

What grade do you take Algebra 1? The US math sequence by grade

Algebra 1 is 9th grade on the standard track and 8th on the accelerated one; everything after it follows from that. The chart, the five skills that say whether 8th grade is the right year, the state tests attached to the course, and what each system abroad calls it.

The sequence

Grade	Standard track	Accelerated (one year ahead)	Double-accelerated
6th	Math 6	Math 6 or accelerated 6/7	Accelerated 6/7/8
7th	Math 7	Pre-Algebra or accelerated 7/8	ALGEBRA 1
8th	Math 8 (Pre-Algebra)	ALGEBRA 1	Geometry
9th	ALGEBRA 1	Geometry	Algebra 2
10th	Geometry	Algebra 2	Pre-Calculus
11th	Algebra 2	Pre-Calculus	AP Calculus AB or BC
12th	Pre-Calculus, Statistics or a fourth-year math	AP Calculus AB/BC or AP Statistics	AP Calculus BC, Multivariable, AP Statistics

Integrated Math 1, 2, 3 (North Carolina, Utah, many California districts) covers the same content as Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 in the same grades. Some districts run Algebra 1, Algebra 2, then Geometry; the content by the end of 11th is identical.

Is 8th grade the right year? Five skills, one question each

Skill	Try this (no calculator)	Answer
1. Fractions	$\frac{2}{3} + \frac{3}{4}$, and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ divided by $\frac{3}{8}$	$\frac{17}{12}$ ($1 \frac{5}{12}$); 4
2. Negative numbers	$-3 - (-5)$; $(-2)(-7)$; -4 squared	2; 14; -16
3. Proportional reasoning	A 20% rise then a 20% fall leaves what % of the start?	96%
4. Two-step equations, explained	$3x - 7 = 11$: solve and say why you add 7 first	$x = 6$; undo the subtraction before the multiplication
5. Words to symbols	'Five less than twice a number'	$2n - 5$ (not $5 - 2n$)

All five automatic: Algebra 1 in 8th will be comfortable. Missing two: the first semester passes on memory and stalls at systems of equations in January; the summer before is enough time to close two gaps.

The state tests attached to Algebra 1

State	Test	What rides on it
Florida	Algebra 1 End-of-Course (B.E.S.T.)	30% of the course grade; passing it (or a comparative score) is required for a standard diploma
Texas	STAAR Algebra I End-of-Course	One of the end-of-course assessments required for graduation
New York	Regents Examination in Algebra I	A Regents math exam is required for the Regents diploma
Virginia	Algebra I Standards of Learning (SOL)	Verified credit toward the diploma
California	No end-of-course test	Algebra 1 or Integrated Math 1 is a graduation requirement

For an 8th grader the exam is the high school exam, and in most of these states the grade follows the student to the high school transcript. Ask whether it counts in the GPA before accepting the placement.

What each track means later

Algebra 1 in	Calculus in high school?	SAT math	For college
9th	Not without doubling up or a summer course	Algebra 2 finished by end of 11th, in time for a spring SAT	Meets the requirement everywhere
8th	Yes, in 12th	Algebra 2 finished in 10th; a full year to prepare	The expected track for engineering, physical sciences, selective admissions
7th	Yes, in 11th, with a further course in 12th	Content finished early	Useful only if the grades stay high

Arriving from another system

Coming from	Roughly equivalent to Algebra 1
India (CBSE, ICSE)	Class 8 and Class 9 algebra; a child finishing Class 8 is usually ready, often for Geometry too
England	Year 9 and early Year 10 algebra
Australia	Year 9
IB MYP	MYP 3 and 4

Ask to sit the placement test rather than accept the default placement for the child's age. Full guide: sciencewithshobha.com/blog/what-grade-do-you-take-algebra-1-geometry-algebra-2-and-pre-calculus-the-us-sequence/