

# Kyrene School District



## What is CKLA?

CKLA is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum for elementary students that effectively develops children's foundational reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills while building diverse background knowledge in history, science, literature, culture, and the arts.

## Why is CKLA effective?



Research shows that background knowledge is essential to reading comprehension. Students build crucial literacy skills and vocabulary in the context of rich and culturally relevant topics like the Ancient Greek Civilization, Astronomy, The War of 1812, and Fairy Tales.



CKLA builds students' decoding skills through a research-based approach that teaches sound and letter relationships sequentially. Students learn the most frequent sound-spellings in the English language first, maximizing the words they can read from the very first day of Kindergarten.



CKLA features topics kids love in science, history, literature, culture, and the arts, instilling a love of reading and creating a literacy-rich learning environment for all students.

# What topics does CKLA cover?

CKLA builds knowledge of topics sequentially within a grade and across grades. Prior knowledge equips students to acquire even more knowledge. Building diverse background knowledge early supports students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development, which becomes evident in their conversations and writing. Below you'll find the topics covered in each grade, with examples of how CKLA builds on prior learning across grade spans.

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Nursery Rhymes and Fables	<b>Fables and Stories</b>	<b>Fairy Tales and Tall Tales</b>	<b>Classic Tales: The Wind in the Willows</b>	Personal Narratives	Personal Narratives
The Five Senses	The Human Body	Early Asian Civilizations	Animal Classification	Empires in the Middle Ages	Early American Civilizations
<b>Stories</b>	Different Lands, Similar Stories	The Ancient Greek Civilization	The Human Body: Systems and Senses	<b>Poetry</b>	Poetry
Plants	Early World Civilizations	Greek Myths	The Ancient Roman Civilization	Eureka! Student Inventor	Adventures of Don Quixote
Farms	Early American Civilizations	The War of 1812	Light and Sound	<b>Geology</b>	The Renaissance
Native Americans	Astronomy	<b>Cycles in Nature</b>	The Viking Age	Contemporary Fiction with excerpts from <i>The House on Mango Street</i>	The Reformation
Kings and Queens	<b>The History of the Earth</b>	Westward Expansion	Astronomy: Our Solar System and Beyond	American Revolution	<b>A Midsummer Night's Dream</b>
Seasons and Weather	Animals and Habitats	Insects	Native Americans: Regions and Cultures	Treasure Island	Native Americans
Columbus and the Pilgrims	Fairy Tales	The U.S. Civil War	Early Explorations of North America		<b>Chemical Matter</b>
Colonial Towns and Townspeople	A New Nation: American Independence	Human Body: Building Blocks and Nutrition	Colonial America		
<b>Taking Care of the Earth</b>	Frontier Explorers	Immigration	<b>Ecology</b>		
Presidents and American Symbols		Fighting for a Cause			



# CKLA Research Base

This body of research explains the rationales guiding the three major dimensions of the CKLA program:

1. The **two-strand** approach to instruction in K–2.
2. The language-based and **knowledge** driven approach to building children's capacity with complex text and vocabulary.
3. The importance of explicit and systematic **phonics** instruction to build automaticity with the written code.

The two-strand design in K–2 refers to the fact that the CKLA program, in these grades, is organized around two distinct blocks of language arts instruction, each with its own set of activities, materials, and goals. In the Knowledge strand, oral language and listening comprehension skills are honed through interactions with complex, knowledge-based texts. In the Skills Strand, time is dedicated to building decoding and word-level automaticity within controlled, decodable texts.

## Effective **phonics** instruction includes:

1. Systematic ordering of phonetic targets that progress in number and complexity over time.
2. Systematic practice in which children have intentionally designed opportunities to apply and use the sound-spellings they are taught (DeGraaff et al., 2009).
3. Systematic instructional planning whereby methods of instruction are consistent and progress depending on students' learning (Bodrova and Leong, 2006; DeGraaff et al., 2009).

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The decision to split the instructional focus in the earliest grades is based in recent developmental models of reading that refute the notion that decoding and reading comprehension develop sequentially (Catts et al., 2012; Kendeou et al., 2009; Scarborough, 2005; Storch and Whitehurst, 2002). In Grade 3, the program continues to develop skills (e.g., grammar, spelling, morphology), but the content of the Knowledge Strand begins to integrate into the Skills Strand in more systematic ways. There are still almost-daily Read-Alouds, but students also read independently about the topics introduced during the Read-Alouds. This serves as a bridge toward the program design in Grades 4 and 5, where instruction moves away from the two-strand model toward a single, integrated language arts block.

CKLA designed a Read-Aloud component (the Knowledge Strand) that blends language support, vocabulary, knowledge building, and listening comprehension skill development in an integrated manner. The Knowledge Strand uses interactive Read-Alouds to:

**CKLA knowledge based** Read-Alouds are an important tool used across grades to build children’s independent capacity for understanding and analyzing complex text. The Read-Aloud experience is specifically designed to integrate key messages about successful reading from cognitive, developmental, and applied research bases.

- **provide exposure to complex language and texts** as a means of supporting language development, in a manner that is particularly supportive for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with language based disabilities, or English language learners (D’angiulli, Siegel, and Maggi, 2004; Hargrave and Sénéchal, 2000);
- **provide intentional word exposure** to support vocabulary learning (Biemiller and Boote, 2006; Neuman et al., 2006; 2009);
- **build children’s knowledge and understanding of words and ideas** needed to form a clear or coherent mental understanding—comprehension—of the text;
- **provide all children with a model of active and engaged text processing** that, over time, becomes internalized (Snow and Ninio, 1986 Sulzby and Teale, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

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