

Frequently Asked Questions about Bridges



How often should we expect homework?

Homework is a chance for students to practice what they have learned and for families to see what students are doing in math class. Homework has more to do with teacher philosophy than with the Bridges program. Homework is assigned with increasing frequency as students progress from kindergarten through fifth grade. In addition, teachers may send home supplemental practice pages if students need more practice with a particular skill or if there is a desire for more frequent homework.

What do students do in a Bridges math class?

There are 8 units of study at each grade level. Each unit includes 20 lessons and takes approximately 4 weeks to complete. Each lesson takes a single class period. Additionally, students also work on their skills in 15- to 20-minute Number Corner exercises. Students talk about math by sharing observations, explaining their thinking and asking questions. Hands on activities and math tools are incorporated into the lesson to help students understand how mathematical concepts work. The lessons are rigorous to help students build stamina for solving complex problems. Bridges math also is fun! Students play games in small groups to help practice and reinforce what they learn.

How does information taught get communicated to parents?

A family overview letter will be sent at the beginning of each unit to make families aware of the topics. The Home Connections that you see coming home often reinforce the way content is taught in the classroom. The more you review these, the more you will understand how the program introduces concepts through inquiry. The website for Bridges is also a helpful tool for finding more information about the program: www.themathlearningcenter.org.

Does each student get a textbook?

No. Each student uses a Bridges Student Book in class to solve problems and record their work.

How can I help my child with math at home?

- The most common way for you to help your child at home is to ask them to show you what they have been learning and how they are doing it. Celebrate that they may be doing the math differently than you but still get the same answer. When this happens ask them to tell you why their way of solving the problem worked and if they can make any connections to the way you solved it.
- Make sure that when you are talking with your child about math you are asking them open ended questions like “What did you notice...”, “How do you know that...”, “Why?”, etc. Let them do the talking and you ask the questions. Don’t do the work for them!
- Use the Math Learning Center website link for Parent Support. The website has interactive games that model the Bridges curriculum and will help you and your child become more proficient with concepts. www.mathlearningcenter.org
- Communication, communication, communication. Do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher with questions or concerns.

Why is it a good idea for students to learn multiple strategies? Why not just have students memorize basic facts and algorithms?

Bridges teaches basic facts by first having students explore the operation (addition, subtraction, multiplication or division) in the context of a story problem or situation. This in turn helps the student to understand the math concepts.

What do you do for a child who did well with the traditional model but is not yet catching on to Bridges?

Students that are successful with the traditional model are able to memorize rules and successfully follow them. If students are struggling with the “Bridges way of teaching”, then they do/did not truly understand the concepts behind the rules. The Bridges curriculum is designed in a spiraling fashion which will continue to allow students to revisit concepts giving them additional opportunities to strengthen understanding.

How does Bridges address advanced students?

The Bridges program recognizes the 9th mathematical practice created by National Association for Gifted Children to address the development of promising mathematics students. The 9th mathematical practice standard on mathematical creativity and innovation states students should: *Solve problems in novel ways and pose new mathematical questions of interest to investigate.* Each of the Bridge’s units include a differentiation chart where challenge opportunities are outlined across each of the program’s components. Teachers have the ability to provide those opportunities to students so they can be challenged when appropriate.