

Parent Guide for English Language Arts Kindergarten

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of kindergarten 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 kindergarten
- 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:

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Reading Standards for Informational Text		
STANDARD	CLARIFICATION	GLOSSARY
<i>Cluster: Key Ideas and Evidence</i>		
RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text .	Students ask questions about the important details in the text. They also correctly answer questions about those important details in the text. Teachers and/or peers provide support and prompting. <i>In the Classroom:</i> The teacher selects a mentor text and reads it to the students. The teacher models asking questions about what is happening in the text. The teacher asks a question, and then he/she allows the students to think about the information and answer the question. Students use words, sentences, and illustrations to help them understand the important parts of the text. The teacher provides pictures and words regarding key details from the text. Students take turns asking questions which are answered by their classmates.	key details – specific and important parts of the text that provide information, support, and elaboration text – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more

ELA Standards’ Expectations for Kindergarten

This section focuses on the key skills your child will learn throughout kindergarten, 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 first grade. The ELA Standards’ expectations for kindergarten include:

Reading Foundational Skills

Print Concepts

Students:

- recognize the basic features of text, which includes following words from left to right, top to bottom, and page to page.
- recognize that words are represented by letters and separated by spaces.
- recognize and name all letters of the alphabet.

Handwriting

Students:

- print upper and lower-case letters.

Phonological Awareness

Students:

- recognize and produce rhyming words.
- work with syllables and pronounce, blend, and segment the sounds of simple words.
- change simple words into new words by adjusting individual sounds.

All of these skills are done orally.

Phonics and Word Recognition

Students:

- produce the sounds of consonants.
- recognize long and short sounds of the five major vowels.

- read common high-frequency words.
- tell the difference between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of the letters that make them different.

Fluency

Students:

- read emergent level books with purpose and understanding.

Reading (Literature)

Key Ideas and Evidence

Students:

- ask and answer questions about a text
- retell stories with details
- identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

Students receive prompting and support from an adult.

Craft and Structure

Students:

- ask and answer questions about words related to feelings and senses (with prompting and support)
- recognize common types of texts
- define the role of the author and illustrator in telling a story (with prompting and support).

Integration of Ideas and Analysis

Students:

- describe how the words and illustrations work together to tell a story
- compare and contrast adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

Students receive prompting and support from an adult.

Range of Reading and the Level of Complexity

Students:

- understand and participate in group (or class) reading activities.

Reading (Informational Text)

Key Ideas and Evidence

Students:

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

Students receive prompting and support from an adult.

Craft and Structure

Students:

- ask and answer questions about words (with prompting and support)
- identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book

- define the role of the author and illustrator in presenting information in a text (with prompting and support).

Integration of Ideas and Analysis

Students:

- describe how the words and illustrations work together to provide information
- identify the similarities and differences in two texts on the same topic.

Students receive prompting and support from an adult.

Range of Reading and the Level of Complexity

Students:

- understand and participate in group (or class) reading activities.

Writing

Text Types, Purposes, and Publishing

Students:

- use drawings, dictations, and writing to express opinions, write information or explanations, or narrate an event.
- add details to strengthen their composition (with guidance and support)
- explore digital tools to produce and publish their writing (as a whole class or small group).

Research

Students:

- participate in group investigations of grade appropriate topics, as well as 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
- understand how to take turns allowing everyone to speak.
- ask and answer questions about key details of information presented or read to them.
- ask and answer questions when they are confused, need clarification, or need help.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Students:

- speak clearly, audibly, and in an organized manner to express their ideas.
- add pictures or other visual representations to clarify their thoughts or to provide additional detail.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

Students:

- demonstrate a basic understanding of standard grammar rules and learn parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, 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 words in kindergarten level books by using context clues, word parts, and noting how words are related.
- sort common objects into categories.
- develop an understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites.
- act out the meanings of similar verbs, such as walk, march, strut
- use words/phrases learned through conversations, reading, being read to, and talking about 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
Subject/Verb Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure subject/verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure subject/verb agreement 	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.
Nouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form frequently occurring nouns; form regular plural nouns (/s/ or /sɪz/) • Use common, proper, & possessive nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the function of nouns • Use collective nouns (such as <i>group</i>) • Form and use frequently occurring regular and irregular plural nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use abstract nouns (such as <i>courage</i>) • Continue to use regular and irregular plural nouns 		

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 kindergarten.

Activities to do at home:

- Provide a time and space for your child to read every day.
- Play word games like *I Spy*, sing songs like *Itsy Bitsy Spider*, and make silly rhymes together.
- 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.
- Discuss vocabulary found in texts.
- Discuss any confusing parts, elements, or information in the book, chapter, or passage.
- Help your child visualize or have a mental picture of what he/she is reading.
- Ask your child to retell what he/she reads 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 in his/her 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 drawings or pictures from magazines to create an alphabet book with a letter and an object that begins with that letter on each page.
- 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 does an author do?
- What does an illustrator do?
- What in the illustration helps you better understand the words?
- Can you think of another story that is like this one?
- What are the important details in this book?
- How are _____ and _____ connected to each other?
- What did you do to help you figure out an unknown word?
- Show me how to hold this book and turn the pages.
- Describe how the picture helps you understand what the author has written.
- We read two books. How are they the same? Different?
- Show me where to start reading on this page.
- How many words are in this sentence? How do you know?
- Point to the first word in the sentence. Point to the last word in the sentence.
- Can you show me an uppercase _____? Lowercase _____?
- 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?

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

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.
- Find out what your child's interests are. Encourage him/her to pick an interest to research with your support. Then, he/she can create a picture book or other form of written presentation about the topic of interest.
- 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 or 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 or 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/kindergarten/> -- 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 -- 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