

WHAT DOES HOME READING LOOK LIKE IN KINDERGARTEN AND IN GRADE 1?

KINDERGARTEN GRADE 1	Types of home reading	What are the possible goals or purposes of home reading for the student?
	French or English books, chosen by students (can be beyond their reading ability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose books according to personal interests. Listen as parents read to them. Share and explore books with family members. Reinforce reading behaviours such as looking for details/clues in illustrations.
	French books, chosen by teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count the number of sentences on a page, identify the capital letters and periods in sentences, count the number of words in a sentence, etc. Read the illustrations and talk about the story page by page. Retell the story using their own words or words they recognize in the text. Share their favourite books that have previously been read by the teacher. Read stories that have been written collectively by the students and that have been previously practiced during choral reading.
English books, chosen by teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about the stories, illustrations, etc. Practice reading familiar books. Develop fluency and confidence. 	

IF MY CHILD IS EXPERIENCING CHALLENGES IN LEARNING TO READ, WHAT SHOULD I, AS A PARENT, SEE?

Reading is a developmental process and readers progress at different rates. When your child begins to read in English in Grade 1, teachers will closely monitor progress and offer targeted supports as necessary. These supports may include explicit teaching to help students

- develop letter-sound knowledge and knowledge of the alphabet
- learn to break words into smaller parts and to combine sounds
- develop vocabulary and language
- improve listening skills
- learn and apply comprehension strategies
- engage in meaningful writing experiences
- practice reading skills at school and at home

Reading skills developed in English in Grade 1 transfer to reading in French. However, the development of your child's reading skills in English is a strong predictor of how your child will succeed in reading in French. Teachers can therefore anticipate what your child will need to be successful in reading in French. Grade 1 teachers will be attentive to your child's possible challenges with reading in French. They will focus their instruction on developing French oral vocabulary and language structure. They may do this by targeting sound and word knowledge through nursery rhymes, poems, and songs as well as explicitly teaching the language. In Grade 2, when formal reading instruction begins, supports for French reading will be similar to those offered to readers in English in Grade 1.

IF MY CHILD IS STRUGGLING IN READING, SHOULD HE OR SHE REMAIN IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

Yes. With appropriate supports, your child can be successful in reading in English and in French. If your child is struggling in reading in English, transferring your child to the English Program will not make his or her academic difficulties disappear. Learning to read in French will provide him or her with more exposure to texts, reading, and comprehension strategies. Research findings pertaining to the English skills of French Immersion students indicate that after an initial lag lasting until a year or two after English language arts is introduced, early French Immersion students perform as well in English or better than their English counterparts (adapted from *French Immersion in Manitoba: A Handbook for School Leaders*, p. 2–7).

“Research shows that learning a second language has a positive effect on first language achievement. Immersion students match and often exceed the English skills of other students by grade 4 or 5”
(Canadian Parents for French).

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP GET MY CHILD READY FOR READING IN EITHER ENGLISH OR FRENCH?

- Talk to your child—listening and speaking are a child's first introduction to language.
- Establish a reading time, and read every day.
- Read aloud to your child regularly.
- Set an example and let your child see you read.
- Talk about books—discussing a story or a book with your child helps him or her understand it and connect it to his or her own experiences of life.
- Show an interest in the books that your child brings home.
- Listen to your child read and give specific praise about what your child is doing well.
- Make reading fun.

For more ideas, visit the department's website at:
<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/parents/learn/read.pdf>

For more information, please contact your child's teacher.

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READING IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM (K-2)

A RESOURCE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The aim of this document is to share information with parents and guardians regarding reading in the French Immersion Program. It will give you the knowledge and tools to better prepare your child for the French Immersion Program and encourage success in both French reading and English reading.

Prior to arriving in school, a child's language growth is entirely dependent on what people say to the child, how often they talk with the child, and what they talk about. Entry to school places big demands on a child's existing language skills as new experiences and conversations move into new relationships and learning experiences. Language development in one's first language is essential to learning, and plays a crucial role in the later development of successful readers. Children learn about books, language, and themselves when others read to them and when they play. These types of experiences set the stage for reading acquisition.

In the French Immersion Program, French oral communication is the foundation and at the centre of all learning that occurs. To read and to be able to understand what is being read, students need to acquire a solid language base that includes vocabulary and language structures. As students begin the French Immersion Program, they generally come with a relatively solid base in English; however, they have little or no language experiences in French. This reality has a significant impact on the way reading is approached and taught in the French Immersion Program. Expectations for beginner readers in French and English reflect the particular needs and demands of learning a second language.



WHAT IS READING AND WHEN DOES FORMAL READING INSTRUCTION BEGIN?

From birth, children learn to “read” their world as well as the non-verbal and verbal communication of others. This occurs naturally. However, reading print is not a natural process. It is a complex process involving discriminating sounds from speech and connecting letters to form meaning. It differs from one language to the other. Words convey ideas and reading consists of making sense of these ideas. Reading is more than simply decoding words; reading is thinking and understanding. It is a developmental process in which children progress at different rates. Children draw on their prior life experiences and prior knowledge of language to become readers.

In Kindergarten and Grade 1, children will begin to experiment with the French language and they will be exposed to informal reading in French. Formal reading instruction in French should only occur in Grade 2.

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
ELA – Immersion French Immersion		Formal reading instruction	
French French Immersion	Informal reading instruction		Formal reading instruction

During a student’s first two years in French Immersion, **priority should must be given to the development of French oral language.** To do so requires a significant amount of time. However, this investment of time provides a necessary and solid base for the future development of the student’s literacy skills.

WHY DOES FORMAL READING IN FRENCH BEGIN ONLY IN GRADE 2 IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

By the time students reach Grade 1, most of them have been exposed to English and texts for up to six years at home. This exposure usually provides the necessary language skills for the development of reading in English.

In contrast, the majority of French Immersion Grade 1 students have only been exposed to the French language for half days in Kindergarten. This does not allow sufficient time to acquire the language skills needed to support reading or reading comprehension. Students need to continue to build on these language skills throughout Grade 1 so that they can be ready to read and to understand what they will be independently reading by the end of Grade 2. It is unfair to ask a student to answer questions such as “Does it look right?”, “Does it sound right?”, or “Does it make sense?” while reading in French when he or she has not yet been given sufficient time to learn the French language and consequently does not yet have the necessary knowledge to answer these questions.

Students may become very skillful at decoding texts once they master the sound and symbol connections. However, there is more to reading than decoding. Reading is understanding information and ideas that are found in print. In order to be able to make sense of print and to comprehend its intended message, your child requires sufficient French vocabulary and a solid grasp of how the French language structure works.

WHO DECIDES WHEN FORMAL READING SHOULD BEGIN IN FRENCH IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

The Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 12 French provincial curriculum for the French Immersion Program outlines expectations for reading instruction in French. In accordance with these learning expectations, students should engage in informal reading instruction in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and in formal reading instruction beginning in Grade 2. Reading expectations as well as progress are communicated regularly to parents throughout the school year, and the Provincial Report Card should closely adhere to the mandated learning expectations. **All school divisions are required to implement the provincial curriculum.**

It is important to “Provide learners who have not yet learned to read in any language with beginning reading instruction in a language in which they are competent.”
(Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English, 2008, p. 3–4)

WHAT IS MEANT BY INFORMAL READING INSTRUCTION AND FORMAL READING INSTRUCTION IN THE FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM?

Your child will constantly be exposed to reading and will progressively develop reading skills.

INFORMAL READING INSTRUCTION

	What kind of reading is done?	What does this look like?	Why is it important?
KINDERGARTEN	Read Alouds Modelled Reading	The teacher reads a variety of illustrated print texts (e.g., <i>Big Books, story books, classroom charts</i>) to students for different purposes and to model different strategies and processes.	Helps develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ability to connect text to prior knowledge concepts about print imagination love of reading oral language sense of story vocabulary
	Reading Wordless Picture Books	The teacher encourages the students to use the pictures in the book and their imagination to create their own story.	Helps develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness of how authors construct stories ability to connect experiences oral language understanding that story and pictures are connected vocabulary
	Echo Reading	The teacher reads words or a sentence that the students repeat.	Develops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ear for the French language and its sounds Models appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> intonation pronunciation rhythm and phrasing
	Choral Reading	The teacher and students read aloud in unison as a group.	Helps develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ear for vocabulary listening skills understanding of structures of language Models appropriate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> intonation pronunciation rhythm and phrasing Helps build <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fluency self-confidence and motivation
GRADE 1	Shared Reading	The teacher and students read a text interactively.	Allows students to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experience the teacher’s rereading of books with different instructional intentions participate in and enjoy books with repetitive structures see themselves as readers use new and familiar reading strategies in a non-threatening, risk-taking environment use vocabulary and oral language in a meaningful way Allows the teacher to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> model and talk about reading and comprehension strategies model connections between oral language, reading, and writing

	What kind of reading is done?	What does this look like?	Why is it important?
GRADE 1 IN ENGLISH GRADE 2 IN FRENCH	Guided Reading	The teacher introduces a variety of texts at the student’s instructional level. The student does the reading and practices strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It allows teachers to model connections between reading and writing. It allows the teacher to monitor individual student’ progress and to plan next steps for student’ learning. Guided reading engages students in conversation to activate prior knowledge, deepens understanding, and express ideas. It helps students to see themselves as readers and teaches them to make appropriate book selections. It provides opportunities to use mistakes as a part of learning. It provides opportunities for goal setting. It teaches reading and comprehension strategies and offers students the opportunity to select appropriate strategies when problem solving.
	Independent Reading	The student chooses texts to read independently for academic purposes or for pleasure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent reading allows students to choose texts on topics that interest them and to read for enjoyment. It allows readers to use comprehension strategies and problem solving “on the run.” It allows students to make connections between reading and writing.

WHAT ARE SOME SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE?

There are many similarities between the English and the French language. When your child begins to read in English in Grade 1, these similarities can be transferred to reading in French in Grade 2. However, differences also exist between the two languages and these do not transfer from English to French. Your child needs exposure to the French language to be able to acquire this knowledge.

Similarities (Transferable Knowledge)	Differences (Non-transferable Knowledge)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabets are identical in appearance. Decoding, word recognition, and spelling skills follow the same rules and require similar skills. Words can be broken into smaller parts and sounds are combined to form words. Reading is done from left to right, ideas and sentences follow one another, and texts continue from one page to the other. Comprehension strategies are transferable from one language to another. Stories are built in a similar fashion, having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Texts either stimulate the imagination or provide information. Background knowledge and cultural knowledge are needed to develop comprehension. Strong language skills and deeper thinking are developed through shared reading experiences between parents and their children. Home literacy skills are necessary to ensure success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pronunciation is different for specific sounds. Letters might look the same but have different names or represent different sounds (e.g., <i>the letter “i” in French is pronounced the same as the letter “e” in English</i>). Words are not placed in the same order in sentences (e.g., <i>“La pomme rouge” literally translated would be “The apple red”</i>). The French language contends with masculine and feminine genders in texts (nouns, adjectives, and pronouns). Some letters are silent when speaking, but appear in the written word (e.g., <i>In French, “mot” is pronounced “mo”; plurals and ending consonants are silent</i>). Some letter sounds can be represented in many ways in writing (e.g., <i>In French, the sound “o” can be written as “o, ô, au, eau”, aux</i>). Expressions in both languages will use different verbs. In the following examples “to be” is expressed differently in French depending on the situation (e.g., <i>“J’ai faim” literally translates to “I have hunger”</i>).