

Dear Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade Parents,

In 4th Quarter, third graders are offered an option for children to begin typing their written papers. This has been planned by the tutors to gently help initiate our 3rd grade students to the use of tablets in 4th grade. For the last 5 years, tech devices have been on the supply list for 4th and 5th grades. Below, we have given a brief history of technology in schools, and what you can expect in 4th grade at Classical Beginnings.

From day one in 4th grade, your children will be submitting typed assignments through Google docs. Each family is required to open a Google docs account (if you don't already have one), under the adult's name for your children to submit typed assignments. The email address and password for the account will be written inside each child's homework folder, until they have it memorized, and so they can sign in to their accounts during writing class. We teach them how to do that at school, if they do not know how already. Students are also required to bring a tablet or laptop to school for writing class in 4th grade. We have 2 ipads for back-up at school in case a child forgets theirs, or has a technical problem with theirs, etc. So please be saving up for this, and looking for deals on used ones.

You may be thinking, "But my children don't know how to type yet. Aren't they supposed to learn how to type 'properly' first?" The answer to that is, "No."

In 2005, technology standards were implemented in classrooms across the nation from Kindergarten through 12th grade. All public and private schools with enough funding installed large desktop computers in their writing labs for students to type certain writing assignments. Kindergartners were, and still are, required to type (hunt and peck) single letters and digraphs they are learning at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, kindergarteners are typing (hunting and pecking) a short sentence they have written.

By the end of the year in 1st grade, students can type (hunt and and peck) up to 4 sentences they have written. By the end of 2nd grade, it is 5 sentences, which is considered a full paragraph. By the end of 3rd grade, students type at least 7-10 sentences. By the end of 4th grade, students type up to 2-3 pages (usually, that's the one research paper done at the end of 3rd quarter). This year, at CBT, it was a biography research paper for their wax museum project.

From 2005-2015, many middle and high schools offered a typing/tech class for students coming from less fortunate schools or schools that needed time to get up to speed.

Fast forward to 2021. No schools, public or private, teach typing anymore, as students have been typing since Kindergarten. Middle school tech classes (with enough funding) consist of introducing children to new collaboration, presentation, and drawing apps for students to learn, so they can do research together, give presentations, and create 3D art projects for 3D printers.

Schools no longer have computer labs. Public elementary students are issued tablets (most schools choose ipads due to the exceptional safety it provides). Private schools require families to purchase the ipads (usually through the school, so that every student has the same tools). In 6th grade (for some schools, it's 8th), parents are required to purchase laptops (again through the school for uniformity) for each student.

In other words, students type for 6-9 years on an ipad (and by middle school, many are typing and recording papers on their phones). "Typing properly" is not possible on these devices, and students type faster than most of us ever did anyway by high school. In addition, desktop computers are becoming obsolete in most middle class homes and businesses due to the size and space they take up.

However, if you still decide you want your child to learn to formally type, many schools recommend the free website www.typing.com

We have chosen Google docs for our students because it is the most widely and commonly used writing submission app in schools across the city and nation, as well as most colleges. Most businesses, except financial institutions, commonly use it for document collaboration as well. CBT implemented these tech standards in 4th grade five years ago, and we have received numerous reports from families that it has prepared their children for learning the new technology required in 6th grade. We are working to prepare your children for the middle school years, and we thank you so much for the tremendous love and support you show us. We are truly blessed!

Auburn Walley and Julia Lancaster
4th and 5th Grade Tutors