

First Grade Language Arts Curriculum

The Core Knowledge Language Arts program is comprised of two strands; the Skills strand which focuses on the decoding skills needed for future independent reading and the Listening and Learning Strands which focuses on helping students build the background knowledge and vocabulary critical to listening and reading comprehension. The two strands complement each other, building the requisite decoding and comprehension skills that comprise fluent, mature reading.

Skills Strand

The Skills strand of the Core Knowledge Language Arts program teaches students the decoding skills needed for (future) independent reading. Each Skills lesson begins with a warm-up, reviewing previously taught content in reading, writing, and/or grammar. Students are assessed and grouped according to their reading ability. For a unit-by-unit alignment of Skills learning objectives to the Common Core State Standards, please visit <http://www.engageny.org/resource/grade-1-english-language-arts>.

Phonics & Reading

Phonics and reading in first grade involves the learning of long and short vowel sounds, identifying root words and endings, chaining of one syllable short and long vowel words, clapping and reading of two syllable words, as well as, partner and small group reading, and reading comprehension with multiple choice, .

Grammar

Grammar in first grade involves the identification of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Students learn noun-verb agreement and build sentences in the present, past and future tense. Students learn appropriate use of periods, question marks, and exclamation points.

Spelling

Spelling in first grade involves chaining of one syllable long vowel words with digraphs, two syllable words with consonant blends, and dictation of words with vowel digraphs and short phrases.

Writing

Writing in first grade involves pictorial representations, handwriting of upper and lower case letters, and word writing of one and two syllable words and sight words. Students respond questions about stories they read and stories read aloud. Students learn to plan their writing, starting with a rough draft, revising and editing their writing, before producing a finished product.

Listening and Learning

The Listening & Learning strand of the Core Knowledge Language Arts program is designed to help students build the background knowledge and vocabulary critical to listening and reading comprehension. Through introducing, presenting, and discussing read-alouds in each domain, teachers build students' listening and reading comprehension and oral language skills. For an in-depth unit-by-unit alignment of Listening & Learning objectives to the Common Core State Standards, please visit <http://www.engageny.org/resource/kindergarten-english-language-arts>

Each domain anthology is comprised of daily lessons, pausing points, a domain review, a domain assessment, and culminating activities.

- **Pausing Points:** opportunities to review, reinforce, or extend the content taught thus far. Both the decision to pause and the length of the pause are optional and should be determined by each individual teacher based on the particular class's performance.
- **Domain Review:** an opportunity to review and reinforce the material (e.g., core content and vocabulary) in the domain in order to help students prepare for the domain assessment.
- **Domain Assessment:** evaluates students' understanding and retention of academic vocabulary words and the core content targeted in the domain. The results should guide review and remediation the following day.
- **Culminating Activities:** provide remediation and/or enrichment for individual students, small groups, or the whole class based on the results of the Domain Assessment and students' Tens scores.

Listening and Learning Domains:

Domain 1: Fables and Stories

This domain will introduce students to fables and stories that have delighted generations of people. By listening to these classics, students will increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills, learn valuable lessons about ethics and behavior, become familiar with the key elements and parts of a story, and acquire cultural literacy.

Domain 2: The Human Body

This domain provides students with a basic introduction to the human body. Students will be introduced to a network of body systems, comprised of organs that work together to perform a variety of vitally important jobs. Students will learn about the fundamental parts and functions of five body systems: skeletal, muscular, digestive, circulatory, and nervous. This domain also focuses on care and maintenance of the human body. Students will learn how germs can cause disease, as well as how to help stop the spread of germs.

Domain 3: Different Lands, Similar Stories

This domain will introduce students to three themes in folktales that have been told to children for generations, using variations from different lands or countries. By listening to these stories,

students will increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills, be exposed to different places and cultures from around the world, and learn valuable universal lessons.

Domain 4: Early World Civilizations

This domain will introduce students to the development of early civilizations by examining the fundamental features of civilizations, including the advent of farming, establishment of cities and government, and creation of other practices, such as writing and religion. It should be noted that the word civilization, as used in this domain, is not meant to convey a value judgment but to indicate that a group of people collectively established and shared these practices. Starting in the ancient Middle East, students will study Mesopotamia. They will learn about the importance of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the development of cuneiform as the earliest-known form of writing, the first codification of laws known as the Code of Hammurabi, and the significance of gods and goddesses in the “cradle of civilization.” Students will then explore ancient Egypt and be able to compare and contrast Mesopotamia and Egypt. They will learn about the importance of the Nile River; the use of hieroglyphs; the rise of pharaohs, including Tutankhamun and Hatshepsut; the building of the Sphinx and pyramids; and the significance of mummification and the afterlife for ancient Egyptians

Domain 5: Early American Civilizations

The domain includes a study of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations, exposing students to the gradual development of cities. Students will examine the fundamental features of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, including farming, the establishment of cities and government, as well as religion. Students will be encouraged to compare and contrast each of these societies and their elements.

Domain 6: Astronomy

In this domain, students will be introduced to the solar system—our home in space. They will learn that Earth, the planet on which we live, is just one of many different celestial bodies within the solar system. They will learn how the sun, the stars, the moon, and the other planets relate to the earth (given its position in space). In the early read-alouds, students will learn that the sun is a giant star as well as a source of light, heat, and energy for the earth. They will also learn about the earth’s orbit around the sun, and how the earth’s own rotation on its axis leads to the phenomenon of day and night. Part of this domain is focused on the history of space exploration and the missions to the moon. Students will learn about NASA, the Space Race, the Apollo missions, and what it takes to be an astronaut.

Domain 7: The History of the Earth

In this domain, students will learn about the geographical features of the earth’s surface. They will also learn about the inside of the earth and characteristics of its various layers. Students will learn about the shape of the earth, the North and South Poles, and the equator. Students will also learn the names of the layers of the earth—the crust, the mantle, and the core—and

characteristics of each layer. Students will learn how occurrences such as volcanoes and geysers give information about the layers of the earth.

Domain 8: Animals and Habitats

This domain will introduce students to the wonder of the natural world, focusing on the interconnectedness of all living things with their physical environment and with one another. Students will learn what a habitat is and will also learn to identify specific types of habitats and their related characteristics. They will learn to recognize different plants and animals as being indigenous to specific habitats and will begin to develop an understanding of several fundamental principles of nature. They will learn, for example, that animals and plants typically live in those habitats to which they are best suited, often developing unique characteristics or features that enable them to specifically adapt to the climate and conditions of a given environment. They will also be introduced to simple classifications of animals according to the types of food they eat and will begin to understand the notion of a food chain.

Domain 9: Fairy Tales

This domain will introduce students to fairy tales that have been favorites with children for generations. Students will learn about the elements of fairy tales that distinguish them from other types of fiction. They will also learn that fairy tales have the elements of character, plot, and setting that are found in other types of fiction. By becoming familiar with particular fairy tales, students will be able to add these tales to their repertoire of stories that they are able to retell orally. Reading these fairy tales will help first-grade students develop a strong foundation for the understanding of other fictional stories in later grades.

Domain 10: A New Nation: American Independence

In this domain, students will hear about the birth of our country, the United States of America. They will be introduced to many important historical figures and events as the story unfolds to describe how the thirteen colonies evolved slowly over time from their initial dependence on England to the status of an independent nation. The overriding focus of this domain is from the perspective of a rather wide lens, i.e., to emphasize the story of how the colonies became an independent nation.

Domain 11: Frontier Explorers

In this domain, students will learn about the American frontier and the explorers that played an important role in the westward expansion of the United States. Students will be introduced to key people and events that played a role in the early westward expansion of the United States.