

Literacy Curriculum

Scope and Sequence, Kindergarten through Gr. 8

Overview: Mission and Core Competency Categories

Lower School Literacy (Grs. K-4)

At The School at Columbia, literacy instruction in the Lower School is built on a strong foundation in the science of reading, paired with rich opportunities for authentic reading and writing every day. Children move through a carefully sequenced progression of skills, from foundational phonics and decoding in the earliest grades to increasingly fluent, confident, and independent reading and writing by 4th grade.

Reading instruction combines explicit, systematic instruction with rich, engaging texts that build knowledge, spark curiosity, and nurture a lifelong love of reading. As students develop strong foundational skills, they learn to read increasingly complex texts with fluency and understanding, think deeply about what they read, and share their ideas through meaningful discussion and written response.

Writing instruction introduces students to a range of genres and purposes, with an emphasis on process, structure, craft, and voice. Students learn to develop and organize their ideas, make purposeful choices as writers, and revise their work with growing independence. Writing is woven throughout the curriculum, giving students opportunities to communicate their thinking and knowledge across subject areas.

Grammar and handwriting are taught explicitly alongside reading and writing, giving students the transcription and language skills they need to communicate their ideas with clarity and ease. Students learn printing in kindergarten through 2nd grade and transition to cursive in 3rd and 4th grade. As handwriting becomes increasingly automatic, students can devote greater attention to generating, developing, and refining their ideas. Grammar instruction is integrated into students' own writing, helping them understand how sentence structure, conventions, and word choice shape meaning.

Our K–4 literacy expectations are grounded in the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards and are part of a coherent, school-wide vision for literacy that spans kindergarten through 8th grade. Teachers collaborate closely across grade levels to ensure that the knowledge and skills students build each year connect meaningfully to what comes next, preparing them to grow into thoughtful, capable, and joyful readers and writers.

Literacy Curriculum

Scope and Sequence, Kindergarten through Gr. 8

Overview: Mission and Core Competency Categories

Upper School Literacy (Grs. 5-8)

The Upper School literacy program builds directly on the strong foundation established in the Lower School, guiding students toward increasingly sophisticated, analytical, and independent reading and writing. Across grades 5–8, students deepen their ability to engage critically with complex texts, develop and communicate ideas, and use reading and writing as tools for thinking and learning across the curriculum.

Reading instruction places an increasing emphasis on close reading and analysis. Students engage with complex texts across genres, examining how authors use language, structure, and craft to develop ideas and create meaning. Through explicit instruction in annotation and note-taking, students learn to identify important information, track their thinking, gather evidence, and make connections within and across texts. These practices support students as they move from understanding what a text says to developing thoughtful interpretations of how and why it works.

Writing becomes increasingly sustained and demanding throughout the Upper School years. Students write essays and other extended pieces that require them to develop clear ideas, organize and support their thinking with evidence, and attend closely to structure, craft, and voice. They learn to move purposefully through the writing process—from gathering and organizing ideas to drafting, revising, and editing—and take increasing ownership of their work as writers.

Grammar instruction continues explicitly in the Upper School, building students' knowledge of increasingly sophisticated sentence structures, conventions, and language. Students apply this knowledge to their own writing, using grammar and syntax intentionally to strengthen clarity, precision, and style, while also drawing on their understanding of language to analyze the choices authors make in the texts they read.

Our 5–8 literacy expectations are grounded in the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards and are part of a coherent, school-wide vision for literacy that spans kindergarten through 8th grade. Teachers collaborate across grade levels to ensure that students build upon their knowledge and skills each year, preparing them to enter high school as thoughtful, analytical, confident, and independent readers and writers.

KINDERGARTEN: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Reading is a way to learn, explore, and enjoy stories and information.
- Books have parts, including a cover, title, pages, words, and pictures.
- Words are made up of letters, and sentences are made up of words in a specific order.
- Words are separated by spaces in print.
- Print carries meaning, and we read from left to right and top to bottom in English.
- Pictures can help us understand the meaning of a story or text.
- Stories have characters, settings, and events that can be retold and discussed.

Reading and Decoding Skills

- Retell stories or share key details from a text.
- Make connections between self, text, and the world.
- Identify literary (fiction) and informational texts.
- Name the author and illustrator and define the role of each in presenting the ideas in a text.
- Describe the relationship between illustrations and the text.
- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Accurately decode all cvc words.
- Decode some regularly spelled one-syllable words (ex. ccvc, cvcc).
- Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Demonstrate one-to-one letter-sound correspondence
- Begin to use the suffixes -ed and -s as clues to word meaning
- Read taught high-frequency words by sight.
- Read grade-level decodable texts and demonstrate basic literal comprehension by answering questions and retelling key details.

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Engage with books independently for 5 minutes.
- Demonstrate interest and engagement with books read aloud through active listening and participation.

KINDERGARTEN: Core Competencies

Writing Understandings

- Writing is a way to share thoughts, stories, and information with others.
- Letters and words are used to represent spoken language.
- Words in a sentence follow a specific order to make sense.
- Pictures and words work together to tell a story or share an idea.
- Writers can use different kinds of writing (e.g., storytelling, labeling, lists, messages).
- Writing can be read by others when letters, words, and spaces are clear.
- Writers can improve their writing by adding more details, drawing clearer pictures, or rereading their work.

Writing Skills

- Create drawings that clearly show people, places, and events.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, oral expression, and emergent writing to state an opinion about a familiar topic or personal experience and state a reason to support that.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, oral expression, and emergent writing to name a familiar topic and supply information.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating oral expression, and emergent writing to narrate an event or events in a sequence.
- Use graphic organizers to plan and structure informational writing.
- Write an informational text with 3-5 sentences that clearly shares facts about a topic.
- Encode all sounds in one and two syllable words.

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Write a complete sentence independently using appropriate spacing and punctuation.
- Independently apply grade level phonics skills and taught high frequency words when writing.
- Write in mostly lowercase letters, using uppercase only where needed (e.g., at the beginning of a sentence or for names).
- Sustain independent writing for at least 10 minutes.
- Consistently reread writing and begin making simple edits and revisions when appropriate.

KINDERGARTEN: Core Competencies

Phonological Awareness Skills

- Recognize and produce spoken rhyming words.
- Blend and segment syllables in spoken words.
- Blend and segment onsets and rimes of spoken words.
- Blend and segment individual phonemes in spoken one-syllable words.

Grammar and Language Skills

- Recognize and use common nouns (e.g., cat, book) and verbs (e.g., run, jump).
- Begin using simple pronouns (e.g., I, he, she, they).
- Use simple adjectives to add detail.
- Speak and write in complete sentences.
- Identify complete sentences and fragments.
- Understand the roles of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in simple sentences.
- Begin using conjunctions (e.g., and, because) to connect ideas.
- Understand that words have specific roles in sentences. For example, nouns name people, places, or things, and adjectives describe or tell more about nouns.
- Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing duck is a bird and learning the verb to duck).

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults in small and large groups and during play.
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions, including listening to others, taking turns, and staying on topic.
- Listen actively and ask relevant follow-up questions based on the speaker's response.
- Describe familiar people, places, things, and events with detail.
- Express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.
- Explore and use new vocabulary and multiple-meaning words and phrases in authentic experiences.

GRADE 1: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Reading is a way to learn, explore, and understand the world.
- Words are made up of letters and sounds that follow predictable patterns.
- Fluent reading sounds smooth and expressive, helping readers understand the text.
- Stories have characters, settings, problems, and events that can be retold in order.
- Nonfiction texts provide facts and information about real people, places, and things.
- Readers ask and answer questions to show understanding of what they read.
- Readers think about what they are reading and make connections to their own lives.
- Reading the same book multiple times builds fluency and confidence.

Reading and Decoding Skills

- Develop and answer questions about key ideas and details in a text.
- Identify a main topic or central idea in a text and retell important details.
- Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, or pieces of information in a text.
- Identify specific words that express feelings and senses.
- Identify and explain the major differences between literary texts and informational texts.
- Identify specific information an author or illustrator gives that supports ideas in a text.
- Make connections between self and text (texts and other people/ world).
- Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).
- Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Decode consonant blends (e.g., bl, st, mp) at the beginning and end of words
- Decode consonant digraphs (e.g., sh, ch, th, wh)
- Decode long vowel sounds in regularly spelled one-syllable words (e.g., final -e conventions and common vowel teams).
- Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.
- Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables.
- Recognize and identify root words and simple suffixes (e.g. run, runs, walk, walked).
- Read most common high-frequency words by sight.
- Regularly add new words to sight vocabulary independently, using reading and writing experiences to internalize unfamiliar words without direct instruction.

GRADE 1: Core Competencies

Reading and Decoding Skills (continued)

- Read beginning reader texts, appropriate to individual student ability, with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read beginning reader texts, appropriate to individual student ability, orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Engage with books independently for 10 minutes.
- Demonstrate interest and engagement with books read aloud through active listening and participation.
- Engage in one-on-one conversations with peers about books, actively listening, sharing ideas, and taking turns speaking.
- Respect others' reading time and space; demonstrate focus and independence during reading times.
- Take care of books and classroom materials.

Writing Understandings

- Writing is a way to share ideas, tell stories, and provide information.
- Sentences are made up of words that follow a specific order to make sense.
- Writers use capitalization, punctuation, and spacing to make their writing clear.
- Stories have a beginning, middle, and end that help readers understand what happens.
- Informational writing shares facts and answers questions about a topic.
- Writers can add details through words and pictures to make their ideas clearer.
- Revising and editing help make writing stronger.
- Writing can be planned using pictures, graphic organizers, or talking through ideas.
- Writers use high-frequency words and phonics knowledge to spell words.
- Writing can be shared with others to communicate thoughts and information.

GRADE 1: Core Competencies**Writing Skills**

- Identify the four types of sentences (statement, command, question, and exclamatory) and integrate them appropriately in writing.
- Use correct end punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation points).
- Create a response to a text, author, theme or personal experience (e.g., poem, dramatization, artwork, or other).
- Use graphic organizers to plan and structure informational writing.
- Write an informative/explanatory text with 5-8 sentences that introduces a topic, supplies some facts to develop points, and provides some sense of closure.
- Write an opinion on a topic or personal experience; give two or more reasons to support that opinion.
- Write narratives which recount real or imagined experiences or events or a short sequence of events.
- Develop questions and participate in shared research and explorations to answer questions and to build knowledge.
- Recall and represent relevant information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question in a variety of ways.
- Encode all sounds in one and two syllable words.
- Use the correct format for a letter, including a greeting, body, and closing.
- Write letters for different purposes (e.g., friendly letters, thank-you notes, invitations).

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Consistently reread writing and begin making simple edits and revisions when appropriate:
 - Use pronouns to make language less repetitive
 - Add adjectives
 - Use more specific verbs.
- Write five complete sentences independently, using appropriate spacing and punctuation.
- Independently apply grade level phonics skills and taught high frequency words when writing.
- Write in all lowercase letters and use correct capitalization for names, the pronoun “I,” days of the week, and the beginning of sentences.
- Independently sustain engagement in the writing process for at least 15 minutes.

GRADE 1: Core Competencies

Phonological Awareness

- Count, blend and segment single syllable words that include consonant blends.
- Create new words by manipulating individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken one-syllable words.
- Manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in single -syllable spoken words.
- Determine the number of syllables in a printed word by using knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound.

Grammar and Language Skills

- Identify and use the four sentence types.
- Recognize and use nouns, including singular and plural forms.
- Use verbs to show action and begin to use different tenses (past, present, future).
- Use simple pronouns (e.g., I, he, she, they, it) correctly in sentences.
- Use adjectives to describe nouns (e.g., big dog, red apple).
- Use conjunctions (e.g., and, but, because) to connect ideas in a sentence.
- Write complete sentences with a subject and a predicate.
- Use apostrophes in common contractions (e.g., can't, don't).
- Begin using commas in dates and to separate words in a list.
- Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., look) and their inflectional forms (e.g., looks, looked, looking).
- Begin to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.
- Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., large, gigantic) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.

GRADE 1: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening Skills and Understandings

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults (e.g., in small and large groups and during play).
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and participate by actively listening, taking turns, and staying on topic.
- Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
- Ask questions to clear up any confusion about topics and texts under discussion.
- Consider individual differences when communicating with others.
- Develop and answer questions to clarify what the speaker says and identify a speaker's point of view.
- Describe familiar people, places, things, and events with relevant details expressing ideas clearly.
- Express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, using complete sentences when appropriate to task, situation, and audience.
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Begin to demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Reading helps us learn new information, understand others' experiences, and enjoy stories.
- Readers use a combination of decoding strategies, context clues, and word parts (prefixes, suffixes, root words) to read unfamiliar words.
- Fluent reading involves accuracy, appropriate pacing, and expression, which support comprehension.
- Good readers think about what they read and monitor their understanding as they go.
- Readers ask and answer questions, make predictions, and summarize key details to show understanding.
- Fiction texts have characters, settings, and problems that develop across the story.
- Nonfiction texts use features (headings, captions, diagrams) to help readers learn new information.
- Readers compare and contrast texts, characters, and ideas.
- Reading widely and often helps build vocabulary, knowledge, and confidence.

Reading and Decoding Skills

- Develop and answer questions to demonstrate an understanding of key ideas and details in a text.
- Identify a main topic or central idea and retell key details in a text; summarize portions of a text.
- In literary texts, describe how characters respond to major events and challenges.
- Explain how words and phrases in a text suggest feelings and appeal to the senses.
- Explain how specific points the author or illustrator makes in a text are supported by relevant reasons.
- Make connections between self and text (texts and other people/ world).
- Know and apply phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words (including common vowel teams).
- Decode short and long vowel sounds in two-syllable words.
- Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words.
- Recognize and identify root words and common suffixes and prefixes.
- Read all common high-frequency words by sight.
- Read grade-level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Choose books that are appropriate for their level and interests, and explain why they selected them.
- Read independently for 15 minutes and continue developing reading stamina across the school year.
- Reread texts to build fluency, deepen understanding, or clarify confusion.
- Talk about books with peers, sharing ideas, questions, and opinions.
- Listen respectfully to others' ideas during book discussions and take turns speaking.
- Respect others' reading time and space; demonstrate focus and independence during reading times.
- Take care of books and classroom materials.
- Demonstrate perseverance when reading challenging texts by using strategies rather than giving up.
- Ask for help appropriately when stuck, after trying independent strategies first.
- Celebrate personal reading growth and respect that others may read differently or at a different pace.
- Take risks as a reader by trying new genres, authors, or book types.

Writing Understandings

- Writing is a way to communicate ideas, tell stories, and share information with others.
- Writers organize their ideas before writing to make their message clear.
- Different types of writing (narrative, informational, opinion) serve different purposes and follow different structures.
- Strong writing includes clear sentences, relevant details, and organized ideas.
- Writing can be revised and edited to make it clearer, more detailed, and easier to understand.
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization help the reader understand the writer's message.
- Writers use what they know about words and sounds to spell unfamiliar words.
- Pictures and text can work together to communicate meaning, especially in early drafts.
- Writing improves over time with practice, reflection, and feedback.

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Writing Skills

- Utilize a variety of sentence types in written pieces.
- Use conjunctions (e.g., and, but, because, so) to connect ideas in a sentence.
- Write multiple sentences on a topic with a clear focus.
- Begin to write simple topic sentences that introduce the main idea of a paragraph, often using a GIST statement to clarify the purpose and focus.
- Use topic sentences to help organize informational and opinion writing.
- Write an opinion about a topic or personal experience, using clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts that introduce a topic, use facts and other information to develop points, use content-specific language, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- Write narratives which recount real or imagined experiences or a short sequence of events, including details to describe actions, thoughts and feelings; use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.
- Create a response to a text, author, theme or personal experience (e.g., poem, play, story, artwork, or other).
- Develop questions and participate in shared research and explorations to answer questions and to build knowledge.
- Recall and represent relevant information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- Use descriptive language to add detail and interest.
- Use descriptive language by choosing strong verbs, specific adjectives, and precise nouns; adding sensory details and including comparisons to help readers visualize and connect with their writing.
- Begin to revise writing by adding, changing, or reordering words and sentences.
- Spell many high-frequency words correctly and apply phonics to spell unknown words.
- Use correct capitalization and punctuation in most sentences. Capitalize the beginning of sentences and most proper nouns. Apply end punctuation accurately and use commas when creating a list.
- Edit for punctuation, capitalization, and spelling with increasing independence.

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Use classroom tools such as sound walls, checklists, and charts to support writing, spelling, and editing habits.
- Write independently for 20 minutes, sustaining focus and effort throughout the session.
- Plan writing by thinking, talking, sketching, and using graphic organizers to organize ideas.
- Reread writing regularly to check for clarity, meaning, and flow.
- Stay focused during writing time and take responsibility for organizing and caring for materials.
- Share writing with peers and listen respectfully when others share their work.
- Take risks by trying new ideas or unfamiliar types of writing, even when they feel challenging.
- Use writing time productively from start to finish, staying engaged in the task.
- Set a goal at the start of writing time (e.g., finish a draft, add details, revise a sentence) and work toward it.
- Keep writing materials organized and keep track of drafts and planning tools.
- Use checklists or rubrics to reflect on progress and make decisions about what to do next.
- Follow through on finishing pieces and applying feedback through revision and editing.
- Ask for help or feedback when needed, after trying strategies independently.
- Show consistent effort to use correct capitalization in names, titles, the pronoun “I,” days of the week, and at the beginning of sentences.

Grammar and Language Skills

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
- Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (e.g., birdhouse, lighthouse, housefly; bookshelf, notebook, bookmark).
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Compare academic and conversational uses of English.
- Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., happy/unhappy, tell/retell).
- Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs (e.g., toss, throw, hurl) and closely related adjectives (e.g., thin, slender, skinny, scrawny).
- Recognize and use simple prefixes and suffixes to change meaning.

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Grammar and Language Skills (continued)

- Understand that base words carry meaning and can combine with affixes
- Examples: play → playing, played, playful, replays
- Write complete sentences that include a subject and predicate.
- Use end punctuation appropriately (periods, question marks, exclamation marks).
- Identify and correctly use nouns (singular, plural, common, proper).
- Use verbs that match the subject and show correct tense (past, present, future).
- Use adjectives to describe nouns.
- Use pronouns to avoid repetition.
- Use conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or, because) to connect ideas.
- Form and use contractions in writing.
- Use commas in a list.

Phonics

- Recognize and use common vowel teams in reading and writing
- Recognize and use consonant blends at the beginning and end of words
- Recognize and use consonant digraphs that represent single sounds
- Spell words with common long vowel patterns and spelling rules
- Apply spelling rules when adding endings to base words
- Spell grade-level high-frequency and irregular words
- Break words into syllables to support reading and spelling
- Read and spell two-syllable words with common patterns
- Use speech-to-print strategies when spelling unfamiliar words
- Think about how words sound, what they mean, and how they're spelled when reading and writing
- Apply word study knowledge across reading, writing, and content areas

GRADE 2: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults in small and large groups and during play.
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and participate by actively listening, taking turns, and staying on topic.
- Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others through multiple exchanges.
- Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about topics and texts under discussion.
- Consider individual differences when communicating with others.
- Recount or describe key ideas or details of diverse texts and formats.
- Develop and answer questions about what a speaker says; agree or disagree with the speaker's point of view, providing a reason(s).
- Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
- Express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, adapting language according to context.
- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs.

GRADE 3: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Reading is a way to learn new information, understand others' experiences, and explore ideas.
- Readers use strategies (like rereading, asking questions, and predicting) to deepen comprehension.
- Texts have structures and features that help readers understand how ideas are organized.
- Readers support their thinking with evidence from the text.

Reading Skills

- Develop and answer questions to locate relevant and specific details in a text to support an answer or inference.
- Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize portions of a text.
- In literary texts, describe character traits, motivations, or feelings, drawing on specific details from the text.
- In informational texts, describe the relationship among a series of events, ideas, concepts, or steps in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- Determine the meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, and academic and content-specific words.
- In literary texts, identify parts of stories, dramas, and poems using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza.
- In informational texts, identify and use text features to build comprehension.
- Begin using basic note-taking tools (e.g., boxes and bullets, labeled diagrams, or short lists) to record key details from texts and read-alouds with teacher support.
- Discuss how the reader's point of view or perspective may differ from that of the author, narrator or characters in a text.
- Explain how specific illustrations or text features contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a text (e.g., create mood, emphasize character or setting, or determine where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence.
- Recognize genres and make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.
- Read grade-level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read grade-level text across genres orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

GRADE 3: Core Competencies

Phonics and Decoding Skills

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Identify, know the meanings of, and decode words with suffixes.
- Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
- Decode and spell multisyllabic words with regular patterns
- Apply syllable types and division patterns (e.g., V/CV, VC/CV, C+le)
- Decode and spell words with common long vowel teams
- Read and spell r-controlled vowel words.
- Decode and spell words with diphthongs and variant vowels.
- Accurately read and spell words with soft/hard c and g.

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Read independently for sustained periods (20+ minutes), with increasing stamina and focus.
- Select “just right” books for independent reading using strategies like I-PICK to make thoughtful choices.
- Explore a variety of genres, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, as part of regular reading habits.
- Set personal reading goals and reflect on progress, such as finishing a series or trying new authors or genres.
- Develop routines for tracking thinking while reading, such as jotting, sketching, or using sticky notes.
- Reread familiar texts to clarify confusion, deepen understanding, or notice new details.
- Talk regularly with peers about books—sharing opinions, questions, and personal connections.
- Use strategies to get back on track when comprehension breaks down, such as rereading or asking for help.
- Begin to read with specific purposes in mind, such as learning new information, supporting writing, or exploring a topic.
- Show responsibility for books and reading materials by caring for them and keeping track of what they borrow.

GRADE 3: Core Competencies

Writing Understandings

- Writing communicates ideas, experiences, and opinions to others.
- Writers use structure to organize their thinking across genres (narrative, opinion, informational).
- Revising and editing make writing clearer, stronger, and more engaging for readers.
- Word choice and sentence variety help bring writing to life.

Writing Skills

- Introduce a claim, supported by details, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Write an argument to support claim(s), using clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary.
- Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.
- Provide a concluding statement or section.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.
- Introduce a topic and organize related information together.
- Continue using GIST statements to introduce main ideas and begin learning additional types of topic sentences, including list statements, power number statements, and appositive statements (e.g., recycling, a daily habit in our school, helps protect the environment.).
- Begin choosing topic sentence types that best fit the purpose and content of the paragraph.
- Develop a topic with facts, definitions, and details; include illustrations when useful for aiding comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters.
- Use descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- Provide a conclusion.
- Create a response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience (e.g., poem, play, story, artwork, or other).
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge.
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather information from multiple sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

GRADE 3: Core Competencies**Writing Habits and Behaviors**

- Write independently for sustained periods (20–30 minutes), showing focus and perseverance.
- Plan writing by brainstorming, talking, sketching, or using graphic organizers to organize ideas.
- Reread writing consistently to clarify meaning, revise ideas, and check for overall flow.
- Use classroom tools such as anchor charts, word walls, personal dictionaries, and rubrics to support spelling and craft choices.
- Make a habit of revising writing by adding, deleting, or rearranging ideas to make it stronger.
- Edit regularly for punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and spelling, using checklists or peer feedback.
- Set personal writing goals and reflect on progress during and across writing projects.
- Apply teacher and peer feedback thoughtfully to improve writing over time.
- Move through the full writing process with increasing independence, from planning and drafting to revising, editing, and publishing.
- Apply writing habits flexibly across genres and subject areas, using writing to express, explain, and explore ideas.
- Monitor personal focus and effort during writing time; take short, purposeful breaks when needed and return to the task.

Language Skills

- Recognize differences between the conventions of spoken conversational English and academic English; signal this awareness by selecting conversational or academic forms when speaking or writing.
- Choose words and phrases for effect.
- Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies, including, but not limited to the following:
 - Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and suffixes.
 - Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/careless, heat/preheat).
 - Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion).

GRADE 3: Core Competencies

Language Skills (continued)

- Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
- Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).
- Use words for identification and description, making connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).
- Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).
- Acquire and accurately use conversational, general academic, and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went out for dessert).

Grammar Skills

- Write complete sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.
- Use nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns correctly in writing.
- Identify and use all four types of sentences: statement, questions, command, exclamations.
- Use coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or and, so) to join ideas.
- Begin using complex sentences with subordinating conjunctions (because, when, if).

GRADE 3: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Participate and engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse peers and adults, expressing ideas clearly, and building on those of others.
- Come to discussions having read or studied required material; draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions by actively listening, taking turns, and staying on topic.
- Ask questions to check understanding of information presented and link comments to the remarks of others.
- Explain their own ideas and understanding of the discussion.
- Consider individual differences when communicating with others.
- Determine the central ideas and supporting details or information presented in diverse texts and formats (e.g., including visual, quantitative, and oral).
- Ask and answer questions in order to evaluate a speaker's point of view, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
- Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
- Include digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to emphasize certain facts or details.
- Identify contexts that call for academic English or informal discourse.

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Readers analyze texts by identifying main ideas, comparing perspectives, and drawing inferences.
- Understanding how an author structures and develops a text helps deepen comprehension.
- Readers use evidence and text features to support their interpretations and ideas.
- Reading multiple texts helps build knowledge, make connections, and see different points of view.

Reading Skills

- Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine a theme or central idea of text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize a text.
- In literary texts, describe a character, setting, or event, drawing on specific details in the text.
- In informational texts, explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts, including what happened and why, based on specific evidence from the text.
- Determine the meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, academic, and content-specific words.
- In literary texts, identify and analyze structural elements, using terms such as verse, rhythm, meter, characters, settings, dialogue, stage directions.
- In informational texts, identify the overall structure using terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution.
- In literary texts, compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
- In informational texts, compare and contrast a primary and secondary source on the same event or topic.
- Identify information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, illustrations), and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text.
- Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence.
- Use structured notes (e.g., categories, timelines, or two-column charts) to organize key ideas and evidence from multiple sources.
- Recognize genres and make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Read independently for extended periods (30+ minutes), maintaining stamina and focus.
- Choose texts that match interests and reading goals, and challenge themselves to try new genres.
- Set goals to grow as a reader and reflect on their progress.
- Develop and maintain habits of recording thinking while reading, such as note-taking, annotating, or writing responses.
- Persist through reading challenges by applying strategies when comprehension breaks down.
- Discuss books thoughtfully in partnerships or groups, supporting ideas with text evidence.
- Intentionally select a variety of genres to broaden perspectives and reading experiences.
- Apply reading habits purposefully across subject areas to support learning and inquiry.
- Maintain personal reading logs, response notebooks, or digital portfolios to reflect and respond to reading.

Writing Understandings

- Writing can inform, persuade, or entertain depending on the writer's purpose.
- Writers develop ideas with relevant facts, vivid details, and thoughtful organization.
- Sentence fluency and paragraph structure help make writing more effective and readable.
- Strong writing includes revision, word choice, and attention to audience.

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Writing Skills

- Write an argument to support claim(s), using clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Use a variety of topic sentence types—including GIST, list, power number, and appositive statements—to introduce and structure paragraphs.
- Begin to select and revise topic sentences independently to match the writer's purpose, audience, and the structure of the paragraph.
- Introduce a precise claim, supported by well-organized facts and details, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary.
- Use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.
- Provide a concluding statement or section related to the argument presented.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to explore a topic and convey ideas and information relevant to the subject.
- Introduce a topic clearly and organize related information in paragraphs and sections.
- Develop ideas on a topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, or other relevant information; include text features when useful for aiding comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary.
- Use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.
- Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters.
- Use dialogue and description of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- Use transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to respond and support analysis, reflection, and research by applying the grade 4 Reading Standards.
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigating multiple aspects of a topic.
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from multiple sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Write independently for sustained periods (30–40 minutes), maintaining focus and stamina throughout the writing process.
- Use a consistent planning process, such as brainstorming, organizing, outlining, or talking, to prepare for drafting.
- Reread drafts critically and with purpose to clarify meaning, revise ideas, and improve overall flow.
- Revise writing regularly by adding detail, improving word choice, and reorganizing ideas for clarity and impact.
- Edit writing for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics, using checklists and feedback from peers or teachers.
- Set personal writing goals and track progress across writing pieces.
- Apply writing habits across genres and subject areas, adapting tone and structure for different purposes.
- Use available tools, including anchor charts, mentor texts, rubrics, and reference materials, to support writing craft and accuracy.
- Follow through on publishing and presenting writing in a variety of formats, including typed, handwritten, or digital forms.

Language Skills and Understandings

- Recognize differences between the conventions of spoken conversational English and academic English; signal this awareness by selecting conversational or academic forms when speaking or writing.
- Choose words and phrases for effect.
- Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
- Distinguish between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small group discussion).
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., telegraph, photograph, autograph).

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Language Skills and Understandings (continued)

- Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and suffixes.
- Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses) to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors in context.
- Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
- Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their antonyms and synonyms.
- Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).

Grammar

- Write complete sentences with subject-verb agreement.
- Use compound and complex sentences to express ideas.
- Identify and use independent and dependent clauses.
- Use coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) and subordinating conjunctions (because, although, when) to connect ideas.
- Use quotation marks and commas to punctuate dialogue correctly.
- Maintain consistent verb tense within a sentence or paragraph.
- Identify and correctly use nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns.
- Use prepositions and prepositional phrases to add detail.
- Use commas in compound sentences, series, and introductory phrases.
- Correctly use apostrophes in contractions and possessives.

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Phonics, Decoding and Fluency

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Identify, know the meanings of, and decode words with suffixes.
- Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
- Read grade-level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read grade-level text across genres orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- Decode and spell multisyllabic and content-area words.
- Apply rules for open and closed syllables and stress patterns.
- Spell words with irregular vowel teams and digraphs. *Examples: ie, ei, igh, ough → believe, ceiling, neighbor, though*
- Recognize and accurately spell consonant patterns. *Examples: kn, wr, ph, gh, sc → knife, write, phone, laugh, science*
- Consistently apply spelling rules.

Morphology and Word Analysis

- Analyze words using common Latin and Greek roots. *Examples: port (carry), dict (speak), geo (earth)*
- Use derivational suffixes to change word class. *Examples: beauty → beautiful, create → creation*
- Use morphology to infer meaning of unknown words in fiction and nonfiction. *Example: transport = trans (across) + port (carry)*

GRADE 4: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, expressing ideas clearly, and building on those of others.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- Review the relevant ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding of the discussion.
- Paraphrase portions of information presented in diverse formats (e.g., including visual, quantitative, and oral).
- Identify and evaluate the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.
- Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace and volume appropriate for audience.
- Include digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to emphasize central ideas or themes.
- Distinguish between contexts that call for formal English versus/or informal discourse; use formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Reading Understandings

- Readers synthesize information from multiple sources to build understanding and evaluate ideas.
- They consider an author's purpose, perspective, and use of language when analyzing text.
- Readers make inferences, support claims with text evidence, and revise their thinking as they read.
- Reading is a tool for research, reflection, and expanding worldviews.

Reading Skills

- Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize a text.
- In literary texts, compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, and events, drawing on specific details in the text.
- In informational texts, explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts based on specific evidence from the text.
- Determine the meaning of words, phrases, figurative language, academic, and content-specific words and analyze their effect on meaning, tone, or mood.
- In literary texts, explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to determine the overall structure of a story, drama, or poem.
- In informational texts, compare and contrast the overall structure in two or more texts using terms such as sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution.
- In literary texts, explain how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.
- In informational texts, analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
- Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to meaning of literary and informational texts.
- Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence, identifying which reasons and evidence support which claims.
- Independently select appropriate note-taking formats (e.g., outlines, webs, evidence charts) and synthesize information across texts to support writing or discussion.
- Use established criteria to categorize texts and make informed judgments about quality; make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras and personal experiences.

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Read independently for extended periods (30+ minutes), sustaining focus and stamina.
- Select books across a range of genres, text complexities, and purposes—including research, inquiry, and enjoyment.
- Set and monitor personal reading goals related to volume, genre, authors, or reading growth.
- Develop consistent habits for tracking thinking, questions, and responses using post-its, journals, or digital tools.
- Annotate and revisit text regularly to support thinking and discussions.
- Approach reading with a critical lens, actively considering the author's purpose, structure, and craft.
- Engage in thoughtful conversations about books, using text evidence to support ideas and interpretations.
- Reflect on reading identity and habits over time, making intentional adjustments to reading choices and goals.

Writing Understandings

- Writers use voice, structure, and evidence to communicate with clarity and impact.
- Writing in different genres requires purposeful planning, organization, and language.
- Writers revise for meaning, tone, and precision, not just correctness.
- Effective writing connects to broader ideas, uses strong transitions, and considers the reader's perspective.

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Writing Skills

- Write an argument to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Introduce a precise claim and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Integrate a range of topic sentence types with increased flexibility and purpose.
- Write topic sentences that reflect complexity, including those that use subordinating conjunctions (e.g., Even though recycling takes extra time, it benefits our community.).
- Revise topic sentences for tone, clarity, and connection to the broader writing purpose.
- Develop a topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information; include text features, illustrations, and multimedia to aid comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.
- Use appropriate transitional/linking words, phrases, and clauses to clarify and connect ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- Establish a style aligned to a subject area or task.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to respond and support analysis, reflection and research by applying the Grade 5 Reading Standards.
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, and to build knowledge through investigation of multiple aspects of a topic using multiple sources.
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from multiple sources; summarize or paraphrase; avoid plagiarism and provide a list of sources.

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Sustain independent writing for 30+ minutes, engaging in planning, drafting, and revising with independence.
- Plan writing by talking, jotting, outlining, or using graphic organizers to organize ideas before drafting.
- Reread and revise drafts thoughtfully, with attention to structure, clarity, elaboration, and word choice.
- Edit writing with care, checking for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraph structure.
- Use classroom tools, such as rubrics, checklists, anchor charts, and mentor texts, to support writing craft and conventions.
- Apply feedback from peers and teachers to make meaningful revisions.
- Set personal writing goals and monitor progress over time across writing projects.
- Transfer writing habits across genres and subject areas, adapting voice and structure for different purposes.
- Use digital tools intentionally to draft, revise, publish, and present writing.

Language Skills and Understandings

- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., photograph, photosynthesis).
- Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses) to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context.
- Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
- Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.
- Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition).

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Grammar

- Write and identify complete sentences, fragments, and run-ons.
- Use compound and complex sentences to show relationships between ideas.
- Vary sentence openings and structure to improve fluency and tone.
- Use dependent and independent clauses flexibly and purposefully.
- Maintain correct and consistent verb tense, including perfect tenses when appropriate.
- Use a variety of conjunctions, transitions, and prepositions to show relationships among ideas.
- Use modifiers (e.g., adverbs and adjectives) to enhance description and precision.
- Punctuate dialogue and quoted text accurately using commas and quotation marks.
- Apply commas to set off introductory elements, items in a series, and appositives.
- Use colons and parentheses where appropriate to clarify information.
- Use apostrophes for contractions and possessives with accuracy.
- Continue mastery of parts of speech in context:
 - Nouns (including abstract and possessive)
 - Verbs (helping, linking, irregular)
 - Pronouns (including subject/object agreement and vague pronouns)
 - Adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions
 - Conjunctions and interjections

Phonics, Decoding and Fluency

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
- Read grade-level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read grade-level text across genres orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- Accurately read and spell multisyllabic and morphologically complex words using knowledge of syllable types and division rules. *Examples: unforgettable, transportation, disagreement, information*
- Apply advanced knowledge of spelling patterns and exceptions in reading and writing. *Examples: conscience, schedule, chorus, architecture, Wednesday*
- Use knowledge of less common vowel and consonant patterns to decode and spell unfamiliar words. *Examples: igh (eight), ough (through, rough), kn (knight), sc (science), ps (psychology)*

GRADE 5: Core Competencies

Morphology and Word Analysis

- Use phonics and morphology strategies together to decode academic vocabulary. *Examples: photosynthesis, autobiography, construction*
- Analyze unfamiliar words by identifying prefixes, suffixes, and Greek/Latin roots.
- Understand how prefixes and suffixes change meaning, function, and part of speech. *Examples: happy → happiness (adj → noun), act → react, inactive, actor*
- Use morphology to support spelling, vocabulary development, and comprehension in all subject areas.
- Use affix knowledge to identify word families and generate new vocabulary. *Example: From view → preview, review, viewer, viewpoint*
- Begin to explore etymology and word origins to understand spelling and meaning. *Examples: Noticing Latin roots in science vocabulary or Greek roots in math terms.*

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- Consider the ideas expressed and draw conclusions about information and knowledge gained from the discussions.
- Summarize information presented in diverse formats (e.g., including visual, quantitative, and oral).
- Identify and evaluate the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.
- Report on a topic or text, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support central ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace and volume appropriate for audience.
- Include digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to emphasize and enhance central ideas or themes.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate.

GRADE 6: Core Competencies

Reading Skills

- Cite textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is developed by key supporting details over the course of a text; summarize a text
- In literary texts, describe how events unfold, as well as how characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, and mood, including words with multiple meanings.
- In literary texts, analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, stanza, chapter, scene, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and how it contributes to the development of theme, central idea, setting, or plot.
- In literary texts, analyze how elements of plot are related, affect one another, and contribute to meaning.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the novel.
- Cite textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; summarize a text.
- In literary texts, describe how events unfold, as well as how characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- In literary texts, analyze how elements of plot are related, affected one another, and contribute to meaning.
- In literary texts, identify the point of view and explain how it is developed and conveys meaning. In informational texts, explain how and author's geographic location or culture affects his or her perspective.
- Compare and contrast how different formats, including print and digital media, contribute to the understanding of a subject.
- Trace and evaluate the development of an argument and specific claims in texts, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and relevant evidence from claims that are not.
- Use established criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. Make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences.

GRADE 6: Core Competencies

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Read independently for 30+ minutes with focus and purpose.
- Arrive prepared for class reading and discussions, having completed required reading assignments.
- Use reading tools (e.g., post-its, reading notebooks, digital platforms) to track thinking, questions, and important moments.
- Annotate or jot notes while reading to support comprehension and class participation.
- Reread texts or passages when meaning breaks down.
- Choose texts thoughtfully based on interests, needs, or reading goals.
- Demonstrate growing independence in selecting strategies to support comprehension.
- Respect independent reading time and consistently engage during those periods.
- Reflect on personal reading progress and habits across genres and assignments.
- Begin developing systems to identify, track, and use unfamiliar vocabulary from independent and assigned reading (e.g., personal word banks, vocabulary lists).

Writing

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence,
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to argue a claim.
- Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that explains the significance of the argument presented.
- Maintain a style and tone appropriate to the writing task.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Introduce a topic clearly; organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.
- Develop a topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.
- Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that explains the significance of the information presented.
- Establish and maintain a style appropriate to the writing task.

GRADE 6: Core Competencies

Writing (continued)

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details and sequencing.
- Engage the reader by introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme, or personal experience.

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Sustain independent writing for 30+ minutes with focus and engagement.
- Use planning tools (e.g., outlines, graphic organizers, brainstorming lists) to generate and structure ideas.
- Reread drafts regularly to check for meaning and flow.
- Edit writing for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraph structure.
- Use classroom resources (rubrics, anchor charts, mentor texts, checklists) to guide revision and editing.
- Continue to demonstrate increasing independence in managing the full writing process, from planning to publishing.
- Complete writing assignments on time, both in and out of class.
- Use writing folders or digital tools to organize and track drafts, revisions, and feedback.
- Set writing goals and reflect on progress to support growth over time.
- Participate in peer feedback routines and revise with attention to clarity and impact.

GRADE 6: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Follow norms for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
- Consider the ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
- Include digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to clarify information and emphasize and enhance central ideas or themes.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language Conventions

- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
- Maintain consistency in style and tone.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses) to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

GRADE 6: Core Competencies

Language Conventions (continued)

- Interpret figurative language, including personification, in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty).
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases; apply vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

GRADE 7: Core Competencies

Reading Skills

- Cite textual evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; summarize a text.
- In literary texts, analyze how elements of plot are related, affect one another, and contribute to meaning.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, and mood, including words with multiple meanings.
- In literary texts, analyze how structure, including genre-specific features, contributes to the development of themes □□ central ideas. (RL) In informational texts, analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the sections contribute to the whole and to the development of themes□□□ central ideas. (RI)
- In literary texts, analyze how an author develops and contrasts the point of view and the perspectives of different characters or narrators. (RL) In informational texts, analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others. (RI)
- Compare and contrast a written text with audio, filmed, staged, or digital versions in order to analyze the effects of techniques unique to each media and each format's portrayal of a subject.
- Use established criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. Make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences.
- Adding annotations.

GRADE 7: Core Competencies**Reading Habits and Behaviors**

- Read independently for extended periods (30+ minutes) with sustained focus.
- Maintain a personal system for tracking reading (e.g., logs, journals, digital tools).
- Come to class prepared, having completed assigned reading and noted key ideas or questions.
- Use strategies (highlighting, annotating, margin notes, stickies) to monitor understanding while reading.
- Apply tools such as anchor charts, discussion guides, or vocabulary trackers to support comprehension.
- Demonstrate flexibility and stamina by reading a variety of genres and text complexities.
- Monitor their own comprehension and reread when needed to clarify meaning.
- Set and reflect on personal reading goals (e.g., genre exploration, pace, volume).
- Respect reading time in class and use it purposefully.
- Demonstrate curiosity and engagement by selecting books independently and participating in conversations about texts.
- Begin to develop systems for learning and tracking new vocabulary from texts (e.g., vocabulary lists, personal dictionaries).

Writing Skills

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast and cause/effect.
- Develop a topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.
- Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that explains the significance of the information presented.
- Establish and maintain a style appropriate to the writing task.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details and clear sequencing.
- Engage the reader by establishing a point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters.

GRADE 7: Core Competencies

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Sustain focused independent writing for 30–40 minutes in class and at home.
- Plan writing using personally preferred methods (e.g., outlining, jotting, sketching) before drafting.
- Manage time effectively across stages of the writing process, planning, drafting, revising, editing.
- Reread and reflect on their own writing to identify areas for improvement.
- Use teacher and peer feedback constructively to revise and improve work.
- Use classroom resources (e.g., rubrics, checklists, mentor texts) to guide writing and self-monitor progress.
- Maintain organized writing materials (notebooks, folders, digital documents) and track drafts over time.
- Set personal writing goals (e.g., "vary my sentence beginnings") and revisit them throughout a unit.
- Approach revision as a meaningful process, not just surface editing.
- Persist through writing challenges by applying strategies (e.g., breaking tasks into steps, taking movement breaks, seeking clarification).

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Follow norms for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
- Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify personal views.
- Analyze the central ideas and supporting details presented in diverse formats (e.g., including visual, quantitative, and oral) and explain how the ideas clarify and/or contribute to a topic, text, or issue under study.
- Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear enunciation.
- Include digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

GRADE 7: Core Competencies

Language Conventions

- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Interpret figurative language, including allusions, in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending).
- Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases; apply vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

GRADE 8: Core Competencies

Reading Skills

- Cite textual evidence to strongly support an analysis of what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.
- Determine one or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; summarize a text.
- In literary texts, analyze how particular lines of dialogue or events propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- In informational texts, analyze how individuals, events, and ideas are introduced, relate to each other, and are developed.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning, tone, and mood, including words with multiple meanings.
- In literary texts, and informational texts, compare and contrast the structures of two or more texts in order to analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to overall meaning, style, theme, or central idea.
- In literary texts, analyze how the differences between the point of view, perspectives of the characters, the audience, or reader create effects such as mood and tone. In informational texts, analyze how the author addresses conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media—text, audio, video, stage, or digital—to present a particular subject or idea and analyze the extent to which a production remains faithful to or departs from the written text.
- Trace and evaluate an argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient and recognizing when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- Choose and develop criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. Make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences.

GRADE 8: Core Competencies

Reading Habits and Behaviors

- Independently manage reading assignments in and out of class, completing them on time.
- Read with sustained attention for 30+ minutes, both in school and at home.
- Use personal systems (digital or paper) to organize reading notes, annotations, and reflections.
- Prepare for class discussions by noting key moments, questions, or passages while reading.
- Consistently apply self-monitoring strategies (rereading, asking questions, summarizing).
- Engage with multiple texts at once—balancing independent reading, class novels, and research materials.
- Set specific reading goals and adjust reading choices to support growth.
- Demonstrate accountability by following through on independent reading plans.
- Use vocabulary strategies (tracking unfamiliar words, making connections to known roots/contexts) to grow academic vocabulary.
- Maintain respectful, focused participation during independent reading time and small-group discussions.
- Reflect on reading habits and preferences to build reading identity and make thoughtful book selections.

Writing Skills

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Introduce a precise claim, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from a counterclaim, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using credible sources while demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to argue a claim.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that explains the significance of the argument presented.
- Maintain a style and tone appropriate to the writing task.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.

GRADE 8: Core Competencies

Writing Skills (continued)

- Develop a topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.
- Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that explains the significance of the information presented.
- Establish and maintain a style appropriate to the writing task.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details and clear sequencing.
- Engage the reader by establishing a point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
- Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- Create a poem, story, play, artwork, or other response to a text, author, theme or personal experience; explain divergences from the original text when appropriate.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Apply the grade 8 Reading Standards to both literary and informational text, where applicable.
- Conduct research to answer questions, including self-generated questions, drawing on multiple sources, refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. Generate additional related questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
- Gather relevant information from multiple sources; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others; avoid plagiarism and follow a standard format for citation.

GRADE 8: Core Competencies

Writing Habits and Behaviors

- Write independently for 40+ minutes across genres and assignments, both in and out of class.
- Independently manage writing tasks across days, meeting deadlines and breaking large assignments into smaller steps.
- Select effective planning strategies based on task and purpose (e.g., using outlines for essays, lists for narratives).
- Monitor their own writing process and adapt routines as needed to stay productive.
- Maintain a system for organizing drafts, resources, and research notes (paper or digital).
- Seek out and apply feedback with increasing autonomy.
- Use peer collaboration strategically, asking for and offering feedback with intention.
- Reflect on writing growth through self-assessment, journaling, or portfolio review.
- Demonstrate persistence and resilience, returning to challenging writing even after setbacks.
- Work toward personal goals (e.g., write with more clarity, manage time better) and reflect on progress over time.

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively, and build on those of others.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- Follow norms for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify personal views in light of the evidence presented.
- Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse formats (e.g., including visual, quantitative, and oral) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating for sound reasoning, and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence; identify when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

GRADE 8: Core Competencies

Speaking and Listening Key Skills and Understandings (continued)

- Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear enunciation.
- Integrate digital media and/or visual displays in presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add elements of interest to engage the audience.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language Conventions

- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses) to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- Interpret figures of speech including irony and puns in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute).
- Acquire and accurately use general academic and content-specific words and phrases; apply vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.