ELA SECTION

Parent Guide

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA STANDARDS' EXPECTATIONS
Get an in-depth look at the skills your child will learn in fourth grade

This guide provides an overview of what your child will learn by the end of fourth grade in English Language Arts (ELA), as well as strategies and resources for learning outside of school.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

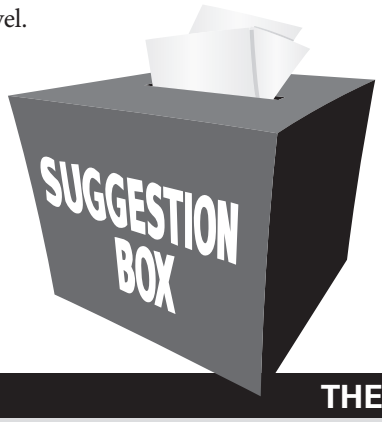
- an introduction to the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study
- an explanation of the skills your child is learning in fourth grade
- reading strategies for learning outside of school
- writing strategies for learning outside of school
- websites to support your child's learning

FOURTH GRADE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY FOR ELA

In April 2017, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted new ELA standards for grades K-12. The Standard Course of Study describes what students should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of each grade level. How these standards are taught is decided at a district level.



The NC Standard Course of Study was developed based on feedback provided from the following:

- Parents
- Community Members
- Business/Industry Professionals
- Higher Education Faculty
- Educators (teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists)

THE NC STANDARDS ARE DIVIDED INTO 4 STRANDS:

READING

– Foundational Skills (K-5)
– Reading Literature
– Reading Informational Text

WRITING

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

LANGUAGE

THE NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY HAS A NEW FORMAT THAT INCLUDES:

Standards with **bolded** terms

Clarification of the standards with suggestions for instruction, explanations, and examples

Glossary that defines the **bolded** terms from the Standards

EXAMPLE OF THE NEW FORMAT

Reading Standards for Literature

STANDARD		CLARIFICATION	GLOSSARY
Cluster: Key Ideas and Evidence			
RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a **text** when explaining what the text says **explicitly** and when drawing **inferences** from the text.	Students specify and point out details and examples from the text to support their explanations of what the text clearly states, as well as the conclusions they have made from the text. *In the Classroom:* The teacher poses a question. The teacher and students use a shared text to highlight details and examples that answer the question. Students share their answers and refer to the details and examples they highlighted.	**explicit, explicitly** – stated clearly and directly, leaving no room for confusion or interpretation **inference** – a conclusion derived from logical reasoning following an investigation of available evidence **text** – anything that students can read, write, view, listen to, or explore, including books, photographs, films, articles, music, art, and more

ELA STANDARDS' EXPECTATIONS FOR FOURTH GRADE

This section focuses on the key skills your child will learn throughout fourth grade, which build a solid foundation for success in later grades. The skills in each strand are broken down into topics. If your child is meeting the expectations outlined here, he or she will be well prepared for fifth grade. The ELA Standards' expectations for fourth grade include:

READING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

HANDWRITING

Students:

- create readable documents in cursive

PHONICS AND WORD RECOGNITION

Students:

- use knowledge letter sounds, syllables, root words, prefixes, and suffixes to read unfamiliar words

FLUENCY

Students:

- read and understand fourth grade level texts with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression
- use context clues to recognize or self-correct words, re-reading if needed

READING (LITERATURE)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- refer to details in the text when talking/writing about the text
- draw inferences from what the text says
- determine the theme
- summarize the text
- use specific details from the text to thoroughly describe a character, setting, or event

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in a text
- identify words that impact the meaning and tone of the text
- explain differences between dramas, stories, and poems
- compare and contrast the points of view of different stories
- know the difference between first and third person points of view

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of that same story
- compare and contrast similar themes and topics in different stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for fourth grade independently and for a sustained period of time
- connect background knowledge and experiences to texts

READING (INFORMATIONAL TEXT)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- refer to details in the text when talking/writing about the text
- draw inferences from what the text says
- determine the main idea and explain how the key details support it
- summarize the text
- explain events, procedures, ideas, and concepts or steps in technical procedures in a text

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in texts on fourth grade topics
- describe the structure of the events, concepts or ideas, and information in part of a text or the whole text
- compare firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same subject or topic

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- interpret information that is presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and how it supports their understanding of the text
- explain how the author uses reasons and evidence to support his or her points in the text
- integrate information from two texts on the same topic when writing about or discussing the topic

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for fourth grade independently and for a sustained period of time
- connect background knowledge and experiences to texts

WRITING

TEXT TYPES, PURPOSES, AND PUBLISHING

Students:

• organize information and ideas based on a topic to plan and prepare to write
• write **opinion** pieces that: introduce the topic or text clearly, state an opinion, group related ideas in an organized structure, provide reasons that are supported by facts and details, link the opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement
• write **informative** pieces that: introduce a topic clearly, group related information in paragraphs and sections, use facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations to develop the topic, link ideas within categories, use precise language and vocabulary, and provide a concluding statement
• write **narrative** pieces that: develop real or imagined events, introduce the characters/narrator, organize the sequence of events, use dialogue and descriptions to show the response of characters to certain situations, use words that help sequence the events, use concrete words/phrases, use sensory details to convey experiences, and provide a conclusion
• revise and edit based on peer and adult feedback (with guidance and support)
• use digital tools to produce and publish their writing (with some guidance and support)
• use digital tools to collaborate and interact with others (with some guidance and support)
• sufficiently use word processing skills

RESEARCH

Students:

• conduct short research projects that explore different aspects of a topic
• gather information from sources and recall information from personal experiences
• take notes on and categorize the gathered information
• provide a list of sources

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Students:

• follow predetermined rules to discuss grade level texts and topics
• carry out assigned roles
• come prepared for discussions by having read or studied the material
• ask and answer questions to clarify information
• contribute to the discussion by making comments and linking their comments to others' comments
• explain their own ideas after reviewing the key ideas expressed during the discussion
• paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented (orally or through digital media)
• identify the reasons and evidence a speaker uses to support his/her points

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Students:

• tell a story, report on a subject, and recount experiences
• use appropriate, relevant facts and descriptive details in their presentations
• adjust their speech based on if the situation is formal or informal

LANGUAGE

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH

Students:

• demonstrate understanding of progressively more difficult standard grammar rules and parts of speech, expanding on their previous work with nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.
• produce complete sentences and questions, as well as use conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE

Students:

• choose words that convey ideas precisely
• choose punctuation for effect
• determine when to use formal English (such as presenting ideas or writing a letter to the governor) and informal English (such as writing a letter to a friend or sending a birthday card to Grandma)

VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND USE

Students:

• determine the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words in fourth grade level books using context clues, word parts, reference materials, and noting how words are related
• explain simple similes and metaphors found in a text
• recognize and explain common idioms, adages, and proverbs
• relate words to their opposites (antonyms)
• relate words to words that are similar (synonyms)
• use grade-appropriate words and phrases

Language Standards 1 and 2 include two continuums, one for grammar and one for conventions. The skills within each continuum are arranged by grade band rather than by individual grades so you will notice that your child will be working with the same skills in multiple grades, but the activities and texts will become more complex. In the lower grade of the band, the teacher is introducing and modeling the skill. In the higher grade of the band, students are applying the skill to more complex text as they work toward mastery.

PORTION OF THE CONTINUUM FOR LANGUAGE STANDARD 1

SKILL	K-1	2-3	4-5	6-8	9-12
Subject/Verb Agreement	• Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences	• Ensure subject/ verb agreement	• Continue to ensure subject/ verb agreement	• Continue to ensure subject/ verb agreement	Students apply grammar and usage skills to create a unique style and voice when writing or speaking with increasing sophistication and effect in grades 9-12. Skills taught in previous grades should be reinforced and expanded.
Nouns	• Form frequently occurring nouns; form regular plural nouns (/s/ or /es/) • Use common, proper, & possessive nouns	• Explain the function of nouns • Use collective nouns (such as *group*) • Form and use frequently occurring regular and irregular plural nouns	• Use abstract nouns (such as *courage*) • Continue to use regular and irregular plural nouns		

READING STRATEGIES

Reading outside of school provides the additional support and encouragement that allows students to create a deep passion for reading, to deepen their comprehension skills, and to build a broad vocabulary knowledge. Reading strategies can be developed and used before, during, and after reading takes place. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in fourth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

- **Provide** a time and space for your child to read every day.
- **Find** small and simple poems. Read them together and talk about the feelings they convey. Try making up your own poems together about objects, people you know, or anything you like!
- **Read** to your child or have your child read to you every day. Reading aloud to children, of all ages, provides opportunities to discuss more challenging and complex plots and themes which builds critical thinking skills.
- **As** your child learns to read new words and understand the meaning of those words, help him/her keep track of them in his/her own dictionary. Your child can write them down, draw pictures to illustrate the words or the definitions, or write sentences with the words.
- **Discuss** any confusing parts, elements, or information in the book, chapter, or passage.
- **Start** a family book club. Let different members of the family pick the book. This could be a good way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together!
- **Ask** your child to retell what he/she read in his/her own words.
- **Ask** your child to summarize what he/she read and tell what he/she learned from what was read. This could be connected to something in real life, another reading, or to events happening in the world.
- **Visit** the local library and make reading fun for the entire family.
- **Give** your child opportunities to participate in new experiences. Visit museums, the zoo, theaters, historical sites, aquariums, etc. to help build your child's vocabulary and speaking skills.
- **Find** a series that interests your child and begin to read it together. You can read to your child, your child can read to you, and he/she can read a chapter independently. You and your child can interview each other as you read — ask about main ideas, events, and thoughts you each have about the books and characters.
- **Begin** a family project of building vocabulary. Ask all family members to contribute to the project by submitting new vocabulary words they read or hear. Vocabulary words may be compiled in a decorative container in a prominent place. Family members practice using the new vocabulary words in their speaking and writing.
- **Act** out a story, poem, or other text as if it is a play by using different voices for the characters. This will help children practice appropriate pacing while reading and encourage reading with expression.
- **As** your child develops favorite authors, look online for that author's website. Your child can email or write a letter to the author (under your supervision). The author may even be at a book signing or other events in your neighborhood for you and your child to attend.
- **When** you or your child uses a word with a prefix or suffix, stop to talk about it. Break down the word and talk about what the prefix or suffix and the root word mean together. Think of other words that have that suffix or prefix. You can also write the word out on two separate cards, with the prefix on one and the root word on the other and make new words with the cards. Write down the different words with prefixes and suffixes you and your child use.
- **Talk** about current events together. Discuss with your child so he/she understands what is happening and how it connects to him/her, other events that he/she may have seen or read about, and other areas of the community.
- **Read** the same book as your child independently, together, or a combination of both. Talk about the books as you read them, reviewing main ideas, plots, and expressing your opinions on the book. Then read an additional book or books on the same subject and compare and contrast how the books both dealt with the same issue. For example, read two fiction books about family, or two different texts about the same historical event or non-fiction topic.
- **Read** two texts, one that is first-hand and one written in third person about the same event. Talk with your child about the differences and why she thinks these differences exist. Or try this yourself! After sharing an event with your child, each of you can write about it from your own perspective. Or choose an event you experienced first-hand that both of you can write about individually. Talk about the differences between what you wrote to gain a better understanding of perspective.
- **After** your child reads a story, make up your own version, changing details such as setting, time, or even the ending. You can change the story so it occurs in places or with characters you know. This helps your child understand story structure and make comparisons. Alternatively, make up your own version of a fairy tale or known story.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS/PROMPTS TO ASK AS OR AFTER YOUR CHILD READS:

Who was this about?

What can you infer from what you have read so far?

Retell the story in sequential order.

Which of these details is really important to the story? How do you know?

What do you think the author is trying to say when he/she uses the word/phrase ____?

Who is telling the story in this section? How do you know?

What is the theme of this story? How is it similar/ different from another story you/we have read?

Who is your favorite author? Why?

What details explain or support the main idea?

How is this text organized?

What does the word _____ mean in this sentence?

What details does the author use to support his/her point?

What is the root word in _____?

Why did the author write this?

What were the main ideas/topics?

What is the lesson/moral? How do you know?

Describe one of the characters (or settings) using details from the text.

What clues can you find in the sentence or paragraph that help you figure out the meaning of _____?

How is the story and the video/ recording/movie the same? Different?

What genres do you like to read? Why?

Summarize the text.

What is the first step in the procedure explained in the book? What comes next?

What information does this chart/diagram/photo provide?

What did you do to help you figure out an unknown word?

Identify at least two points the author is trying to make in this text.

Does _____ have a prefix or suffix? What does the prefix/ suffix do to the root word?

What strategies can you use when you don't understand the text?

WRITING STRATEGIES

Writing to express opinions, provide information, and/or create a story goes far beyond letter formation and spelling rules. In school, students are learning the writing process. Out of school, help is needed to reinforce, encourage, and support students in their writing process. Writing out of school provides a connection between writing and everyday experiences. These strategies reinforce what your student is learning in fourth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

• **Help** your child organize his/her thoughts by planning what he/she wants to write. Using sticky notes or a graphic organizer will provide a visual way to accomplish this.

• **Discuss** family stories and history. Encourage your child to ask questions. Work together with your child to create a book, magazine, poem, short story, newspaper article, pamphlet, or other written narrative of your family's history.

• **Encourage** your child to write a letter, birthday card, get well card, thinking of you card, or thank you note to family members or friends.

• **Help** your child create a poster, collage, pictograph, or infographic about something your child or your family learned or experienced recently.

• **Encourage** your child to draw and/or write his/her own version of a favorite story. Or, encourage your child to create or write a next chapter (or page) for his/her favorite book.

• **When** your child asks a question, research the answer together using books or computers (under your supervision). Then create an informative poster or collage which tells the question, the answer, and uses both texts and illustrations to show what they learned.

• **Encourage** your child to find a picture from a newspaper or magazine, cut it out, paste it on paper, and write a story about it.

• **Help** your child choose something that he/she wants to do or learn to do. Work with your child to research information related to the topic chosen. Ask your child to create a brochure, flyer, or "How To" manual or guide describing/explaining the topic, or how to do something. Then, together, you and your child can follow the guide to do or learn to do the chosen topic.

• **During** a family event, take a photograph. After the family event, ask your child to write a brief summary to go along with the photograph and send the photograph and your child's summary to the local newspaper to be printed with community events.

• **Keep** a family journal of trips, weekends, and special times spent together. Your child can both write and illustrate the journal. Pick a favorite entry from the journal and use it to expand your child's writing. You and your child can write a longer piece or story about that event and illustrate it with photographs or drawings.

• **Urge** your child to use logical arguments to defend his or her opinion. If your child wants a raise in allowance, ask him/her to research and then based on that research, explain reasons why he/she should have a raise in allowance.

• **Under** your supervision, begin to help your child use a computer to research a topic or communicate with friends and family. Your child can also use the computer to write his/her own pieces or pieces you write together.

• **Encourage** your child to practice his/her typing skills. Use typing games or make up your own games such as giving your child a word to spell and timing how fast he/she can type it.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

At home, you play an important role in your student's academic success. You are a valuable resource for your child. The websites provided below are not an all-inclusive list, but are intended to provide quality resources for you to support your child's learning.

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/grade/3-4/**
— a language arts resource for both in and out of school; parent and afterschool resources are provided by grades

- **www.readingrockets.org/reading_research_guides_resources**
— research, guides, and resources for supporting reading

- www2.ed.gov/parents/read/resources/edpicks.jhtml — reading resources for parents

- **www.readingpartners.org/take-action/resources-for-parents/**
— supports parents as reading partners for their children and helps parents stay informed about literacy

- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/more-reading-resources/reading-tips-parents**
— reading tips for parents; 7 tips to keep reading exciting and enjoyable for children

- **www.education.com/guided-lessons/**
—choose the grade and scroll down to "reading" to learn more about lessons your student can practice for mastery of a skill

- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-choose-book-30320.html**
— tips on how to help children choose a book

- **www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/languagearts/parents/**
— NCDPI ELA Parent page