



# First Grade ELAR Instructional Plan: First Semester

## Course Overview

### Welcome First Grade Families!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to First Grade! We are so excited to partner with you on this important journey in your child's education. This year will be filled with growth, exploration, and joy as your child builds on the foundational skills learned in kindergarten.

In **reading and writing**, students will develop stronger phonics skills, learn to read with fluency and understanding, and begin writing full sentences and short paragraphs. They'll explore fiction and nonfiction texts, build vocabulary, and learn to express their ideas clearly in writing.

In **social studies**, students will explore family and community, learn about important historical figures and holidays, and begin to understand the geography of Texas and the United States. We'll also focus on citizenship, rules, and making good choices.

Throughout the year, your child will continue to develop important **social-emotional skills**, such as working with others, being responsible, and showing respect.

We look forward to an amazing year of learning and growing together. Thank you for your support and for being an essential part of our classroom community!

Warmly,

**Mrs. Thompson**  
First Grade Teacher  
**South Elementary**

## Contact Information

Teacher Name: Glinda Thompson  
Email: [glinda.thompson@midlandisd.net](mailto:glinda.thompson@midlandisd.net)  
Phone: 432-240-8156

## Classroom Expectations

### Classroom Expectations & Schoolwide Guidelines – First Grade

At our school, we believe that a positive, respectful, and structured environment helps every student succeed. In first grade, we teach and model clear expectations to help students feel safe, valued, and ready to learn.



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## ☀ Classroom Environment Expectations

Our classroom is a community built on kindness, respect, responsibility, and safety. We focus on:

- **Being respectful:** Listening when others are speaking, using kind words, and following directions.
- **Being responsible:** Taking care of personal and classroom materials, completing work, and being honest.
- **Being safe:** Keeping hands and feet to ourselves, walking in the classroom, and using materials properly.
- **Being ready to learn:** Arriving on time, staying on task, and trying your best.

These expectations support both academic learning and social-emotional development.

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## 📖 Schoolwide or Grade-Level Expectations (PBIS-Aligned)

Most schools across Texas, especially those using **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)** or similar frameworks, adopt a shared set of schoolwide expectations such as:

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Responsible**

**In the classroom, this looks like:**

Expectation	What It Looks Like in 1st Grade
<b>Be Safe</b>	Walking feet, using supplies properly, keeping hands to self
<b>Be Respectful</b>	Raising your hand, using kind words, listening quietly to the teacher/peers
<b>Be Responsible</b>	Cleaning up after yourself, turning in work, following directions



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## How Students Will Learn Expectations

We don't expect students to know all the rules right away! During the first weeks of school—and throughout the year—we will:

- **Model** each behavior (e.g., how to walk in the hallway or line up quietly)
  - **Practice** routines daily (like transitions, group work, and independent time)
  - **Use visuals and charts** to remind students of expectations
  - **Reinforce positive behaviors** through praise, class incentives, and rewards
  - **Use read-alouds and role-playing** to explore social-emotional skills  
Consistency, patience, and positive reinforcement are key!
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## What Happens if Expectations Are Not Met

We understand that learning behavior takes time, and mistakes are part of growing. Here's how we address issues:

1. **Gentle Reminder** – A quiet, respectful prompt to help the student self-correct.
2. **Re-teaching** – The expectation is reviewed again, often one-on-one or as a group.
3. **Reflection Time or Break** – The student may take a short break or complete a reflection activity to reset.
4. **Parent Communication** – If the behavior continues, we will reach out to partner with you.
5. **Office Referral** – For repeated or serious behavior (e.g., aggression, defiance), the situation may be handled by administration following district guidelines.

Our goal is always to **support growth**, not punish. We work together with families to help each child thrive behaviorally and emotionally.

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Please know that your child is supported every step of the way as they learn how to be part of a positive, respectful learning community. If you ever have concerns or questions, feel free to reach out!



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## Attendance Policy & Its Importance

Here's why consistent attendance matters in 1st grade reading:

1. **Daily Skill Building** – The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for 1st grade reading covers phonics, sight words, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These skills are introduced and reinforced every day, so absences mean missing key lessons that are hard to fully make up.
2. **Reading Foundations Are Time-Sensitive** – By the end of 1st grade, the goal is for students to be fluent readers of grade-level texts. Research shows that gaps in attendance can make it harder for students to catch up later, especially with decoding and comprehension.
3. **Practice and Repetition Matter** – Students need regular opportunities to practice reading aloud, apply phonics skills, and discuss texts. Attendance ensures they get immediate feedback from the teacher and consistent guided reading time.
4. **Early Intervention Works Best** – Teachers can quickly spot and support reading difficulties when students are present every day. Gaps in attendance can delay interventions, which are most effective when provided early.
5. **Confidence and Motivation Grow With Routine** – Being present helps students stay connected to the classroom reading routine, participate in discussions, and feel successful with peers—important factors in building a lifelong love of reading.

**Please notify the school if your child will be absent.** Frequent or extended absences may make it more difficult for your child to learn necessary foundational skills that ensure student success this year and in future school years.



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## Learning Objectives

By the end of the first semester, students will be able to:

### Knowledge Domains (*Comprehension & Background Knowledge*)

1. **Nursery Rhymes and Fables** – Enjoy classic rhymes and short moral tales while learning new words and story patterns.
2. **The Five Senses** – Explore how sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell help us learn about the world.
3. **Stories** – Listen to and discuss different kinds of stories, identifying characters, settings, and events.
4. **Plants** – Learn how plants grow, what they need to live, and why they are important to people and animals.
5. **Farms** – Discover how farms work, the crops and animals they produce, and how farming affects our lives.
6. **Native Americans** – Explore early Native American cultures, traditions, and contributions to our country.

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### Skills Units (*Foundational Reading & Writing*)

1. **Unit 1** – Review letter sounds, short vowels, and basic spelling patterns to prepare for 1st grade reading.
2. **Unit 2** – Blend syllables and sounds to make new words and practice writing them.
3. **Unit 3** – Learn new letter-sound pairs and read short, decodable stories.
4. **Unit 4** – Add more letter-sound knowledge and strengthen blending and spelling skills.
5. **Unit 5** – Introduce new sounds, including another way to spell the /k/ sound, and practice reading fluently.



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## Course Resources

### What is Amplify ELAR in 1st Grade?

Amplify ELAR (English Language Arts and Reading) is a state-approved program in Texas that follows the **Science of Reading**. It teaches children how to read, write, speak, and understand language by combining two parts:

1. **Skills Strand** – Builds the *how* of reading
  - Students learn phonics (how letters and sounds work together), spelling, handwriting, and grammar.
  - Lessons follow a very structured order so children can practice each new sound or word pattern until it becomes automatic.
  - Students read **decodable texts**—short stories made up of words they can sound out—to build fluency and confidence.
  
2. **Knowledge Strand** – Builds the *what* of reading
  - Students listen to and discuss rich read-alouds about history, science, literature, and culture.
  - Units build background knowledge and vocabulary, helping children understand what they read and hear.
  - Students practice listening comprehension, answering questions, and retelling stories.

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### Why Texas Uses Amplify ELAR in 1st Grade

- It's aligned to the **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)** standards.
- It follows a proven, step-by-step approach that prevents reading gaps.



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- It combines phonics and knowledge building—so children learn not just to *read the words*, but to *understand and enjoy* what they read.
  - The program uses assessments and small-group instruction to give extra help when needed.
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## How Students Learn in Amplify ELAR

- **Daily Skills Lessons:** Hands-on phonics practice, word building, spelling, and writing.
- **Daily Knowledge Lessons:** Listening to stories, learning new vocabulary, and connecting reading to real-world topics.
- **Reading Practice:** Independent and small-group reading of decodable books matched to each child's current skill level.
- **Discussion and Writing:** Talking about ideas, answering questions, and writing about what they've learned.

## Grading Policy

### Midland ISD District-Wide Grading Policy (All Grades)

#### Grading Scale

MISD uses a traditional letter-grade system:

- **A:** 90–100%
- **B:** 80–89%
- **C:** 70–79%
- **D:** 60–69%
- **F:** Below 60%



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## School-wide System of Communication

At South Elementary, we believe clear and consistent communication between home and school is the key to student success. We use multiple tools to make sure families stay informed and connected:

1. **Blackboard Callouts** – Automated phone messages are sent for important school-wide updates, reminders, and urgent information.
2. **Email** – Staff and administrators send important notices, event details, and follow-up information directly to your inbox.
3. **Skyward Emails** – Through our student information system, Skyward, families receive grade reports, progress updates, and official notices.
4. **Class Dojo** – Our teachers use this app to share classroom news, post reminders, celebrate student achievements, and message parents directly.
5. **Parent Contacts Through Teachers** – Teachers connect with families individually through phone calls, messages, or in-person meetings to discuss student progress, concerns, or celebrations.

**Our goal** is to ensure every parent stays informed and every student feels supported. By using multiple communication methods, we can reach families quickly, keep them updated, and work together to help each child succeed.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. We are excited to work together to make this a successful year of learning!



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**Please fill out the portion below and return this portion to your teacher.**

We acknowledge that we have read and that we understand the expectations in 1st grade at South Elementary. We agree to contact the teacher should we have any questions or concerns regarding this instructional plan.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_