

4th Grade - ELA

4th ELA (Phonics, Spelling, Penmanship, Literature, Grammar, Composition, Poetry, Sayings)

Students are introduced to only the most beautiful and correct examples of writing in excerpts, books, and poetry that have stood the test of time. In keeping with this classical approach, 4th grade scholars will practice phonetic concepts and word decoding through daily oral and written phonogram review followed by spelling word presentation. In Literature, they will continue to read beautiful stories and discuss the stories in class. These conversations allow the teacher to address concepts such as setting, character, narrative arc, etc., as they arise in the context of the story. Grammar will consist of studying the parts of speech and careful sentence diagramming, how these parts work together to form beautiful sentences, and observing and utilizing proper capitalization and punctuation. The study of Composition will require the observation and summarization of the main points of a passage, as well as the construction of multi-paragraph narratives in imitation of the great works they have read. Through discussion and their memorization of poems, students begin to ask questions about why a poet chose a particular word or phrase or why they wrote a line in a specific way.

In 4th grade, scholars will master a series of isolated skills before moving on to the next. This includes building on and refining orthographic knowledge and skills acquired in early grades with the aim of independent application. Scholars will participate in lively discussions of literature, in which students demonstrate comprehension of the story, setting, characters, etc. As they analyze and diagram sentences, students recognize what makes a sentence beautiful and powerful. Independent composition of a proper four- or five-sentence paragraph summary which includes basic story elements and specific details in chronological order will be explicitly taught. Sentences should reflect proper syntax, capitalization, and punctuation, including the correct use of commas and apostrophes. Through reading and composition, students will be exposed to 3-point expository and persuasive paragraphs. (Practice, but not mastery, is expected.)

Phonics, Spelling, Penmanship and Root Words

The teacher uses specific guided instruction to train students in phonics, decoding, and spelling skills through the Spalding method as articulated in *The Writing Road to Reading* - all toward the end of understanding words (in their written and spoken form).

Students at this level build on the systematic phonics work of Kindergarten through Grade 3 by reviewing all 70 phonograms and moving on to Ayres word lists Q-V, applying skills with increasing independence. They will pronounce, syllabicate, and mark words and articulate all rules that apply to their daily spelling words.

Students in Grade 4 perfect cursive letters (upper and lower case), having been introduced to cursive formation in Grade 2.

In fourth grade, scholars will begin to study Greek and Latin root words. These brief lessons will build their vocabulary and strengthen their comprehension.

- Unit 1: Phonogram Review (5 lessons)
- Unit 2: Rule Pages (15 lessons)
- Unit 3: Section Q (35 lessons)
- Unit 4: Section R (30 lessons)
- Unit 5: Section S (25 lessons)
- Unit 6: Section T (25 lessons)

- Unit 7: Section U (25 lessons)
- Unit 8: Section V (20 lessons)

Literature

Grade 4 provides a range of literary works, including classic children's fantasy and historical fiction. Students read and discuss literature books as a class, usually at the pace of one chapter a day. Grade 4 also provides a rich exploration of a great Medieval English legend.

As students encounter literature through listening or reading, they should be guided toward an understanding of literary structure, artistic use of language, the role of illustration, and a consideration of the human experience.

There are three ways in which students can encounter the text of literature in elementary grades: as a Read-Aloud, a Read-Along, or a Read-Alone. A teacher may fill extra down-time during the day with a Read-Aloud book. However, students in Grade 4 almost always encounter the Core Literature texts as a Read-Along, though they may be asked to complete a small selection of a chapter (5-10 pages, depending on the book) as a Read-Alone for homework. In class, students follow along in their copy as the teacher, or an individual student takes turns reading aloud. When they read aloud, students will practice the skill of reading with expression. The teacher guides them through Socratic discussion of literary elements such as plot, character, setting, and dialogue.

- Unit 1: *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (20 lessons)
- Unit 2: *Prince Caspian* by C. S. Lewis (16 lessons)
- Unit 3: *Robin Hood and his Merry Outlaws* by J. Walker McSpadden (28 lessons)
- Unit 4: *Fairytales* (8 lessons)
- Unit 5: *The Princess and the Goblin* by George MacDonald (36 lessons)
- Unit 6: *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* by Jean Lee Latham (34 lessons)

Grammar and Composition

Fourth grade grammar instruction provides students with exposure to sentences of increasing complexity. Partnering sentence analysis with diagramming, instruction involves the exploration of the functional aspects of each part of speech, building on what students already know about principal elements of a sentence and basic modifying forms. Instruction will rely on text-based discussion of definitions and oral choral analysis. Through parsing and diagramming, students will develop an understanding of the proper use of language, attune their sensibilities to what is beautiful and well-wrought, and prepare to reflect on the effect of form and an author or speaker's choice of words.

Topics will include compound and then, later, complex elements at the word, phrase, and sentence level, with practice in related mechanics, including the formatting of direct quotations, the use of apostrophes, and the particulars of comma usage. Students will memorize through song and chant the definitions of the following grammatical terms: predicate nominative, predicate adjective, possessive noun, possessive pronoun, interrogative pronoun, relative pronoun, interjection, clause, and relative clause. Each Grammar consists of 5 lessons, with lesson 5 (unit assessment) being given on the 2nd day of the following composition unit. The time allotment for Grammar/Composition will be evenly divided between the two.

- Unit 1: Four Kinds of Sentences and Principal Elements (5 lessons)
- Unit 2: Adverbs (5 lessons)
- Unit 3: Adjectives (5 lessons)
- Unit 4: Predicate Verbs and Direct Objects (5 lessons)
- Unit 5: Predicate Nominatives (5 lessons)
- Unit 6: Predicate Adjectives (5 lessons)
- Unit 7: Predicate Review (5 lessons)
- Unit 8: Possessive Nouns (5 lessons)
- Unit 9: Prepositional Phrases (5 lessons)
- Unit 10: Compound Elements (5 lessons)
- Unit 11: Subject Pronouns (5 lessons)
- Unit 12: Object Pronouns (5 lessons)
- Unit 13: Possessive Pronouns (5 lessons)
- Unit 14: Interrogative Pronouns (5 lessons)
- Unit 15: Compound Sentences (5 lessons)
- Unit 16: Relative Pronouns and Relative Clauses (5 lessons)

Composition instruction is the venue for the application of language skills for the purpose of communication. Students will apply language skills through text-based writing exercises. The 4th-grade composition curriculum is largely based on curricular materials designed by Susan Wise Bauer, specifically, *Writing With Ease Level 4* and *Writing with Skill Level 1*. While the core practices outlined in Bauer materials are upheld, the reading passages used in lessons have been largely replaced with writing selections from other subject areas such as Literature, History, Science, and the like. This practice of integrating curriculum is designed to give students repeated exposure to the material they are learning in other subject areas and facilitating a deeper understanding of it. In the first semester, students practice retelling and summarizing passages (8-10 paragraphs in length) in four or five written sentences. In the second semester, dictation ends while summary practice continues, although with lengthier narratives. Students will begin to analyze and copy models of topoi (chronological narratives and descriptions) and use the one-line outline to build multi-paragraph compositions. Fourth graders will explore persuasive style and write opinion pieces to meet standards-based expectations.

- Unit 1: Writing Foundations (12 lessons)
- Unit 2: Paragraph Structure (8 lessons)
- Unit 3: Outlining (12 lessons)
- Unit 4: Letter Writing (8 lessons)
- Unit 5: Independent Narratives (8 lessons)
- Unit 6: Expository Writing (12 lessons)
- Unit 7: Persuasive Writing *Test Prep* (12 lessons)
- Unit 8: Description of a Place (8 lessons)

Poetry and Sayings

Discussing, memorizing, and reciting poetry engages the students' natural sense of wonder, not only about the poem's content but also the carefully chosen words of the poet. The students' ears will be trained to the musicality of poetry and their minds to the meaning. Throughout the year, students will delight in language as they discover its many facets and how it can be used to beautifully convey truths of the human condition and the world.

Students listen to, discuss, memorize, and recite poems throughout the year. They continue to study various rhythmic patterns while practicing accurate memorization and recitation skills such as tone, fluency, speed, posture, projection, expression, and poise. Poetic form will be taught through observation of stanzas and line breaks, with an emphasis on commas and capitalization. Students will learn to annotate poems with guidance from their teacher, making notes on meaning and poetic structure. When it is time to recite, emphasis will be placed on presentation skills and understanding, as well as accurate memorization.

Great Hearts Core Poetry List

- Unit 1: "Afternoon on a Hill" by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- Unit 2: "Dreams" by Langston Hughes
- Unit 3: "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley
- Unit 4: "Norman and Saxon" by Rudyard Kipling
- Unit 5: "Humanity" by Elma Stuckey
- Unit 6: "Life Doesn't Frighten Me" by Maya Angelou
- Unit 7: "The Landlord's Tale. Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow