

Common Core -- What is It?

What are the Common Core State Standards? We have certainly heard a much about the Common Core so in this column, I will try and provide a brief overview. The Common Core State Standards Initiative Website (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) states the following as its Mission:

"The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."

The Common Core is a set of standards (which every State has had for a long time - just all different) across the nation and the world with the idea that whether my child goes to school in Decatur, Michigan; Madison, Wisconsin; or Shanghai, China the expectations or standards would be the same. This is no doubt a big wad of gum to chew, but hang with me, the standards are destined to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four year college programs or enter the workforce and be SUCCESSFUL. Wow, this is an extremely important goal. The standards are also clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school. This is an equally important goal of standards. For those of you who are visual learners, please watch the [Three Minute Video Explaining the Common Core State Standards](http://vimeo.com/51933492) at <http://vimeo.com/51933492>.

The standards are challenging and focus on the following:

- Depth over Breadth
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Close Reading - shifting to more reading for information.
- Writing - Wording a cohesive argument
- Technology - Pushing schools to use the e-tools that promote learning

Check out the work going on right here in Algebra -- applying concepts, problem-solving, depth of instruction, application and working together.