

Second 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-2-english-language-arts>.

Phonics & Reading

Phonics and reading in second grade involves whole group reading, partner reading, and independent reading with comprehension tasks. Students learn to read “tricky words,” or words with unconventional spelling.

Grammar

Grammar in second grade involves the identification of synonyms and antonyms, common and proper nouns, and parts of speech. Students learn to identify adverbs, complete vs. incomplete sentences, and run-on sentences.

Spelling

Spelling in second grade involves dictation and spelling of one, two, and three syllable words with varied endings. Students learn words with more sophisticated spellings including digraphs, consonant blends, and long and short vowel sounds.

Writing

Writing in second grade involves constructing multi-sentence descriptions, writing sentences using evidence from text read, and planning and drafting fiction and nonfiction writing pieces. Students write personal narratives, book reports, summary paragraphs, and persuasive letters.

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: Fairy Tales and Tall Tales

This domain will introduce students to classic fairy tales and tall tales and the well-known lessons they teach. This domain will also lay the foundation for understanding stories in future grades. The first half of the Fairy Tales and Tall Tales domain focuses on fairy tales and the second half of the domain focuses on tall tales and the elements of that genre.

Domain 2: Early Asian Civilizations

This domain will introduce students to the continent of Asia and its two most populous countries, India and China. Students will learn about the early civilizations in India and China and how they were both able to form because of mighty rivers. Students will once again hear about the important features of early civilizations, to which they were introduced in the Grade 1 Early World Civilizations domain. These features include the advent of farming, establishment of cities and government, and other practices such as writing and religion.

Domain 3: The Ancient Greek Civilization

This domain will introduce students to an ancient civilization whose contributions can be seen in many areas of our lives today. Students will learn about the gods and goddesses of the ancient Greeks, the city-states of Sparta and Athens, and the philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. They will learn about the first Olympic Games held in honor of Zeus, the significance of the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, and the conquests of Alexander the Great. Students will also learn about the Greek contribution of democracy and how those ideas are used today in many governments, including our own.

Domain 4: Greek Myths

This domain builds on The Ancient Greek Civilization domain and will introduce students to several well-known Greek myths and many well-known mythical characters. Students will learn that the ancient Greeks worshipped many gods and goddesses, and that the twelve they believed lived on Mount Olympus, the home of the gods, were the most powerful. Students will learn the definition of a myth: a fictional story, once thought to be true that tried to explain mysteries of nature and humankind. They will also learn about myths that include supernatural beings or events, and that myths give insight into the ancient Greek culture. Students will hear about Prometheus and Pandora, Demeter and Persephone, Arachne the Weaver, the Sphinx, and Hercules, among others.

Domain 5: The War of 1812

This domain will introduce students to an important period in the history of the United States—the time during the War of 1812. The War of 1812 is, perhaps, best remembered as the war that gave birth to “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Students will also learn why the War of 1812 is often called America’s second war for independence. Students will learn how the United States was affected by the Napoleonic Wars between France and Great Britain. They will learn about James and Dolley Madison, and their direct connection to the War of 1812. Students will learn about Great Britain’s three-part plan to win back the United States. This includes attacks on Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, and the Battle of New Orleans. This domain will build the foundation for learning about Westward Expansion, The U.S. Civil War, and Immigration later in Grade 2 as well as for learning about other periods of American history in future grades.

Domain 6: Cycles in Nature

This domain will introduce your students to the many natural cycles that make life on Earth possible. Your students will increase their knowledge of cycles in nature by learning more about seasonal cycles, and by beginning their study of flowering plants and trees, animal life cycles, and the importance of the water cycle. Students will also learn about the effect seasonal changes have on plants and animals. In addition, throughout this domain, students will gain exposure to poems by renowned authors Emily Dickinson and Robert Louis Stevenson. As students learn that all organisms experience the developmental stages of the life cycle, they will also learn how their growth and development relates to Earth’s seasonal cycles and begin to understand how all organisms depend on Earth’s limited water supply.

Domain 7: Westward Expansion

This domain will introduce students to an important period in the history of the United States—the time of westward expansion during the 1800s. Students will learn why pioneers were willing and eager to endure hardships to move westward. Students will learn about important innovations in both transportation and communication during that period, which greatly increased the movement of people westward. More specifically, students will learn about

Fulton's steamboat, the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, and the Pony Express. Students will also come to understand the hardships and tragedies that Native Americans endured because of westward expansion. This domain will build the foundation for learning about The U.S. Civil War and Immigration later in Grade 2 as well as for learning about other periods of American history in future grades.

Domain 8: Insects

This domain will introduce students to the largest group of animals on Earth. Students will learn the characteristics of insects, the life cycles of insects, how insects can be categorized as solitary or social, and how insects are viewed as both helpful and harmful. For example, students will learn how insects are important to the process of pollination and in the production of honey, some cosmetics and even medicines. Students will gather the information they learn in a journal and will have the opportunity to further research questions and points of interest. Students will use the information gathered in their journals to plan, draft, and edit an informational narrative. This domain will lay the foundation for review and further study of the life cycles, habitats, and classifications of insects and other animals.

Domain 9: The U.S. Civil War

This domain will introduce students to an important period in the history of the United States. Students will learn about the controversy over slavery between the North and the South, which eventually led to the U.S. Civil War. They will learn about this war and how the end of the war also meant the end of slavery.

Domain 10: The Human Body

This domain covers a number of topics regarding the human body. This domain first covers concepts regarding cells and how cells form the building blocks of life on Earth. Students are then taught how collections of cells form tissues, and tissues form organs, and finally how organs work within the various body systems. In addition, students are taught about Anton van Leeuwenhoek and his work with the microscope and his discovery of the tiny one-celled bacteria. Students will then hear about the digestive and excretory systems. They will learn the fundamental parts and functions of these two body systems. The narrator of these read-alouds is a nutritionist named Nick Nutri, who reinforces basic facts that students will be learning. The remainder of this domain focuses on the importance of good nutrition and how to make good choices in order to eat a well-balanced diet. Students will be taught five keys to good health—eat well, exercise, sleep, keep clean, and have regular checkups.

Domain 11: Immigration

This domain will introduce students to the concept of immigration in the United States, an especially important topic because the United States is often referred to as a country of immigrants. Students will learn about the biggest wave of immigration to the United States, which occurred between 1880 and 1920. They will discover why people immigrated, what factors pushed them from their homelands and pulled them to the United States, and why

many immigrants settled in particular cities or regions upon their arrival. These basic facts about immigration will help students further their awareness of U.S. history. Learning about immigration in the United States is also an opportunity for students to find out more about their family history and what brought them and/or their ancestors to the United States.

Domain 12: Fighting for a Cause

This domain will introduce students to several ordinary people who stood up for what they believed in and who fought for a cause, even when faced with immeasurable odds. Students will learn how members of very powerful groups have often excluded members of other groups from exercising certain rights. They will learn about some key historical figures who fought for various causes such as the abolition of slavery, the right for women to vote, and the welfare of migrant workers. Each of these individuals struggled for a cause, their struggles later helped change many laws, and they all practiced nonviolence. These historical figures also had an impact on the ability of others in our nation to exercise their individual rights. Students will understand the connection between ideas and actions, and how ordinary people can do extraordinary things, changing people's awareness throughout an entire country. Students will also learn the terms civil rights and human rights, and what these terms mean.