

**English Language Arts**

**Foundational Skills in the  
Development of Literacy**

**Grades 3 to 5**

**DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2025**



Literacy Progressions: Grade 3 to 5  
(end of year learning outcomes)

Foundational Literacy Skills	Specific Learning Outcomes	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
ORAL LANGUAGE	Listening	Demonstrate active listening through body language (nodding, facial expressions, self-regulation) and stay focused on speaker during short discussions or presentations	Demonstrate active listening through body language (nodding, facial expressions, self-regulation) and identify speaker’s purpose or main message	Demonstrate active listening through body language (self-regulation, body posture, wait time/ show patience) and paraphrasing/ summarizing speaker’s ideas and details
		Demonstrate interest, and engagement about a variety of topics; listens and can retell information in order or recall key details heard	Demonstrate interest and engagement about a variety of topics; highlight key ideas and details heard and provide a thoughtful response about the topic	Demonstrate interest and engagement about a variety of topics; summarize information heard and provide a thoughtful response about the topic
		Follow more detailed multi-step instructions (e.g., switch home-reading book, take out your agenda, write the date and the reminder for the day)	Follow longer and more complex multi-step directions (e.g., 4-5 steps in a sequence); use checklists, planners, or visual reminders to stay on track	Follow more detailed multi-step instructions (e.g., 5-6 steps in a sequence); use checklists, planners, or visual reminders to manage time/materials
		Listen actively to short texts (e.g., read-alouds, audio stories, conversations) and ask/ answer questions about the topic of discussion	Listen more attentively to a variety of multimodal text; start to ask topic focussed, relevant follow-up questions	Listen critically to a range of multimodal text (e.g., narrative, informational, multimedia); independently ask insightful, topic-focused follow-up questions that show deeper thinking
	Interacting	Adapt talk to a particular context or situation (e.g., who the listener is, what the listener knows, what the listener needs to know); can clarify message when someone looks confused	Add necessary background details for the listener’s understanding; clarify misunderstandings without support/prompting	Adjust vocabulary for age, expertise, and familiarity of topic for the listener; use strategies to engage listeners (e.g., rhetorical questions, examples, etc.)
		Engage in collaborative discussions with diverse partners (one-on-one, small groups, teacher led) to understand perspectives;	Engage in collaborative discussion with diverse partners (one-on-one, small groups and teacher led); contribute ideas that connect clearly to the topic	Engage in sustained discussions with diverse partners (one-on-one, small groups and teacher led)
		Stay on topic and build on others’ ideas; express own ideas clearly and adjust tone, word choice, and volume with support, based on who they are speaking to (adults vs. peers) and the situation (formal/informal);	Stay on topic and extend topics logically, and build on others’ ideas with relevant details; adjust tone, vocabulary, and content based on audience and situation with increasing independence; use more formal or polite language when interacting with others (e.g., speaking to guests, giving a presentation)	Stay on topic and build meaningfully on others’ ideas; shift or extend topics to generate new ideas; demonstrate confidence in formal and informal speaking situations when interacting with others; keep conversations focused and productive
		Ask questions (who, what, or where) to better understand ideas and/or clarify information; anticipates peer/audience questions or gaps in knowledge.	Independently ask relevant questions (how, why, what if) to gain more information and/or ask follow-up questions based on what was heard, to extend group discussions and deepen understanding of a topic	Consistently ask questions that explore reasoning, or implications (e.g., “Why do you think that happened?”) to clarify, deepen understanding, or extend discussion in a range of contexts; vary questioning style for different contexts (e.g., academic discussion vs. interviewing a guest)
	Speaking	Speak audibly when sharing ideas, thoughts and feelings to ensure their intended message is understood	Speak audibly in coherent sentences when sharing ideas, feelings and descriptive details to ensure their intended message is understood	Speak audibly and confidently with clear points of opinion, facts and descriptive details; can support opinions with reasons to peers/adults
		Use compound and complex sentences when speaking, include common conjunctions (e.g., and, but, because) with grammatical accuracy	Use more difficult sentence structures connecting ideas clearly with a range of conjunctions (e.g., although, since, when), with correct grammar; vary sentence structures to add clarity or emphasis	Consistently use complex, well-structured sentences when speaking, connecting and expanding ideas with a variety of conjunctions and transitions appropriate to purpose and audience; demonstrate grammatical control and fluency across varied speaking tasks
		Use and adjust volume, intonation and phrasing when speaking	Adjust volume, intonation, and phrasing with growing independence to match the speaking context, purpose, or emotion	Consistently use volume, intonation, phrasing, and expression effectively to enhance meaning and engage listeners in a variety of contexts
		Use new and topic specific vocabulary when speaking on a topic/ text, telling a story or recounting an experience using facts/details; use a range of synonyms (e.g., “happy” and “joyful”) and antonyms (“happy” and “sad”) to enhance speaking	Use precise topic specific vocabulary when speaking on a topic/text, telling a story or recounting an experience using facts/details to enrich main ideas and engage audience	Use varied and precise vocabulary when speaking on a topic/text, telling a story or recounting an experience using facts/details; adapt speech deliberately to suit the audience and purpose

Foundational Skills in the Development of Literacy

READING  <i>*Morphological knowledge</i> refers to the understanding of how morphemes (the smallest unit of meaning within words-prefixes, suffixes, and bases) can be used to form words.	Phonological/ Phonemic Awareness	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved (rhyme, syllable awareness)		
		Add or substitute sounds (phonemes) in the initial, medial and final part in words to make new words (e.g., b-l-o-ck/c-l-o-ck; ch-u-m-p/ch-i-m-p; f-l-u-ng / f-l-u-nk)	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved	
		Blend sounds (phonemes), in order, including digraphs and triple-consonant blends, including nonsense words (e.g., sh-r-i-m-p, s-t-r-o-ll, etc.)		
		Segment sounds (phonemes), in order, including words with digraphs and triple-consonant blends, including nonsense words (e.g., thrush - th-r-u-sh; asks - a-s-k-s; squid - s-q-ui-d)		
	Phonics	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved (name identification, alphabet letters/sounds)		
		Can read/decode regularly/irregularly words with short and long vowel patterns (e.g., ccvc, cvcc, ccvcc, cccvc, vce, etc.)	Can read/decode words using multisyllabic pattern blending (e.g., ccvc – <b>trac</b> /add -tion = traction; ccvcc – <b>plant</b> / add prefix re- / add suffix -ing = replanting; cccvc – <b>strat</b> -egy, etc.)	Can read/decode words using multisyllabic pattern blending (e.g., ccvc – <b>trac</b> /add -tion = traction; ccvcc – <b>plant</b> / add prefix re- / add suffix -ing = replanting; cccvc – <b>strat</b> -egy, etc.)
		Know the consonant clusters for consonant digraphs and silent letter combinations (e.g., ph, wr, gh, kn, mb, sc)	Know the consonant clusters for less-common silent letter combinations – rh (rhyme), ps (psychology), pt (pterodactyl)	Know the consonant clusters for less-common silent letter combinations – rh (rhyme), ps (psychology), pt (pterodactyl)
		Apply knowledge of vowel teams -ai, ea, ee, oa, oo, ey, oi, oy, eigh, oo (foot, book) to decode longer words	Notice vowel teams can make more than one sound and apply understanding to decode accurately [e.g., ea (meat, bread), ow (now, grow), ou (out, touch, soup, though), ey (key, they)]	Notice vowel teams can make more than sound and apply understanding to decode accurately [e.g., ei (vein, ceiling), ough (though, bough, rough, through)]
		Decode multi-syllable words using syllable types: open syllables-long vowels (cv) and closed syllables-short vowels (cvc) (e.g., rab-bit, ti-ger, cam-el)	Decode multi-syllable words using syllable types: open-cv (pa/per, re/lay), closed-cvc (nap/kin), vowel pairs-cvvc (rain/bow, toast/er), vce (mis/take, in/vite), r-controlled (har/vest, fur/nish), consonant-le (ta/ble, bub/ble)	Decode multi-syllable words using syllable types and morphemes (r-controlled+ing – har/vest/ing); morphology*-based decoding (e.g., <b>trans-</b> in transport; <b>con-</b> in contract, etc.); pronunciation (e.g., <b>produce</b> as a noun vs. verb – I eat fresh produce. I want to produce a record.)
	Word Study (Morphology)*	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved (concept of word/phrase/sentence, directionality, high frequency words)		
		Use a full range of plural nouns (e.g., add <b>-s</b> or <b>-es</b> to form plurals of regular nouns- <i>experiment/experiments; glossary/glossaries</i> ; use irregular plural nouns (e.g., children, mice).	Use irregular plural nouns (e.g., children, mice); use possessive nouns (e.g., student’s, women’s)	Use possessive nouns (e.g., student’s, women’s); understand and apply plural forms of nouns borrowed from other languages (e.g., cactus → cacti)
		Understand contractions that use common verbs and negatives (e.g., verbs: I am – I’m, I will – I’ll, I have – I’ve, etc. / negative: will not – won’t, cannot – can’t, do not – don’t, etc.) to support comprehension; understand most common contractions independently by end of Grade 3.	Understand contractions in more varied contexts; begin to understand when/why author’s use contractions to support comprehension	Understand contractions across different genres; recognize more complex or less common contractions (e.g., shan’t, we’d’ve) and how they are used to support comprehension
		Recognize common prefixes: un-, re-, dis-, pre-, mis-, non- and suffixes:-ly, -ness, -er, etc.; use strategies to identify base words and affixes (prefix and suffix) to decode and comprehend new words (e.g., un-happi-ness; mis-understand-ing)	Recognize prefixes (e.g., mis-, non-, over-, under-, trans-, etc.); suffixes (e.g., -able, -al/-ial, -ive, -sion, -tion, etc.); Greek/Latin roots (e.g., port, tele, graph, bio); use strategies to identify base words and affixes (prefix and suffix) to decode and comprehend new words (e.g., re-construc-tion; tele-port, etc.)	Recognize prefixes (e.g., sub-, anti-, inter-, post-, mid-, intra-, etc.); suffixes (e.g., -ous, -ive, -tion, -sion, -ture, -ible, etc.); Greek/Latin derivational patterns (e.g., create → creation); multiple morphemes (e.g., <i>sub + tract + ion = subtraction</i> ); use strategies to identify base words and affixes (prefix and suffix) to decode and comprehend new words
	Vocabulary	Recognize categories and sub-categories of words; acquire and apply understanding of Tier 1 words (basic vocabulary), Tier 2 words (high utility) and Tier 3 words (content specific)	Acquire and apply understanding of Tier 1 words (basic vocabulary), Tier 2 words (high utility) and Tier 3 words (content specific); continue to add new words from texts to grow vocabulary	Acquire and apply understanding of Tier 1 words (basic vocabulary), Tier 2 words (high utility) and Tier 3 words (content specific); continue to add new words from texts to grow vocabulary
		Notice and understand strong verbs (e.g., “strolling” “stalking”) and adverbs (e.g., “proudly”, “cheerfully”) that convey action and emotion in text	Notice and understand strong verbs (e.g., “strolling” “stalking”) and adverbs (e.g., “proudly”, “cheerfully”) that convey action and emotion in text	Notice and understand strong verbs (e.g., “strolling” “stalking”) and adverbs (e.g., “proudly”, “cheerfully”) that convey action and emotion in text
		Notice and understand adjectives that vary in shades of meaning (e.g., big rock-gigantic boulder) to deepen understanding of text	Notice and understand adjectives that vary in shades of meaning to (e.g., pretty rainbow – dazzling rainbow”) to deepen understanding of text	Notice and understand adjectives that vary in shades of meaning to (e.g., pretty rainbow – dazzling rainbow) to deepen understanding of text
		Identify word relationships (synonyms-antonyms) and adapt to own vocabulary to enhance understanding	Identify word relationships (synonyms-antonyms) and adapt to own vocabulary to enhance understanding	Identify word relationships (synonyms-antonyms) and adapt to own vocabulary to enhance understanding

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		Understand words with the same spelling (homographs) can be a noun or a verb and have different meanings (e.g., left – go left down the street / left- I left to go to school) depending on content of text	Understand words with the same spelling (homographs) can be a noun or a verb and have different meanings (e.g., left – go left down the street / left- I left to go to school) depending on content of text; use syllable emphasis to identify word meaning (e.g., <b>re</b> -cord – We need a record of your address OR re- <b>cord</b> – I want to record your voice)	Understand words with the same spelling (homographs) can be a noun or a verb and have different meanings (e.g., left – go left down the street / left- I left to go to school) depending on content of text; use syllable emphasis to identify word meaning (e.g., <b>re</b> -cord – We need a record of your address OR re- <b>cord</b> – I want to record your voice)
		Apply understanding of figurative language (e.g., idioms- “A bird’s eye view”) to enhance understanding	Apply understanding of figurative language (idioms- “a bird’s eye view”, similes- “as busy as a bee”) to enhance understanding	Apply understanding of figurative language (idioms- “a bird’s eye view”, similes- “as busy as a bee”, metaphors- “heart of gold”) to enhance understanding
	Fluency	Read with accuracy to support comprehension; may pause to efficiently decode multisyllabic words and reread as necessary	Read with accuracy and automaticity with appropriate expression, phrasing and intonation to support comprehension; use word analysis skills and context to decode and confirm word meaning of multisyllabic words; reread as necessary	Read with appropriate expression, natural phrasing, and intonation to support comprehension; complex multisyllabic words are accurately decoded; begin to adjust reading rate (pacing) for different types of texts (e.g., slower for complex informational text, faster for narrative)
		Notice and use punctuation to read with appropriate intonation, pausing and word stress (e.g., use excited tone when reading exclamations, etc.)	Notice and use punctuation to read with appropriate intonation, pausing, phrasing, and word stress	Notice and use punctuation to read with intonation, pausing, phrasing, word stress, expression and appropriate rate/pace
WRITING	Print Mechanics & Print Conventions	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved (using print mechanics)		
	Sentence Structure	Use parts of speech (e.g., nouns, subject-verb agreement, adjectives, and pronouns, etc.) accurately to create grammatically correct compound and complex sentences	Use parts of speech (e.g., nouns, subject-verb agreement, adjectives, and pronouns, etc.) accurately to create grammatically correct compound and complex sentences; compose more varied sentence beginnings	Use parts of speech (e.g., nouns, subject-verb agreement, adjectives, and pronouns, etc.) accurately to create grammatically correct compound and complex sentences; vary sentence length and structure to create flow of ideas
		Use regular and irregular past tense verbs (e.g., jump-jumped/eat-ate, go-went) and other verb tenses (present, future) to increase clarity of meaning	Use regular and irregular past tense verbs (e.g., jump-jumped/eat-ate, go-went) and other verb tenses (present, future) consistently in complex sentences	Use regular and irregular verbs (present, past, future) consistently in complex sentences
		Compose longer, descriptive, compound sentences using conjunctions (e.g., because, while, after, before) with proper punctuation	Compose descriptive compound sentences using conjunctions (e.g., although, in case, since); use transition words (e.g., however, therefore) to link ideas together and arrange sentences in a paragraph	Compose compound and complex sentences using conjunctions (e.g., although, in case, since) and transition words (e.g., however, therefore, although) to link ideas together; organize sentences in paragraph structure-topic sentence, supporting details and concluding sentence
		Expand sentences using descriptive words and combine sentences using conjunctions to produce various compound and complex sentence types (e.g., declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory)	Expand sentences using descriptive words and combine sentences using conjunctions to produce various compound and complex sentence types (e.g., declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory)	Expand sentences using descriptive words and combine sentences using conjunctions to produce various compound and complex sentence types (e.g., declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory)
	Spelling	Consolidation, application and mastery of skill is typically achieved (writing own name)		
		Know and apply phonics and word analysis skills in spelling words with common suffixes (e.g., -ive, -ous, -ment, -cian, etc.), common derivational suffixes (e.g., -ness, -ship, -able, etc.) and multisyllabic words	Know and apply phonics and word analysis skills in spelling words with common Greek/Latin derived words, including plurals (e.g., cactus-cacti, etc.); use combined knowledge of letter-sound, syllables and morphology (base word/roots and affixes) to spell unfamiliar, multisyllabic words accurately	Know and apply phonics and word analysis skills in spelling words with common Greek/Latin derived words, including plurals (e.g., criterion-criteria, etc.); use combined knowledge of letter-sound, syllables and morphology (base word/roots and affixes) to spell unfamiliar, multisyllabic words accurately
		Can spell words with short and long vowel patterns (e.g., CCVC - stop, CCVVC-trees, etc.); can use signal vowels (e, y, i) to spell soft c and g (e.g., race, cage, etc.)	Can spell multisyllabic words with different consonant and vowel patterns (e.g., CCVVCe – freeze, CCVCC – stand, flame, chess, CVCC – buzz, moss, etc.)	Can spell multisyllabic words with more advanced vowel patterns (e.g., CVCVCCVCCe, - celebrate CCCVVCC – screech) and irregular spelling patterns (e.g., thoughtful, believe, etc.)
		Spell words with vowel digraphs/diphthongs (e.g., "ai" – brain; "ay" – play; "aw"–saw); r-influenced vowels (ar, er, etc.); prefixes (re-, un, dis-, etc.), suffixes (e.g., -ed, -ing, -ly, etc.) and words with silent letters - <b>mb, wr, kn, l</b> (thumb, wrong, know, walk)	Spell words with more complex vowel digraphs/dithongs – “ee”, “ea”, “oa”, “ou”, etc.; alternate long /ā/ - eigh (freight), ey (hey), ea (great); alternate long /u/ - ew, (few) ou (soup); <b>au</b> and <b>aw</b> (author, saw); ei – long /ā/ (vein)/long e (receive); Latin/Greek prefixes/suffixes; words with silent letters - mb, wr, kn, l (climb, comb, wrist, write, wrap, knight, kneel, knock, chalk, calm, etc.)	Spell words with more complex vowel diagrams/diphthongs (e.g., oi, oy, alternate long /ā/ - eigh (freight), ey (hey), ea (great); alternate long /u/ - ew, (few) ou (soup); <b>au</b> and <b>aw</b> (author, saw); ei – long /ā/ (vein)/long e (receive); Latin/Greek prefixes/suffixes; words with silent letters (doubt, height, etc.)
		Spell high frequency words (regular/irregular spellings) correctly (approximately 300 words)	Spell high frequency words (regular/irregular spellings) correctly (approximately 500 words)	Spell high frequency words (regular/irregular spellings) correctly (over 500 words)
		Demonstrate correct capitalization (e.g., capitals for the beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns, days, months);	Demonstrate correct capitalization (e.g., capitals for the beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns, days, months, titles); use capital letters in dialogue	Demonstrate correct capitalization (e.g., capitals for the beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns, headings, titles); use capital letters in dialogue
	Conventions (Capitalization & Punctuation)	Demonstrate punctuation use - periods, question marks, exclamation marks, commas in dates and lists, apostrophes in contractions and possessives, quotation marks for dialogue	Demonstrate punctuation use - commas and quotation marks in dialogue (e.g., “I’m going to school, said the student); commas after introductory elements (e.g., “after school, we played soccer”) and apostrophes in singular and plural possessives (e.g., the student’s picture, the students’ class picture); commas in addresses, lists, etc.	Demonstrate correct punctuation use - commas to separate items in a series, use colons and semicolons in lists, use quotation marks and commas in dialogue and text references