

Common First-Grade Milestones

Reading, writing, talking, singing, and playing together help your child grow and learn. While you're home together, watch for some of these key milestones in growing first-grade readers. On the back of this guide, you'll find ideas for supporting these literacy developments at home.

Language

Breaking Down Words

- ▶ Know the sound and shape of every letter.
- ▶ Recognize sounds in one-syllable words (*dog, creak*). Count syllables in longer words.
- ▶ Distinguish nouns (*foot*) and verbs (*run*).

Exploring Meaning

- ▶ Use new words.
- ▶ Express ideas and feelings clearly, with detail.
- ▶ Understand that some words have many meanings (*fly* a kite vs. *fly* on the wall).
- ▶ Understand synonyms (*cold* and *freezing*) and antonyms (*cold* and *hot*).
- ▶ Think about similar words and when to use them (*walk, prance, and stroll*).

Reading

Learning the Basics

- ▶ Recognize common sight words (*thank, let, from*).
- ▶ Read some complex words (*hairless* or *amphibians*) and irregular words (*have, said, you, are*).
- ▶ Use context clues to understand new words.
- ▶ Identify/use a table of contents, index, glossary.

Connecting to Texts

- ▶ Use what they already know to enrich their reading.
- ▶ Describe in detail what they've learned from a book, including main ideas and supporting ideas.
- ▶ Ask questions and make predictions.
- ▶ Describe characters, settings, and events.
- ▶ Identify who is telling a story.

Writing

Forming Sentences

- ▶ Use upper- and lowercase letters.
- ▶ Write some familiar/common words.
- ▶ Understand that there is a correct way to spell words, even though they may not always use it.
- ▶ Use different types of sentences (statements, questions, commands, exclamations) and punctuation (periods, commas, exclamation points).

Writing With Purpose

- ▶ Write for different purposes (tell a story, explain, write a letter, share an opinion, make a list).
- ▶ Introduce topics and use facts as support.
- ▶ Write things for others to read.



How Literacy Grows at Home

Children also become stronger readers the more time they spend reading. That includes choosing their own books and rereading favorites over and over again. Seeing you read encourages them, too, as does having books and magazines available to explore.

Making the Most of Read-Aloud Time

Your child is learning to read independently. But reading aloud together every day is still important. Try...

- ▶ choosing books together.
- ▶ reading with expression. Ham it up!
- ▶ using different voices for different characters.

It won't be perfect, and if you make a mistake, correct it. This shows your child that going back to get it right is part of being a good reader!

If your book is longer, you need not always complete it in one sitting. Look forward together to finding out more when you return to read the next part.

Your Child as an Independent Reader

Independent reading for young children can take many forms, from sitting and looking at pictures, to reading aloud the words that they can.

First graders need to spend about 30 minutes a day reading on their own. Encourage your child to split up the time and try different approaches with different types of books—including reading aloud to you!



Making Connections

As important as reading time is, so is having your child share what he or she has read! Making time to talk with your child about his or her reading will deepen his or her understanding and joy in the material.

These conversations can happen anytime—while you cook, fold the laundry, or share a meal. Invite your child to read aloud a favorite part or ask a question about the meaning of a challenging word or concept.

Literacy Builders

Encourage your child to use his or her reading as a springboard into other enjoyable literacy-building activities like these that they can share with family and friends.

MAKE A RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Have your child dictate to you, or copy on his or her own, the titles of favorite books as his or her own recommended reading list. Help your child share this list with family members and friends over the phone, video chat, or in text. Be sure to have your child ask for recommended reading lists in return!

WORD JOURNAL Create an empty book using a notebook or stapled paper. Have your child create a journal of favorite words by copying them down as he or she comes across them during reading. Your child can draw pictures to illustrate the meanings, or you might help him or her write or dictate meanings to you as well.

PUT ON A PLAY Talk with your child about what happens 1) first, 2) next, and 3) last in a favorite story. Let your child know he or she has all that is needed to put on a three-act play! Suggest that your child create costumes out of found objects around your home, a poster, and tickets for the play, provide simple snacks, and invite available family members to watch as he or she acts out the story.

CONNECT AND CONSIDER Your child may be able to connect via social media (with supervision) to friends from school who have read the same book. They can compare their impressions: what they liked best, what was surprising, or themes like friendship, feelings, and more!