

## Frequently Asked Math Questions for VCA Parents

### *Middle School*

#### **Middle School Math at VCA**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>On Grade Level</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
6	Grade 6 curriculum	Grade 6 enriched curriculum
7	Pre Algebra	Algebra I
8	Algebra I	Algebra II

#### **Why are timed math facts tests important?**

Though math facts tests are not administered on a weekly basis in middle school, their importance is still evident. It is not uncommon for students to miss problems in middle school math because of basic math facts errors. With continual practice and reinforcement, these errors can be avoided.

#### **Why are story problems important?**

Story problems are important because they use life applications for the math concepts being studied. This helps students use their math skills in the “real world.”

#### **What happens if my child is “behind” or “ahead” in math?**

As math concepts often build on each other, it is important for students to stay on task. If they are behind, it is important for them to put in the extra effort and seek extra help if necessary, so they do not fall further behind. If they are ahead, it is still important for them to stay on task, so they do not miss any important information or new concepts. As math becomes more specialized in the higher grades, some students will struggle in certain areas, but excel in others. For example, some students who struggle in algebra will excel in geometry and vice versa.

Within the math classroom, there are two levels in every class: on grade level, and higher. Students are assessed and moved according to consistent performance. A student may receive small group instruction as needed in the middle school resource room. This is arranged per the math teacher’s recommendation. There are faculty members who may be contacted to tutor one-on-one after school per hourly fee.

#### **Why did my child’s math grade fall in the middle of the year?**

There are several factors that could cause your child’s math grade to fall in the middle of the year. One is that the beginning of the year is typically review of previously learned material from earlier grades. As the year progresses, the material may become increasingly challenging for students because they are introduced to unfamiliar concepts. This is why it is important for students to actively participate in class and complete their responsibilities of homework and studying at home.

**As a parent, what are common math principles that I should be reinforcing at home?**

One recurring issue students have is the necessity to show their work. This is important for many reasons. First, it will help the student locate where his/her mistake was made if a problem is solved incorrectly. Then he/she can quickly correct the mistake, rather than re-doing the whole problem. This also helps the teacher determine where students are having problems. It is also important for tests in class and standardized tests. If a student shows in his/her work that he/she understands the concept being tested, but made a simple computational error, he/she may receive partial credit for the work. If no work is shown, no credit can be given for the incorrect answer.

It is also extremely helpful if the work is neatly done and numbered, rather than not shown and in all different directions sporadically on the paper.

It is also important for students to label their answers correctly on word problems, as points will be deducted on standardized tests if the answers are not labeled correctly.