



WELCOME TO

Core Knowledge®

The Core Knowledge sequence is based on 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 are exposed to a broad range of historical, scientific, and cultural topics that build on one another to prepare them for later educational success. This wide array of subject matter not only develops cultural literacy but also builds the strong vocabulary necessary for *true* reading comprehension.

Core Knowledge develops 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.

At www.coreknowledge.org you can:

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

THE CORE KNOWLEDGE SEQUENCE: SOLID, SPECIFIC, SEQUENCED, SHARED/INTEGRATED

SOLID, SPECIFIC

The following samples will give you an idea of the specific content requirements of the



curriculum. To learn more about the curriculum, you can read the *Sequence* 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

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

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, summarizing and paraphrasing,

acknowledging sources and avoiding plagiarism, preparing a bibliography

SEQUENCED

Here's how one topic in 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/INTEGRATED

Studying topics together in the same grade builds a sense of community in much the same way that common knowledge binds the larger society together. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. believes that a diverse society needs commonly shared background knowledge and that everybody has a right to share it, not just a select few.

Through shared topics/content integration, students 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.

