

Kindergarten English 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/kindergarten-english-language-arts>.

Phonics & Reading

Phonics and reading in kindergarten involves learning the identification and letter sounds of upper and lower case letters A to Z, blending syllables and sounds, digraphs, as well as, partner and small group reading.

Spelling

Spelling in kindergarten involves chaining of one syllable short vowel words, one syllable short vowel words with consonant blends, clusters, and digraphs, and dictation of words and short phrases.

Writing

Writing in kindergarten involves pictorial representations, prewriting skills such as drawing vertical and horizontal lines and shapes and writing your own name. Students learn the proper formation of upper and lower case letters, as well as, writing one syllable short vowel words, sight words, and responses to literature.

Listening and Learning Strand

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: Nursery Rhymes and Fables

This domain will introduce students to nursery rhymes and fables that have been favorites with children for generations. Students will learn classic rhymes like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Humpty Dumpty," and "Hickory, Dickory, Dock," as well as classic characters such as Humpty Dumpty and Little Miss Muffet. Students will also be listening to some well-known fables, which are special types of fiction that teach morals, or important lessons.

Domain 2: The Five Senses

This domain will be one of many that will follow in subsequent grade levels in which students will broaden their knowledge of the human body. An exploration of the senses also requires students to make observations and then use language to describe those observations, both of which are key skills in the scientific process. Later lessons will also address what happens if the senses of sight and hearing do not function properly.

Domain 3: Stories

This domain will introduce students to classic stories that have been favorites with children for generations. Students will acquire an understanding of the elements of a story including characters, plot, and setting as well as develop an awareness of language to help them become both better writers and readers.

Domain 4: Plants

By listening to the read-alouds in this domain, students will acquire a fundamental understanding of the parts of plants and how they grow. They will learn what plants need in order to stay alive and will be introduced to the concepts of the life cycle of plants, pollination, and photosynthesis. This basic knowledge about plants will lay the foundation for a broader understanding of ecology and the interdependence of all living things, topics that will be addressed in other Kindergarten domains (Farms and Taking Care of the Earth), as well as in subsequent grades.

Domain 5: Farms

This domain will introduce students to several farm animals as well as to crops that people grow on farms. Students will learn how farmers meet the needs of farm animals. Students will be able to contrast how plants make their own food with how animals get their food from eating plants or other living things. Students will understand the importance of farms as a source of food and other products people use. Students will also become familiar with the classic story “The Little Red Hen,” which introduces the seasonal rhythm of planting, growing, and harvesting.

Domain 6: Native Americans

The Native Americans domain introduces students to the broad concept that indigenous people lived on the continents of North and South America long before European explorers visited and settled in this area. Students will learn that there were many, many different tribes of Native Americans, and that each tribe had its own way of eating, dressing, and living, depending on where they lived. Students will learn about three tribes in particular: the Lakota Sioux of the Great Plains region, and the Wampanoag and the Lenape, both of the Eastern Woodlands region. They will begin to understand how different geographical regions influenced different lifestyles. Students will learn that each Native American group has its own distinctive culture. The last read-aloud focuses on Native Americans today.

Domain 7: Kings and Queens

In the Kings and Queens domain, students will listen to read-alouds about kings and queens and royal families. Both the fiction and nonfiction selections will build students’ understanding of the responsibilities, lifestyle, and customs associated with royalty throughout history. Many of the fictional rhymes, poems, and stories in this domain are classic, well-loved tales, including King Midas and the Golden Touch, The Princess and the Pea, Cinderella, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Domain 8: Seasons and Weather

This domain will introduce students to the concept of weather. Students will learn that different regions of Earth experience different characteristic weather patterns throughout the year. They will also learn that we can think about a year and the related weather patterns in terms of four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn.

Students will also learn why knowing about the weather is important, and how weather affects our day-to-day lives and activities.

Domain 9: Columbus and the Pilgrims

This domain will introduce students to the first voyage of Columbus, and the voyage of the Pilgrims some 128 years later. The read-alouds stress the similarities between the voyages of Columbus and the Pilgrims and how they both led to interactions between Europeans and Native Americans. The domain also reinforces basic geography concepts, including the locations of the different continents as well as cardinal directions.

Domain 10: Colonial Towns and Townspeople

This domain will continue students' journey as they learn more about the early history of our country. Students already know that the Pilgrims came to America from England, seeking religious freedom from read-alouds in Columbus and the Pilgrims domains. The setting for Colonial Towns and Townspeople is more than 150 years later, after the colonies had been firmly established. These read-alouds will acquaint students with what daily life was like for the people who lived during these times, and how very different it was from students' own present-day experiences. This background knowledge will help set the stage for an in-depth understanding in later grades of specific historical events that also took place during colonial times. During these years, America evolved from a small group of dependent British colonies to a growing, independent nation.

Domain 11: Taking Care of the Earth

This domain will introduce students to the importance of being environmentally aware individuals. Students will learn that the best way to conserve Earth's natural resources is to practice the three Rs of conservation—reduce, reuse, and recycle. By studying conservation, students will become familiar with the earth's natural resources and will begin to recognize how people's actions affect the environment in which we live. Students will learn specifically about land, water, and air pollution as well as the water cycle, the journey of trash from its creation to its burial in a landfill, and the steps in the recycling and composting processes. Practical examples of how students can help take care of the earth are included in every lesson.

Domain 12: Presidents and American Symbols

This domain explores the lives and legacies of five famous presidents and introduces students to several national symbols, including the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, the White House, and Mount Rushmore. Students begin by hearing about the branches of the government, what a president is, what a president does, and how a person becomes president. Students should have learned about monarchies in the Kings and Queens domain prior to this domain, providing useful background knowledge on forms

of government. By the end of this domain, students will be able to make a comparison between a king and a president.