



## Core Knowledge Summary

The "Core Knowledge" movement is an educational reform based on the premise that a grade-by-grade core of common learning is necessary to ensure a sound and fair elementary education. The movement was started by Professor E. D. Hirsch, Jr., author of Cultural Literacy and The Schools We Need. Professor Hirsch has argued that, for the sake of academic excellence, greater fairness, and higher literacy, early schooling should provide a solid, specific, shared core curriculum in order to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge. The content of this core curriculum has been outlined in two books — The Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence and The Core Knowledge Sequence, K–8 — that state explicitly what students should learn at each grade level.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is an outline of specific content to be taught in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts. The sequence represents a core of shared knowledge that children should learn. The theory behind Core Knowledge is that the specific content provides a solid foundation on which to build skills instruction. In this regard, the hope is that repetitions and gaps that can occur in instruction can be eliminated. Whenever appropriate, the same subject is covered in literature, history, science, and art, so that students can create connections. The benefits of an integrated curriculum grow when the entire school is involved in exploring topics simultaneously.

According to the Core Knowledge Foundation, the sequence is not meant to outline the whole of the school's curriculum, but rather to provide a coherently organized plan for the content and should make up at least 50% of the curriculum, with the remainder of instruction devoted to skills and local requirements.

The Core Knowledge Sequence is the result of research into the content and structure of elementary school systems around the world (France, Japan, Sweden, and West Germany), as well as by professional organizations such as the National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and experts from the Core Knowledge Foundation's advisory board on multicultural traditions.

In Core Knowledge schools, teachers make a commitment to teach all of the topics in the Core Knowledge Sequence at the assigned grade levels. The Sequence serves as the planning document in each classroom. Core Knowledge schools develop a school wide plan to teach each topic in the sequence. Typically, this plan is developed over a period of two to three years.

The Core Knowledge Foundation serves as the "hub" of the nationwide network. "Official schools" are implementing at least 80% of the Core Knowledge Sequence in all grades and have completed all of the professional development recommended for official status by the Core Knowledge Foundation.

For additional information on The Core Knowledge Sequence: [www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org).