

# **RESEARCH BASE**

# for

Fundamentals of Algebra Foundations of Algebra Algebra 1

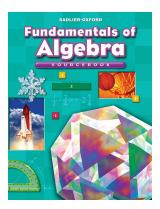
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# RESEARCH BASE REPORT

for

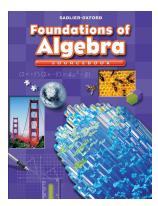
# Middle School Mathematics\*

(with Algebra 1)

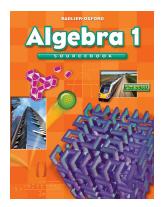


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he National Mathematics Advisory Panel (NMAP) was created by President Bush in April 2006, and it was asked to "use the best available scientific research to advise on improvements in the mathematics education of the nation's children." Over a period of nearly two years, the Panel heard public testimony and worked in task groups to fulfill its charge. In March 2008, the Panel issued its final report, entitled *Foundations for Success: The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel*. This report includes the Panel's main findings and recommendations under the headings "Curricular Content," "Learning Processes," "Teachers and Teacher Education," "Instructional Practices," "Instructional Materials," "Assessment," and "Research Policies and Mechanisms." The recommendations of the NMAP reflect the professional judgment of mathematicians, the results of comparative curriculum studies, and the evidence from large and sound bodies of high quality research studies as defined by demanding criteria.

One purpose of this paper is to show that the major curricular and programmatic features of Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program represent the best professional knowledge as well as the best practices in mathematics instruction suggested by the findings of independent research studies and meta-analyses of the data from many studies. We do so by referring to:

- Research reviews and individual studies whose evidence supports the programmatic features of Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program;
- 2. Conclusions and recommendations in the final report of the NMAP, which are based largely on the evidence from many research studies and the professional judgment of mathematicians.

For each program feature, we first note how Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program reflects the conclusions and recommendations of these studies and reports.

A second purpose of this paper is to describe the Product Development Research that Sadlier undertook in order to solicit the views of the mathematics education community: classroom teachers, mathematics supervisors, principals, authors, and national experts in mathematics education. These educators provided comments on each of the titles that are part of Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program: *Fundamentals of Algebra*, *Foundations of Algebra*, and *Algebra 1*.

# **1. Curricular Features**

## **Textbook Organization**

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- middle school SourceBooks that are about half the length of competing texts, with a companion Practice Book;
- a coherent list of priority lessons that can be taught in 140 days;
- an illustration plan that avoids using unnecessary social art to create visual interest and instead relies on diagrams, tables, and graphs to support mathematical understanding;
- inclusion of content from the natural and social sciences only when it serves to focus student attention on the relevant mathematical connections;
- multiple, specific objectives provided on the student page that serve as an advance organizer of the content of the lesson;
- succinct explanations accompanied by diagrams that facilitate predictable teaching time for each concept;
- an instructional design that is designed to facilitate a smooth flow, highlight key concepts as they are reached, and stress readability.

#### Why?

In an effort to address the diverse standards of different states, textbooks have expanded to the point where the content of an individual textbook usually cannot be taught within a school year. The result is that many teachers devote too little attention to key topics in an effort to address all topics. Additionally, the inordinate length of textbooks is often the result of unnecessary illustrations or nonmathematical content. The NMAP recommends that textbook publishers make their products more coherent by focusing more on the content and reducing nonmathematical elements. Thus, Sadlier's textbooks focus on priority content for a 140-day school year.

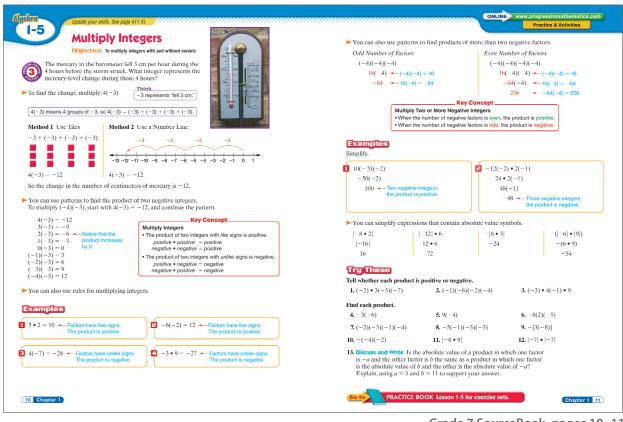
Additionally, research shows that the organization of textbook materials plays an important role in student learning. The objective for a lesson should be clearly spelled out for students at the beginning of a lesson in order to activate students' prior knowledge. Where there are multiple facets to a lesson, an outline or list of the multiple parts of the lesson is even more helpful to the student and the teacher, insofar as either provides an in-depth inventory of the concepts and skills to be addressed. For these reasons, Sadlier's textbooks make lesson objectives clear to the student and the teacher before lessons are taught. Textbooks need to include carefully chosen, worked-out examples that students can refer to as an alternative to teacher-directed instruction. Also, it is important that these worked-out examples are available to students when they are solving problems, either at school or at home.

The quantity of new conceptual material in a lesson and the evenness of flow from one activity to another within the lesson also contribute to a successful textbook. When each lesson spans a realistic time-on-task for the conceptual load, teachers are more likely to guide students to a new understanding of the material. Also, when transitions from one part of a lesson to another move smoothly, students are less likely to be disengaged from meaningful work.

#### What the research says...

#### **National Mathematics Advisory Panel:**

"All parties involved in the publication and adoption of textbooks should strive for more compact and more coherent mathematics texts for use by students in grades K–8 and beyond..." (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, pp. 55). "Textbook publishers should publish editions that include a clear emphasis on the material that states and districts agree to teach in specific grades..." (ibid., p. xxiv).



Grade 7 SourceBook, pages 10–11

1. Curricular Features

"Other potentially useful ways of decreasing length and increasing coherence are (1) reducing the number of photographs that are not essential to the mathematical content; (2) placing content aimed at providing extended review, enrichment activities, or motivation in supplements rather than in the main textbook; and (3) reducing applications in which the primary content is posed by the social studies or science content" (ibid., p. 56).

#### **Individual Studies:**

- A study of the use of advance organizers found them to be useful in the learning of verbal learning (Ausubel, 1960).
- A study found that the amount of time spent on instruction correlated positively to academic achievement, whereas the amount of time spent on classroom organization correlated negatively with academic achievement (Brophy, 1988).
- A study found that effective teachers avoided problems with classroom management by keeping students involved in meaningful work throughout a class period. One method that effective teachers used for keeping students engaged was making smooth transitions from one activity to the next within a lesson (Kounin, 1970).

## **The Critical Foundations for Algebra**

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- pacing that identifies the foundational concepts for algebra as the priority curriculum;
- the modeling of fractions—including number lines—that helps students see and think of fractions as numbers;
- a grade 7 program in which one half of the chapters focus on rational number concepts and procedural knowledge;
- intensive focus on proportional reasoning.

#### Why?

Since the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* first appeared in 1989, states and school districts have attempted to re-shape their mathematics curricula in order to place less focus on arithmetic computation and more emphasis on topics from the strands of Measurement, Geometry, Algebra, and Data Analysis and Probability. However, the different interpretations given to this curriculum model by various states tended to result in curricula that included many grade-level learning goals at each grade. Teachers often struggled with curricula that were unfocused and repetitive. Once the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 passed, high-stakes testing was tied to the overly-broad curricula for the first time, and the subsequent test results made it clear that these curricula were unmanageable.

In 2006, NCTM published the *Curriculum Focal Points* (CFP), a clarification of curriculum goals for Grades K–8 that were based on a new objective: preparing students for Algebra 1 by the end of Grade 8. The CFP embodied a narrowed curriculum of topics that are foundational for Algebra 1, and the NCTM identified this curriculum as the principal curriculum focus at each grade level, K–8. One year later, the NMAP reinforced this perspective in its final report, urging that all parties involved in curriculum planning narrow and prioritize the topics taught at each grade level, K–8. The NMAP identifies the Critical Foundations of Algebra as proficiency with whole number concepts and skills, rational number concepts and skills, and certain areas of geometry and measurement. Among those three foundational areas of concern, rational numbers are identified as the area in which proficiency is the most severely underdeveloped. The important rational number concepts include proportional reasoning, including significant experience with similar triangles.

#### What the research says...

#### **National Mathematics Advisory Panel:**

"Proficiency with whole numbers, fractions, and certain aspects of geometry and measurement [is the foundation] for algebra" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 19). "Of these, knowledge of fractions is the most important foundational skill not developed among American students" (ibid., p. 18). "As with learning whole numbers, a conceptual understanding of fractions and decimals and the operational procedures for using them are mutually reinforcing. One key mechanism linking conceptual and procedural knowledge is the ability to represent fractions on a number line..." (ibid., p. 28).

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

a scope and sequence that is designed for mastery of the critical foundations in the school year recommended by the NMAP.

<b>Benchmarks for the Critical Foundation</b>	$\mathbf{S}^1$ (middle school to	ppics indicated in red)
Benchmark	NMAP Expects Mastery	Sadlier Designed for Mastery
Fluency with Whole Numbers		
Students should be proficient in the addition and subtraction of whole numbers.	Grade 3	Grade 3
Students should be proficient in the multiplication and division of whole numbers.	Grade 5	Grade 5
Fluency with Fractions		•
Students should be able to identify and represent fractions and decimals, compare them on a number line or with other common representations of fractions and decimals.	Grade 4	Grade 4
Students should be proficient in comparing fractions and decimals and common percent, as well as in the addition and subtraction of fractions and decimals.	Grade 5	Grade 5
Students should be proficient in the multiplication and division of fractions and decimals.	Grade 6	Grade 6
Students should be proficient in all operations involving positive and negative integers.	Grade 6	Grade 6
Students should be proficient in all operations involving positive and negative fractions.	Grade 7	Grade 7
Students should be able to solve problems involving percent and ratio, and they should be able to extend this work to proportionality.	Grade 7	Grade 7
Geometry and Measurement		
Students should be able to solve problems involving the perimeter and area of triangles, and all quadrilaterals having at least one pair of parallel sides.	Grade 5	Grade 6
Students should be able to analyze the properties of two-dimensional shapes and solve problems involving perimeter and area, and they should also be able to analyze the properties of three-dimensional shapes and solve problems involving surface area and volume.	Grade 6	Grade 6
Students should be familiar with the relationship between similar triangles and the concept of the slope of a line.	Grade 7	Grade 7

<sup>1</sup>Derived from National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 20.

#### Why?

The Critical Foundations of Algebra identified by the NMAP also include benchmarks as to when this foundational material should be taught.

#### What the research says...

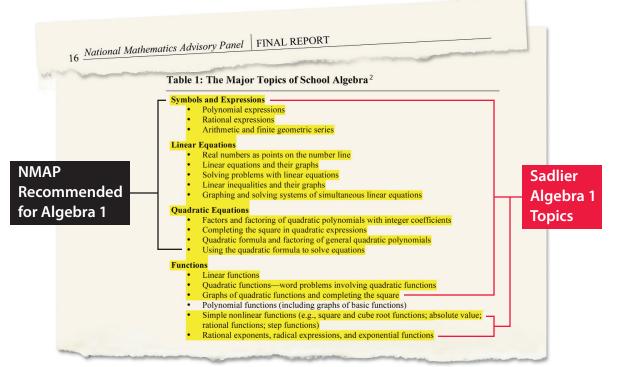
#### National Mathematics Advisory Panel:

"The Benchmarks for the Critical Foundations [in the Table on page 10]... should be used to guide classroom curricula, mathematics instruction, and state assessments" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 20).

## The Major Topics of Algebra

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- a scope and sequence that is designed for mastery of the Algebra 1 topics recommended by the NMAP;
- additional instruction extending beyond the basic Algebra 1 course, including content that is a normal expectation in Algebra 1 courses of high-achieving countries;
- additional instruction for many topics that are appropriate in honors-level Algebra 1 courses.



<sup>2</sup>National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 16.

#### Why?

Some of what is taught in Algebra 1 and much of what is taught in Algebra 2 vary greatly across the United States. The NMAP studied which topics are included in different state curriculum frameworks, as well as in the curricula of high-performing countries. The Panel recommended that a core of topics, described as "The Major Topics of Algebra," be the focus of school algebra, or Algebra 1 and Algebra 2. In addition, the Panel observed that the high-performing countries typically include a full discussion of quadratic equations, the derivation of the Quadratic Formula, and the factoring of quadratic equations in their Algebra 1 course.

#### What the research says...

#### **National Mathematics Advisory Panel:**

"The Major Topics of School Algebra" on page 11 "should be the focus for school algebra standards in curriculum frameworks, algebra courses, textbooks for

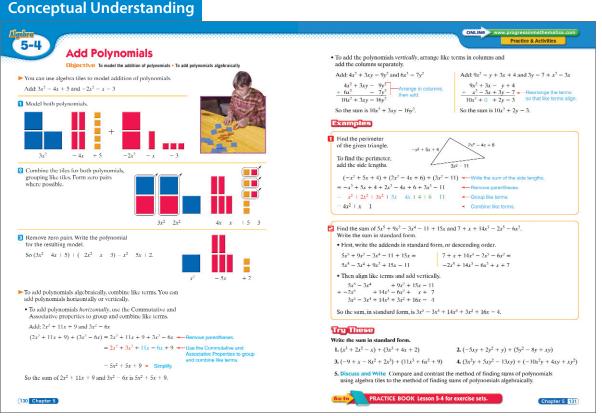
algebra, and...end-of-course assessments" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. xvii). "What is usually called Algebra 1 would, in most courses, cover the content in Symbols and Expressions, ...Linear Equations, and the first two topics in Quadratic Equations. The typical Algebra 2 course would cover the other topics..." (National Mathematics Advisory Panel *Reports of the Task Groups and Subcommittees*, 2008, p. 3–4).

# **2. Programmatic Features**

## A Balanced Approach to Achieving Mathematical Proficiency

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- Instruction that stresses key concepts with appropriate perceptual models that lead to conceptual understanding;
- Skill practice that develops skill fluency by emphasizing accurate execution of algorithms;
- Regular opportunities to develop problem-solving competence through lessons that foster strategic thinking and give students explicit practice in choosing effective problem-solving strategies.



Grade 8 SourceBook, pages 130–131

# Skill Fluency

Name	Date	Add horizontally or vertically. Write the sum in standard form. You can use algebra tiles to help combine like terms.		
To add polynomials, combine like terms. You can horizontally or vertically.	n add polynomials	15. (3x2 + 4xy - y2) + (3x2 - 3xy + 9y2)3x2 + 3x2 + 4xy - 3xy - y2 + 9y26x2 + xy + 8y2	<b>16.</b> $(4x^2 + 12xy - 3y^2) + (9x^2 - 36xy + 7y^2)$	
Add: $(4x^2 + 7x + 9) + (-3x^2 - 4)$	Add: $(2x^2 + 4xy + 7y^2) + (5x^2 - xy - 8y^2)$	<b>17.</b> $(23w^2x^2 + 3wx + 7) + (-w^2x^2 - 4wx - 8)$	$18. \left( 2yz + 2yz^2 + 3y^2z \right) + \left( 6y^2z + 2yz^2 - yz \right)$	
Add polynomials horizontally.	Add polynomials vertically.			
$(4x^2 + 7x + 9) + (-3x^2 - 4)$ = $4x^2 + (-3x^2) + 7x + 9 + (-4)$	and $\frac{2x^2 + 4xy + 7y^2}{+ 5x^2 - xy - 8y^2} \leftarrow \text{Arrange like terms in columns. Then add.}$	<b>19.</b> $(x^2 + 5xy - 14y^2) + (4x^2 - 19y^2)$	<b>20.</b> $(-3c^2 + 8d^2) + (10c^2 + 14cd - 20d^2)$	
the Associativ Properties to group like terr		<b>21.</b> $(23s^2t - 18st^2) + (16s^2t - 13st^2)$	<b>22.</b> $(16ab + a^2b + 20ab^4) + (12ab - 4a^2b - 20ab^4)$	
$= x^{2} + 7x + 5  \text{simplify.}$ So the sum is $x^{2} + 7x + 5$ .		<b>23.</b> $(6x^2y + 4xy) + (3xy^2 + 2x^2y - 5xy)$	<b>24.</b> $(2ac + 7a^2c) + (4ac - 4a^2c - ac^2)$	
Add horizontally or vertically. Write the sum in s use algebra tiles to help combine like terms.	tandard form. You can	<b>25.</b> $(4a^2b^2 - 2ab^2 + 3ab) + (7a^2b^2 - 8ab)$	<b>26.</b> $(12m^2 - 4mn + 4n^2) + (-8n^2 - 2mn)$	
<b>1.</b> $(2x^2 - 7x - 3) + (4x^2 - 3x + 6)$	<b>2.</b> $(4x^2 - 7x + 3) + (2x^2 + 2x - 7)$	<b>27.</b> $(-cd^2 + 4cd - 8c^2d) + (5c^2d - 3cd)$	<b>28.</b> $(4xy^2 - 3x^2y + 4xy) + (3x^2y - 5xy)$	
$2x^{2} + 4x^{2} - 7x - 3x - 3 + 6$ $6x^{2} - 10x + 3$				
<b>3.</b> $(3x^2 + 4x - 3) + (5x^2 - 6x + 3)$	<b>4.</b> $(2x^2 + 6x + 4) + (x^2 - 7x + 4)$	<b>29.</b> $(3a^2c - 5ac^2) + (-2a^2c - 6ac + 5ac^2)$	<b>30.</b> $(7x^2y - 4xy) + (-3xy^2 - 4xy)$	
5. $(6n^2 + 4n - 3) + (-9n^2 - 4n + 7)$	6. $(2x^2 - 2x - 3) + (3x^2 - 2x + 3)$	Problem Solving Write a polynomial in simplified form to represe	nt each situation.	
<b>7.</b> $(42x^2 - 36x + 64) + (28x^2 + 11x)$	$8_{\bullet} (x^2 - 23x + 14) + (6x^2 - 8)$	31. The dimensions of a picture are (p + 7) and (p - 3). Kalciph wants to buy a fabric border for the picture. What length of the fabric border should she buy?		
9. $(7x + 2) + (4x^2 + 6x - 4)$	<b>10.</b> $(3x^2 + 2x - 7x) + (6x^2 + 4)$	borter should she buy:		
<b>11.</b> $(-4t^2 - 8t + 96) + (30t^2 - 102)$	<b>12.</b> $(61x^2 - 128) + (44x + 17)$	TEST PREPARATION		
<b>13.</b> $(45x^3 - 22 + 19x) + (-24x + 17x^3 + 19)$	$14. (5a - 4a^2 + 7) + (12a^2 - 9 - 6a)$	<b>33.</b> Evaluate $3c^2d - 2cd + 4d^2$ , when $c = -\frac{1}{2}$ an <b>A.</b> 81 <b>B.</b> 90	d d = 4. C. 64 D. 71	
Use with SOURCEBOOK Lesson 5-4, page	es 130–131. (Chapter 5 145)	(146 Chapter 5)		

## Problem-solving Competence

Incode       Joint       Joint <t< th=""><th>Predicts 24         tethed 25       Clears and Test strategy. Start by gaessing the number of squares. To make you can figure out the number of nonsquare rectangles and the number of squares.         Start by guessing that there are 2 squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Increase the guession of the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Increase the guession of the number of squares.         Number of sides:         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of sides:         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Indummer of sides:         Indummer of sidesis and testing until the total number of s</th><th>sidos;</th></t<>	Predicts 24         tethed 25       Clears and Test strategy. Start by gaessing the number of squares. To make you can figure out the number of nonsquare rectangles and the number of squares.         Start by guessing that there are 2 squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Increase the guession of the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Increase the guession of the number of squares.         Number of sides:         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of sides:         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Number of nonsquare rectangles:         Indummer of sides:         Indummer of sidesis and testing until the total number of s	sidos;
Incod       Plan       Solve       Check         Ubjective       to save problems by using a variety of strategies         Problem:       There are a total of 20 rectangles and triangles on a page of a child's coloring book. Half of the rectangles care squares: and nonsquare rectangles on a page of a coloring book. There are the same number of squares an onnsquare rectangles on a page of a coloring book. There are the same number of squares an onnsquare rectangles. In all, there are 20 shapes and 74 sides.         Posterior:       How many of the 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Posterior:       How many of the 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Posterior:       How many of the 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Poster a strategies.       In all, there are 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Poster a strategies.       In all, there are 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Poster a strategies.       In all, there are 20 shapes are triangles and how many are squares?         Poster a strategies.       In all the shapes and 74 sides.         Poster a strategies.       In all the shapes and 74 sides.         Poster a strategies.       In all the shapes and 74 sides.         Poster a strategies.       In all the shapes and 74 sides.         Poster a strategies.       In all the shapes and 74 sides.         Poster a strategies.       In all the shape and 74 sides. <th>outcause the Graves and Taris strategy. Start by guessing the number of squares.         from that guess, you can figure out the number of sides. If it is not 74, djust your guess and try again.         Start by guessing that there are 2 squares.         Number of squares:         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         4         Total number of sides is too small.         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of squares:         8         Number of squares:         8         Number of sides is too small.         Increase the guess for the number of squares. Try 8.         Number of squares:       8         8       —Half the mechangles are not squares.         Number of squares:       8         Number of squares:       7         4       —Them are 20 shapes in al.         Total number of sides:       76         9       —H(1)       4(3)         104       104       -70         There are too many siden guesting until the total number of sides is 74. You can</th> <th></th>	outcause the Graves and Taris strategy. Start by guessing the number of squares.         from that guess, you can figure out the number of sides. If it is not 74, djust your guess and try again.         Start by guessing that there are 2 squares.         Number of squares:         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         2         Number of nonsquare rectangelse:         4         Total number of sides is too small.         Increase the guess for the number of squares.         Number of squares:         8         Number of squares:         8         Number of sides is too small.         Increase the guess for the number of squares. Try 8.         Number of squares:       8         8       —Half the mechangles are not squares.         Number of squares:       8         Number of squares:       7         4       —Them are 20 shapes in al.         Total number of sides:       76         9       —H(1)       4(3)         104       104       -70         There are too many siden guesting until the total number of sides is 74. You can	
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	8 8 4 76 too many sides	
To account for the other 14 sides, add one side to exactly 14 of the figures.	5 5 10 70 too few sides	
	7 7 6 74 Correct!	
	So there are 7 squares and 6 triangles on the page.	
	heck to make sure your answer makes sense.	
	Are there 20 shapes in all?	
The 14 four-sided figures represent 14 rectangles, in which half of these rectangles are	7 squares + 7 nonsquare rectangles + 6 triangles = 20 shapes ✓	
	Are there 74 sides in all?	
triangles, so there are 6 triangles. The shapes on the page might look something like this:	(7 • 4) sides for the squares 28 sides	
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	74 sides 🗸	
	The answer checks.	
(324 Chapter 12) 6		

Algebra 1 SourceBook, pages 324–325

#### Why?

Debates have raged for decades over which is more valuable for achieving mathematical proficiency: conceptual development or computational proficiency. The NMAP describes this debate as "misguided" and recommends that educators view **conceptual understanding**, **skill fluency**, and **problem-solving competence** as mutually supportive. This conclusion also reinforces the findings of the Mathematics Learning Study Committee of the National Research Council's (NRC, 2001) Center for Education. Its review of mathematics learning from pre-kindergarten through grade 8 identified several "strands of mathematical proficiency. ...[that are] interwoven and interdependent":

- 1. *Conceptual understanding*—comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations;
- 2. *Procedural fluency*—skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately;
- **3.** *Strategic competence*—ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems;
- 4. *Adaptive reasoning*—capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification;
- 5. *Productive disposition*—habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy.

#### What the research says...

#### **National Mathematics Advisory Panel:**

"Conceptual understanding, computational and procedural fluency, and problem-solving skills are equally important and mutually reinforce one another" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 19).

#### **Individual Studies:**

A review of the relationship between conceptual and procedural knowledge found that conceptual knowledge is related to conceptual skill.

"Children's understanding of mathematical concepts is positively correlated with their ability to execute procedures. In some tasks, conceptual understanding precedes procedural competence; in other tasks, the order is reversed" (Rittle-Johnson & Siegler, 1998, p. 109).

A study of the relationship between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge noted the importance of inculcating both types of knowledge in the classroom.

"... Improved procedural knowledge can lead to improved conceptual knowledge, as well as the reverse" (Rittle-Johnson, Siegler, & Alibali, 2001, p. 360).

### **Explicit and Systematic Instruction**

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- an instructional approach that regularly includes explicit instruction, teacher modeling, guided practice, and application;
- clear models for each instructional concept, using a thorough, carefully chosen set of different examples;
- step-by-step support for teaching the examples, including suggested questions and modeling ideas;
- extensive practice.

#### Why?

Explicit and systematic instruction refers to the direct teaching of mathematical concepts and skills in a clearly-defined sequence designed to grow over the course of the school year and from grade to grade. A logically developed progression of concepts and skills ensures that students are able to learn more and more complex material as they build on the foundation of previously learned concepts and skills. Direct teaching of a logical sequence of concepts and skills extends students' knowledge systematically in mathematically effective ways. However, within a systematic instruction plan, a combination of "teacher-directed" approaches, such as direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, and application, can be combined with "guided discovery" to produce a beneficial effect on learning. In general, exclusive reliance on either teacherdirected instructional approaches or student-centered approaches has not been shown to be supported by research, according to the NMAP. The Panel recommends that neither be used as the sole approach to instruction. However, the Panel did find that explicit instruction has a demonstrated value with certain student groups and in certain circumstances. Two such groups are advanced students and at-risk students.

With respect to Algebra and Pre-Algebra, students gain in their ability to translate words into algebraic terms by studying explicit written model solutions and then practicing the translations.

#### What the research says...

#### **National Mathematics Advisory Panel:**

"Explicit instruction for students who struggle with math is effective in increasing student learning. Teachers should understand how to provide clear models for solving a problem type using an array of examples, [and they should] offer opportunities for extensive practice, encourage students to 'think aloud,' and give specific feedback" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. xxiii).

#### **Research Review:**

- In a review of high-quality studies in mathematics education, the National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators found support using both direct teaching and guided discovery in lessons. In studies of effective strategies, it also found support for selecting and sequencing instructional examples according to principles of concept acquisition. It found no advantages for strictly discovery instruction (Dixon, Carnine, Lee, Wallin, & Chard, 1998).
- In a study done with high-school algebra students, the study found that students who studied several examples of writing equations from written verbal descriptions of mathematical relationships showed greater success at writing equations than students who did not study worked-out examples (Carroll, 1994).

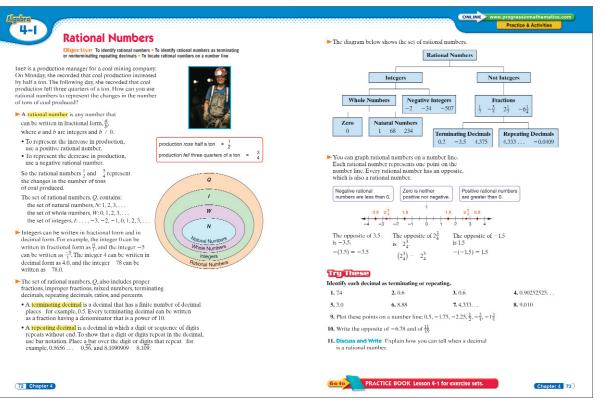
# **Support for Visual Learning**

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides support for the development of the core concepts through different representations of them:

- multiple representations of concepts through different models;
- extensive use of concept maps, diagrams, and flow charts;
- explicit instruction in how to understand and use graphic representations;
- an extensive focus on relating different representations of linearity: tables, graphs, and equations;
- an extensive focus on the visual representation of data;
- extensive use of technology in the form of online and handheld resources to enhance visual learning.

#### Why?

Several generations ago, the material in textbooks was mostly a combination of verbal explanation and visual support in the form of line drawings. Over the last several decades, however, photographs have been increasingly used for visual representations of data, and photographs tend to contain information that is both relevant and irrelevant to the concepts the textbook is trying to illustrate. Representations that contain a great deal of irrelevant information are more difficult to interpret. As a result, students need more help. Research has shown that the ability to visualize does not develop by itself. Because representations by means of photographs increasingly need to be interpreted, both textbooks and teachers play a role in providing extended support as students internalize new representations of concepts. Moreover, although, students remember information better when presented



Grade 7 SourceBook, pages 72-73

in a graphic representation than they do if it is presented with colorful pictures, students visualize in different ways. Thus, it is important that they be exposed to different representations of important concepts.

In the middle grades, the opportunities for students to utilize representations to recall concepts come in many forms: (1) models for concepts relating to rational numbers of all types—fractions, decimals, and percents; (2) representations that show relationships in data sets; (3) representations that apply proportionality; (4) representations of linearity through tables, equations, and graphs; and (5) representations of hierarchical and procedural relationships.

#### What the research says

#### **Individual Studies:**

- A study of different methods of visualization among students concluded that students need extended support to acquire the ability to visualize (Grinder, 1992).
- A study of different types of supplementary materials compared the effects on students' memory of graphic representations (flow charts with key words) versus colorful pictures. Students remembered more if they were given the graphic representation (Imhof, Echtrernach, Huber, & Knorr, 1996).

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

an approach to problem solving that encourages self-monitoring during problem solving. Strategies are learned in a step-by-step approach in which

(1) each step of the strategy is clearly modeled;

(2) opportunities are provided for students to see and compare different strategies for solving the same problem;

(3) opportunities are provided for students to solve problems that draw on a variety of previously learned strategies.

- opportunities to apply strategies are also supported in lessons that are not the explicit focus of problem solving;
- a heavy emphasis on representing mathematical relations.

#### Why?

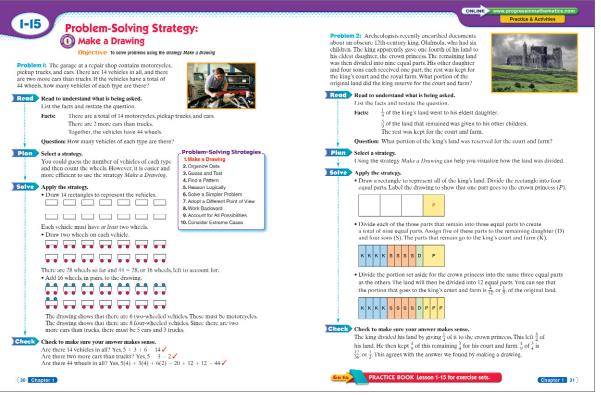
Problem solving in a mathematics class involves more than the routine application of a newly learned skill to a word problem. Problem solving may require the use of previously learned concepts or skills, recently learned concepts or skills, and/or the simultaneous application of multiple skills and concepts. In solving a problem, students analyze the information given in the problem, consider the range of strategies they know for solving a problem, decide on the range of strategies that best address the problem as they have analyzed it, or develop new strategies for solving the problem. Students acquire flexibility in using the strategies they know or in developing new strategies through practice — specifically, practice in solving problems in a variety of formats and contexts and at increasing levels of complexity and by utilizing the depth of their content knowledge to expand the range of their strategic thinking. Opportunities for students to see and compare different strategies for solving the same problem help students develop the habits of self-regulation that are crucial to successful problem solving. Graphic and semantic organizers as well as mental imagery can be helpful tools when examining and representing relationships in a problem.

#### What the research says...

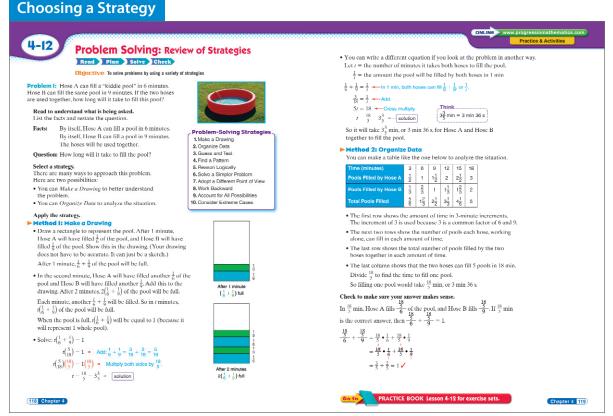
**Research Review:** 

- Skill in representing mathematical relations spatially and skill in translating relations from verbal form to equations are important tools in problem solving.
- "Strong mathematical problem solving [ability] appears to be associated with, among others, the ability to spatially represent mathematical relations, the ability to translate word problems into appropriate equations, and an understanding of how and when to use mathematical equations" (Geary, 1995).

#### Learning a Strategy



Grade 8 SourceBook, pages 30–31



2. Programmatic Features

Grade 8 SourceBook, pages 118-119

#### **Individual Study:**

A common problem for students, even at the high-school and college level, is their inability to monitor whether the problemsolving strategy they have selected is working.

"In Schoenfeld's collection of (more than a hundred) videotapes of college and high-school students working unfamiliar problems, roughly 60% of the solution attempts are of the 'read, make a decision quickly, and pursue that direction come hell or high water' variety" (Grouws, 1992, p. 356).

## **Formative Assessment**

#### Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program provides:

- regular formative assessments called "Check Your Progress" that appear every 3–6 lessons;
- practice Chapter Tests, Beginning-of-Year Tests, Quarterly Tests, and End-of-Year Tests that reveal concepts and skills in need of additional work;
- cumulative reviews that serve as benchmark assessments.

#### Why?

The value of formative assessments—measures of student learning that guide and redirect ongoing instruction—has been shown in many studies. Formative assessments allow the teacher to avoid squandering instructional time on concepts that are largely mastered, to place additional emphasis on concepts and skills that students are struggling with, and to individualize the focus of instruction. The NMAP recommends "regular use of formative assessment for students in the elementary grades."

#### What the research says...

#### National Mathematics Advisory Panel:

"Teachers' regular use of formative assessments can improve student learning in mathematics" (National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008, p. 46).

#### Individual Study:

In the King's-Medway-Oxfordshire Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP) and in a parallel project at Stanford University, students who had received feedback based on formative assessments showed considerable growth on standardized tests (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003).

# **3. Product Development Research**

Prior to the publication of Sadlier's Middle School Mathematics program, each stage of development of the program was subjected to scrutiny by educators at all levels. Teachers, mathematics coaches, department heads, principals, and supervisors reviewed the program and offered suggestions. Authors provided the architecture of the program and critiqued each stage. Sadlier's Mathematics Advisory Board, an organization comprised of mathematicians, mathematics educators, researchers, and educational specialists, offered guidance throughout the writing of the program.

#### Stage 1: School Visits and Interviews with Classroom Teachers

School visits and reviews with classroom teachers took place in four states (Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and included teachers from both public and nonpublic schools. Many important product concepts came from these initial discussions. For example, it was at this point that teachers expressed their interest in a product configuration built around a separate SourceBook and Practice Book for students.

#### **Stage 2: Focus Groups with Educators**

Focus-group sessions with teachers and supervisors were conducted in several states. These sessions offered educators a chance to review prototype materials and prospective Tables of Contents for the program. Utilizing the feedback from these sessions, the program developers created more detailed lesson-by-lesson tables of contents and sample chapters of prototype materials.

#### Stage 3: Teacher Review of Prototype Materials

Teacher reviewers inspected and offered suggestions on the lesson-by-lesson Tables of Contents for all three levels. They also reviewed sample chapters from each of the three levels of the program.

#### Stage 4: Systematic Review of Developing Manuscript

The author team, some members of the Mathematics Advisory Board, teachers, and other consultants reviewed stages of the manuscript in a systematic way to ensure that the pedagogy and mathematical integrity of the program were of the highest quality.

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