

Princeton Charter School

3 Milestones of Achievement

Princeton Charter School establishes common public milestones to punctuate a student's progress and to give students and the whole PCS community the opportunity to celebrate academic achievement. Milestones are not competitive; they are goals that students, with the help of teachers, work toward meeting successfully.

Milestones are significant learning objectives that the great majority of PCS students can achieve. The tasks have been drawn from recommendations by PCS faculty and board members, with preference given to tasks that cross subject-area boundaries and emphasize language arts and mathematics.

Classroom teachers are the mentors in their grades/classes as students undertake milestone projects. Teachers schedule the tasks involving their classes and arrange with colleagues for the judging of the students' projects/tasks. Teachers provide feedback on the rough drafts, and all grammatical, spelling, factual, and mathematical errors noted must be corrected for the final draft.

In most grades, the judge for a milestone will be a teacher with expertise in the subject area who is not the classroom teacher for the student attempting the milestone. For the eighth grade, judges with appropriate expertise will be drawn from outside the faculty in order not to overburden the faculty with judging, and in order to promote, within the community, a sense of recognition of the accomplishments of our graduating class. The Head of School will assign the judging tasks to the faculty so that all faculty members may participate.

Students who do not complete the milestones ascribed to a specific grade can attempt the task again in the following year. Students will receive a certificate upon successfully completing each milestone task.

3.1 Grade One

Reading Milestone (English)

Task: Demonstrate the ability to read a text at the level of *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss, or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

Criteria: Able to sound out unknown words;

Addition and Subtraction Milestone (Mathematics)

Task: Demonstrate mastery of addition and subtraction of whole numbers up to and including ten.

Criteria: 90% accuracy on 20 problems.

3.2 Grade Two

Letter Writing Milestone (English)

Task: Write a letter to a family member about a day in school.

Criteria: Correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation; quality of descriptions and reactions concerning the day's events.

Addition Milestone (Mathematics)

Task: Demonstrate mastery of addition problems with sums less than 12 and subtraction problems with differences less than 12.

Criteria: 90% accuracy on 30 problems on a timed test.

3.3 Grade Three

Story Milestone (English and Art)

Task: Write a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, illustrate a cover page, and add from one to five illustrations. Read the story to the class.

Criteria: Use of five-step writing process; contains all elements of a story; no major mistakes in grammar, spelling, or penmanship; illustrations relate to story.

Multiplication Table Milestone (Mathematics)

Task: Demonstrate mastery of multiplication tables.

Criteria: 90 percent accuracy on 30 problems.

3.4 Grade Four

Biography Report (History and English)

Task: Research a person from American history and write a paper on his or her life.

Criteria: Accuracy of information; complete bibliography; use of the five steps in the writing process; all grammar and spelling errors marked by teacher corrected.

Health and Nutrition Plan (Health, Science, and Mathematics)

Task: Prepare charts with baseline data on good nutritional and exercise practices, e.g., calories taken in and burned. Students plot their own exercise and diet practices for one week and prepare a written summary of results.

Criteria: Accuracy of baseline data and intelligibility of charts.

3.5 Grade Five

World Civilizations Milestone (History and English)

Task: What is a civilization? Compare and contrast two civilizations that you studied and show how and why they are true civilizations.

Criteria: Quality of analysis; no errors of fact or of writing mechanics.

Science Laboratory/Safety Report Milestone (Science and Mathematics)

Task: Prepare a report of a science lab with arithmetic operations and data; explain all safety measures and the reasons for them; what could go wrong?

Criteria: Proper layout and writing; accuracy and explanations of safety measures and reasons for them.

Typing Milestone (Technology)

Task: Demonstrate competency in typing.

Criteria: Four lines at 25 words per minute; 90 percent accuracy.

3.6 Grade Six

Short-Story Milestone (English)

Task: Write a short story from one of several assigned topics drawn from chess, music or sports.

Criteria: An outline and draft; quality of content and of writing; 750-1000 words.

Physical Fitness Milestone (Physical Education and Mathematics)

Task: Run a half-mile and record time; predict best time for one-quarter and one full mile, assuming a faster rate for shorter distances and gradual decline in speed over a full mile. Summarize total class results in a graph.

Criteria: Maximum time of 5 minutes; reasonableness of calculations; accuracy of graph.

3.7 Grade Seven

3.8 Milestones: Grade Seven

Literary Analysis Milestone (English)

Task: Write a paper that demonstrates ability to analyze a selection drawn from literature.

Criteria: Identify theme, plot, setting, major characters, and so forth; good paragraph construction; proper use of language without grammatical or spelling errors.

Graphing Calculator Milestone (Mathematics)

Task: Use a graphing calculator to do at least three of the following: plot points; graph and compare linear or quadratic equations; use the absolute value function; use the table, zoom, and trace functions; calculate nth roots; enter matrices and calculate determinants; solve systems of linear equations with three or more variables.

Criteria: Thorough familiarity with calculator; accurate calculations; quality and accuracy of graph comparisons.

3.9 Grade Eight

3.10 Milestones: Grade Eight

Essay Milestone (History - application of English skills)

Task: Write a five-paragraph essay on a conflict studied in the modern world history course. In drafting the paper, consider the political situation immediately prior to the conflict, the causes that led to it, the leading characters, their ideas and the roles they played, and the effects of the conflict in the countries involved.

Criteria: Accurate citations of sources; depth of comparisons, explanations, and judgments; quality of organization, syntax, and spelling; five-paragraph organization.

Science Laboratory Report Milestone (Science - application of Mathematics)

Task: The science teacher designates a school laboratory experiment that uses quantitative measurements to be written up for submission. Students write a draft report, followed by rewriting and expansion. The final report should be a polished version of the original draft, with clear explanations of the purpose

of the experiment, procedures, equipment, observations, data analysis, and conclusions as well as possible sources of error.

Criteria: Correct format with conclusions supported by observations; neat layout and handwriting/typing; appropriate data analysis; proper use of language without errors in spelling or grammar.

French Language and Art (French and Art)

Task: Working together, two-three students prepare a paper on a work of art, including its subject, artist, style, and characteristics of the period. The students then present their paper, speaking only in French (2-3 minutes), and respond to questions (in French) from the judge(s) (1-2 minutes).

Criteria: Defensible judgments concerning the work of art; language fluency, accent, and vocabulary consistent with the number of years of study in French.

Spanish Language and Art (Spanish and Art)

Task: Choose a famous Spanish painting that includes several people. Describe in Spanish at least two people who are in the painting and their appearance and personal history or personality.

Criteria: Accuracy of description; correct vocabulary and grammar, consistent with three year's study of Spanish.