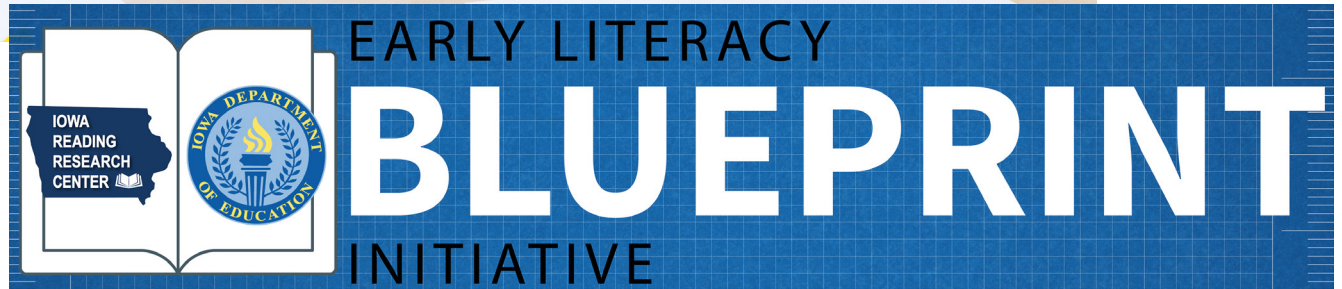


High-Priority Milestones for K-3 Literacy Development

Content Developed by the Iowa Reading Research Center
The University of Iowa

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High-Priority Milestones for K-3 Literacy Development User's Guide

This document outlines the high-priority skills students need to master in each grade level (kindergarten through Grade 3), including each area of reading development (oral language, phonological awareness, alphabets and print conventions, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) as well as written expression. The top of each section provides a definition of the literacy component and an overview of the skills associated with that component. For each grade level, the skills are specified in greater detail and accompanied by references to the Iowa Core standards when appropriate. These are noted in parentheses and bold font, for example: **(L.K.6)**. The Iowa Core standards referenced can be found at <https://iowacore.gov/iowa-core>. High-priority skills that do not align to a particular Iowa Core standard are indicated as not applicable, or **(NA)**. In each of these sections, there are footnotes to provide information relevant to English learners (ELs) and bilingual students.

Following the sections on grade-level skills, there are cross-grade recommendations for supporting students' literacy learning. Two of these sections are for all students:

- Motivation and engagement
- Assessment and environment

These sections also contain footnotes to provide information specific to ELs and bilingual students.

The final section of the document includes general recommendations for supporting the literacy learning of ELs and bilingual students.

For definitions of unfamiliar terms in this document, please see the Iowa Reading Research Center's glossary at www.iowareadingresearch.org/reading-glossary.

There are three important considerations when using this document:

1. This is not intended to be a comprehensive plan for literacy instruction. Rather, it is intended to serve as a starting point for ensuring that any curriculum or year-to-year instructional plan being implemented addresses the key milestones of early reading and writing development.
2. The milestones assume typical development. Students with reading disabilities and ELs often do not make typical progress. Any student who does not master the high-priority skills identified in a lower grade level will need to continue working on them in higher grades. Therefore, it is important to consider the progression of skills and not focus on a single grade in isolation.
3. Although each literacy component is listed separately, it is not intended that teachers separate the components in their instruction. Rather, the components should be integrated (e.g., students can be working on their oral language as they learn vocabulary and comprehension, or students can be working on achieving fluent reading of words with phonics patterns they are learning).

Early Literacy Blueprint Initiative: High-Priority Milestones for K-3 Literacy Development

Note: The milestones reflect a continuum of typical development, so children with reading or writing difficulties may need to work on skills listed for preceding grades if those milestones are not yet mastered.

Oral Language			
Definition of Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can understand orally communicated information. • Students can express ideas orally. 			
Overview of Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate ideas • Hold conversations with different people and in a variety of contexts • Adjust language for setting and purpose¹ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use pragmatic language • Develop receptive and expressive oral vocabulary • Use the conventions of oral language • Understand and use inferential language 	
Kindergarteners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use informal, casual, formal, and academic language in the appropriate context (L.K.6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Share information and ideas by speaking audibly and clearly</i> ○ <i>Distinguish between asking and telling</i> ○ <i>Use social communication to make introductions and requests, to express empathy and feelings, and to ask “when/how” questions²</i> ○ <i>Initiate a topic and maintain conversation for four turns (initiate, listen, respond, listen)</i> ○ <i>Use vocabulary related to the topic</i> ○ <i>Report on past events and personal experiences</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use informal, casual, formal, and academic language in the appropriate context (L.1.6; SL.1.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Speak using the conventions of language</i> ○ <i>Share information and ideas in discussion by following agreed-upon rules such as taking turns and listening to others</i> ○ <i>Use questions and clarifying statements to repair a communication breakdown</i> ○ <i>Draw conclusions orally while reading with an adult (e.g., “Why do you think that happened?”)</i> ○ <i>Expand grade-appropriate vocabulary used in oral expression</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use informal, casual, formal, and academic language in the appropriate context (L.2.6; SL.2.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Listen actively, ask relevant questions to clarify information, and answer questions using multiword responses</i> ○ <i>Build upon the ideas of others during a discussion</i> ○ <i>Use language to problem solve</i> ○ <i>Expand grade-appropriate vocabulary used in oral expression</i> • Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (L.2.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use compound subjects and predicates while maintaining subject-verb agreement</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use informal, casual, formal, and academic language in the appropriate context (L.3.6; SL.3.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Speak coherently about the topic under discussion, using an appropriate speaking rate and volume for the audience and setting</i> ○ <i>Use the conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively</i> ○ <i>Express inferences while talking about books</i> ○ <i>Expand grade-appropriate vocabulary used in oral expression</i>

¹ ELs may use language that is too informal for the context and may need extra support to understand the different registers in English (e.g., conversational vs. academic).

² ELs may not be able to use all forms of social communication in English, but they should be aware of the pragmatic importance of social communication and be able to recognize “when/how” questions when asked (even if they are unable to respond).

Kindergarteners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Make predictions orally while reading with an adult (e.g., “What do you think will happen next?”)</i> ○ <i>Expand grade-appropriate vocabulary used in oral expression</i> ● Speak using complete sentences of 4-7 words (L.K.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use pronouns as the subject (I/she/he/we/they)³</i> ○ <i>Use present and regular past tense verbs</i> ○ <i>Produce sentences that contain more than one verb</i> ○ <i>Join ideas using “and/so/because/if/when”</i> ○ <i>Use irregular plurals, articles, and adjectives</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce, expand, and rearrange complete sentences (L.1.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use pronouns as the object (me/her/him/us/them)⁴</i> ○ <i>Use the possessive case of pronouns⁵</i> ○ <i>Use prepositions⁶</i> ○ <i>Use adverbs that convey time</i> ○ <i>Produce simple sentences with subject-verb agreement⁷</i> ○ <i>Produce simple sentences with pronoun-antecedent agreement</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use future tense verbs</i> ○ <i>Use adverbs that convey place</i> ○ <i>Use compound prepositional phrases</i> ○ <i>Produce and distinguish among declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce, expand, and rearrange a variety of sentence types to communicate ideas (L.3.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives</i> ○ <i>Use adverbs that convey manner</i> ○ <i>Produce complex and compound-complex sentences</i>

³ Depending on the context, subjects can be left out of Spanish sentences.

⁴ Pronouns in Spanish do not always change based on use (e.g., “Give it to **him**” vs. “**He** eats”), so ELs are likely to make more errors than non-ELs.

⁵ In Spanish, the possessive for he/she/it/they are the same. Spanish-speakers may say, “She spoke with his father,” instead of, “She spoke with her father.”

⁶ Developing knowledge of prepositions in a second language can take a long time.

⁷ ELs may overgeneralize irregular past tense verbs.

Phonological Awareness⁸

Definition of Component

- Students can distinguish and manipulate sounds in spoken words
- Students can count, segment, and manipulate sounds in spoken words

Overview of Skills

- Count sound units: words, syllables, phonemes
- Identify and isolate sounds in words: syllables, phonemes
- Blend sounds in words: syllables, onset-rime, phonemes
- Segment sounds in words: syllables, onset-rime, phonemes
- Add and substitute sounds in words, syllables, onset-rimes, and phonemes.

Kindergartners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish words in sentences (RF.K.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Identify individual words in a spoken or written sentence</i> • Blend, segment, and count syllables in words (RF.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Identify syllables in words</i> ◦ <i>Blend and segment syllables in words</i> • Recognize when a spoken word has been changed (RF.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Tell whether words and sounds are the same or different</i> ◦ <i>Identify which sound is different in two words being compared</i> • Blend, segment, count, and rhyme sounds in words (RF.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Blend and segment onsets and rimes in one-syllable words</i> ◦ <i>Identify and produce rhyming words⁹</i> ◦ <i>Blend and segment individual sounds in one-syllable words of up to 3 phonemes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blend, segment, and count sounds in words (RF.1.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Blend and segment words of up to 5 phonemes that include consonant clusters</i> • Identify and manipulate sounds and syllables in spoken words (RF.1.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Recognize and produce alliterations</i> ◦ <i>Distinguish between long and short vowel sounds in one-syllable words</i> ◦ <i>Add, change, or remove individual phonemes in words, regardless of position (initial, medial, final)</i> 		

⁸ Having phonological awareness skills in a native language can support the development of phonological awareness in English, a critical skill for all ELs.

⁹ The ability to rhyme in Spanish transfers to and supports the development of reading in English.

Alphabets and Print Conventions			
<p>Definition of Literacy Component</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can identify letters and their common sounds • Students can identify the conventions of print 			
<p>Overview of Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and form letters • Connect letters and sounds • Know how a book is used • Distinguish features of words, sentences, and paragraphs¹⁰ 			
Kindergartners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and form uppercase and lowercase letters (RF.K.1; L.K.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify all uppercase and lowercase letters</i> ○ <i>Accurately form all uppercase and lowercase letters, using appropriate directionality</i> ○ <i>Recognize the difference between a letter and a word in print</i> • Know the organization of print (RF.K.1; RL.K.7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Hold a book right side up</i> ○ <i>Turn pages correctly</i> ○ <i>Demonstrate that reading moves from top to bottom and left to right with return sweep</i> ○ <i>Distinguish pictures from the print and know which is read</i> ○ <i>Recognize that sentences are composed of words separated by spaces</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the features of sentences and paragraphs (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, spaces) (RF.1.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Recognize that sentences start with a capital letter and end with a period, question mark, or exclamation point</i> ○ <i>Track a sentence that is split between two pages</i> ○ <i>Recognize how paragraphs are separated (e.g., indented first line, blank line in between)</i> 		

¹⁰ These conventions are similar across most alphabetic languages.

Phonics and Word Recognition ¹¹			
Definition of Component		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can decode and encode words • Students can recognize high frequency words automatically 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can represent sounds with letters¹² 			
Overview of Skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and spell high frequency words • Recognize and apply knowledge of orthographic patterns • Read and spell words by analyzing their parts 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and spell consonants, blends, and digraphs • Read and spell long and short vowels and vowel combinations 			
Kindergartners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decode and encode words using letter-sound knowledge and blending (RF.K.3; L.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Decode simple vowel-consonant words (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words ◦ Spell simple VC and CVC words ◦ Know the common sound of each consonant ◦ Know the long and short sounds of vowels • Develop sight word knowledge (RF.K.3; L.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read and spell grade-appropriate, high frequency irregular words (e.g., “have,” “of,” “said”) from research-based lists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decode and encode words using letter-sound knowledge and syllable types (RF.1.3; L.1.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read and spell regular one-syllable words with closed syllables, open syllables, VCe syllables, vowel teams (including diphthongs), and r-controlled syllables ◦ Recognize when the consonants “c” (/s/ and /k/), “g” (/g/ and /j/), “s” (/s/ and /z/), and “x” (/k/s/ and /z/) make their different sounds ◦ Read and spell different representations of common vowel sounds (e.g., long a: a, a-e, ai, ay) ◦ Read and spell words with initial and final consonant blends, digraphs, and trigraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decode and encode complex one- and multi-syllable words (RF.2.3; L.2.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Use context to recognize when the vowel digraphs “oo” and “ea” are making their different sounds ◦ Read and spell regular multisyllabic words of all 6 syllable types: closed syllables, open syllables, VCe syllables, vowel teams (including diphthongs), r-controlled syllables, and final stable syllables ◦ Decode words using knowledge of basic syllable division patterns such as VC/CV, V/CV, and CVC/VC ◦ Read and spell compound words (e.g., “sandbox,” “cupcake”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decode and encode words by using advanced phonics patterns (RF.3.3; L.3.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read and spell words with multiple sound-spelling patterns (e.g., eigh, ough) ◦ Read and spell words with 3-4 syllables • Apply morphological knowledge (RF.3.3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read and spell words with the inflectional endings (-“ing,” “-er,” “-est”) that require changing the “y” to “i” ◦ Read and spell words with derivational suffixes that produce phonological shifts (e.g., “magic” → “magician,” “prefer” → “preference”) ◦ Use word meaning and order in the sentence to confirm decoding efforts

¹¹ Before beginning word reading instruction, EL and bilingual children must have at least basic oral abilities in English. ELs will require extra practice and support for phonics development, but mastering these skills is important to ELs’ success in more advanced literacy instruction.

¹² Spanish grapheme-phoneme correspondences are very regular. Students initially tend to decode and encode words using their Spanish sound system. These “errors” can persist for many years and require patient and explicit instruction as well as ample opportunities for students to practice reading, writing, and speaking in English.

Kindergartners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply morphological knowledge (NA)¹³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read and spell words with the inflectional endings “-ed,” “-s,” and “-es”</i> • Develop sight word knowledge (RF.1.3; L.1.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read and spell grade-appropriate, high-frequency irregular words (e.g., “then,” “walk”)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply morphological knowledge (RF.2.3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read and spell words with contractions and possessives</i> ○ <i>Read and spell words with high frequency prefixes (e.g., “un-,” “re-,” “dis-”)</i> ○ <i>Read and spell irregular plurals (e.g., feet)</i> ○ <i>Read and spell words with the inflectional endings (“-ing,” “-er,” “-est”) that require doubling a consonant or dropping the silent-e</i> • Develop sight word knowledge (RF.2.3; L.2.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read and spell grade-appropriate, high frequency irregular words (e.g., “always,” “because”)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop sight word knowledge (RF.3.3; L.3.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read and spell grade-appropriate, high frequency irregular words (e.g., “thought,” “enough,” “sometimes”)</i>

¹³ It is common for ELs not to pay attention to morphology, particularly the endings of words. Instead, ELs may concentrate on meaning only (i.e., the root or base of words). Therefore, teachers need to draw students’ attention to the form of the morphemes in English and how they convey verb tenses and plurals.

Fluency			
<p>Definition of Component</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can read text with accurate word recognition, rate, and expression • Students can identify and self-correct errors while reading 			
<p>Overview of Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read grade-appropriate words quickly and accurately¹⁴ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read text with appropriate expression, phrasing, and intonation • Read text at an appropriate rate 	
Kindergartners	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize letters quickly and accurately (RF.K.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Recognize letters quickly and accurately (1/second)</i> ○ <i>Identify most common letter-sounds quickly and accurately (1/second)</i> • Read decodable and irregular common words quickly and accurately (RF.K.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Recognize at least 25 research-based, grade-appropriate, high frequency words by sight</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read decodable and irregular common words quickly and accurately (RF.1.4)¹⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read regular single-syllable words fluently</i> ○ <i>Recognize at least 100 research-based, high frequency words by sight</i> • Monitor for word reading accuracy (RF.1.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Reread and self-correct errors to improve understanding</i> • Read authentic text accurately and with appropriate rate and expression (RF.1.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read accurately (no more than 1 error in 20 words)</i> ○ <i>Read fluently (1 word/second)</i> ○ <i>Attend to end punctuation for phrasing</i> ○ <i>Use appropriate inflection to read declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read decodable and irregular common words quickly and accurately (RF.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read grade-appropriate sight words accurately, including some multisyllabic words</i> • Read authentic text accurately and with appropriate rate and expression (RF.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read 90-100 words per minute</i> ○ <i>Attend to commas for phrasing</i> ○ <i>Use expression to convey different characters</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read decodable and irregular common words quickly and accurately (RF.3.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read multisyllabic sight words fluently</i> • Read authentic text accurately and with appropriate rate and expression (RF.3.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read 110-120 words per minute</i> ○ <i>Use expression to convey tone</i> ○ <i>Flexibly adjust rate, accuracy, and prosody to improve comprehension when reading grade-level text</i>

¹⁴ Difficulty with reading words quickly and accurately in Spanish (and other languages with a close sound-symbol correspondence) is a key indicator that students may have a reading disability.

¹⁵ At the earliest stages, teachers may need to limit the number of new words ELs encounter in texts to help them develop automaticity in word-recognition skills.

Vocabulary ¹⁶			
Definition of Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students know the meaning of grade-appropriate words used in texts¹⁷ • Students know strategies for determining the meaning of unfamiliar words used in text 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use strategies for understanding the basic meanings of words and for exploring the deeper meaning of words (e.g., how words relate to each other, how to change words to use them in different sentences and contexts) 	
Overview of Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect oral vocabulary to words in print • Determine the relationships among words • Identify context clues to determine a word’s meaning • Apply common affixes and roots to understand unfamiliar words and change the form of familiar words 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital and print resources to support independent word learning • Interpreting figurative language: metaphors, similes, personification, idioms • Apply word knowledge to read and write texts 	
Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect oral vocabulary to words in print (L.K.5; L.K.6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Name pictures of common concepts and, with adult assistance, match the pictures to the words in print</i> • Determine the relationships among words (L.K.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify and sort pictures of common words into basic categories such as colors, sizes, shapes, textures, opposites, and locations</i> ○ <i>Identify and use words that name actions, directions, positions, and sequences</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect oral vocabulary to words in print (RI.1.4; L.1.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Read with understanding grade-appropriate oral vocabulary words that appear in print</i> ○ <i>Use newly-learned vocabulary when talking about text</i> • Determine the relationships among words (L.1.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify and use synonyms</i> • Use context to determine word meanings (L.1.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Make inferences about the meaning of a word based on its use in a sentence with adult assistance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect oral vocabulary to words in print (RI.2.4; L.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use new vocabulary in speaking and writing</i> • Determine the relationships among words (L.2.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Classify and categorize related words into groups</i> ○ <i>Identify and use antonyms in context</i> • Use context to determine word meanings (L.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Distinguish multiple-meaning words and apply the appropriate definition to a context</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect oral vocabulary to words in print (RI.3.4; L.3.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify, explain, and use figurative and descriptive language</i> • Determine the relationships among words (RI.3.4; L.3.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Draw and use semantic maps and organizers to convey word relations</i> ○ <i>Categorize words hierarchically</i> ○ <i>Identify and use idioms, homophones, and homographs in context</i>¹⁸

¹⁶ ELs may have knowledge of certain vocabulary words in English and other words in their home language. This may lead to mixing the two languages, which should not be treated as a problem.

¹⁷ ELs should be encouraged to use their home language to support learning English vocabulary.

¹⁸ Realizing the number of homophones that exist in English is important for ELs, particularly for those whose native language contains few or no homophones (e.g., Spanish).

Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context to determine word meanings (NA)¹⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use illustrations and texts the student is able to read or hear to learn or clarify word meanings</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply common affixes and roots to determine word meaning (L.1.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify and explain how adding the affixes “-s,” “-ed,” and “-ing” change the meaning of a root or base word</i> • Use resources to determine the meaning and pronunciation of an unfamiliar word (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use a picture dictionary or digital resource to find words</i>²⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply common affixes and roots to determine word meaning (L.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify and explain how adding the affixes “un-,” “re-,” “-ly,” “-er,” and “-est” change the meaning of a root or base word</i>²¹ • Use resources to determine the meaning and pronunciation of an unfamiliar word (L.2.2; L.2.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use a standard dictionary or multimedia resource to find words</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use context to determine word meaning (L.3.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use context within and beyond a sentence to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words</i> • Apply common affixes and roots to determine word meaning (L.3.4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify the meaning of and use words with the suffixes “-ion,” “-tion,” and “-sion”</i> ○ <i>Identify the meaning of and use words with the affixes such as “im-” (“into”), “non-,” “dis-,” “in-” (“not,” “non”), “pre-,” “-ness,” “-y,” and “-ful”</i>

¹⁹ Teaching vocabulary learning strategies at the beginning stages of literacy development is particularly important for ELs.

²⁰ ELs’ use of dictionaries should be carefully and explicitly taught and monitored. Successful dictionary use requires a great deal of linguistic knowledge about grammatical categories, multiple meanings, related words, and appropriate uses.

²¹ Many of these morphemes have direct equivalents in Spanish.

Comprehension			
Definition of Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are able to read grade-appropriate texts with understanding • Students know and can use a variety of strategies for monitoring their comprehension and repairing any breakdowns 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can think critically about a text and discuss it with peers and adults • Students read for enjoyment and to learn new information 	
Overview of Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prior knowledge to information in the text²² • Monitor comprehension while reading²³ • Ask and answer literal and critical thinking questions about a text • Justify responses with textual evidence 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and use the organizational patterns/text structures to connect ideas across the text • Identify and synthesize elements of literary and informational texts (e.g., characters, themes, main ideas, persuasion) • Make inferences while reading text 	
Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prior knowledge to information in the text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Relate the text to personal experiences</i> • Monitor comprehension while reading (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Stop periodically to check understanding</i> • Ask and answer questions about a text (RL.K.1; RI.K.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Answer “who,” “what,” and “where” questions after listening to a sentence or short paragraph</i> ○ <i>Answer questions using multiword responses</i> ○ <i>Ask questions about a text before, during, and after reading to improve understanding</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prior knowledge to information in the text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use prior knowledge of a topic to clarify understanding</i> • Monitor comprehension while reading (RL.1.7; RI.1.7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Reread when the text does not make sense</i> • Ask and answer questions about key details in a text (RL.1.1; RI.1.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Answer “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how” questions after listening to or reading one or more paragraphs</i> ○ <i>Ask questions about details in a text</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prior knowledge to information in the text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Relate prior knowledge to something in society</i> • Monitor comprehension while reading (RL.2.7; RI.2.7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Create mental and graphic images of the events and concepts</i> • Ask and answer questions about key details in a text (RL.2.1; RI.2.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Answer “what-if,” “why,” and “how” questions using textual evidence</i> ○ <i>Ask low-level inference questions about a text</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect prior knowledge to information in the text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Relate ideas across texts</i> • Monitor comprehension while reading (RL.3.10; RI.3.10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts</i> • Ask and answer questions about key details in a text (RL.3.1; RI.3.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Provide justification when answering questions to analyze or evaluate a grade-appropriate text</i> ○ <i>Ask critical thinking questions about a text</i>

²² ELs may come from a cultural or familial background that differs considerably from that of students raised in the United States. Teachers should not assume that ELs have access to the same prior knowledge as non-ELs.

²³ ELs can be encouraged to ask themselves to summarize the text in their home language or in a combination of their home language and English.

Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and use the organizational patterns/text structures to connect ideas across the text (RL.K.2; RI.K.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Restate the key ideas or important information in a text</i> • Identify elements of literary and informational texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Describe the characters, settings, and important events</i> (RL.K.3; RI.K.3) • Make inferences while reading text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Make and confirm predictions using text features and information</i> ○ <i>Refer to ideas and information in the text to support responses</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and use the organizational patterns/text structures to connect ideas across the text (RL.1.2; RI.1.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Retell a story or chronological text in the correct sequence</i> ○ <i>Retell or summarize texts in ways that maintain meaning</i>²⁴ • Identify elements of literary and informational texts (RL.1.3; RI.1.3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Describe the main character(s) and the reason(s) for each character's actions, behavior, or feelings</i> ○ <i>Describe the main events, problem, and resolution of a literary text</i> ○ <i>Evaluate details to determine what is most important</i> • Make inferences while reading text (NA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Create mental images to deepen understanding</i> ○ <i>Draw conclusions about information or stories read</i> ○ <i>Use specific textual evidence to support an appropriate response</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and use the organizational patterns/text structures to connect ideas across the text (RL.2.5; RI.2.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use text features and graphics to locate and gain information</i> ○ <i>Recognize characteristics of multimodal and digital texts</i> • Identify elements of literary and informational texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Identify characters' actions, motives, emotions, traits, and feelings</i> (RL.2.3) ○ <i>Identify dialogue</i> (RL.2.6) ○ <i>Identify themes of text</i> (RL.2.2) ○ <i>Identify implicit main ideas</i> (RI.2.2) ○ <i>Recognize characteristics of persuasive text</i> (RI.2.8) • Make inferences while reading text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Compare and contrast different versions of text</i> (RL.2.9; RI.2.9) ○ <i>Distinguish literal and nonliteral meaning in text</i> (NA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and use the organizational patterns/ text structures to connect ideas across the text²⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Explain cause-effect relationships among events</i> (RI.3.3; RI.3.8) ○ <i>Recognize and use text structures (e.g., sequence, compare-contrast, cause-effect, problem and solution) to support understanding</i> (RL.3.5; RI.3.8) • Identify elements of literary and informational texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Explain the relationships among the major and minor characters</i> (RL.3.3) ○ <i>Relate events to the historical context</i> (N/A) ○ <i>Recognize characters and structures of argumentative text</i> (N/A) • Make inferences while reading text (RL.3.6; RI.3.6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Distinguish different points of view within and across texts</i>

²⁴ Teachers should evaluate the accuracy of the content in the EL students' retell or summarization rather than the grammatical or spelling accuracy of the language used.

²⁵ To assist ELs with reading more complicated texts, use graphic organizers in which students can write one-word responses, draw pictures, or even arrange prepared sentences.

Written Expression			
Definition of Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can communicate coherent ideas²⁶ • Students can write letters, words, and sentences fluently 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can apply grammar and writing mechanics • Students can use the writing process 	
Overview of Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctly use capitalization and punctuation • Vary use of words and sentence types • Logically order words in sentences, sentences in paragraphs, and paragraphs in compositions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the writing process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing • Compose narrative, informational, and opinion/persuasive written products for different audiences²⁷ 	
Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate short stories, poems, and messages in a logical sequence (W.K.3)²⁸ • Compose a sentence with phonetic spellings for most sounds in high frequency, regular words and invented spellings for other words (L.K.2)²⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>State an opinion (W.K.1)</i> ○ <i>Identify a topic (W.K.2)</i> ○ <i>Name a story event (W.K.3)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose complete simple sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use a variety of types (i.e., declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory) (L.1.1)</i> ○ <i>Use correctly spelled single-syllable, regular words and other high frequency words (L.1.2)</i>³⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand sentences (L.2.1)³¹: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Add adjectives and adverbs</i> ○ <i>Use compound sentences and/or compound predicates</i> • Accurately compose compound sentences (L.2.1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Use commas and conjunctions</i> ○ <i>Use irregular plurals</i> ○ <i>Use irregular verbs</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write sentences with correct use of comparative adjectives, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun-antecedent agreement (L.3.1) • Compose complex sentences with accurate use of commas and dependent clauses (L.3.1) • Maintain correct verb tense (i.e., past, present, future) across sentences of a composition³²

²⁶ Early writing instruction should emphasize that written language conveys meaning. Just as readers monitor comprehension while they are reading, writers monitor the comprehensibility of their writing. The teacher should constantly ask students to reread their writing to make sure it makes sense and that they are writing what they mean to say. Frequent rereading often leads to revising.

²⁷ ELs require scaffolding for composing texts. Teachers can talk about the topic beforehand to reinforce ideas and have students articulate about what they are going to write. Students can be encouraged to support their writing with drawings, images, and graphic organizers aligned to particular genres or organizational patterns of text.

²⁸ ELs should be encouraged to participate in these activities, either in their native language or, if able, in English.

²⁹ Students can engage in “pretend” writing activities that encourage them to “write sentences” and express their ideas in writing, regardless of their linguistic abilities. During these pretend writing activities, the teacher can emphasize the direction of script and the symbolic nature of printed English.

³⁰ At the very beginning stages, ELs will rely heavily on phonetics when writing English words of all types (even frequently used short words). They will be using the sounds of their native language to represent the words in English.

³¹ ELs may produce shorter texts with limited sentence and lexical variety. Teachers should focus more on overall organization and text style.

English morphology and word order can be affected by ELs’ native language. For example, Spanish-speaking ELs may write the adjective after the noun, leave out the subject, or have difficulties knowing when to include non-referential “it.” Moreover, in Spanish, when the sentence has two clauses and the subject is the same, the subject does not have to be mentioned the second time.

³² ELs will benefit from instruction in signal or connecting words that indicate sequences (e.g., first, second, third), comparisons/contrasts (e.g., however, but, as well as, although), and cause and effect (e.g., because, so that, in order to, etc.).

Kindergarten	Grade 1 Students	Grade 2 Students	Grade 3 Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point (L.K2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Use phonetic spellings for longer, irregular, or unfamiliar words (L.1.2)</i>³³ <i>Use correct order and verb tense (L.1.1)</i>³⁴ Combine several simple sentences to produce short written products (e.g., stories, poems, messages, opinions) in a logical sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Link an opinion to a reason (W.1.1)</i> <i>Write a story containing two or more events (W.1.3)</i> <i>Write an informational text containing a topic and details (W.1.2)</i> Correct basic errors in the capitalization and end punctuation of composed sentences (L.1.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the writing process to compose paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Write 1-2 paragraph essays communicating an opinion with reasons (W.2.1)</i> <i>Write 1-2 paragraph essays on a topic with details, facts, and a concluding statement (W.2.2)</i> <i>Write stories with details on the characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings (W.2.3)</i> <i>Write multi-paragraph friendly and formal letters (L.2.3)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the writing process to compose multi-paragraph essays (W.3.4, W.3.5)³⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Write multi-paragraph persuasive essays with a position and reasons linked to supporting evidence (W.3.1)</i> <i>Write multi-paragraph informational essays with an introduction, body, and conclusion (W.3.2)</i> <i>Write multi-paragraph stories with major literary elements (e.g., characters, setting, problem, sequence of events, outcome) and dialogue (W.3.3)</i>

³³ At first, ELs may use phonetic spellings that correspond to the phonetics of their native language. For example, Spanish-speaking students may confuse “b” with “v” or misspell vowel sounds that they perceive differently because of the influence of Spanish.

³⁴ ELs can become familiar with English syntax, phrasing, and vocabulary by frequently re-reading exemplar written texts.

³⁵ When possible, ELs should be allowed to mix their two languages so they are encouraged to write more in English. Allowing students to produce multiple (two or three) revisions of their text with feedback from the teacher and peers will allow ELs to make closer approximations of a native English speaker’s writing.

Early Literacy Blueprint Initiative: Cross-grade Recommendations for Supporting Students' Literacy Learning

Motivation and Engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students access a variety of high-interest texts and build motivation to read for enjoyment and to learn new information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create lessons and activities using high-quality, appropriately challenging, authentic texts³⁶ that support the development of deep comprehension. • Integrate technology and media. • Offer some choices in materials and activities, opportunities to collaborate with peers³⁷, and real-world applications of skills and content. • Integrate oral language development, reading, and writing. • Immediately follow skill work with the use of those skills for authentic reading and writing tasks. • Engage students in discussions to foster language and concept development. • Plan extended time for students to engage in reading and writing.
Assessment and Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning is continually supported and measured to inform new and challenging reading goals for ongoing reading progress.³⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver explicit instruction that includes modeling and scaffolding whenever introducing new skills or strategies. This applies across the reading and writing domains.³⁹ • Provide ample time for guided practice, independent practice, and cumulative review. • Establish content and language objectives based on assessment data tied to standards.⁴⁰ • Help students make connections between previous and new learning. • Teach students how to monitor and be metacognitive about their own learning. • Provide whole-group and differentiated small-group instruction based on student needs as identified in assessment data. • Implement predictable routines that allow students to focus on learning. • Manage student behavior proactively in order to avoid disruptions and provide a productive learning environment. • Maximize the amount of time for instruction.

³⁶ For ELs with lower-proficiency, controlled texts (rather than authentic texts) can be beneficial. Controlled texts use repeated vocabulary, which facilitates automatic word recognition, and they limit the reliance upon extensive background knowledge or sophisticated sentence structures that ELs may lack.

³⁷ ELs with lower proficiency levels may benefit from working with peers who speak the same home language. The students can help each other with learning content, understanding vocabulary, and interacting with the teacher or native English-speaking peers. Same language peers also may serve as a social support system.

³⁸ Evaluation of bilingual or EL students should be multidimensional to allow the students to demonstrate their understanding. For example, students may demonstrate their comprehension by drawing or ordering pictures, copying prepared sentences, or writing approximations of grade-level sentences (using invented spellings).

³⁹ A supportive environment for ELs includes language scaffolds such as glossaries or pictures of key words and concepts in texts, extensive modeling of sentence writing, and extended time.

⁴⁰ When possible, ELs' linguistic development and early literacy skills should be evaluated in their native language.

General EL Supports

Expected Development of English Literacy

- If the EL student begins school in the United States in kindergarten, the milestones can be followed as laid out, keeping in mind that bilingual children may exhibit some interference from their home language when developing literacy skills in English. It is important to remember that bilingualism does not mean that the child has the same vocabulary or skills in each language.
- If ELs begin school in the United States in Grade 2 or 3, it is important to be aware of their and their family's literacy in their native language and their literacy practices in the home. This will indicate how much home language and English literacy can be reinforced at home. The brief [Linguistic Context Questionnaire](#) (also found in the Supplemental Materials of the Blueprint "Overview of Effective Literacy Strategy Instruction" module) can be filled out with the help of a teacher or by the child's caretakers alone, depending upon the family's English skills.
- Before being introduced to reading and writing, ELs must have some oral expressive ability in English. It is important that the student be able to say and understand simple English sentences, have basic phonological and phonemic awareness, and understand the alphabetic principle. This can be taught more quickly to older children and those who have started developing literacy in their home language already.
- ELs commonly transition out of an EL classification after they have attained general English proficiency, but it can take students 6 or 7 years to achieve full academic language proficiency in English.

Instructional Guidance

- ELs may come back from school breaks during which they did not speak or hear English. Therefore, teachers should wait to administer high-stakes tests or other evaluations in English. However, the return from break is a good time to evaluate ELs' literacy in their native language.
- ELs will perceive and produce English through their native language system and, therefore, will potentially have difficulty recognizing and spelling English words. Failure to recognize words or misunderstanding words also could impact comprehension.
- Children should be encouraged to translate vocabulary and grammar into their native language to support their understanding and increase their confidence in their linguistic abilities.

Supporting Bilingualism

- When literacy is taught in the native language, the EL experiences better overall literacy outcomes in both English and the home language. Parents should be encouraged to enroll their children in immersion/dual immersion programs where they are available.
- Bilingual children receive less overall input in each language and draw upon both languages when comprehending and producing English. However, that may not mean they have equivalent skills in their native language.
- Responding in a combination of both the ELs' native language and in English should not be discouraged as it is part of normal bilingual development. Bilingual students do not have two words for everything. Rather, they have different knowledge in each and use each of their languages in different contexts and for different reasons.

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