



## MATH ON-THE-GO : NUMBER SENSE



As you know, the state of Florida has determined the standards that are crucial for students to master. These skills are organized into five general clusters for math, which then break down into more specific grade level expectations (GLE's). One of those clusters is called Number Sense, Concepts and Operations. This cluster contains skills that require students to understand how numbers are represented (i.e. written form, fractions decimals...), and how those numbers relate to each other (i.e.  $1/2 = .50 = 50\% =$  one half).

While this becomes increasingly difficult in middle school and high school, there are still many ways you can help your child with this skill.

Try these activities to help your child improve their number sense skills:

**Elementary:** Have students convert between different types of numbers by using familiar values, such as money. For example, 25¢ equals  $1/4$  of \$1.00. Also, have students write prices in word form. For example, \$.40 is the same as forty cents. Make sure your child practices their multiplication tables. (Continued on page 2)

## SCHOOL / HOME CONNECTION: MAIN IDEA



Just like math, reading too, is broken down into clusters and then grade level expectations. One example of a standard that students must demonstrate that they can master is the following:

**LA.A.2.2.1 The student reads text and determines the main idea or essential message, identifies relevant supporting details and facts, and arranges events in chronological order.**

The code of letters and numbers at the top tells you that this is a Language Arts standard, and the grade level and where to find this particular standard. Students will be expected to find the main idea of a passage on the reading portion of the FCAT at all grade levels.

When looking for the main idea, first, find the topic, or subject. The topic is who or what the passage is about. Ways to find the topic include, reading the title, finding the idea repeated the most, and analyzing pictures and diagrams.

Quote of the Week: "What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow." ~ Lev Vygotsky

Next, find what the author says about the topic. Summarize the important details, add the topic and you have the main idea. Main ideas of passages come at the beginning, middle, or end. The main idea may be clearly stated or might be *INFERRED*.

**IN A STORY, THE MAIN IDEA CAN BE STATED OR INFERRED .**

When the main idea is inferred, the author is trying to tell the reader something without coming right out and saying it. For example, if an author wants you to know that the story took place on a cold winter night they may describe the leafless trees, the darkness of the night and the chill in the air. You could then infer that the story took place on a winter night. (Continued on page 2)

## QUICK CHECK:

FLORIDA WRITES FOR 4<sup>TH</sup>, 8<sup>TH</sup>, AND 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE . . . FEB. 10<sup>TH</sup>-12<sup>TH</sup>

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- The Planning Process (*webbing, brainstorming, etc.*) should take no more than **10 minutes**... then, start writing!
- At the **10 minute warning** to END the essay, finish the sentence and **write the ENDING or CONCLUSION!**
- Pay attention to the writing prompt and **STAY ON TOPIC!**
- **Write within the lines** of the





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Have your child practice putting numbers in order of least to greatest, include whole numbers and fractions in your list.

**Middle School:** Have your child practice putting numbers in order of least to greatest, include fractions, decimals, mixed numbers and integers in your list. Have them solve real world problems like calculating the tip you leave for the waiter at a restaurant.

“What is 15% of \_\_\_\_\_” or figuring out the price for an item that is 30% off.

**High School:** Helping your highschooler seems beyond what many parents think they are capable of, but that is not true. Ask your child to bring home their tests and quizzes from math class, then ask them to teach you what he or she is learning (even if you already know how to do it).

Research shows that teaching others is the number one way of learning something yourself. If your child stumbles at one part of the process when teaching you, have them go to their teacher for extra help, until they can teach it (and know it) well. Also, make sure you help your child take advantage of every opportunity offered by the school, in the form of help classes, after school tutoring, even Saturday workshops. If you give your child the impression that you will do anything to assist in their learning, they will see the learning as important and do anything they need to do as well.

Helping your child, at any age, requires more time and energy than know how, but that time and energy will make all



The FCAT writing test looks at four major writing skills: focus, organization, support and conventions.

**Focus** is the idea that the writing sample (essay) is focused on one topic and does not include irrelevant or unrelated information.

**Organization** looks at the way the essay is organized. Is it chronologically organized? Is it organized by progression of ideas (topically)? Does it include transition words like first, next, then, in addition or finally? Making sure an essay is organized properly is the key to making sure it reads well and makes sense.

**Support** refers to whether or not an essay topic is supported with reasons or example that makes sense and give the ideas weight.

**Conventions** refer to the grammar, spelling, and punctuation included in the child’s written work.

Understanding these four terms can help you check your child’s writing assignments before they are turned in. Also, make sure your child understands these terms as well. Writing is not just critical for the FCAT writing test, but it is essential for the remainder of their time in school and the success of their future.

## SCHOOL / HOME CONNECTION: MAIN IDEA



When answering multiple choice questions about main idea, eliminate the choices that do not relate to the details in the story and the choices that do not make sense so that the BEST choice stands out.

The 4th, 8th, and 10th grade reading tests will also ask students to answer with short or extended responses. When answering, it is important that students write the best answer with details and information from the article or story. To help them understand how to do this, read with your child. Ask them questions as you read. Design questions that require students to find the main idea of a story or article. Students should support answers with details and information from the passage.

Sample Questions:

- What is the MAIN IDEA of this story/article ?
- Summarize the story/article.

- Why do you think the story/article has the title, “\_\_\_\_\_”?
- Retell a portion of the story/article.
- What would be another good title for this story/article?

These questions work for elementary, middle and high school students. The variation would be the reading level of the story or article. With middle and high school students, have them read articles from the newspaper or age-appropriate magazines, as you drive home from school. Discuss the article in terms of the above listed questions as well as questions based on the content of the article. At any age your child will benefit from conversation about current events, issues and topics that are important to your family. The time spent may improve their understanding of main idea, but it will definitely improve your relationship with your child.