

LANGUAGE ARTS CONTENT STANDARDS KINDERGARTEN

READING

Students know about letters, words, and sounds. They apply this knowledge in reading simple sentences. Students identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed. They use comprehension strategies (e.g., generating and responding to questions, comparing new information to what is already known). Students listen and respond to stories based on well-known characters, themes, plots, and settings.

WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND SYSTEMATIC VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: The standards for word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development are a key part of development in kindergarten through grade three. Although readers access words in many ways (whole words, decoding, word parts, and context) research has found that decoding, or the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to identify words, is fundamental to independent word recognition. The speed and ease with which good readers recognize words differentiate them from less successful readers.

Automaticity is the ability to recognize a word (or series of words in text) effortlessly and rapidly. The foundations of automatic word recognition begin in kindergarten through developing awareness of individual sounds and how sounds are associated with letters. Concepts about print, such as knowledge that readers and writers move from left to right, top to bottom, spacing of separate words, the connection between spoken and written language are also crucial to automatic recognition of words and words.

Proficient readers, writers, and speakers develop fluency with the fundamental skills and strategies. *Fluency* is defined as the accuracy and rate with which students perform reading tasks. In oral reading it includes additional dimensions that involve the quality of such reading (e.g., expression and intonation). To be considered fluent readers, students must perform a task or demonstrate a skill or strategy accurately, quickly, and effortlessly.

An important feature of language arts instruction in kindergarten through grade three is vocabulary development. Wide reading is essential to learning vocabulary and must be an integral component of instruction. At first teachers and parents should read to students, exposing them to vocabulary they are not yet able to read. As students develop proficiency in word recognition, they are taught independent word-learning strategies, such as learning meanings from context and using dictionaries and glossaries as instructional resources.

The primary means by which students learn new words is through independent reading. The volume of that reading is crucial. There is a strong relationship between decoding and vocabulary; decoding ability determines *how much* students read and, therefore, the size of vocabulary to which they are exposed. One of the most effective things that parents and teachers can do to help students develop vocabulary growth is to teach them to become fluent readers and encourage them to read extensively. The process and benefits of independent

reading must begin in the early grades if students are to meet the demands made in the upper elementary grades.

Concepts About Print

- Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.
- **Follow words from left to right and from top to bottom on the printed page. (Concepts of Print)**
- Understand that printed materials provide information.
- Recognize that sentences in print are made up of separate words.
- **Distinguish letters from words. (Concepts of Print)**
- **Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet. (Letter Recognition)**

Phonemic Awareness

- Track (move sequentially from sound to sound) and represent the number, sameness/difference, and order of two and three isolated phonemes (e.g., /f, s, th/, /j, d, j/).
- Track (move sequentially from sound to sound) and represent changes in simple syllables and words with two and three sounds as one sound is added, substituted, omitted, shifted, or repeated (e.g., vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel, or consonant-vowel-consonant).
- **Blend vowel-consonant sounds orally to make words or syllables. (Blending)**
- **Identify and produce rhyming words in response to an oral prompt. (Rhyming)**
- **Distinguish orally stated one-syllable words and separate into beginning or ending sounds. (Beginning/Ending Sounds, Segmenting)**
- Track auditorily each word in a sentence and each syllable in a word.
- Count the number of sounds in syllables and syllables in words.

Decoding and Word Recognition

- **Match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters. (Decoding)**
- **Read simple one-syllable and high-frequency words (i.e., sight words). (Decoding)**
- **Understand that as letters of words change, so do the sounds (i.e., the alphabetic principle). (Decoding)**

Vocabulary and Concept Development

- Identify and sort common words in basic categories (e.g., colors, shapes, foods).
- Describe common objects and events in both general and specific language.

READING COMPREHENSION: An important building block in kindergarten through grade three is instruction in strategies related to reading comprehension, the ability to gain meaning from print and understand what is read. These strategies include predicting what will happen in

a text, comparing information between sources, and answering essential questions. In kindergarten students learn to answer simple questions about *who* and *what*. More abstract *why* and *what if* questions are mastered in the first and second grades. These skills are taught directly in classrooms, just as decoding and vocabulary skills are taught. Parents can help children develop reading comprehension skills by reading aloud and talking about questions that come up. Helping a child recognize what he or she already knows about the subject and explaining unfamiliar vocabulary also help children understand what is read.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

- Locate the title, table of contents, name of author, and name of illustrator.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text (Kindergarten)

- **Use pictures and context to make predictions about story content.**
- **Connect to life experiences the information and events in texts.**
- Retell familiar stories.
- Ask and answer questions about essential elements of a text.

LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS: Students listen and respond to stories based on well-known characters, themes, plots, and settings. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

- Distinguish fantasy from realistic text.
- Identify types of everyday print materials (e.g., storybooks, poems, newspapers, signs, labels).
- **Identify characters, settings, and important events.**

WRITING

Students write words and brief sentences that are legible.

WRITING STRATEGIES AND APPLICATIONS: Students in kindergarten through grade three develop foundational writing strategies, applications, and conventions. They begin by forming letters and using their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words. In first grade they write sentences; by second and third grades they write progressively more sophisticated paragraphs. Penmanship progresses from legible printing in the first grade to cursive writing in the third grade. In first grade students begin to learn that writing is a process. The act of writing is made up of a set of thinking and composing processes used selectively by a writer. Students learn that writing consists of several phases (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and postwriting) that vary depending on the purpose and audience for writing. These phases are not always all used and need not occur in any fixed order. The dimensions of organization, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and capitalization, and handwriting are introduced and extended progressively.

With its emphasis on planning and revising for clarity, the writing process helps students understand that writing is not the same as speech written down. They learn the traits of writing: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. The first five of these traits involve content (rather than spelling, punctuation, etc.) and directly address aspects of written communication that many students find challenging.

Organization and Focus

- **Use letters and phonetically-spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events.**
- Write consonant-vowel-consonant words (i.e., demonstrate the alphabetic principle).
- **Write by moving from left-to-right and top-to-bottom.**

Penmanship

- **Write upper- and lower-case letters independently, attending to form and spatial alignment.**

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS: In kindergarten through grade three, written and oral English-language conventions are integrated within the areas (writing and speaking) where they are most directly applied. During this time, students learn to write and punctuate declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences.

Spelling progresses from phonetic stages, during which children learn to represent sounds in simple words, to more advanced phonetic, rule-governed, and predictable patterns of spelling. Research shows that “temporary” spellings, specifically those used in the earliest stages of spelling development, can be helpful for developing understanding of the identity and segmentation of speech sounds and sound-spelling relationships. Conventionally correct spelling is developed through focused instruction and practice. Primary children should be expected to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final writing products. Fundamental skills in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling become building blocks for more advanced applications later.

Students are expected to have a command of the English-language conventions, including sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to their grade level.

Sentence Structure

- Recognize and use complete and coherent sentences when speaking.

Spelling

- Spell independently using pre- to early-phonetic knowledge, sounds of the alphabet, and knowledge of letter names.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Students listen and respond to oral communication. They speak in clear and coherent sentences. Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests, demonstrating command of the organization and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES: In kindergarten through grade three, students develop listening and speaking strategies and speaking applications that parallel and reinforce instruction in the other language arts. For example, as students learn to identify the major elements in stories, they practice retelling stories and include characters, settings, and major events. When speaking, they need systematic opportunities to use the vocabulary introduced in reading and writing. Students learn to listen and follow instructions that begin as one-step directions in kindergarten and progress to three and four steps in the second and third grades.

Comprehension

- **Understand and follow one- and two-step oral directions.**
- **Share information and ideas, speaking audibly in complete, coherent sentences.**

Speaking Application (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Using the listening and speaking strategies of kindergarten outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

- Describe people, places, things (e.g., size, color, shape), locations and actions.
- **Recite short poems, rhymes, and songs.**
- Relate an experience or creative story in a logical sequence.