

The Core Knowledge Philosophy

Every Child Deserves Equal Access to Common Knowledge

The Core Knowledge Foundation is dedicated to the mission expressed in our motto—educational excellence and equity for all children. To make that mission a reality we offer detailed help and materials to schools, teachers and parents; and effective advocacy grounded in scientific research to citizens and policy makers. We believe that every person in a diverse democratic society deserves equal access to the common knowledge base that draws together its people, while recognizing our differing traditions and contributions. We believe that offering universal access to this shared knowledge is a primary duty of schooling, critical to literacy, and to the closing of the achievement gap between ethnic and racial groups. Most important of all, we believe that shared knowledge, a shared narrative, and shared ideals of liberty and tolerance are indispensable ingredients for effective citizenship and for the perpetuation of our democratic institutions.

The Ideas that Drive Our Work

In all of its publishing, support and advocacy work, the Core Knowledge Foundation is guided by the following principles:

- Our work is not driven by ideology, but logically by science, history, and research.
- For the sake of academic excellence, greater equity, and higher literacy, elementary and middle schools need to teach a coherent, cumulative, and content-specific core curriculum.
- The persistent gap in reading achievement in U.S. schools can never be reduced until the knowledge gap is reduced. And the knowledge gap will not be reduced unless broad, rich content knowledge is integrated into the many hours devoted to language arts instruction.
- We recognize that every school and community is different, and each student and teacher has individual interests and strengths. Schools teaching the Core Knowledge curriculum should still have ample time over the course of the school year to address any additional state or local requirements not reflected in the Core Knowledge Sequence.
- An effective curriculum must be coupled with effective teaching. We believe teaching excellence requires a mastery of subject matter, as well as the ability to engage students, build language competency, use assessment to drive instruction, scaffold instruction to meet individual needs, and provide targeted feedback to students to further shape their learning.

We need to see the reading comprehension problem for what it primarily is—a knowledge problem. There is no way around the need for children to gain broad general knowledge in order to gain broad general proficiency in reading.

—E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

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