Standards for Mathematical Practice – Grade 2

The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe the skills that mathematics educators should seek to develop in their students. The descriptions of the mathematical practices in this document provide examples of how student performance will change and grow as they engage with and master new and more advanced mathematical ideas across the grade levels.

MP.1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
In second grade, students realize that doing mathematics involves solving problems and discussing how they solved them. Students explain to themselves the meaning of a problem and look for ways to solve it. They may use concrete objects or pictures to help them conceptualize and solve problems. They may check their thinking by asking themselves, "Does this make sense?" They make conjectures about the solution and plan out a problem-solving approach. An example for this might be giving a student an equation and having him/her write a story to match.

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
Younger students recognize that a number represents a specific quantity. They connect the quantity to written symbols. Quantitative reasoning entails creating a representation of a problem while attending to the meanings of the quantities. Second graders begin to know and use different properties of operations and relate addition and subtraction to length.

In second grade students represent situations by decontextualizing tasks into numbers and symbols. For example, in the task, "There are 25 children in the cafeteria, and they are joined by 17 more children. How many students are in the cafeteria?" Students translate the situation into an equation, such as:
$25 + 17 = \square$ and then solve the problem. Students also contextualize situations during the problem-solving process. For example, while solving the task above, students might refer to the context of the task to determine that they need to subtract 19 if 19 children leave.

MP.3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
Second graders may construct arguments using concrete referents, such as objects, pictures, drawings, and actions. They practice their mathematical communication skills as they participate in mathematical discussions involving questions like "How did you get that?", "Explain your thinking.", and "Why is that true?" They not only explain their own thinking, but listen to others' explanations. They decide if the explanations make sense and ask appropriate questions.

Students critique the strategies and reasoning of their classmates. For example, to solve $74 - 18$, students may use a variety of strategies, and after working on the task, they might discuss and critique each other' reasoning and strategies, citing similarities and differences between various problem-solving approaches.

MP.4 Model with mathematics.
In early grades, students experiment with representing problem situations in multiple ways including numbers, words (mathematical language), drawing pictures, using objects, acting out, making a chart or list, creating equations, etc. Students need opportunities to connect the different representations and explain the connections. They should be able to use all of these representations as needed.

MP.4 Model with mathematics (continued).

In grade two students model real-life mathematical situations with a number sentence or an equation and check to make sure that their equation accurately matches the problem context. They use concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations to explain the equation. They create an appropriate problem situation from an equation. For example, students create a story problem for the equation

$43 + 17 = \square$ such as "There were 43 gumballs in the machine. Tom poured in 17 more gumballs. How many gumballs are now in the machine?"

MP.5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

In second grade, students consider the available tools (including estimation) when solving a mathematical problem and decide when certain tools might be better suited. For instance, second graders may decide to solve a problem by drawing a picture rather than writing an equation.

Students may use tools such as snap cubes, place value (base ten) blocks, hundreds number boards, number lines, rulers, virtual manipulatives, and concrete geometric shapes (e.g., pattern blocks, three-dimensional solids). Students understand which tools are the most appropriate to use. For example, while measuring the length of the hallway, students can explain why a yardstick is more appropriate to use than a ruler.

MP.6 Attend to precision.

As children begin to develop their mathematical communication skills, they try to use clear and precise language in their discussions with others and when they explain their own reasoning.

Second grade students communicate clearly, using grade-level appropriate vocabulary accurately and precise explanations and reasoning to explain their process and solutions. For example, while measuring an object, students carefully line up the tool correctly to get an accurate measurement. During tasks involving number sense, students consider if their answer is reasonable and check their work to ensure the accuracy of solutions.

MP.7 Look for and make use of structure.

Second grade students look for patterns and structures in the number system. For example, students notice number patterns within the tens place as they connect skip counting by 10s to corresponding numbers on a 100s chart. Students see structure in the base-ten number system as they understand that 10 ones equal a ten, and 10 tens equal a hundred. Students adopt mental math strategies based on patterns (making ten, fact families, doubles). They use structure to understand subtraction as a missing addend problems (e.g., $50 - 33 = \square$ can be written as $33 + \square = 50$ and can be thought of as "How much more do I need to add to 33 to get to 50?")

MP.8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Second grade students notice repetitive actions in counting and computation (e.g., number patterns to skip count). When children have multiple opportunities to add and subtract, they look for shortcuts, such as using estimation strategies and then adjust the answer to compensate. Students continually check for the reasonableness of their solutions during and after completing a task by asking themselves, "Does this make sense?"