



## ***Parent Guide for English Language Arts First Grade***

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of first grade in English Language Arts (ELA), as well as strategies and resources for learning outside of school.

This guide includes:

- an introduction to the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study
- an explanation of the skills your child is learning in first grade
- reading strategies for learning outside of school
- writing strategies for learning outside of school
- websites to support your child's learning

### **Introduction to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for ELA**

In April 2017, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted new ELA standards for grades K-12. The Standard Course of Study describes what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade level. How these standards are taught is decided at a district level.

The NC Standard Course of Study was developed based on feedback provided from the following:

- Parents
- Community Members
- Business/Industry Professionals
- Higher Education Faculty
- Educators (teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists)

The NC standards are divided into 4 strands:

- Reading
  - Foundational Skills (K-5)
  - Reading Literature
  - Reading Informational Text
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language

The NC Standard Course of Study has a new format that includes:

- **Standards** with bolded terms
- **Clarification** of the standards with suggestions for instruction, explanations, and examples
- **Glossary** that defines the bolded terms from the Standards

Below is an image of the new format:

Reading Standards for Foundational Skills		
STANDARD	CLARIFICATION	GLOSSARY
<i>Cluster: Print Concepts</i>		
<b>RF.1.1</b> Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print. a. Recognize and use capitalization and ending punctuation.	Students understand the basic concepts of print. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can identify and use capital letters and ending punctuation (periods, exclamation points, and question marks) in texts.</li> </ul> <p><i>In the Classroom:</i>            The teacher provides a collection of subjects and actions to students. Students choose one of each and use them to create a sentence. Students independently write their sentences using correct capitalization and ending punctuation.</p> <p>The teacher writes a morning message each day with missing or incorrect punctuation and capitalization. Students find and correct the mistakes.</p> <p>The teacher writes several sentences and cuts them into pieces. Students put the sentences back in order, paying close attention to capitalization and ending punctuation.</p>	<b>punctuation</b> — marks (often small) that are used to separate written elements, clarify meaning, guide pacing, and indicate inflection (e.g., period, comma, parentheses, question mark, etc.)

## ELA Standards’ Expectations for First Grade

This section focuses on the key skills your child will learn throughout first grade, which build a solid foundation for success in later grades. The skills in each strand are broken down into topics. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined here, he or she will be well prepared for second grade. The ELA Standards’ expectations for first grade include:

### Reading Foundational Skills

#### **Print Concepts**

Students:

- demonstrate an understanding of the basic features and organization of print, which includes recognizing and using capitalization and ending punctuation

#### **Handwriting**

Students:

- print all upper and lowercase letters legibly

#### **Phonological Awareness**

Students:

- distinguish between long and short vowel sounds
- blend and separate sounds in single-syllable words
- segment single-syllable words into their individual sounds

*All of these skills are done orally.*

#### **Phonics and Word Recognition**

Students:

- read consonant digraphs such as bl, sl, tr
- read simple one syllable words
- know that a final -e and certain vowel teams (such as ai, ee, oa) represent long vowel sounds

- determine how many syllables are in a word
- read two-syllable words by breaking words into syllables
- read words with inflectional endings such as ing, s, ed
- read first grade appropriate irregularly spelled words

### **Fluency**

Students:

- read and understand first grade level texts with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression
- use context clues to recognize or self-correct words, re-reading if needed

### Reading (Literature)

#### **Key Ideas and Evidence**

Students:

- ask and answer questions about a text
- retell stories and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson
- describe characters, settings, and major events in a story

#### **Craft and Structure**

Students:

- identify words and phrases in text that are related to feelings and senses
- explain the difference between books that tell stories and books that give information
- identify who is telling the story at different points throughout the book

#### **Integration of Ideas and Analysis**

Students:

- use illustrations and details to describe characters, setting, and events in a story
- compare and contrast adventures and experiences of characters in stories

#### **Range of Reading and the Level of Complexity**

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for first grade, for a sustained period of time

*Students receive prompting and support from an adult.*

### Reading (Informational Text)

#### **Key Ideas and Evidence**

Students:

- ask and answer questions about a text
- identify the main topic and retell key details in a text
- describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text

#### **Craft and Structure**

Students:

- ask and answer questions about words
- identify and use text features to find important information
- tell the difference between information found in illustrations and information found in the words

## Integration of Ideas and Analysis

Students:

- use illustrations and details to describe key idea
- identify the reasons an author gives to support his/her ideas (with prompting and support)
- identify the similarities and differences in two texts on the same topic

## Range of Reading and the Level of Complexity

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for first grade, for a sustained period of time

*Students receive prompting and support from an adult.*

## Writing

### Text Types, Purposes, and Publishing

Students:

- organize information and ideas based on a topic to plan and prepare to write (with guidance and support)
- write **opinion** pieces that name the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for that opinion, and provide closure
- write **informative** pieces that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide closure
- write **narrative** pieces that recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include details, use words that signal order, and provide some sense of closure.
- add details to strengthen the writing (with guidance and support)
- use digital tools to produce and publish their writing (individually or with peers).

### Research

Students:

- participate in shared research and writing projects
- gather information from provided sources and recall information from personal experiences to answer a question (with guidance and support)

## Speaking and Listening

### Collaboration and Communication

Students:

- follow established rules for talking with others
- build on or add to each other's comments
- ask questions when they are confused, need clarification, need additional information, or need help
- ask and answer questions about key details of information presented or read to them

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Students:

- produce complete sentences to describe people, places, things, and events while expressing ideas and feelings clearly
- add pictures or other visual representations to clarify their ideas, thoughts, and feelings

Language

**Conventions of Standard English**

Students:

- demonstrate understanding of progressively more difficult standard grammar rules and parts of speech, expanding on their previous work with nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.
- produce simple sentences and questions, as well as use conventions such as basic capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

**Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

Students:

- determine the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words in first grade level books using context clues, word parts, and noting how words are related
- sort common objects into categories
- define words by category and one or more key attributes (e.g. “A duck is a bird that swims.”)
- act out, choose, or define the meanings of similar verbs, such as walk, march, strut and similar adjectives such as large, gigantic
- act out, choose, or define the meanings of similar adjectives such as large, gigantic
- use words/phrases learned through conversations, reading, being read to, and responding to texts

Language Standards 1 and 2 include two continuums, one for grammar and one for conventions. The skills within each continuum are arranged by grade band rather than by individual grades so you will notice that your child will be working with the same skills in multiple grades, but the activities and texts will become more complex. In the lower grade of the band, the teacher is introducing and modeling the skill. In the higher grade of the band, students are applying the skill to more complex text as they work toward mastery.

Below is an image of a portion of the continuum for Language Standard 1:

**Language Standard 1 - Grammar Continuum**

SKILL	K-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12
<b>Subject/Verb Agreement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure subject/verb agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement</li> </ul>	Students apply grammar and usage skills to create a unique style and voice when writing or speaking with increasing sophistication and effect in grades 9-12. Skills taught in previous grades should be reinforced and expanded.
<b>Nouns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form frequently occurring nouns; form regular plural nouns (/s/ or /gɪz/)</li> <li>• Use common, proper, &amp; possessive nouns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the function of nouns</li> <li>• Use collective nouns (such as <i>group</i>)</li> <li>• Form and use frequently occurring regular and irregular plural nouns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use abstract nouns (such as <i>courage</i>)</li> <li>• Continue to use regular and irregular plural nouns</li> </ul>		

## Reading Strategies

Reading outside of school provides the additional support and encouragement that allows students to create a deep passion for reading, to deepen their comprehension skills, and to build a broad vocabulary knowledge. Reading strategies can be developed and used before, during, and after reading takes place. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in first grade.

Activities to do at home:

- Provide a time and space for your child to read every day.
- Find small and simple poems. Read them together and talk about the feelings they convey. Try making up your own poems together about objects, people you know, or anything you like!
- Read to your child or have your child read to you every day. Reading aloud to children, of all ages, provides opportunities to discuss more challenging and complex plots and themes which builds critical thinking skills.
- As your child learns to read new words and understand the meaning of those words, help him/her keep track of them in his/her own dictionary. Your child can write them down, draw pictures to illustrate the words or the definitions, or write sentences with the words.
- Discuss any confusing parts, elements, or information in the book, chapter, or passage.
- Start a family book club. Let different members of the family pick the book. This could be a good way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together!
- Ask your child to retell what he/she read in his/her own words.
- Ask your child to summarize what he/she read and tell what he/she learned from what was read. This could be connected to something in real life, another reading, or to events happening in the world.
- Visit the local library and make reading fun for the entire family.
- Give your child opportunities to participate in new experiences. Visit museums, the zoo, theaters, historical sites, aquariums, etc. to help build your child's vocabulary and speaking skills.
- Pick a "special word of the week" for your child to practice writing and using when speaking.
- Begin a family project of building vocabulary. Ask all family members to contribute to the project by submitting new vocabulary words they read or hear. Vocabulary words may be compiled in a decorative container in a prominent place. Family members practice using the new vocabulary words in their speaking and writing.
- Act out a story, poem, or other text as if it is a play by using different voices for the characters. This will help children practice appropriate pacing in their speed while reading and encourage reading with expression.
- Ask your child to "read" his/her favorite book to you, using memory, associations, and clues from the pictures.

- Ask your child to draw a picture of a favorite part of a story. Allow your child to describe the drawing. You can support your child by writing his/ her description.
- Talk about current events together. Discuss with your child so he/she understands what is happening and how it connects to him/her, other events that he/she may have seen or read about, and other areas of the community.
- Use magnetic letters, letter tiles, or cards from games to create both real and silly words. Practice building longer words by putting together shorter words and sounds.
- When you read a favorite picture book to your child and come across a short word that rhymes or is familiar to your child because he/she knows the book very well, stop and let him/her say the word. Point to the word as he/she says it and spell it out.
- Possible questions/prompts to ask as or after your child reads:
  - Who was this about?
  - What were the main ideas/topics?
  - Where did this take place?
  - What happened first? Next? Last?
  - What did the characters do to solve the problem?
  - What lessons were learned in the story?
  - How do we know the character feels happy, sad, or angry?
  - Who is telling the story? How do you know?
  - What adventures did \_\_\_\_\_ have in the story?
  - What details help us know \_\_\_\_\_?
  - How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ connected to each other?
  - What did you do to help you figure out an unknown word?
  - What point was the author trying to make? How do you know?
  - Describe how the picture helps you understand what the author has written.
  - We read two books. How are they the same? Different?
  - Show me a capital letter. Show me an ending punctuation mark.
  - What sound do we hear in the middle of \_\_\_\_\_? What sound do we hear in the end \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What word do you make by putting together the sounds \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What do we do with our voices when we reach a period? Exclamation mark? Question mark?
  - What word rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_?
  - In this word, what sound do you hear first? Last? How many sounds do you hear in the whole word?
  - How many syllables does this word have?
  - In the word \_\_\_\_\_, what vowel sound do you hear? Is it long or short?

## Writing Strategies

Writing to express opinions, provide information, and/or create a story goes far beyond letter formation and spelling rules. In school, students are learning the writing process. Out of school, help is needed to reinforce, encourage, and support students in their writing process. Writing

out of school provides a connection between writing and everyday experiences. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in first grade.

Activities to do at home:

- Help your child organize his/her thoughts by planning what he/she wants to write. Using sticky notes or a graphic organizer will provide a visual way to accomplish this.
- Discuss family stories and history. Encourage your child to ask questions. Work together with your child to create a book, magazine, poem, short story, newspaper article, pamphlet, or other written narrative of your family's history.
- Encourage (and help) your child to write a letter, birthday card, get well card, thinking of you card, or thank you note to family members or friends.
- Help your child create a poster, collage, pictograph, or infographic about something your child or your family learned or experienced recently.
- Encourage your child to draw and/or write his/her own version of a favorite story. Or, encourage your child to create or write a next chapter (or page) for his/her favorite book.
- When your child asks a question, research the answer together using books or computers (under your supervision). Then create an informative poster or collage which tells the question, the answer, and uses both texts and illustrations to show what he/she learned.
- Ask your child to express his/her opinions about a topic or book through drawing, dictating, or writing. Ask your child to provide clear reasons to support the opinions expressed.
- Help your child choose something that he/she wants to do or learn to do. Work with your child to research information related to the topic chosen. Ask your child to create a brochure, flyer, or "How To" manual or guide describing/explaining the topic, or how to do something. Then, together, you and your child can follow the guide to do or learn to do the chosen topic.
- During a family event, take a photograph. After the family event, ask your child to write a brief summary to go along with the photograph and send the photograph and your child's summary to the local newspaper to be printed with community events.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his/ her day at school. Keep paper, markers, or crayons around the house for your child to write letters or words or draw a picture about his/ her day. Ask your child to describe the picture to you.
- Create labels with your child for different objects in your house. For example, various books, places for toys, foods, objects in the kitchen, or clothes. You or your child can write the names of the objects, and your child can draw a picture to go along with it.
- Draw a picture and have your child guess the spelling of that word. Give your child a few letters in a word. For example, show your child "\_at," and ask him/ her to make as many words as he/she can with it.
- When you are in the car, at home, or in the store, ask your child to find certain uppercase and lowercase letters. He/she can keep a list of all the letters he/she finds and write them down as he/she finds them.



## Resources for Learning Outside of School

At home, you play an important role in your student's academic success. You are a valuable resource for your child. The websites provided below are not an all-inclusive list, but are intended to provide quality resources for you to support your child's learning.

- <http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/grade/1-2/> -- a language arts resource for both in and out of school; parent and afterschool resources are provided by grades.
- [http://www.readingrockets.org/reading\\_research\\_guides\\_resources](http://www.readingrockets.org/reading_research_guides_resources) -- research, guides, and resources for supporting reading.
- <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/read/resources/edpicks.jhtml> -- reading resources for parents
- <https://readingpartners.org/take-action/resources-for-parents/> -- this website supports parents as reading partners for their children; these resources help parents stay informed about early literacy
- <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/more-reading-resources/reading-tips-parents> -- reading tips for parents; 7 tips to keep reading exciting and enjoyable for children
- <https://www.education.com/guided-lessons/> --choose the grade and scroll down to reading to learn more about lessons your student can practice for mastery of a standard
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-choose-book-30320.html> -- tips on how to help children choose a book
- <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/languagearts/parents/> -- NCDPI ELA Parent page