ELA SECTION

Parent Guide

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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

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

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

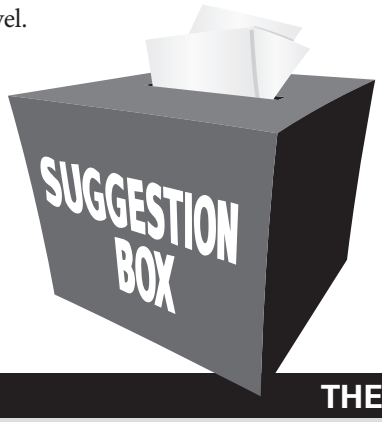
- an introduction to the NC English Language Arts Standard Course of Study
- an explanation of the skills your child is learning in sixth grade
- reading strategies for learning outside of school
- writing strategies for learning outside of school
- websites to support your child's learning

SIXTH 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

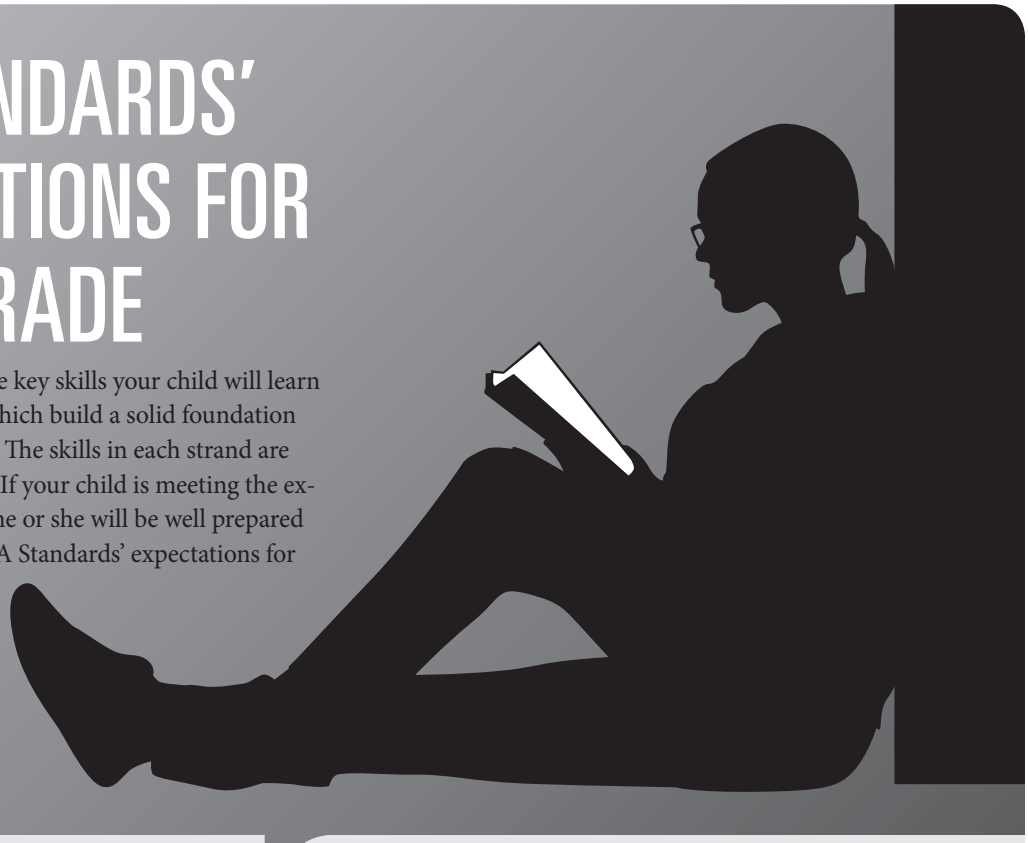
EXAMPLE OF THE NEW FORMAT

Reading Standards for Literature

STANDARD		CLARIFICATION	GLOSSARY
Cluster: Key Ideas and Evidence			
RL.6.1	Cite **textual evidence** to support **analysis** of what the text says **explicitly** as well as **inferences** drawn from the **text**.	Students use evidence from the text to support their analyses of what the text directly and indirectly states. *In the Classroom:* Students complete "I think - I know" graphic organizers with two columns. In the first column, students state an inference (I think) or provide a statement (I know). In the second column, students write a page number and a quote from the text that provides the evidence.	**analysis-** a detailed examination of the components of a subject to understand its meaning and/or nature as a whole **evidence** – facts and/or information (quotes, statistics, graphs, etc.) presented together as a body of support for a claim or value statement. **explicit, explicitly** – stated clearly and directly, leaving no room for confusion or interpretation

ELA STANDARDS' EXPECTATIONS FOR SIXTH GRADE

This section focuses on the key skills your child will learn throughout sixth 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 seventh grade. The ELA Standards' expectations for sixth grade include:



READING (LITERATURE)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- cite evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says
- cite evidence from the text when making inferences
- determine the theme and how it is conveyed through particular details
- summarize the text without opinions or judgments
- describe how a story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes
- describe how the characters respond or change as the story progresses

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in a text
- analyze how specific words impact the meaning and tone of the text
- analyze how particular sentences, chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit into the overall structure
- analyze how particular sentences, chapters, scenes, or stanzas contribute to the theme, setting, or plot
- explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- compare and contrast the experience of reading a story to listening or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the same story
- compare and contrast the approaches used to develop themes and topics in stories of different genres or forms

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

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

READING (INFORMATIONAL TEXT)

KEY IDEAS AND EVIDENCE

Students:

- cite evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says
- cite evidence from the text when making inferences
- determine the central idea and how it is conveyed through particular details
- summarize the text without opinions or judgments
- analyze how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated upon in a text

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Students:

- understand the meaning of words and phrases in texts on sixth grade topics
- analyze how specific words impact the meaning of the text
- analyze how particular sentences, paragraphs, chapters, or sections fit into the overall structure
- analyze how particular sentences, paragraphs, chapters, or sections contribute to the development of ideas
- determine an author's point of view or purpose
- explain how the author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in the text

INTEGRATION OF IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

Students:

- integrate information from different print and digital sources to develop a clear understanding of the topic
- trace and evaluate the argument and claims in a text
- tell the difference between claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from those that are not
- compare and contrast one author's presentation of events from that of another

RANGE OF READING AND THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Students:

- read and understand texts appropriate for sixth 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 **argument** pieces that: clearly introduce the claim, support the claim with organized, clear, and relevant reasons/evidence, use credible sources, use words that clarify the relationship between the claim and reasons, maintain a formal style, and provide a concluding statement
• write **informative** pieces that: introduce a topic, organize ideas, concepts, and information by using definitions, classifications, comparisons, and causes/effects, use relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, examples, and quotations to develop the topic, use appropriate transitions to clarify relationships, use precise language and vocabulary, maintain a formal style, and provide a concluding statement
• write **narrative** pieces that: develop real or imagined events, establish context, introduce the characters/narrator, organize the sequence of events, use dialogue, descriptions, and pacing to develop events and/or characters, use words that help sequence the events and/or signal a shift in time, use precise words/phrases, use descriptive details and sensory details to convey experiences, and provide a conclusion
• revise and edit based on peer and adult feedback (with some guidance and support)
• use digital tools to produce and publish their writing
• use digital tools to collaborate and interact with others
• sufficiently use word processing skills

RESEARCH

Students:

• conduct short research projects to answer a question, using several sources
• gather information from multiple print and digital sources
• assess the credibility of sources
• quote or paraphrase information from the sources (avoiding plagiarism)
• provide basic bibliographies

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

Students:

• follow predetermined rules to discuss grade level texts and topics
• set specific goals/deadlines and define individual roles for discussions
• come prepared for discussions by having read or studied the material
• refer to the text and/or studied material when discussing the topic
• ask and answer questions with elaboration and detail
• demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives after reviewing the key ideas expressed during the discussion
• interpret information presented in different formats and explain how it contributes to the studied topic or text
• delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims
• tell the difference between claims that are supported by reasons/evidence and those that are not

PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Students:

• present claims and findings that are logically sequenced
• use appropriate and relevant descriptions, facts, and details to support the main ideas of themes
• adjust their speech based on the context and task
• include multimedia components and visuals in presentations to clarify information

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 punctuation and spelling

KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE

Students:

• use various types of sentences for meaning, interest, and style
• maintain a consistent style and tone

VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND USE

Students:

• determine the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words in sixth grade level books using context clues, word parts, reference materials, and noting how words are related
• interpret figures of speech found in a text
• distinguish the connotations of words with similar denotations such as stingy, economical, thrifty
• 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 grades of the band, students are applying the skill to more complex text as they work toward mastery. Students practice each skill and apply what they have learned to their writing.

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 sixth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

• **Provide** a time and space for your child to read every day.

• **Read** about an event you and your child attended, or write your own accounts of an event you shared. Read the two pieces and then compare the differences between them, like the perspectives from which they were written.

• **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.

• **If** students are auditory learners, listening to audiobooks helps many students to comprehend and interact with the text. Various websites have collections of audiobooks that students can use. Public libraries also have collections of audiobooks students may checkout online or at a physical location.

• **Slowly** and deliberately read and then re-read complex texts.

• **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 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.

• **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 and 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.

• **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.

• **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.

• **Consult** paraphrased/translated versions of complex texts. Students can find the original text and a corresponding modern translation online and in print. This will help students understand and appreciate the language and comprehend the plot, characters, and themes.

• **Read** books/magazines for enjoyment outside of class. Regular trips to the library for books, not computer time, will encourage students to read, which will strengthen their comprehension skills.

• **Students** can annotate the actual text by jotting information in the margins if they have their own copies of the text or take notes on another sheet of paper. When annotating, students may note the following:

– A brief summary for each chapter or page to verify comprehension
– Questions about events, characters, and parts of the text the student did not understand
– Quotes that are important to the text or confusing
– Literary techniques that appear to recur in the text
– Predictions about what will happen in the text
– Opinions about characters, their choices, or other events in the text
– Connections to current events, other texts, movies, songs

• **Students** may develop graphic organizers themselves or receive them from teachers. Important information to include in the graphic organizers - sections for setting, characters, plot, summary, and questions. Students may use graphic organizers such as Cornell Notes, webs (circles or squares of information), or just a bulleted list of notes. Graphic organizers help students organize their thinking.

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

Why did the author write this?

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

What is the theme of the story? What details help you understand the theme?

What does this story suggest about life?

How does the plot unfold?

Describe the problem. How was it solved?

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 ____?

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

How does the author develop the narrator or speaker's point of view?

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

How does reading a story compare to the audio or video version?

What genres do you like to read? Why?

Who is your favorite author? Why?

How does the author develop his/her argument? What reasons support that argument?

What evidence from the text explains or supports the inference you made?

What is the central idea of the text?

How did the individual/events/idea change over the course of the text?

What is the author's point of view or purpose? How do you know?

What does the word _____ mean in this sentence?

Summarize the text.

What did you do to help you figure out an unknown 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 sixth grade.

ACTIVITIES TO DO AT HOME:

- **Keep** a notebook of ideas for use in future writings.
- **Write** in a journal to record events and thoughts.
- **Keep** a response journal to record short responses to things read or watched. These journals may include one or more of the following about what was read or watched:
  - Summary (Try to write a summary with key details)
  - Questions (I wonder about … What would happen if …)
  - Predictions (I think … will happen, because …)
  - Connections (This made me remember a time … This was similar to something else I read or watched. This took place in a similar location to …)
  - Quotes (The quote that seemed important to me was … because …)
- **Write** for a real purpose and/or audience:
  - Thank you notes
  - Quick note or email to relatives about family news
  - Contributing to a family website
- **When** available, suggest that your child participate in a writing contest. Local and national contests are often found online with submission details.
- **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 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.
- **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.
- **Urge** your child to use logical arguments to defend his/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.

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/5-6/**
— a language arts resource for both in and out of school; parent and afterschool resources are provided by grades
- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/milestones-expectations/raise-reader-parent-guide-to-reading-ages-11-13**
— a parent guide to reading for ages 11-13
- **www2.ed.gov/parents/read/resources/edpicks.jhtml**
— reading resources for parents
- **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.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/help-child-choose-book-30320.html**
— tips on how to help children choose a book
- **www.newsela.com/**
— free sign-in; choose from current news (4 new articles are uploaded each day – some in Spanish)
- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/milestones-expectations/enhancing-comprehension-reading-skills-middle-school**
— key components of middle school reading
- **www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/collection/what-to-expect-grade/making-move-to-middle-school**
— strategies and tools to help with the transition from elementary school to middle school
- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/modeling-good-reading-habits-30112.html**
— provides innovative ways for parents to model good reading habits with teens
- **www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/tips-howtos/motivating-teen-readers-30110.html**
— provides practical suggestions parents can use to help motivate their teen to read
- **www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/languagearts/parents/**
— NCDPI ELA Parent page