

Benchmark Advance 2026 Anchor Texts and Poetry — Grade 4

Grade	Unit	Unit Topic	Week	Type	Title	Author	Previously Published Author (Y/N)	Lexile Level	Genre	Race, Ethnicity, Topics, and Cultural Groups Represented
4	1	Observing Nature	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	A Bird's Free Lunch	John Burroughs	Y	870L	Narrative Nonfiction	The narrator of the selection about birds, John Burroughs, is a White male and a photo of him is included.
4	1	Observing Nature	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	The Reeds and the River (from Bronze and Sunflower)	Cao Wenxuan	Y	790L	Realistic Fiction	This is an authentic story that presents a Chinese father and Daughter experiencing the countryside in China together. The illsutrations are free of ethnic and linguistic stereotypes. A photo of well-known Chinese male author Cao Wenxuan is included.
4	1	Observing Nature	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Starting Off (from <i>Mississippi Solo</i>)	Eddy L. Harris	Y	740L	Narrative Nonfiction	This text details the journey of African American travel writer Eddy Harris. A photo of the author is included. The text is free of racial, ethnic, or cultural stereotypes.
4	1	Observing Nature	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Secret Spring (from <i>The Yearling</i>)	Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings	Y	890L	Realistic Fiction	This is an excerpt from the classic book The Yearling. The primary character is white. A photo of the White, female author is included.
4	1	Observing Nature	all	Poem	Delight in Nature	Inuit	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	This a tradional Inuit poem. There is a photograph of an Inuit man, a native alaskan/canadian, paddling in a type of canoe.
4	2	Characters' Actions and Reactions	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Dorothy Meets the Scarecrow (from <i>The Wiz</i>)	William F. Brown	Y	NP	Drama	The Wiz is an adaptation of The Wizard of Oz and features African Americans. The drama was written during the Black Arts Movement and was ground-breaking in its inclusion of an all-Black cast who dramatize a classic American fairy tale. Photos of the African American cast, as well as Black composer Charlie Smalls, are included.
4	2	Characters' Actions and Reactions	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	How Dorothy Saved the Scarecrow	L. Frank Baum	Y	1020L	Fantasy	This is a classic story, excerpted from The Wizard of OZ. The illustrations are of a white girl, a Scarecrow, and dog.
4	2	Characters' Actions and Reactions	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Peter Meets Wendy (from <i>Peter Pan</i>)	J.M. Barrie	Y	NP	Drama	This is an excerpt from the classic drama Peter Pan. There is a photograph of the cast, who appear to be white. There is also a Disney illustration of the characters who also appear to be white. A photo of Scottish author J.M. Barrie is included.
4	2	Characters' Actions and Reactions	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Peter's Shadow (from <i>Peter and Wendy</i>)	J.M. Barrie	Y	870L	Fantasy	This is an excerpt from the novel, Peter Meets Wendy. The illustrations are of white characters.
4	2	Characters' Actions and Reactions	all	Poem	You are Old, Father William	Lewis Carroll	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	The is a classic poem about a wry older man and a young boy who pesters the man with questions. There is an illustration of a white man and boy, as well as a photo of British author Lewis Carroll.

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4	3	Government in Action	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Solving Problems	Lisa Benjamin	Y	920L	Informational Social Studies	An Informational text about how government provides aid to citizens. There is one photograph of people being rescued in a boat, who appear to be white.
4	3	Government in Action	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	The First Town Meeting (from <i>The People of Sparks</i>)	Jeanne DuPrau	Y	850L	Fantasy	A fictional story about the survival of a town after an apocalypse. The town leaders include a woman and the town and the story are free of gender or racial stereotypes. A photo of White female author Jeanne DuPrau is included.
4	3	Government in Action	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The State Government and Its Citizens	Lisa Simone	Y	890L	Informational Social Studies	This is an informational text about the workings and responsibilities of the state government. The images show workers primarily from a distance or wearing uniforms.
4	3	Government in Action	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Stanley's Release (from <i>Holes</i>)	Louis Sachar	Y	1000L	Realistic Fiction	This excerpt from a Newberry award-winning novel is about young men in a Texas detention center. The illustration show the silhouettes of male characters, but ethnicity can't be determined. The text presents females in professional roles, a warden and a lawyer. There is an image of well-known White male author Loius Sachar.
4	3	Government in Action	all	Poem	A Nation's Strength	Ralph Waldo Emerson	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	Classic poem that focuses on the work ethic of ordinary people being the source of a nation's strength. While the poem uses the term "men" throughout, there are illustratons that include both women and men cultivating the land.
4	4	Understanding Different Points of View	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Here Boy (from <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i>)	Kate DiCamillo	Y	780L	Realistic Fiction	The selecton is an excerpt from a classic children's novel. The main characters a girl and a store manager are white in the illustrations. The customers in the background are black and white. The text is free from gender or racial stereotypes. A photo of award-winning White female author Kate DiCamillo is included.
4	4	Understanding Different Points of View	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Something Uneasy in the Air (from <i>Cracker! The Best Dog in Vietnam</i>)	Cynthia Kadohata	Y	860L	Realistic Fiction	The family in this historical fiction, set during the Vietnam War, is Japanese American. There is another character, a military officer, who appears to be white in the illustraion. The story is free of linguistic and ethnic stereotypes. A photo of award-winning Japanese-American female author Cynthia Kadohata is included.

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4	4	Understanding Different Points of View	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Ready to Race (from <i>Riding Freedom</i>)	Pam Muñoz Ryan	Y	930L	Realistic Fiction	This is historical fiction about the childhood of an actual person, Charlotte Parkhurst, who grew up to be a stagecoach driver. In the selection she befriends Vern, an African American male, who works with horses. The Illustrations are of a young woman and a black male. A photo of award-winning Latinx female author Pam Munoz Ryan is included.
4	4	Understanding Different Points of View	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Training (from <i>Black Beauty</i>)	Anna Sewell	Y	810L	Fantasy	This is an excerpt from the classic Black Beauty. The story is told from the horse's perspective. Most illustrations are of the horse. There is one British man pictured in a carriage. A photo of award-winning British female author Anna Sewall is included.
4	4	Understanding Different Points of View	all	Poem	The Drum	Nikki Giovanni	Y	NP	Free Verse Poem	This is a poem by the Caldecott-winning author Nikki Giovanni. The brief poem depicts a positive relationship between a father and daughter. A photo of African American poet Giovanni is included, as well as a photo of African American Artist James Denmark. Demark's painting of African American musicians is also shown.
4	5	Technology for Tomorrow	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Human and Robots Can Work Together	Eleanor Hahn	Y	990L	Opinion Text	This is an opinion piece in support of robotics and technology. A man of indeterminate ethnicity is shown. The text is free of linguistic and ethnic stereotypes.
4	5	Technology for Tomorrow	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Robots Will Take Professional Jobs	Michael Cavanaugh	Y	960L	Opinion Text	This is an opinion piece that focuses on employment issues that may be created when robots take jobs. Most images are of robots. A doctor of indeterminate ethnicity wearing a mask is shown. The text is free of linguistic and ethnic stereotypes.
4	5	Technology for Tomorrow	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Who's Driving?	Amanda Polidore	Y	980L	Opinion Text	This is an opinion piece on the history and use of driverless cars. There are no images of people. The text is free of linguistic and ethnic stereotypes.
4	5	Technology for Tomorrow	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Rise of the Drones	Dang Nguyen, Max Prinz	Y	950L	Opinion Text	This is an opinion piece that presents both sides of drone technology, one calling for more regulation; the other calling for less. There is one picture of a young Asian man powering a drone from the ground. The text is free of linguistic and ethnic stereotypes.
4	5	Technology for Tomorrow	all	Poem	Sun Tracks	Native American	Y	NP	Free Verse Poem	This is a Choctaw poem about the connection between nature and humans. A female Choctaw dancer is shown.

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4	6	Confronting Challenges	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Sugar Maple and the Woodpecker	Joseph Bruchac	Y	700L	Legend	This text is based on a Lenape legend and features animal characters. A photo of well-known Native American author Joseph Bruchac is shown.
4	6	Confronting Challenges	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	The Valiant Little Tailor	Brothers Grimm	Y	790L	Folktale	This classic folktale features characters of different sizes - a thin, small tailor and a brawny, powerful giant - to show how cleverness can overcome negative assumptions. Images of European authors The Brothers Grimm are shown.
4	6	Confronting Challenges	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Hercules' Quest	Nathaniel Hawthorne	Y	880L	Myth	This classic retelling of a Greek tale describes one of Hercules's twelve labors. It is adapted from the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne and features images from ancient Greek mythology. A photo of American male author Nathaniel Hawthorne is shown.
4	6	Confronting Challenges	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Estrella and the Emerald Ring	Alma Flor Ada	Y	920L	Folktale	This folktale about a brave little hen is written by a Cuban American author. Latinx/Hispanic characters are depicted in the illustrations. A photo of award-winning Cuban author Alma Flor Ada is shown.
4	6	Confronting Challenges	all	Poem	Humanity	Elma Stuckey	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	In this poem, African American poet Elma Stuckey writes about looking beyond race and to a person's humanity. The accompanying illustration shows an African American person helping a young white person.
4	7	The Transcontinental Railroad	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Rail Tycoons	Michael Sandler	Y	970L	Informational Social Studies	This informational text describes how rail barons were involved in building the transcontinental railraod. There are no images of people.
4	7	The Transcontinental Railroad	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Building the Transcontinenttal Railroad	Max Prinz	Y	880L	Informational Social Studies	This informational text focuses on how the transcontinental railroad was built. There is an image of a White male. It does not depict any stereotypes.
4	7	The Transcontinental Railroad	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Chinese Railroad Workers	Hao Zou	Y	960L	Informational Social Studies	This informational text features the contributions of Chinese immigrants to the transcontinental railroad. It also describes how Chinese immigrants faced discrimination and the growth of Chinese American communities in the United States. Images include fine art and photo depictions of Chinese immigrant workers.

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4	7	The Transcontinental Railroad	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Railroad's Impact on Native Americans	Odia Wood Krueger	Y	910L	Informational Social Studies	This text describes how the building of the transcontinental railroad impacted the Native Americans of the Great Plains and changed their ways of life. The selection includes images of Native Americans, as well as one image that has Native Americans and White men.
4	7	The Transcontinental Railroad	all	Poem	Concord Hymn	Ralph Waldo Emerson	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	Ralph Waldo Emerson, a renowned U.S. poet, writes about a memorial to the Battle of Concord in this poem. A photo of American male poet Emerson is included.
4	8	Earth Changes	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Earthquakes	Kathy Furgang	Y	1030L	Informational Science	This informational text describes the causes of earthquakes. It does not depict people.
4	8	Earth Changes	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	In Mexico City (from <i>A History of My Mexico City Home, In Earthquakes</i>)	Francisco Goldman	Y	860L	Narrative Nonfiction	Francisco Goldman, a Guatemalan American writer, describes his experiences with earthquakes while living in Mexico City. A photo of Goldman is included.
4	8	Earth Changes	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Volcanoes	Brett Kelly	Y	970L	Informational Social Studies	This is an informational text about the science of volcanoes. It does not depict people.
4	8	Earth Changes	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Eruption of Vesuvius	Pliny the Younger	Y	840L	Narrative Nonfiction	This text features excerpts from Pliny the Younger's letters describing his escape from Pompeii when Mt. Vesuvius erupted. An image of the ancient Roman author is included.
4	8	Earth Changes	all	Poem	Negotiations with a Volcano	Naomi Shihab Nye	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	Naomi Shihab Nye, a Palestinian American writer, describes life living near a volcano in this poem. An image of the poet is included
4	9	Resources and Their Impact	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Seattle: Up and Down — and Up Again	Alexandra Hanson-Harding	Y	920L	Informational Social Studies	This text describes the development of Seattle as a major U.S. city. It does not depict people or stereotypes.
4	9	Resources and Their Impact	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	César: ¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can!	Carmen T. Bernier-Grand	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	These poems focus on the work of Cesar Chavez, a labor activist of Mexican American descent. The poet, a Puerto Rican writer, includes Spanish words and phrases. Photos of Chavez, other Mexican American protesters, and the author, Carmen T. Bernier-Grand, are included.
4	9	Resources and Their Impact	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Natural Resources and Workers	Alexandra Hanson-Harding	Y	950L	Informational Social Studies	Text includes a section about Lue Gim Gong, a Chinese immigrant who developed cross-pollination techniques that helped change the Florida citrus industry. Images include two White males and Chinese American Gong.

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4	9	Resources and Their Impact	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	Dust Dance (from <i>Out of the Dust</i>)	Karen Hesse	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	These narrative poems express the sadness, desperation, poverty, joy, and hopes of a family living in a rural farming community during the Dust Bowl.
4	9	Resources and Their Impact	all	Poem	They Were My People	Grace Nichols	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	This poem speaks of people who worked on sugar plantations in the Caribbean and the legacy of colonialism. It includes a large painting depicting enslaved people working on a sugar plantation. It also include a photo of Black poet Grace Nichols.
4	10	The Power of Electricity	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Power Restored in India	Abby Lieberman	Y	850L	Narrative Nonfiction	This text describes a blackout that occurred in India and includes images of Indian/South Asian people.
4	10	The Power of Electricity	1	Short Read (Anchor Text)	Benjamin Franklin: The Dawn of Electrical Technology	Laura McDonald	Y	1040L	Informational Science	This text discusses Benjamin Franklin and his groundbreaking work with electricity. It does not depict stereotypes.
4	10	The Power of Electricity	2	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Power of Electricity	Kathy Furgang	Y	910L	Informational Science	This text explains the science of electricity and how it is generated in the U.S. There are no depictions of people in this text.
4	10	The Power of Electricity	3	Extended Read (Anchor Text)	The Two Forgotten Electrical Inventors	Alexandra Hanson-Harding	Y	900L	Informational Science	This text discusses Nikola Tesla and Hertha Marks Ayrton, a female electrical engineer, scientist, and inventor. There are images of European male Tesla and British female Ayrton.
4	10	The Power of Electricity	all	Poem	Simplicity of Electricity	Michael Rosen	Y	NP	Narrative Poem	Poem does not include depictions of people. There is an image of the White male author Michael Rosen.