

Standards for Mathematical Practice - Grade 7

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 grade 7, students solve problems involving ratios and rates and discuss how they solved them. Students solve real-world problems through the application of algebraic and geometric concepts. Students seek the meaning of a problem and look for efficient ways to represent and solve it. They may check their thinking by asking themselves, “What is the most efficient way to solve the problem?”, “Does this make sense?”, and “Can I solve the problem in a different way?”. When students compare arithmetic and algebraic solutions to the same problem, they identify correspondences between different approaches.

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

In grade 7, students represent a wide variety of real-world contexts through the use of real numbers and variables in mathematical expressions, equations, and inequalities. Students contextualize to understand the meaning of the number or variable as related to the problem and decontextualize to manipulate symbolic representations by applying properties of operations.

MP.3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

In grade 7, students construct arguments using verbal or written explanations accompanied by expressions, equations, inequalities, models, and graphs, tables, and other data displays (i.e. box plots, dot plots, histograms, etc.). They further refine their mathematical communication skills through mathematical discussions in which they critically evaluate their own thinking and the thinking of other students. For example, as students notice when geometric conditions determine a unique triangle, more than one triangle, or no triangle, they have an opportunity to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. Students should be encouraged to answer questions such as these: “How did you get that?” “Why is that true?” “Does that always work?” They explain their thinking to others and respond to others’ thinking.

MP.4 Model with mathematics.

In grade 7, students model problem situations symbolically, graphically, in tables, and contextually. Students form expressions, equations, or inequalities from real-world contexts and connect symbolic and graphical representations. Students use experiments or simulations to generate data sets and create probability models. Proportional relationships present opportunities for modeling. For example, for modeling purposes, the number of people who live in an apartment building might be taken as proportional to the number of stories in the building. Students should be encouraged to answer questions such as “What are some ways to represent the quantities?” or “How might it help to create a table, chart, or graph?”

MP.5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

Students consider available tools (including estimation and technology) when solving a mathematical problem and decide when certain tools might be helpful. For instance, students in grade 7 may decide to represent similar data sets using dot plots with the same scale to visually compare the center and variability of the data. Students might use physical objects or applets to generate probability data and use graphing calculators or spreadsheets to manage and represent data in different forms. Teachers might ask, “What approach are you considering?” or “Why was it helpful to use ___?”

MP.6 Attend to precision.

In grade 7, students continue to refine their mathematical communication skills by using clear and precise language in their discussions with others and in their own reasoning. Students define variables, specify units of measure, and label axes accurately. Students use appropriate terminology when referring to rates, ratios, probability models, geometric figures, data displays, and components of expressions, equations or inequalities. Teachers might ask, “What mathematical language, definitions, or properties can you use to explain ___?”

MP.7 Look for and make use of structure.

Students routinely seek patterns or structures to model and solve problems. For instance, students recognize patterns that exist in ratio tables making connections between the constant of proportionality in a table with the slope of a graph. Students apply properties to generate equivalent expressions (i.e. $6 + 2n = 2(3 + n)$ by distributive property) and solve equations (i.e. $2c + 3 = 15$, $2c = 12$ by subtraction property of equality; $c = 6$ by division property of equality). Students compose and decompose two- and three-dimensional figures to solve real-world problems involving scale drawings, surface area, and volume. Students examine tree diagrams or systematic lists to determine the sample space for compound events and verify that they have listed all possibilities. Solving an equation such as $8 = 4(n - \frac{1}{2})$ is easier if students can see and make use of structure, temporarily viewing $(n - \frac{1}{2})$ as a single entity.

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

In grade 7, students use repeated reasoning to understand algorithms and make generalizations about patterns. During multiple opportunities to solve and model problems, they may notice that $\frac{a}{b} = \frac{c}{d}$ if and only if $ad = bc$ and construct other examples and models that confirm their generalization. Students should be encouraged to answer questions such as “How would we prove that ___?” or “How is this situation both similar to and different from other situations using these operations?”