

## Third – Fifth Grade Overview

### Student Characteristics

Students in Grades 3-5 are by nature inquisitive. As they move through the third, fourth, and fifth grades, many students progress from being teacher-dependent into a more self-guided stage. They respond well to genuine praise. They experience greater social and emotional development, becoming increasingly concerned with pleasing peers. They also become more aware of individual opinions, form strong opinions, and make many of their own decisions. While beginning the transition into the early phases of abstract thinking, students are primarily concrete learners.

### Instructional Environment

The instructional environment for Grades 3, 4, and 5 provides a stimulating, print-rich climate that encourages engagement in daily reading and instruction embedded in the context of authentic literature. Students have opportunities to practice many kinds of writing and to develop skills in listening, viewing, speaking, and presenting. Students also utilize available technology to develop communication skills.

Developmentally appropriate instruction is designed to address the predominantly concrete thinking inherent in this age group as well as the emerging abstract thinking. An inquiry- and discovery-based environment is created in which learners are engaged in decision making, problem solving, and purposeful learning. Explicit reading instruction takes place in the context of meaningful whole text. At other times, opportunities are provided for student choice in reading materials and writing topics. Learner differences are addressed through differentiated instruction as well as intervention programs.

Students explore, analyze, and synthesize information through flexible instructional grouping practices. Grouping varies throughout the year to include pairs as well as small and large groups. The environment provides for guided individual and small-group instruction to meet specific learning needs through remediation and enhancement of student learning.

Literacy moves into a productive mode in which students read and write to learn. Phonetics, language structure, and meaning are integrated during text interpretation. Writing skills, grammar usage, and mechanics are integrated through the writing process. Students are taught to edit for correct spelling. Effective instruction in grammar and mechanics also includes the “teachable moments” that occur during the editing stage of the writing process. Speaking, presenting, and writing activities are integrated with listening, viewing, and reading in large- and small-group settings.

Teachers and students collaborate in planning student learning tasks. To foster literacy growth, teachers model reading and writing. They also read to students from materials above students’ instructional level but at their interest level. Literacy growth is also fostered by direct reading instruction guided by learning needs rather than dictated by textbook curriculum.

Assessment is ongoing and varied. Journals, portfolios, rubrics, reports, and projects are an integral part of student assessment as are teacher-made and standardized tests.

## **Scope of Content**

The strands of reading, literature, writing and language, research and inquiry, and oral and visual communication permeate third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade curricula. The scope of content progresses from using concrete thinking toward formal operational thought. Strands include a continuum of skills from identification to understanding to usage; strands are combined and integrated in instruction. A variety of reading sources such as textbooks, literary selections of stories, folktales, biographies, poems, audio recordings, and plays are available to provide informational, functional, and recreational selections for student use. Students compose narrative, descriptive, and expository text as they transition through writing modes. Teachers give emphasis to the developmental processes necessary for writing more complex sentences and multi-paragraph compositions, including some based on research. Students advance from improving skills in composition to creating oral and visual presentations.

## **Literature**

Reading materials for both classroom instruction and for independent reading in Grades 3-5 include a variety of types and genres. Students read complete texts as well as selected passages in multicultural literature and nonfiction texts that include novels, short stories, myths, legends, poetry, folktales, science fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and historical fiction. Magazines, newspapers, and trade books are also important parts of student reading materials.

# Third Grade

Third-grade students gain information through reading and listening and then express what they have learned through writing and visually supported oral communication. They continue to express themselves through narrative writing and learn additional modes of expression through descriptive and expository writing. Authentic experiences that integrate reading, literature, writing and language, research and inquiry, and oral and visual communication encourage students to develop self-confidence and assurance in expressing themselves.

These students begin the early phases of transition to abstract thinking; however, they are still primarily concrete learners and are interested in learning tasks that directly relate to their own lives. They continue developing critical-thinking and problem-solving skills as they move into an environment with an increased focus on specific subject-area content.

## MINIMUM REQUIRED CONTENT

Students will:

### Reading

1. Apply advanced phonetic analysis to multiple-syllable words, including consonants, short vowels, blends, long vowel markers, and *r*-controlled vowels.
2. Demonstrate reading vocabulary knowledge of compound words.
  - Using structural analysis to develop meaning  
Examples: prefixes, suffixes, root words
  - Drawing semantic maps
  - Recognizing new synonyms and antonyms
  - Spelling correctly compound words, phonetically regular words, contractions, and possessives, including using a dictionary to check spelling
3. Use a wide range of strategies, including using context clues and predicting outcomes, to comprehend third-grade recreational reading materials in a variety of genres.  
Examples: stories, trade books, poems
  - Reading fluently 110-120 words per minute
  - Identifying literary elements and devices  
Examples: characters, similes
  - Determining sequence of events
  - Distinguishing fiction from nonfiction
  - Using sentence structure to assist in comprehension
  - Drawing conclusions to determine authors' intent
  - Using self-monitoring for text understanding, including rereading and adjusting rate and speed of reading
  - Using vocabulary knowledge to construct meaning
  - Relating main ideas to prior knowledge and specific life experiences
  - Previewing and predicting to anticipate content
  - Utilizing text features to gain meaning
  - Using prior knowledge and experience

## 3rd

4. Use a wide range of strategies and skills, including retelling information, using context clues, and making inferences to identify main idea, to comprehend third-grade informational and functional reading materials.
  - Using sentence structure to assist in comprehension
  - Distinguishing main idea from details
  - Summarizing passages to demonstrate understanding
  - Utilizing text features to gain meaning
    - Examples: titles, headings, glossary, boldface, index, table of contents, maps, charts, tables
  - Using vocabulary knowledge to enhance comprehension
  - Using self-monitoring for text understanding
  - Following simple written directions
  - Ordering by importance or chronology

### Literature

5. Compare poetry, folktales, and fables in respect to their genre characteristics.
6. Recognize linguistic and cultural similarities and differences in multicultural literature.
  - Examples: regional dialects, clothing, food, games
7. Compare fictional characters and events to real-life experiences.
  - Example: relating hardships faced by early settlers in literature to hardships faced by families today
8. Use text features to guide interpretation of expository texts, including italics, headings, maps, and charts.
  - Examples: social studies—locating physical features on a map
  - science—interpreting weather data from charts and tables
  - Interpreting the author’s purpose or intent in a given text

## Writing and Language

9. Compose narrative texts using an introductory paragraph, specific time frames, clear sequencing of events, and a conclusion.
  - Determining purpose and audience prior to writing
    - Examples: purpose—writer addresses topic in correct mode
    - audience—writer uses appropriate tone
  - Demonstrating clarity and organization in a composition
  - Composing descriptive texts using sensory details and vivid language
  - Composing expository texts using appropriate sequencing of ideas or steps in a process
  - Using complete sentences, varied sentence structure, and appropriate transition words in a composition
  - Demonstrating the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
  - Using graphic organizers during prewriting
  - Using figurative language to enhance written text
    - Examples: simile, onomatopoeia, metaphor, alliteration
  - Utilizing precise vocabulary in written presentations
    - Examples: *gorgeous* instead of *pretty*, *prosperous* instead of *rich*
  - Demonstrating correct spelling in final written text
  - Responding in writing to open-ended questions
  - Utilizing bullets to organize major details and ideas to support a topic
  - Demonstrating the ability to write legibly in cursive
10. Apply mechanics in writing, including capitalization of proper nouns and titles of people and appropriate end marks, abbreviations, and commas with dates.
  - Identifying friendly letter parts and related punctuation marks
  - Using apostrophes with contractions and possessives
  - Underlining or italicizing book titles
  - Using commas to separate items in a series, in a physical address, and before the conjunction in a compound sentence
11. Recognize nouns, verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, and adjectives in written texts.
  - Demonstrating use of nouns, verbs, pronouns, conjunctions, adjectives, and verb tenses in writing
  - Demonstrating use of subject-verb agreement in writing
  - Demonstrating use of forms of adjectives in writing

## Research and Inquiry

12. Demonstrate retrieval skills needed to research a topic.
  - Formulating questions based on a topic
  - Using appropriate reference materials
    - Examples: dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, thesauruses, technology resources, news and feature articles
  - Evaluating relevant information gained through research
  - Recognizing text features, including italics, captions, sidebars, photographs, and illustrations

## Oral and Visual Communication

13. Demonstrate the ability to follow multistep oral directions.
14. Demonstrate eye contact, articulation, and appropriate voice intonation with oral narrative presentations.
  - Using dramatizations with oral descriptive presentations
  - Using figurative language to enhance oral communication  
Examples: simile, onomatopoeia, metaphor, alliteration
  - Utilizing precise vocabulary in oral presentations  
Examples: *exceptional* instead of *good*, *brilliant* instead of *smart*

# Fourth Grade

Fourth-grade students continue to transition to a greater degree of abstract thinking. While student learning is more directed by the teacher through the use of various instructional methods, students are also encouraged to progress toward more independent learning.

In order for students to master the standards, teachers incorporate a variety of strategies to ensure expansion of needed skills in the areas of reading, literature, writing and language, research and inquiry, and oral and visual communication. Fourth-grade students build on previous knowledge to further develop abilities to use word recognition, comprehension, and writing skills. Reading vocabulary is increased as students benefit from oral reading and self-selected reading materials. Students use reading strategies and skills to increase comprehension of literary, functional, and informational materials. Students increase their understanding of literature as they are introduced to new genres and delve more deeply into the element of story. They compose descriptive text using newly developed skills in mechanics and grammar. Students improve research and note-taking skills by organizing information obtained from reference materials.

## MINIMUM REQUIRED CONTENT

Students will:

### Reading

1. Demonstrate word recognition skills, including structural analysis.  
Example: structural analysis—prefixes, suffixes, root words
  - Producing common word parts
  - Reading multisyllable words
  - Reading compound words, contractions, possessives, and inflectional endings
2. Demonstrate reading vocabulary knowledge, including recognition of a variety of synonyms and antonyms.
  - Using context clues
  - Reading multiple-meaning words
  - Increasing number of sight words

## 4th

3. Use a wide range of strategies, including distinguishing fiction from nonfiction and making inferences, to comprehend fourth-grade recreational reading materials in a variety of genres.  
Examples: novels, short stories, poetry, trade books
  - Skimming passages to understand significance of passage
  - Summarizing passages to restate information
  - Comparing and contrasting to extend meaning
  - Using knowledge of sentence structure and context to enhance comprehension
  - Using self-monitoring for text understanding, including rereading and adjusting rate and speed of reading
  - Using vocabulary knowledge to enhance comprehension
  - Reading fluently with expression and attention to punctuation
  - Drawing conclusions to determine content not directly stated
  - Asking and answering questions
  - Relating events, ideas, and characters to prior knowledge and specific life experiences
4. Identify literary elements and devices, including characters, important details, and similes, in fourth-grade recreational reading materials and details in fourth-grade informational reading materials.
  - Identifying main idea
  - Identifying author's purpose
5. Use a wide range of strategies and skills, including using sentence structure, locating information, and distinguishing fact from fiction, to comprehend fourth-grade informational and functional reading materials.
  - Determining sequence of events in informational and functional texts
  - Distinguishing fact from opinion in informational text
  - Summarizing passages to demonstrate understanding
  - Comparing and contrasting to extend meaning
  - Using self-monitoring for text understanding, including rereading and adjusting rate and speed of reading
  - Using text features to gain meaning  
Examples: titles, headings, glossary, boldface, index, table of contents, tables, charts, graphs
  - Previewing to anticipate content
  - Using note-taking skills, including highlighting and outlining
  - Detecting obvious bias in informational text
  - Recognizing persuasive techniques in informational text  
Examples: bandwagon, snob appeal



## Literature

6. Compare genre characteristics of tall tales, fantasy, myths, and legends, including multicultural literature.
7. Compare story elements and experiences and feelings of literary characters to students' lives.
  - Describing how events, settings, and characterization encountered in written text influence the thinking of the reader
  - Identifying author's craft and technique for conveying intended message  
Examples: dialogue, exaggeration, alliteration, imagery, parallel structure, logical arguments

## Writing and Language

8. Compose descriptive texts using an introductory paragraph, sensory details, vivid language, and a conclusion.
  - Determining purpose and audience prior to writing  
Examples: purpose—writer addresses topic in correct mode  
audience—writer uses appropriate tone and language
  - Demonstrating clarity and organization in a composition
  - Composing expository texts using a main idea with three supporting details
  - Composing narrative texts using a definite time frame, selected tone, and a clear sequence of events  
Examples: selected tone—sarcastic, angry, humorous, respectful
  - Writing complex sentences to vary sentence structure
  - Correcting sentence fragments and run-on sentences in writing
  - Demonstrating the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
  - Demonstrating usage of graphic organizers during prewriting
  - Spelling correctly in final written texts
  - Bulleting major ideas during prewriting
  - Utilizing figurative language to enhance written communication  
Examples: simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification
9. Respond in writing to open-ended questions.
  - Utilizing bullets to organize major details and ideas to support a topic
10. Apply mechanics in writing, including capitalization of business and friendly letter parts and envelope addresses and use of punctuation, including apostrophe with contractions, underlining or italicizing of book titles, and commas to separate items in a series and in a physical address.
  - Capitalizing proper adjectives and the first word in direct quotations
  - Applying correct punctuation in a direct quotation, including quotation marks, commas, and end marks
  - Using commas correctly in a compound sentence
  - Using apostrophes with possessives
  - Writing sentences without the use of double negatives

11. Demonstrate knowledge of subject-verb agreement with simple subjects and correct usage of regular and irregular verb forms.

Examples: subject-verb agreement—she walks, they walk  
regular verb form—like, liked, liked  
irregular verb form—draw, drew, drawn

- Differentiating among helping, linking, and action verbs
- Demonstrating correct use of nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs

## Research and Inquiry

12. Organize information on a specific topic obtained from grade-appropriate reference materials.

Examples: dictionaries, online resources, thesauruses, atlases, news and feature articles

- Formulating research questions
- Using paraphrasing to convey ideas from resources
- Using note-taking skills to gather information

## Oral and Visual Communication

13. Demonstrate eye contact, articulation, and appropriate voice intonation with descriptive presentations.

- Using demonstrations with oral expository presentations
- Using figurative language to enhance oral communication  
Examples: simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification
- Utilizing precise vocabulary in oral presentations  
Examples: *leap* instead of *jump*, *miniature* instead of *little*

14. Identify strategies of a skillful listener, including attending to the listening task and assigning meaning to the message.

# Fifth Grade

Fifth-grade students engage in numerous learning activities to attain the required knowledge and skills for solving problems and thinking critically in all aspects of the English language arts curriculum. Students are transitioning from concrete to more abstract thinking and are refining their language abilities.

Fifth-graders continue to develop a wide range of applied strategies to comprehend functional, informational, and literary texts and to create written compositions. To achieve this, teachers place emphasis on reading, literature, writing and language, research and inquiry, and oral and visual communication. Ideas, opinions, and information are expressed through narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing. Research and inquiry provide opportunities for students to use search strategies. Through written expression, students demonstrate knowledge of grammar and usage concepts and apply mechanics in their writings.

## MINIMUM REQUIRED CONTENT

Students will:

### Reading

1. Demonstrate reading vocabulary knowledge, including recognition of multiple-meaning words.
  - Identifying word “chunks” or parts  
Example: *mark, remark, or able* in *remarkable*
  - Recognizing inflected endings  
Examples: *ed, ing*
  - Identifying possessives and contractions
2. Use a range of strategies, including drawing conclusions such as opinions about characters based on their actions and summarizing passages, to comprehend fifth-grade recreational reading materials in a variety of genres.
  - Determining sequence of events in recreational reading materials
  - Comparing and contrasting to extend meaning
  - Distinguishing fiction and nonfiction
  - Using sentence structure and context to determine meaning
  - Using prior knowledge and experience to interpret meaning
  - Skimming passages to obtain primary message
  - Inferring motive of characters
3. Recognize the use and effect of literary elements and devices, including setting, character traits, stated purpose, metaphors, and simple symbolism to gain information from various text formats, including tables and charts.
  - Recognizing persuasive techniques
  - Identifying main idea and supporting details
  - Recognizing use of personification
  - Identifying implied purpose

4. Use a wide range of strategies and skills, including using text features to gain meaning, summarizing passages, and drawing conclusions, to comprehend fifth-grade informational and functional reading materials.
  - Determining sequence of events
  - Determining cause and effect
  - Distinguishing fact from opinion
  - Using previewing and predicting skills to determine content
  - Using sentence structure and context to determine word meaning
  - Using prior knowledge and experience to interpret meaning
  - Using self-monitoring for text understanding
    - Examples: rereading, accessing prior knowledge and experiences
  - Using expanded vocabulary to determine word meaning
  - Recognizing persuasive techniques
  - Skimming passages to understand significance of passage
  - Using reference materials

## Literature

5. Compare genre characteristics of autobiographies, biographies, and historical fiction, including multicultural literature.
6. Use text features, including indexes, tables, and appendixes, to guide interpretation of expository texts.
  - Examples: social studies—interpreting a table comparing native American cultures  
science—interpreting a table using everyday indicators that identify common acids and bases

## Writing and Language

7. Compose expository texts using an introductory paragraph that includes a main idea; supporting paragraphs with a minimum of three reasons, explanations, or steps in a process; and a conclusion.
  - Determining purpose and audience prior to writing
    - Examples: purpose—writer addresses topic in correct mode  
audience—writer uses appropriate tone
  - Demonstrating clarity and organization in a composition
  - Using appropriate transition words in a composition
  - Using appropriate prewriting strategies
    - Examples: brainstorming, using graphic organizers
  - Composing persuasive texts, including a minimum of three reasons that support a stance or position
  - Composing narrative texts using a definite time frame, a clear sequence of events, and a selected tone
    - Examples: selected tone—sarcastic, humorous, respectful
  - Composing descriptive texts using an introductory paragraph, sensory details, vivid language, and a conclusion

8. Express meaning through writing varied sentence structure, detailed paragraphs, and multi-paragraph compositions in an organized manner.
  - Editing writing for clarity of thought
  - Correcting awkward sentence construction, redundancy, fragments, and run-ons in written presentations
  - Utilizing precise vocabulary in oral and written presentations  
Examples: *sauntered* instead of *walked*, *scurried* instead of *ran*
  - Bulleting major details and ideas to support a topic or subject
  - Responding in writing to open-ended questions
9. Apply mechanics in writing, including capitalization of first word in a direct quotation and use of punctuation, including quotation marks and comma with direct quotations, colon to introduce a list, and commas after introductory words, with a noun of direct address, and in a compound sentence.
  - Using quotation marks with titles of short stories and poems
  - Capitalizing proper adjectives, titles of books, and works of art
  - Using apostrophes with possessives
10. Demonstrate knowledge of grammar and usage concepts, including subject-verb agreement with a compound subject; present, past, and future verb tenses; forms of adjectives; forms of nouns; and subject, object, and possessive pronouns.
  - Writing sentences without the use of double negatives
  - Identifying homonyms, homophones, and homographs  
Examples: homonym—as in a *bat* and a ball, a *bat* in a cave  
homophone—as in a *bear* in a forest, a *bare* spot in the lawn  
homograph—as in a *bass* in a lake, a *bass* singing voice
  - Using irregular verbs in writing
  - Using adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, nouns, and verbs in writing
  - Demonstrating correct use of prepositions and interjections

## Research and Inquiry

11. Use search strategies in the research process to identify reliable current resources and computer technology to locate information.

## Oral and Visual Communication

12. Demonstrate eye contact, articulation, and appropriate voice intonation with expository presentations.
  - Using dramatizations with oral persuasive presentations  
Examples: role play, Reader's Theater
  - Using figurative language found in literature to enhance oral communication  
Examples: personification, idiom, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, alliteration, symbolism
13. Apply strategies of a skillful listener, including maintaining eye contact, attending to the listening task, and assigning meaning to the message.