



Education Lingo Dictionary

General education terms

Accommodation- Accommodations are changes to the equipment, schedule, curriculum format, or environment that help a student with a physical or learning disability access course content and complete assignments. When students receive accommodations, they are still receiving the same instruction and content as their peers. Some examples of accommodations are: audio textbooks for a student with dyslexia or hearing impairment, extra time on assessments, or the use of a computer for written assignments.

Buddy room- A buddy room is often a classroom near your child's classroom where the teacher sends students who are having a hard time or being disruptive. Sometimes students who are having a conflict with another student or the teacher are asked to go to the buddy room to cool off and then rejoin the class.

Blended Learning- Blended learning is when the teacher blends in-person traditional learning with online learning experiences. Examples of blended learning:

- A teacher giving a lecture and then having students take a quiz on their laptops.
- Students being provided with an online game or video to further their learning.
- Students listening to a podcast as a part of their assignment.
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Classroom management- This phrase is often used by teachers to refer to the way they run their classroom. Teachers must plan how they will run their classroom as smoothly as possible so that each child can learn. This includes classroom rules and procedures, discipline, where things are placed in the room, and so much more.

Common Core- The common core standards are a set of standards for grades K-12 that outline the skills and knowledge students should acquire. Not all states use the common core standards, but most states use some form of learning standard to guide their instruction. Your child's school and teacher will use the standards to plan and execute their instruction. Using education standards ensures that all students throughout the state are mastering the same content. For more information about why

and how the standards were formed [click here](#). To read the standards for your child's grade [click here](#).

Differentiation- Teachers differentiate when they take different students' needs into consideration as they are planning lessons, classroom areas, or the materials that they will use. Teachers often differentiate their lessons to make sure different levels of students are getting what they need from the instruction. For example, a 2nd grade reading teacher may choose different leveled books for students to read and reflect upon. She may even provide a book on tape for an english language learner or struggling reader. Differentiation means that students aren't getting the same instruction or materials- because all students in a classroom won't have the exact same needs.

Executive functioning- Executive functioning is your ability to control your thoughts, emotions, and actions in order to carry out tasks. The main executive functioning skills are working memory, flexible thinking, and inhibitory control (self-control). These abilities develop over time, and some students struggle to develop these skills to use them as they are needed in an academic setting. [Click here](#) to learn more about executive functioning.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)- FERPA requires that schools receiving any funds from the department of education keep your child's records private. This act also protects your right as a parent to review your child's records and request changes to the records under certain circumstances. For more information about FERPA [click here](#).

Flexible Seating- Many modern classrooms steer away from rows of desks for flexible seating. Flexible seating can mean anything from letting students move around and pick their own desks/floor space, to having multiple seating options (yoga balls, wobble stools, pillows, rugs, etc.) for students to choose from. Many flexible seating classroom will keep some desks in the room for students who prefer the option.

Flipped Classroom- Flipped classroom is a model that lets students learn content at their own pace online (usually at home). This content is usually lectures and other course materials. Students then spend their time in class working on assignments and projects with the teacher there for support and additional learning. This hybrid of online and in-person instruction allows for more personalized learning. This model is also sometimes referred to as "blended learning" seen above.

Formative assessment- Formative assessments are low stakes assessments that monitor student learning. These assessments are given often, and are used to

determine what students strengths and weaknesses are. Teachers use the information they gather from formative assessments to shape their instruction. Formative assessments also help students see their own progress and areas that need to be improved. Examples of some formative assessments are:

- Solve and turn in a math problem at the end of a math lecture
- Write one or two sentences explaining a concept
- Turn in a rough draft of a paper for feedback
- Read out loud to the teacher or a peer

Gifted- There is no universal definition of gifted or what makes a gifted student. Often states define gifted and talented in different ways. Most definitions center on children who perform at a high level in academic or other areas such as art, leadership etc. Different states and schools each have their own systems and policies for providing services to gifted students. For more general information about gifted students click [here](#).

IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act)- IDEA is a law that ensures appropriate public education to those with eligible disabilities. The act also ensures services for these children within the public school system. For details on IDEA [click here](#).

IEP (Individualized Education Program)- An Individualized Education Program or Individualized Education Plan is a legal document that lays out the specific instruction, support, services, accommodations and assistance a child will receive through their special education program. For more information about what an IEP is and how students qualify for an IEP [click here](#).

Inclusion- Inclusion is welcoming students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and other differences into a mainstream classroom with their same age peers. Most students who qualify for special education services will spend most of their time in a regular classroom setting with same age peers due to inclusion. Also see Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Least restrictive environment (LRE)- The federal requirement that students with disabilities receive their education alongside their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. This requires schools to not remove special education students from the classroom unless their education cannot be received satisfactorily in that classroom environment with the appropriate aids and services. For more information about LRE [click here](#).

Low floor High ceiling- This phrase is used to refer to tasks that allow students to enter at their own academic level, while being easily extended to give high performing or more advanced students an opportunity to learn more or further their work.

Modifications- Modifications change the content the student is expected to learn and be tested on. For example, a student with reading difficulties may be given different reading passages, or a student with spelling difficulties may be given a different spelling list than the rest of the class. For information on modifications vs. accommodations [click here](#).

Paraprofessional- Paraprofessionals are men and women who work in schools and classrooms supporting teachers, but aren't required to be a licensed educator. Some paraprofessionals are assigned as one-on-one help for students with learning and physical differences as a part of an IEP, while some paraprofessionals work in support of a teacher in the classroom setting. For more information about paraprofessionals [click here](#).

Percentiles- Percentile scores on assessments tell you where your child scored compared to others who took the test. A percentile of 74 would mean that your child scored the same or better than 74% of students who took the test. A percentile score of 50 would be considered average performance.

RTI (Response To Intervention)- Response to Intervention is a system used to get students the instruction and supports they need. RTI consists of three tiers that increase the amount of intervention being given as they progress. The goal of RTI is to get students the interventions they need before they fall behind. The RTI process often begins with assessments that all students are given. The results from these assessments will alert the RTI team to any students who may need instructional intervention (or extra help). For more information about RTI [click here](#). A short breakdown of the three tiers is found below:

- *Tier 1:* Whole class instruction, assessments, and small groups
 - Your child's teacher will give universal assessments, or screeners, to determine which students need additional supports. The teacher will group students for small group instruction based on what they need additional help with.
- *Tier 2:* Small group
 - Students who aren't progressing with regular classroom instruction will receive more targeted interventions in small groups a few times a week. These small group times do not replace classroom instruction.
- *Tier 3:* One-on-one or very small group

- Students who aren't progressing with the additional instruction provided in tier three will move on to receiving one-on-one intervention personalized to their needs.

Scaffolding- Scaffolding is when teachers provide supports that help students gain understanding and skills they wouldn't have been able to gain on their own without the supports. Over time, the teacher slowly removes the supports and turns over more responsibility for the learning or task over to the student. An example of scaffolding would be a teacher providing a detailed outline to guide students in writing some of their first essays. Over time the teacher would provide less detailed outlines and then eventually expect the student to write the essay on their own without support from an outline. For more information on scaffolding [click here](#).

Scope and Sequence- A scope and sequence usually determines the depth and breadth of the content that will be covered in a subject for a certain grade level as well as the order (or sequence) in which the concepts will be introduced. Many schools and districts use a scope and sequence to ensure their students are all learning the same content in the same order.

Small Group- Small group is usually used to describe a group of students that a teacher or other school staff gathers in order to give specific instruction. Small groups are common in reading and math. Teachers often group students who are struggling with similar concepts so that they can all receive instruction on that concept from the teacher at the same time.

Special Education- Special education refers to the social and instructional services provided to students who have disabilities. Special education is often provided while a student is in the mainstream classroom. See IDEA, LRE, IEP, 504. For more information about special education and its history, [click here](#).

Standards- Each state uses learning standards to lay out what students in each grade are expected to learn. Teachers and schools use these standards to plan instruction. If you want to see the learning standards in your state google learning standards + your state. Also see Common Core above.

Summative assessment- Summative assessments are used to evaluate a student's learning after a unit, project, or semester. These assessments are used to evaluate whether students have learned what they were expected to learn. Summative assessments are often given scores that are more heavily weighted than regular assignments or that go in school records and aren't given as often as formative

assessments. Some examples of summative assessments are end of unit tests, end of semester projects, and state standardized tests.

504 plan- A 504 plan is a plan used to ensure students with disabilities have access to the same education as their peers. This is usually accomplished through accommodations that help the student overcome obstacles (ex. extended break times, a front row seat in class, or using the computer to type instead of writing essays by hand). 504 plans are unlike IEPs in that they don't address instruction or academic goals. For more information about 504 plans and how students qualify, [click here](#).

Terms specific to reading

Digraph- Digraphs are two letters that make one sound (ex. sh, ch, oa, oo, etc.). There are also split digraphs where the e on the end of a word makes the vowel long (ex. dine, bake, time etc.).

Fluency- Fluency is a student's ability to read at a proper pace with accuracy and appropriate expression. This is an important part of students being able to comprehend what they read, although being a fluent reader doesn't guarantee good reading comprehension. Fluency is often assessed and charted by teachers in early grades.

Grapheme- Graphemes are letters or groups of letters that represent a single sound (phoneme). For example the grapheme "c" represents the hard c sound in "cat". "oo" represents the "uu" sound in moo. "eigh" represents the "a" sound in eight.

Guided reading- Guided reading occurs when a teacher works with a small group of students on specific reading skills. Students are often placed in small groups by the teacher based on reading level, so that each student gets the instruction they need with peers who need the same thing. The small groups will read texts together that are at or slightly above their reading level, and the teacher will deliver small lessons on phonics or comprehension topics that will benefit each specific group.

Invented spelling- Invented spelling is when children use their knowledge of phonics to make a guess at how words are spelled. The student tries to represent the sounds they hear in the word the best they can. (ex. Spelling cat "kat", eight as "at, or the as "ta") All student's invented spellings will be different. This is an important step in learning to spell. For more information on the stages of spelling development [click here](#).

Lexile Levels- Lexile measures or levels are used to help students find books to read that are at their reading and comprehension level. Students are usually assessed to find their lexile measure and then encouraged to read books that are at that level. This helps

students read books that are right for them but that will also challenge their reading and comprehension skills. For more information about Lexile levels and to find books at your child's level, [click here](#).

Phonemic Awareness- Phonemic awareness is a child's ability to recognize and manipulate the phonemes in a word spoken out loud. Phonemic awareness is important prior to acquiring reading and spelling skills. To practice phonemic awareness students can separate the sounds heard in a word (ex. Parent: "What sounds are in cat?" Child sounds out: "/c/./a/.../t/").

Phoneme- A phoneme is a single sound. Each sound heard in a word is a phoneme. For example the word "apple" has three phonemes ("a" "p" and "l").

Phonological Awareness- Phonological awareness is a student's ability to identify and manipulate large parts or words such as syllables and rhymes. Students with phonological awareness can clap the syllables in a word, create rhymes, and recognize words with the same initial sound.

Sight Words- Sight words are words that students are expected to memorize by sight (not by sounding out or phonics rules) and be able to recall quickly when seen in a book or story. Sight words are selected and presented in different ways depending on a teacher's ideas and philosophies. Some teachers use words that are difficult or impossible to sound out (ex. come, who, the etc.) but that appear often in books. Other teachers choose words that have been proven to appear most frequently in books (so, is, color, etc.).

Terms specific to math

Array- Items or numbers arranged in rows and columns. Arrays are often used to represent addition or multiplication. (ex. A picture of three rows of four dots would represent the problem 3×4)

Bar Model- A bar model is a rectangle or bar that is drawn to represent a math equation or word problem. This model can be used to represent many different types of problems. Students allocate different parts of the bar to numbers in their problem and use the bar to show what they are solving for. For a more detailed description of how bar models are used with visuals, check out this [video](#).

Base Ten Blocks- Base ten blocks are a physical manipulative often used to help students understand place value. A small cube represents "1". A "rod" is represents "10"

as it is made up of 10 small cubes. A “flat” represents 100 as it is made up of 100 small cubes and so on. Students often use base ten blocks to model place value as well as many other concepts such as addition, multiplication and subtraction. For a virtual representation of base ten blocks [click here](#).

Decomposing- Decomposing is the act of breaking numbers into smaller numbers or parts. This can be done by place value, but it doesn’t have to be. For example, the number 34 can be decomposed into $30+4$ or $17+17$ or even $20 + 14$. Learning how to decompose numbers helps students increase their ability to do mental math, and to see relationships between numbers.

Friendly Number- A friendly number is a number that is easy to add or subtract with. This is usually 10 or a multiple of 10. Students may round or decompose to use friendly numbers as a strategy when adding and subtracting.

Making ten- Making ten is a strategy that is used to add numbers mentally. Students learn to create multiples of 10 within the problem to make it easier to compute. Here is an example of how this is done: *For $9 + 7$ I can see that this is the same as $10 + 6$ (I moved one from the 7 to make 10) I can then easily add the numbers in my head and know that the sum is 16.*

Manipulative- Math manipulatives are physical tools that are used to teach and practice math concepts. Some examples of math manipulatives are base ten blocks, coins, colored chips, unifix cubes, and tangrams.

Model- A model is a physical, pictorial or numerical representation of a student’s or teacher’s math work or thinking. Models help students visualize the math that they are doing. Students are often asked to draw or create a model to show their thinking when doing math work. Some examples of math models are bar models, number lines, ten frames and arrays.

Number Bonds- A number bond is a visual representation of the relationship between a number and the numbers (or parts) that is made up of. Number bonds usually look like three circles in a triangle shape connected by two lines. Number bonds can also be used when “making ten” when doing addition and subtraction problems. To see a number bond and get more information about how they are used, [click here](#).

Partial products- Partial products is a multiplication strategy where one or both numbers are split into place value or factors to make multiplying easier. For example: 25×8 could be broken down into $(20 \times 8) + (5 \times 8)$. This strategy is usually taught to help

students understand multi-digit multiplication before moving on to the standard algorithm. For more information on partial products, watch [this video](#).

Standard Algorithm- A standard algorithm is the standard set of steps used to solve a problem (we usually hear this for multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) that can be used quickly and efficiently to arrive at an answer. Algorithms do vary from country to country, so you may also hear these procedures referred to as the US standard algorithm.

Strategy- Strategies are the different ways students solve problems. A single problem can be solved with many different strategies depending on what works best for the student. Strategies can be used pen-to-paper or mentally. For example, when presented with $6 + 7$, one student may use a “counting on” strategy by counting up from six, one student might use a “doubles strategy” by using their knowledge of $6 + 6$ to find the answer, and another student might make 10 by changing the problem into $3 + 10$.

Subitizing- Subitizing is the ability to look at a small amount of objects and know how many there are without counting. With numbers over five, students can decompose or “split” the dots to quickly come up with the number of objects pictured. For a short explanation of subitizing and some easy subitizing activities [click here](#).

Ten Frame- A ten frame is a rectangular box that is split into 10 equal pieces- five on top and five on bottom. This frame is used to help students visualize numbers and how they relate to 10 by placing dots or items in the ten frame to represent different numbers. For example, a student might place 7 dots in the ten frame and see that there are three empty squares. Ten frames are also used to “make ten” when solving addition and subtraction problems, usually using two different colors of dots or objects. For a visual of a ten frame [click here](#).

Tape Diagram- A tape diagram is a long rectangle used to model problems. This diagram is very diverse, and can be used to solve a majority of word problems. Tape diagrams are also sometimes referred to as bar diagrams (mentioned above). To learn more about tape diagrams and what makes them useful [click here](#).

One-to-one Correspondence- One-to-one correspondence is a the ability to match one set of objects to another set of objects or names. For example, being able to distribute one cookie to each member of the family. Students who have one-to-one correspondence are also able to count small numbers of objects correctly, usually by pointing or moving the objects while counting out loud. For more information on what one-to-one correspondence is and how to practice [click here](#).

Looking for a word that's not here? Please let us know so that we can get you some answers and add the word to our list!