



Parent Guide to the Curriculum

at the **BROADALBIN-PERTH** Central School District

First Grade

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED?

You play a very important role in your child's academic performance. Here are some things you can do to support your child's learning:

- ▶ Let your child know that education is the foundation for success.
- ▶ Know what your child is expected to learn in first grade.
- ▶ Help your child set high short-term and long-term academic goals.
- ▶ Designate a time and location to complete homework.
- ▶ Talk to your child about what is happening in school and constantly monitor progress.
- ▶ Advocate for your child.
- ▶ Share your child's strengths with your child and your child's teacher.

RESOURCES

- ▶ 1,000 Book Club
- ▶ RazKids.com
- ▶ Scholastic.com (parent resources)
- ▶ PBSkids.org

Broadalbin-Perth Elementary School is an important part of our school system and our community. At every grade level, students will receive the necessary preparation to be successful in school. Our goal is to instill in our students a strong sense of Patriot Pride at this young and impressionable age. This pride emerges from developing a positive work ethic, persevering in learning activities, and showing respect toward themselves and one another. As we "strive for excellence," these skills will help students become lifelong learners.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you an overview of what your child will learn by the end of first grade. This guide gives you the necessary tools and strategies to help your child meet his or her learning goals.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Teacher

When speaking with your child's teacher about academic progress, here are a few questions you may want to consider asking:

- ▶ What are the learning goals? Can you show me examples of student work that meets the learning goals?
- ▶ May I see an example of my child's work? How does it or doesn't it meet these learning goals?
- ▶ Is my child at or above grade level? What extra support is available? What can I do at home?
- ▶ What classroom routines do you have that should also be used at home?
- ▶ What kinds of questions could I ask my child on a daily basis about your class?

Talking to Your Child

Good conversations help our children see that we are interested in their lives. Here are a few conversation starters you may want to consider using:

- ▶ Tell me about the best part of your day.
- ▶ What was the nicest thing you did for someone today?
- ▶ What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- ▶ Can you show me something you learned today?
- ▶ What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
- ▶ What rules are different at school than our rules at home? Do you think they're fair?



Language & Literacy

Highlights of what your child will learn in first grade include:

- ▶ Reading and understanding a wide selection of literature and informational texts at grade level (expectation Level J).
- ▶ Retelling stories including important details and story elements (character, setting, problem, solution).
- ▶ Identifying main topics and important details in informational texts.
- ▶ Making book-to-self, book-to-book, and book-to-world, connections to foster deeper understanding.
- ▶ Answering deep-level comprehension questions using evidence from the text.
- ▶ Identifying, reading, and spelling words with long and short vowels, blends and digraphs, and vowel teams.
- ▶ Reading words by breaking them down into their individual sounds.
- ▶ Identifying syllables in words to help decode them.
- ▶ Reading and spelling irregularly spelled words.
- ▶ Reading with appropriate fluency (smoothness), expression, rhythm and intonation.
- ▶ Writing pieces that contain a beginning sentence, two or three details in sequential order, and a closing sentence.
- ▶ Writing opinion pieces with support for their thinking.
- ▶ Writing to teach about a topic by providing facts.
- ▶ Writing an organized story with details.
- ▶ Writing freely to express thoughts, feelings, events, facts or stories.
- ▶ Spelling common words correctly when writing.
- ▶ Using correct grammar, language skills and conventions when writing.
- ▶ Steadily improving their writing craft, structure, vocabulary, and content as the year progresses.



Social Studies

The focus of social studies in first grade is “My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago.” Students examine families and develop an awareness of cultural diversity in America. Students begin to learn what it means to be a responsible citizen, as well as the role of authority in making rules and laws. Students expand their knowledge of geography through the use of maps and directions. They learn their own family history while examining and organizing sources of information. Economic terminology and principles are introduced in the context of family resources and making economic decisions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BOOKS FOR PROFICIENT FIRST-GRADE READERS

- ▶ Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), some simple biographies on familiar subjects
- ▶ Beginning chapter books with illustrations (40-75 pages)
- ▶ Underlying organizational structures used and presented clearly (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)
- ▶ Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers
- ▶ Some ideas new to most children
- ▶ Some texts with settings that are not familiar to most children
- ▶ Varied placement of subject, verb, adjectives and adverbs in sentences
- ▶ Contain some abstract concepts that are highly supported by text and illustrations
- ▶ Some complex spelling patterns and letter-sound relationships in words
- ▶ Many lines of print on a page

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFICIENT FIRST-GRADE READERS

- ▶ Able to process a variety of texts (short fiction texts, short informational texts, and longer narrative texts that have illustrations and short chapters)
- ▶ Adjust reading strategies as needed to process different genres
- ▶ Process increasingly more complex sentences
- ▶ Have a large, expanding sight-word vocabulary
- ▶ Able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multi-syllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- ▶ Read silently during independent reading
- ▶ Oral reading reflects appropriate rate, stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing



Mathematics

Highlights of what your child will learn in first grade include:

- ▶ Counting up to 120 by starting at any number less than 120.
- ▶ Reading, writing and representing a number using objects within 120.
- ▶ Solving addition and subtraction word problems in situations involving adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing.
- ▶ Adding and subtracting within 20.
- ▶ Fluently adding and subtracting basic facts within 10.
- ▶ Understanding what the numbers mean (value of each number) within two-digit numbers.
- ▶ Using their understanding of place value to add or subtract.
- ▶ Measuring lengths of objects by using a shorter object as a unit of length.
- ▶ Making composite shapes by joining shapes together.
- ▶ Dividing rectangles and circles into halves or fourths.
- ▶ Telling and writing time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks.
- ▶ Recognizing and identifying coins by naming and providing the value of a specific coin.



STEAM

In first grade, students are introduced to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics through the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Launch Program. PLTW taps into children’s exploratory nature, engages them in learning that feels like play, and encourages them to keep discovering. Through PLTW, students become hands-on problem solvers and learn to collaborate with each other.

PLTW brings learning to life. Students learn to adopt a design-thinking mindset through activities, projects, and problems that relate to the world around them. As students engage in hands-on activities in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science, they become creative, collaborative problem solvers ready to take on any challenge.

STEAM TOPICS

- ▶ Light and sound
- ▶ Animal adaptations
- ▶ Animated storytelling
- ▶ Light: Observing the sun, moon and stars

Questions to ask your child’s teacher:

Parent Tip



- ▶ How can I help my child improve or excel?
- ▶ What are some specific strategies that my child uses in school that we can practice at home?
- ▶ What are some resources that I can use to help my child learn outside the classroom setting?
- ▶ What are the steps my child needs to follow in order to solve a math word problem?

LIBRARY/MEDIA PROGRAM

The goal of the school library media program is to assist students and staff in becoming effective users of information and ideas. Children are growing up in a society that requires them to be efficient in information literacy. The media center supports classroom instruction and personal goals, encourages children to develop a lifelong love for reading, exposes children to various forms of material, and nurtures an environment for choosing and using books.

In first grade, children learn to:

- ▶ Appreciate literature.
- ▶ Identify the difference between fiction and nonfiction.
- ▶ Demonstrate an understanding of story elements (characters, setting, problem, solution).
- ▶ Begin to recognize differences in genres.
- ▶ Identify the organization of fiction books (alphabetical order based on author’s last name).
- ▶ Demonstrate the ability to use various nonfiction materials to research a topic.
- ▶ Gather information on various graphic organizers.
- ▶ Present research findings in various formats.
- ▶ Recognize ways to stay safe while working online.
- ▶ Learn how to use keywords for searching online.
- ▶ Understand what a digital trail is.
- ▶ Understand what cyberbullying is and what to do when encountering it.

Outside the Core

Physical Education

In first grade, the primary goal is for students to begin to master basic locomotor and non-locomotor skills and concepts. Spatial awareness and safety is stressed in order to continue the safe learning environment that was created in kindergarten. During this year, more emphasis is placed on ball skills and object management as team sports are introduced. With the introduction of team sports, there is also an increased emphasis on following directions and interacting appropriately with classmates. Students also start to understand more clearly the many physical and health benefits these activities have on their bodies.

- ▶ Spatial Awareness – Personal and general space in active game environments
- ▶ Locomotor Movement – Basic locomotor skills and more complex skills, such as sprinting
- ▶ Physical Fitness – Endurance and strength, speed and agility, understanding the relationship between heart rate and physical activity, introduction to obesity
- ▶ Body Management – Balance, dodging, chasing, fleeing and tumbling
- ▶ Object Management – Ball skills (rolling, tossing, throwing, dribbling with hands, dribbling with feet, kicking, catching), striking with different objects, introduction to jumping rope
- ▶ Rhythms and Dance – Movement patterns, introduction to choreographed dances
- ▶ Core Sport - Team sports (soccer, football, basketball, volleyball, floor hockey, baseball), individual sports (track and field, bowling)

Citizenship

Citizenship is built and understood through school-wide presentations, modeling, and curriculum study. Opportunities to discuss citizenship and positive character traits are embedded in the daily life of the elementary school. Through school and classroom expectations, as well as literacy study and discussion, students build an understanding of the value of citizenship. Service learning projects are hosted throughout the year to promote good citizenship. The district follows a 10-month character education calendar to ensure that students learn and understand the essential elements of good citizenship.

Art

In first grade, your child will learn:

- ▶ Types of line and shape-line drawings, as well as creating and using shape.
- ▶ Cutting and gluing.
- ▶ Problem-solving skills.
- ▶ Primary, secondary and neutral colors; utilizing the color wheel; and applying that knowledge in painting and drawing.
- ▶ Skills to understand and appreciate different types of art works.
- ▶ More advanced watercolor skills.
- ▶ How to think, question, plan and create.
- ▶ How to use a variety of mediums, including oil, pastel, crayon, chalk and paint.

Music

First graders listen to music and picture books, dance, sing and play to experience steady beat and musical opposites: loud/soft, fast/slow, long/short, and high/low. Musical notation is introduced. Students have opportunities for creating and composing while developing an understanding of and appreciation for many genres of music.

Health

In first grade, students are introduced to age-appropriate health topics so that they may start to develop and understand the importance of optimal wellness and self-worth. Learning focuses on developing healthy habits, such as making healthy food choices and practicing good hygiene. Students also begin to learn about their bodies and how they work as they explore all of the body's important systems. Each successive year builds on what children learn in previous years through hands-on experiments and projects.

- ▶ Healthy Habits – Personal hygiene, making healthy food choices, getting plenty of rest, moving every day
- ▶ Human Body – Skeletal, muscular, circulatory, respiratory, and digestive systems
- ▶ Nutrition – My Plate, obesity, gardening
- ▶ Personal Safety – Bike safety, stranger safety, substance abuse
- ▶ Emotional Health – Expressing emotions in healthy ways, importance of family and friends, anti-bullying