**Core Knowledge**

**We teach much of the Core Knowledge Sequence to prepare our students for a rigorous, college-prep. high school curriculum.**

For the sake of academic excellence, greater equity and higher literacy, elementary and middle schools need to teach a coherent, cumulative, and content-specific core curriculum.

Our society cannot afford a two-tiered system in which the affluent have access to a superior education, while everyone else is subjected to a dull and incoherent classroom experience. Academic excellence, educational equity and fairness demands a strong foundation of knowledge for all learners.

— E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

### Coherent

The Core Knowledge Sequence is predicated on the realization that what children are able to learn at any given moment depends on what they already know–and, equally important, that what they know is a function of previous experience and teaching. Although current events and technology are constantly changing, there is a body of lasting knowledge and skills that form the core of a strong preschool—Grade 8 curriculum. Explicit identification of what children should learn at each grade level ensures a coherent approach to building knowledge across all grade levels. Every child should learn the fundamentals of science, basic principles of government, important events in world history, essential elements of mathematics, widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music from around the world, and stories and poems passed down from generation to generation.

### Cumulative

Core Knowledge provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade so that knowledge, language, and skills build cumulatively from year to year. This sequential building of knowledge not only helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, it also helps prevent the repetitions and gaps that so often characterize current education. No more repeated units in multiple years on the rain forest, with little or no attention to the Bill of Rights, world geography, or exposure to other cultures. Core Knowledge sets high expectations for all children that are achievable thanks to the cumulative, sequential way that knowledge and skills builds. Teachers in Core Knowledge schools have assurance that children will emerge well prepared with a shared body of knowledge and skills.

### Content-Specific

A typical state or district curriculum says, “Students will demonstrate knowledge of people, events, ideas, and movements that contributed to the development of the United States.” But which people and events? Which ideas and movements? The [Core Knowledge Sequence](http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_live_data/view.php?id=1833&record_id=103) is distinguished by its specificity. By clearly specifying important knowledge in language arts, history, geography, math, science, and the fine arts, the Core Knowledge Sequence presents a practical answer to the question, “What do our children need to know?”  Teachers are free to devote their energies and efforts to creatively planning how to teach the content to the children in their classrooms.

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