

Kindergarten Reading Standards

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year and help ensure that students gain adequate exposure to a range of texts and tasks. Rigor is also infused through the requirement that students read increasingly complex texts through the grades. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Kindergarten Reading Standards for Literature [RL]

Key Ideas and Details

1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

For example, after hearing their teacher read and show the illustrations in Gerald McDermott’s picture book version of a traditional African tale, Anansi the Spider, students retell the folktale about the clever spider Anansi and draw pictures to illustrate characters and their interactions at important points in the story. (RL.K.2, RL.K.3, W.K.3)

3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

Craft and Structure

4. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text. (See kindergarten Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Recognize common types of texts and characteristics of their structure (e.g., story elements in books; rhyme, rhythm, and repetition in poems).

For example, students read with their teacher two texts about foods that are made, eaten, and enjoyed all around the world: pancakes. The two texts are Tomie DePaola’s book Pancakes for Breakfast and Christina Rossetti’s poem “Mix a Pancake.” After discussing the two texts, students explain how they knew from the structure of each work that the first text was a story and the second a poem. (RL.K.5, SL.K.1)

6. With prompting and support, explain that reading the cover or title page is how to find out who created a book; name the author and illustrator of a book and define the role of each in telling the story.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
8. (Not applicable.)
9. With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Kindergarten Reading Standards for Informational Text [RI]

Key Ideas and Details

1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
3. With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

Craft and Structure

4. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text. (See kindergarten Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.)
5. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.
6. Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

For example, students study the life cycles of plants and animals. Read-alouds from books such as One Bean by Anne Rockwell, From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons, and A Tree is a Plant by Clyde Robert Bulla introduce students to core science concepts and vocabulary through illustrations and words. Students draw, dictate, and write observations in science journals. (RI.K.2, RI.K.4, RI.K.7, SL.K.5, L.K.6)

8. With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
9. With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, procedures).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

Kindergarten Reading Standards for Foundational Skills [RF]

These standards are directed toward fostering students’ understanding and working knowledge of concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions of the English writing system. A research- and evidence-based scope and sequence for phonological and phonics development and the complete range of foundational skills are not ends in and of themselves. They are necessary and important components of an effective, comprehensive reading curriculum designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. Instruction should be differentiated: as students become skilled readers, they will need much less practice with these concepts. Struggling readers may need more or different kinds of practice. The point is to teach students what they need to learn and not what they already know—to discern when particular children or activities warrant more or less attention.

Note: In pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, children are expected to demonstrate increasing awareness and competence in the areas that follow.

Print Concepts

1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
 - a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
 - b. Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
 - c. Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
 - d. Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Phonological Awareness

2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
 - a. Recognize and produce rhyming words.
 - b. Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.
 - c. Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.
 - d. Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme

(consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words.⁶ (This does not include CVCs ending with /l/, /r/, or /x/.)

Phonics and Word Recognition

3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
 - a. Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
 - b. Associate the long and short sounds with common spellings (graphemes) for the five major vowels.
 - c. Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., *the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does*).
 - d. Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of the letters that differ.

Fluency

4. Read early-emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

Kindergarten Writing Standards [W]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* The expected growth in student writing ability is reflected both in the standards themselves and in the collections of annotated student writing samples in [Appendix C of the Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action Project](#).

Text Types and Purposes

Note: The intent of Writing Standards 1–3 is to ensure flexibility, not rigidity, in student writing. Many effective pieces of writing blend elements of more than one text type in service of a single purpose: for example, an argument may rely on anecdotal evidence, a short story may function to explain some phenomenon, or a literary analysis may use explication to develop an argument. In addition, each of the three types of writing is itself a broad category encompassing a variety of texts: for example, narrative poems, short stories, and memoirs represent three distinct forms of narrative writing. Finally, although the bulk of writing assigned in school should address the purposes described below, other forms of writing—for example, lists and notes, descriptive letters, personal reflections—should have a place in the classroom as well. To develop flexibility and nuance in their own writing, students need to engage with a wide range of complex model texts (see Reading Literature Standard 10 and Reading Informational Text Standard 10) and study authors who have written successfully across genres (see [Appendix B: A Literary Heritage](#)).

1. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces that tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., *My favorite book is...*).
2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts that name and supply some information about a topic.

How do you play football? A student explains it all in this illustrated how-to book created during a unit on informational writing. See “How to Play Football,” a kindergarten writing sample, [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#). (W.K.2, L.K.1, L.K.2)

⁶ Words, syllables, or phonemes written in /slashes/ refer to their pronunciation or phonology. Thus, /CVC/ is a word with three phonemes regardless of the number of letters in the spelling of the word.

3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or experience, or several loosely linked events or experiences; sequence the narrative appropriately and provide a reaction to what it describes.
 - a. For poems, use rhyming words to create structure. (See kindergarten Reading Foundational Skills Standard 2a.)

A kindergartner tells the story, in pictures and words, of everything that happened on a night at an aunt's house. See "Auntie and Me," a kindergarten personal narrative writing sample, [Massachusetts Writing Standards in Action](#). (W.K.2, W.K.3, W.K.5, L.K.1, L.K.2, L.K.5, L.K.6)

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. (Begins in grade 1.)
5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
 - a. (Begins in grade 3.)
 - b. Demonstrate the ability to use vocabulary appropriate for kindergarten (as described in kindergarten Language Standards 4–6).
6. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including collaboration with peers.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
9. (Begins in grade 4.)

Range of Writing

10. Write or dictate writing routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Kindergarten Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.*

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
 - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
 - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

For example, pairs of students make audio recordings of poems in which each child speaks alternate lines or verses. They listen to the recordings and decide whether both voices are clear, sufficiently loud, and easy to understand.

Kindergarten Language Standards [L]

The following standards offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades. For example, though sentence fragments may receive the most attention in grade 4, more nuanced discussions of the topic should develop throughout the later grades as students continue to analyze speakers' and authors' sentence structure, vary syntax for effect in their own speaking and writing, and more.*

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned previously.

Sentence Structure and Meaning

- a. Demonstrate the ability to produce and expand complete sentences using frequently occurring nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, question words, and prepositions; name and use in context numbers 0–100 (see kindergarten mathematics standards for Counting and Cardinality).
- b. Form questions that seek additional information, rather than a simple *yes/no* answer.

Word Usage

- c. Form regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/.

For example, students make an illustrated list of plural nouns that end just in "s"—cats, boats, car—and those that need "es"—classes, bushes, boxes. (W.K.10, L.K.1)

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - a. Print upper- and lowercase letters.
 - b. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.
 - c. Recognize and name end punctuation.
 - d. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).
 - e. Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.
 - f. Write numbers 0–20 (see kindergarten mathematics standards for Counting and Cardinality).

Knowledge of Language

3. (Begins in grade 2.)

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
 - a. Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing *duck* is a bird and learning the verb *to duck*).
5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
 - a. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
 - b. Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms).
 - c. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are *colorful*).

- d. Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., *walk, march, strut, prance*) by acting out the meanings.
6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, activities in the kindergarten curriculum, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

For example, students use targeted academic vocabulary for mathematics—count, add, more, counting on, number, put together, number sentence, equal to, equal sign—to ask or answer questions about addition. Later, in a lesson introducing subtraction, the teacher reads the picture book *Ten Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, by Annie Kubler, to engage students in the process of making sense of subtraction as taking away: “Eight little monkeys jumping on the bed, one fell off and then there were....” Based on story prompts, students are guided to represent subtraction situations with actions, fingers, drawings, and numbers.

Connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice

6. Attend to precision

See the [pre-K–5 resource section in this Framework](#) or the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics.