

Utah Elementary Science Core Curriculum
Third Grade
Adopted by Utah State Board of Education
March 12, 2002

Introduction

Science is a way of knowing, a process for gaining knowledge and understanding of the natural world. The Science Core Curriculum places emphasis on understanding and using skills. Students should be active learners. It is not enough for students to read about science; they must do science. They should observe, inquire, question, formulate and test hypotheses, analyze data, report, and evaluate findings. The students, as scientists, should have hands-on, active experiences throughout the instruction of the science curriculum.

The Elementary Science Core describes what students should know and be able to do at the end of each of the K–6 grade levels. It was developed, critiqued, piloted, and revised by a community of Utah science teachers, university science educators, State Office of Education specialists, scientists, expert national consultants, and an advisory committee representing a wide variety of people from the community. The Core reflects the current philosophy of science education that is expressed in national documents developed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Academies of Science. This Science Core has the endorsement of the Utah Science Teachers Association. The Core reflects high standards of achievement in science for all students.

Organization of the Elementary Science Core

The Core is designed to help teachers organize and deliver instruction.

The Science Core Curriculum's organization:

- ✓ Each grade level begins with a brief course description.
- ✓ The INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs) describe the goals for science skills and attitudes. They are found at the beginning of each grade, and are an integral part of the Core that should be included as part of instruction.
- ✓ The SCIENCE BENCHMARKS describe the science content students should know. Each grade level has three to five Science Benchmarks. The ILOs and Benchmarks intersect in the Standards, Objectives and Indicators.
- ✓ A STANDARD is a broad statement of what students are expected to understand. Several Objectives are listed under each Standard.
- ✓ An OBJECTIVE is a more focused description of what students need to know and be able to do at the completion of instruction. If students have mastered the Objectives associated with a given Standard, they are judged to have mastered that Standard at that grade level. Several Indicators are described for each Objective.
- ✓ An INDICATOR is a measurable or observable student action that enables one to judge whether a student has mastered a particular Objective. Indicators are not meant to be classroom activities, but they can help guide classroom instruction.

Eight Guidelines Were Used in Developing the Elementary Science Core

Reflects the Nature of Science: Science is a way of knowing, a process of gaining knowledge and understanding of the natural world. The Core is designed to produce an integrated set of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for students. Please see the Intended Learning Outcomes document for each grade level core.

As described in these ILOs, students will:

1. Use science process and thinking skills.
2. Manifest science interests and attitudes.
3. Understand important science concepts and principles.
4. Communicate effectively using science language and reasoning.
5. Demonstrate awareness of the social and historical aspects of science.
6. Understand the nature of science.

Coherent: The Core has been designed so that, wherever possible, the science ideas taught within a particular grade level have a logical and natural connection with each other and with those of earlier grades. Efforts have also been made to select topics and skills that integrate well with one another and with other subject areas appropriate to grade level. In addition, there is an upward articulation of science concepts, skills, and content. This spiraling is intended to prepare students to understand and use more complex science concepts and skills as they advance through their science learning.

Developmentally Appropriate: The Core takes into account the psychological and social readiness of students. It builds from concrete experiences to more abstract understandings. The Core describes science language students should use that is appropriate to each grade level. A more extensive vocabulary should not be emphasized. In the past, many educators may have mistakenly thought that students understood abstract concepts (such as the nature of the atom), because they repeated appropriate names and vocabulary (such as electron and neutron). The Core resists the temptation to tell about abstract concepts at inappropriate grade levels, but focuses on providing experiences with concepts that students can explore and understand in depth to build a foundation for future science learning.

Encourages Good Teaching Practices: It is impossible to accomplish the full intent of the Core by lecturing and having students read from textbooks. The Elementary Science Core emphasizes student inquiry. Science process skills are central in each standard. Good science encourages students to gain knowledge by doing science: observing, questioning, exploring, making and testing hypotheses, comparing predictions, evaluating data, and communicating conclusions. The Core is designed to encourage instruction with students working in cooperative groups. Instruction should connect lessons with students' daily lives. The Core directs experiential science instruction for all students, not just those who have traditionally succeeded in science classes. The vignettes listed on the "Utah Science Home Page" at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/science> for each of the Core standards provide examples, based on actual practice, that demonstrate that excellent teaching of the Science Core is possible.

Comprehensive: The Elementary Science Core does not cover all topics that have traditionally been in the elementary science curriculum; however, it does provide a comprehensive background in science. By emphasizing depth rather than breadth, the Core seeks to empower students rather than intimidate them with a collection of isolated and eminently forgettable facts.

Teachers are free to add related concepts and skills, but they are expected to teach all the standards and objectives specified in the Core for their grade level.

Feasible: Teachers and others who are familiar with Utah students, classrooms, teachers, and schools have designed the Core. It can be taught with easily obtained resources and materials. A Teacher Resource Book (TRB) is available for elementary grades and has sample lessons on each topic for each grade level. The TRB is a document that will grow as teachers add exemplary lessons aligned with the new Core. The middle grade levels have electronic textbooks available at the Utah State Office of Education’s “Utah Science Home Page” at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/science>.

Useful and Relevant: This curriculum relates directly to student needs and interests. It is grounded in the natural world in which we live. Relevance of science to other endeavors enables students to transfer skills gained from science instruction into their other school subjects and into their lives outside the classroom.

Encourages Good Assessment Practices: Student achievement of the standards and objectives in this Core are best assessed using a variety of assessment instruments. One’s purpose should be clearly in mind as assessment is planned and implemented. Performance tests are particularly appropriate to evaluate student mastery of science processes and problem-solving skills. Teachers should use a variety of classroom assessment approaches in conjunction with standard assessment instruments to inform their instruction. Sample test items, keyed to each Core Standard, may be located on the Utah Science Home Page. Observation of students engaged in science activities is highly recommended as a way to assess students’ skills as well as attitudes in science. The nature of the questions posed by students provides important evidence of students’ understanding of science.

The Most Important Goal

Elementary school reaches the greatest number of students for a longer period of time during the most formative years of the school experience. Effective elementary science instruction engages students actively in enjoyable learning experiences. Science instruction should be as thrilling an experience for a child as seeing a rainbow, growing a flower, or holding a toad. Science is not just for those who have traditionally succeeded in the subject, and it is not just for those who will choose science-related careers. In a world of rapidly expanding knowledge and technology, all students must gain the skills they will need to understand and function responsibly and successfully in the world. The Core provides skills in a context that enables students to experience the joy of doing science.

Third Grade Science Core Curriculum

In third grade students learn about **interactions, relationships, relative motion, and cause and effect**. They study the movement of Earth and the moon. They begin to learn of forces that move things; they learn of heat and light. Third graders observe, classify, predict, measure, and record.

Third graders should be encouraged to be curious. They should be helped and encouraged to pose their own questions about objects, events, processes, and results. Effective teachers provide students with hands-on science investigations in which student inquiry is an important goal. Teachers should provide opportunities for all students to experience many things. Third graders should use their senses as they feel the warmth of the sun on their face, watch the moon as it seems to move through broken clouds, sort and arrange their favorite rocks, look for patterns in rocks and flowers, observe a snail move ever so slowly up the side of a terrarium, test materials for slipping and sliding, measure the speed of rolling objects, and invent ways to resist gravity. They should come to enjoy science as a process of learning about the world.

Third grade Core concepts should be integrated with concepts and skills from other curriculum areas. Reading, writing, and mathematics skills should be emphasized as integral to the instruction of science. Personal relevance of science in students' lives is always an important part of helping students to value science, and should be emphasized at this grade level.

This Core was designed using the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Project 2061: Benchmarks For Science Literacy and the National Academy of Science's National Science Education Standards as guides to determine appropriate content and skills.

The third grade Science Core has three online resources designed to help with classroom instruction; they include Teacher Resource Book—a set of lesson plans, assessment items and science information specific to third grade; Sci-ber Text—an electronic science text book specific to the Utah Core; and the science test item pool. This pool includes multiple-choice questions, performance tasks, and interpretive items aligned to the standards and objectives of the third grade curriculum. These resources are all available on the Utah Science Home Page at: <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/science>

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

The hands-on nature of this science curriculum increases the need for teachers to use appropriate precautions in the classroom and field. Teachers must adhere to the published guidelines for the proper use of animals, equipment, and chemicals in the classroom. These guidelines are available on the Utah Science Home Page.

Intended Learning Outcomes for Third Grade Science

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) describe the skills and attitudes students should learn as a result of science instruction. They are an essential part of the Science Core Curriculum and provide teachers with a standard for evaluation of student learning in science. Instruction should include significant science experiences that lead to student understanding using the ILOs.

The main intent of science instruction in Utah is that students will value and use science as a process of obtaining knowledge based upon observable evidence.

By the end of third grade students will be able to:

1. Use Science Process and Thinking Skills

- a. Observe simple objects and patterns and report their observations.
- b. Sort and sequence data according to a given criterion.
- c. Make simple predictions and inferences based upon observations.
- d. Compare things and events.
- e. Use instruments to measure length, temperature, volume, and weight using appropriate units.
- f. Conduct a simple investigation when given directions.
- g. Develop and use simple classification systems.
- h. Use observations to construct a reasonable explanation.

2. Manifest Scientific Attitudes and Interests

- a. Demonstrate a sense of curiosity about nature.
- b. Voluntarily read or look at books and other materials about science.
- c. Pose questions about objects, events, and processes.

3. Understand Science Concepts and Principles

- a. Know science information specified for their grade level.
- b. Distinguish between examples and non-examples of science concepts taught.
- c. Explain science concepts and principles using their own words and explanations.

4. Communicate Effectively Using Science Language and Reasoning

- a. Record data accurately when given the appropriate form and format (e.g., table, graph, chart).
- b. Report observation with pictures, sentences, and models.
- c. Use scientific language appropriate to grade level in oral and written communication.
- d. Use available reference sources to obtain information.

Science Benchmark

Earth orbits around the sun, and the moon orbits around Earth. Earth is spherical in shape and rotates on its axis to produce the night and day cycle. To people on Earth, this turning of the planet makes it appear as though the sun, moon, planets, and stars are moving across the sky once a day. However, this is only a perception as viewed from Earth.

STANDARD I: Students will understand that the shape of Earth and the moon are spherical and that Earth rotates on its axis to produce the appearance of the sun and moon moving through the sky.

Objective 1: Describe the appearance of Earth and the moon.

- a. Describe the shape of Earth and the moon as spherical.
- b. Explain that the sun is the source of light that lights the moon.
- c. List the differences in the physical appearance of Earth and the moon as viewed from space.

Objective 2: Describe the movement of Earth and the moon and the apparent movement of other bodies through the sky.

- a. Describe the motions of Earth (i.e., the rotation [spinning] of Earth on its axis, the revolution [orbit] of Earth around the sun).
- b. Use a chart to show that the moon orbits Earth approximately every 28 days.
- c. Use a model of Earth to demonstrate that Earth rotates on its axis once every 24 hours to produce the night and day cycle.
- d. Use a model to demonstrate why it seems to a person on Earth that the sun, planets, and stars appear to move across the sky.

Science language
students should use:

model, orbit, sphere, moon, axis, rotation, revolution, appearance

Science Benchmark

For any particular environment, some types of plants and animals survive well, some survive less well and some cannot survive at all. Organisms in an environment interact with their environment. Models can be used to investigate these interactions.
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STANDARD II: Students will understand that organisms depend on living and nonliving things within their environment.

Objective 1: Classify living and nonliving things in an environment.

- a. Identify characteristics of living things (i.e., growth, movement, reproduction).
- b. Identify characteristics of nonliving things.
- c. Classify living and nonliving things in an environment.

Objective 2: Describe the interactions between living and nonliving things in a small environment.

- a. Identify living and nonliving things in a small environment (e.g., terrarium, aquarium, flowerbed) composed of living and nonliving things.
- b. Predict the effects of changes in the environment (e.g., temperature, light, moisture) on a living organism.
- c. Observe and record the effect of changes (e.g., temperature, amount of water, light) upon the living organisms and nonliving things in a small-scale environment.
- d. Compare a small-scale environment to a larger environment (e.g., aquarium to a pond, terrarium to a forest).
- e. Pose a question about the interaction between living and nonliving things in the environment that could be investigated by observation.

Science language students should use:	environment, interaction, living, nonliving, organism, survive, observe, terrarium, aquarium, temperature, moisture, small-scale
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Science Benchmark

Forces cause changes in the speed or direction of the motion of an object. The greater the force placed on an object, the greater the change in motion. The more massive an object is, the less effect a given force will have upon the motion of the object. Earth's gravity pulls objects toward it without touching them.

STANDARD III: Students will understand the relationship between the force applied to an object and resulting motion of the object.

Objective 1: Demonstrate how forces cause changes in speed or direction of objects.

- a. Show that objects at rest will not move unless a force is applied to them.
- b. Compare the forces of pushing and pulling.
- c. Investigate how forces applied through simple machines affect the direction and/or amount of resulting force.

Objective 2: Demonstrate that the greater the force applied to an object, the greater the change in speed or direction of the object.

- a. Predict and observe what happens when a force is applied to an object (e.g., wind, flowing water).
- b. Compare and chart the relative effects of a force of the same strength on objects of different weight (e.g., the breeze from a fan will move a piece of paper but may not move a piece of cardboard).
- c. Compare the relative effects of forces of different strengths on an object (e.g., strong wind affects an object differently than a breeze).
- d. Conduct a simple investigation to show what happens when objects of various weights collide with one another (e.g., marbles, balls).
- e. Show how these concepts apply to various activities (e.g., batting a ball, kicking a ball, hitting a golf ball with a golf club) in terms of force, motion, speed, direction, and distance (e.g. slow, fast, hit hard, hit soft).

STANDARD IV: Students will understand that objects near Earth are pulled toward Earth by gravity.

Objective 1: Demonstrate that gravity is a force.

- a. Demonstrate that a force is required to overcome gravity.
- b. Use measurement to demonstrate that heavier objects require more force than lighter ones to overcome gravity.

Objective 2: Describe the effects of gravity on the motion of an object.

- a. Compare how the motion of an object rolling up or down a hill changes with the incline of the hill.
- b. Observe, record, and compare the effect of gravity on several objects in motion (e.g., a thrown ball and a dropped ball falling to Earth).
- c. Pose questions about gravity and forces.

Science language students should use:	distance, force, gravity, weight, motion, speed, direction, simple machine
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Science Benchmark

Light is produced by the sun and observed on Earth. Living organisms use heat and light from the sun. Heat is also produced from motion when one thing rubs against another. Things that give off heat often give off light. While operating, mechanical and electrical machines produce heat and/or light.

STANDARD V: Students will understand that the sun is the main source of heat and light for things living on Earth. They will also understand that the motion of rubbing objects together may produce heat.

Objective 1: Provide evidence showing that the sun is the source of heat and light for Earth.

- a. Compare temperatures in sunny and shady places.
- b. Observe and report how sunlight affects plant growth.
- c. Provide examples of how sunlight affects people and animals by providing heat and light.
- d. Identify and discuss as a class some misconceptions about heat sources (e.g., clothes do not produce heat, ice cubes do not give off cold).

Objective 2: Demonstrate that mechanical and electrical machines produce heat and sometimes light.

- a. Identify and classify mechanical and electrical sources of heat.
- b. List examples of mechanical or electrical devices that produce light.
- c. Predict, measure, and graph the temperature changes produced by a variety of mechanical machines and electrical devices while they are operating.

Objective 3: Demonstrate that heat may be produced when objects are rubbed against one another.

- a. Identify several examples of how rubbing one object against another produces heat.
- b. Compare relative differences in the amount of heat given off or force required to move an object over lubricated/non-lubricated surfaces and smooth/rough surfaces (e.g., waterslide with and without water, hands rubbing together with and without lotion).

Science language students should use:	mechanical, electrical, temperature, degrees, lubricated, misconception, heat source, machine
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