plan nutritious meals. Be a role model for your child and engage in healthy activities together. Whether you are preparing nutritious meals or enjoying a walk together, make an effort to integrate wellness into your family's daily practices.

Talking to your child's teacher:

Parental involvement in a child's education is crucial, so it's important to build a healthy, collaborative relationship between home and school by establishing good communication with your child's teacher. We encourage you to reach out to the teacher early in the year. Learn about the academic standards your child will be aiming for and discover ways you can support them in their studies. The first step in being able to follow the academic road map is to begin with a solid understanding of what your child will be expected to know by the end of the school year and keep the goal in sight.

Teachers monitor and evaluate student academic progress and achievement on an ongoing basis in many different ways, so parents are encouraged to stay in regular contact with their child's teacher beyond parent-teacher conferences. As the school year progresses, ask to see samples of your child's work to determine, in concert with the teacher, your child's advancement toward grade-level standards. Discuss areas of strength your child exhibits in the classroom as well as areas that may be targeted for growth. Inquire about how you can best help your child at home, and ask the teacher for recommendations and resources. Find out details about specific classroom activities and discuss ways that you may be able to volunteer your time and talents to support classroom activities or units of study.

Growth and learning during the school year doesn't end in the classroom—parents and teachers must work together all year long for the success of each student. We ask that you partner with us in creating an optimal learning experience for your child.