

What You Might See in the Classroom

Students using words, diagrams, and symbols to show the same relationship.

Teachers asking:

- “What does each part of your expression mean?”
- “How do you know these expressions are equivalent (different expressions that represent the same situation)?”
- “Can you explain it in another way?”

Students writing expressions to match real-world situations.

Students comparing different expressions that model the same pattern.

Partners or small groups discussing building and simplifying expressions.

What You Can Do at Home

Use everyday examples: “If one notebook costs \$3, how can you show the total for any number of notebooks?”

Ask: “What does the letter stand for?” or “How does this expression show what’s happening?”

Look for patterns: “If a pattern goes up by 5 each time, how could you write an expression for it?”

Play: Write a number riddle. “I’m thinking of a number ‘n.’ If I double it and add 3, the result is 11. What’s the number?”

Talk it out: Encourage your student to explain what their expression means and how they know it matches the situation.

Make it a Math Moment!

Math is talk! When students explain how they built an algebraic expression, they’re showing how symbols, patterns, and quantities connect in ways that make sense.

