Council of the Great City Schools

parent ROADMAP

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN KINDERGARTEN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

America's schools are working to provide higher quality instruction than ever before.

The way we taught students in the past simply does not prepare them for the higher demands of college and careers today and in the future. Your school and schools throughout the country are working to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all children will graduate high school with the skills they need to be successful.

In English language arts and literacy, this means three major changes. Students will continue reading and writing. But in addition to stories and literature, they will read more texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas including science and social studies. They will read more challenging texts and be asked more questions that will require them to refer back to what they have read. There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that students can read and understand challenging material.

What your child will be learning in kindergarten English language arts and literacy

In kindergarten, students will learn the alphabet and the basic features of letters and words. They will break down spoken and written words into syllables and letters and identify the sounds each letter makes. These important skills will enable your child to learn new words and to read and understand simple books and stories. Students will also learn to write and share information in a variety of ways, including drawing, writing letters and words, listening to others, and speaking aloud. Activities in these areas will include:

- Naming and writing upper- and lowercase letters
- Matching letters to sounds and using other methods to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing
- Learning and using new words
- Identifying words that rhyme
- Reading common words such as *the, of, you, are, she,* and *my*
- Asking and answering questions about a story the teacher reads out loud
- Identifying characters, settings, and major events in a story
- Recognizing the person, place, thing, or idea that an illustration shows
- Participating in discussions by listening and taking turns speaking
- Using a combination of drawing, speaking, and writing to describe an event, give information about a topic, or share an opinion
- Taking part in shared reading, writing, and research projects
- Expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly

Partnering with your child's teacher

Don't be afraid to reach out to your child's teacher—you are an important part of your child's education. Ask to see a sample of your child's work or bring a sample with you. Ask the teacher questions like:

- Is my child learning to read and write?
- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
- What can I do at home to make sure that my child is successful?

In kindergarten, students will read stories and poems. Additionally, they will read to learn information about history, the world, science, and other areas. Here are just a few examples of how your child will develop important reading skills across grade levels.

READING LITERATURE

Kindergarten Reading	Grade One Reading	Grade Two Reading
• With help from the teacher, students retell stories, including key details. • With help from the teacher, students name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.	• Students retell stories, including key details, and show that they understand the lesson or moral of a story. • Students identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.	• Students retell stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. • Students acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

READING FOR INFORMATION

Kindergarten Reading	Grade One Reading	Grade Two Reading
• With help from the teacher, students ask and answer questions about key details in a text. • With help from the teacher, students identify what person, place, thing, or idea a picture shows.	• Students ask and answer questions about key details in a text. • Students use the illustrations and details in a text to describe key ideas.	• Students ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. • Students explain how specific images or illustrations (such as a diagram of how a machine works) are useful.

Students will read more challenging texts and materials as they progress through grade levels.

Writing tasks in kindergarten may include short compositions that tell a story, share an opinion, or present information. Here are just a few examples of how your child will develop important writing skills across grade levels.

Kindergarten Writing	Grade One Writing	Grade Two Writing
• Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing, students name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	• Students name a topic and supply some facts about the topic. • Students provide some sense of closure.	• Students introduce a topic and use facts and definitions to develop points. • Students provide a concluding statement or section.

Some writing guidelines may seem similar from year to year. However, with practice at each grade level, students continue to learn and apply the rules of standard written English and to strengthen and expand their vocabulary, use of language, and organization of ideas.

Helping your child learn outside of school

1. Read to your child and have him or her read to you every day for at least 15 minutes. Pick out words that might be new to your child or words that have multiple or complex meanings. Discuss those words and how they add to what the writer is saying.
2. Ask your child to retell a story in his or her own words by telling what happened first, second, third, etc.
3. Ask your child to think about what the message of a story may be or what he or she learned from an informational book or article.
4. Look for opportunities in everyday places to build your child's vocabulary.
5. Be sure your child has a library card. Children should select books in which they are interested to develop a passion for reading. Many libraries have book clubs and family activities that make reading fun for the entire family.
6. Use technology to help build your child's interest in reading. There are several websites where students can read books or articles online. The computer will help with words the student cannot read independently. Libraries also have computers students can use to access those sites. Feel free to ask a librarian or teacher for suggestions.

Additional Resources

For more information on the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy, go to http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/ or http://www.commoncoreworks.org.

For more information on helping your child become a reader, go to http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/reader/index.html.