

Common Fourth-Grade Milestones

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

Language

Using Powerful Words

- ▶ Break apart words with multiple syllables (such as *tomorrow* or *necessary*), using sound knowledge.
- ▶ Self-correct mistakes in pronunciation.
- ▶ Use idioms (phrases such as *raining cats and dogs*).
- ▶ Use the correct tense in a sentence (past, present, or future).
- ▶ Change verb tenses to fit the tense of a sentence.

Discussing Texts

- ▶ Use evidence to support his or her arguments.
- ▶ Serve as discussion leader occasionally.
- ▶ Connect to others' input by: paraphrasing comments, asking follow-up questions, and agreeing, partially agreeing, or disagreeing.
- ▶ Talk about things that might or might not happen or be true (hypotheticals).

Reading

Connecting to Texts

- ▶ Recognize the building blocks of a story and compare and contrast them to how they appear in other texts.
- ▶ Identify the author's message or the story's moral.
- ▶ Use background knowledge to understand a text.
- ▶ Track how characters change and develop in a story.
- ▶ Form questions that can be answered by a text.

Reading With Purpose

- ▶ Retell stories in detail.
- ▶ Use images, charts, and diagrams to gather information.
- ▶ Recognize that a main idea or claim in an informational text is supported with evidence.
- ▶ Understand multiple ways a text can be structured (such as in order of events or in a textbook format).

Writing

Writing With Purpose

- ▶ Create well-developed characters and a narrator.
- ▶ Understand and use descriptive language.
- ▶ Support opinions with reasons and facts.
- ▶ Organize events or ideas in a sequence that makes sense and works well.
- ▶ Use multiple, interesting types of transitions between scenes or ideas.
- ▶ Create strong conclusions.



Literacy Grows at Home

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

Sharing Books

Your fourth grader has had a lot of experience reading independently, but many children this age miss the experience of being read to as they were when they were younger.

Make time to read together. Pause once in a while to help your child figure out the meaning of a puzzling word or surprising detail. Checking for meaning is part of being a strong reader. Take turns reading to each other or just sit back and listen as your child reads to you! Encourage your child to relax, have fun, and read with expression.

Supporting Independent Reading

Your child may already love to explore reading on his or her own, or may need encouragement. Invite your child to choose a new book, revisit a book you have read together, or finish a book you may have started as a read-aloud.

When school is in session, ideally a child will spend 20 minutes or more per day reading independently in school, and an equal amount of time reading at home. Today, reading at home is even more important. Split up the time or binge-read—just get those eyes on the page!



Making Connections

As important as reading time is, so is talking about what your child reads. Conversations can happen anytime—while you cook, fold laundry, or share a meal. Bond with your child about events and people in books that remind you of events and people from your own lives.

Literacy Builders

Encourage your child to use reading as a springboard into other enjoyable literacy-building activities like these.

JOT IN A JOURNAL Create a reader's journal using a notebook or paper stapled together so your child can jot down thoughts about his or her daily reading. He or she can include new and interesting words and ideas, his or her own artwork, and special notes that he or she may want to share with family or friends.

WHAT'S NEXT? Ask your child to give you a quick retelling of a favorite book. Brainstorm what might happen if the story continued. Ask your child to write or tell what the characters might do next.

COVER STORY Talk about what your child expected a book to be like when he or she first saw the book's cover. How did his or her ideas about the book change after reading it?

ASK THE AUTHOR Who are the authors your child enjoys reading? What more would your child like to know about them? Help your child use the Internet to find out more. Many writers have websites that tell about their books and their lives, and even offer tips for young writers.