

# 1st Grade - ELA (English Language Arts)

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

Kindergarten through Grade 2 ELA provides the foundation to all subject areas as it provides a foundation in the arts of language. The goal is to introduce students to the most fundamental units of language and for them to develop basic proficiency in reading and writing – such that basic encoding and decoding are relatively seamless skills. We also introduce them to the structure of storytelling and artistic examples of language, developing their aesthetic sense and moral imagination.

Kindergarten begins with the introduction of phonograms and the proper positioning of the pencil and Grade 2 ends with reading, retelling, and discussing several children's novels.

The tasks of the teacher are as follows:

- Provide examples of correctly written and spoken English, attuning the hand and ear to order and beauty,
- Coach students first to speak in complete sentences and later to write in complete sentences using proper conventions, and
- Help students see patterns of language and enjoy the rich content and engaging style of sentences.

The language arts block of instruction is divided into five major components: 1) Phonics, Spelling, and Penmanship, 2) Reading, 3) Literature, 4) Grammar and Composition, and 5) Poetry and Sayings.

In Grade 1, students begin more formal exercises in Copywork and Narration designed to develop their ability to put ideas into words and words onto paper, fundamental skills of composition. Development in knowledge and use of language happens both at the word and the sentence level. At the word level, students transition into orthography – learning the patterns and rules of spelling – with a solid review of phonograms. At the sentence level, the focus is writing basic complete sentences with proper handwriting. Grammatical instruction bridges these two areas as students learn to observe the functions that certain words can and do have in a sentence and begin to notice grammatical patterns of sentences.

Reading groups are begun and individual reading continued as needed to create fluency while being exposed to a wide array of stories through read-alouds. The goal is to continue to delight in the order of language and closely imitate well-constructed sentence models while being able to enjoy and retell stories heard. Students also continue to memorize and recite works of Poetry that stir delight in imagery and sound and build skills in expression and memory.

### **Phonics, Spelling, and Penmanship**

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 by reviewing phonograms and moving on to Ayres word lists H-N, applying skills with increasing independence. They will pronounce, syllabicate, mark, and articulate any and all rules that apply to their daily spelling words.

Students practice manuscript letters (upper and lower case) and numbers using the six letter strokes including clock and line letters. Proper pencil grip, paper slant, and letter formation are reinforced for all written work.

- Unit 1: Review (10 Lessons)
- Unit 2: List A-G (25 Lessons)
- Unit 3: List H (15 Lessons)
- Unit 4: List I (15 Lessons)
- Unit 5: List J (20 Lessons)
- Unit 6: List K (20 Lessons)
- Unit 7: List L (30 Lessons)
- Unit 8: List M (30 Lessons)
- Unit 9: List N (20 Lessons)

### **Literature**

In Grade 1 students encounter a range of literary works, including classic fairy tales, fables, and folktales. As students encounter literature through listening or reading, they can and should practice decoding and comprehension skills. However, the mechanical skills of reading are not the primary objective in this course of study – rather, students should be guided toward a sense 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. Students in grades K-2 always encounter texts as a Read-Aloud. The teacher reads to or with the students and guides them through Socratic discussion of simple literary elements such as plot, character, and setting. For Core Literature texts, students will have a copy of the text at their desks and will follow along in their books, decoding as they are able, as the teacher reads aloud.

- Unit 1: Fairy Tales (20 Lessons)
- Unit 2: The House on Pooh Corner (12 Lessons)
- Unit 3: Owl at Home (4 Lessons)
- Unit 4: Aesop's Fables (4 Lessons)

- Unit 5: Frog and Toad (12 Lessons)
- Unit 6: Folk Tales (12 Lessons)
- Unit 7: Best-Loved Doll (4 Lessons)
- Unit 8: Bears on Hemlock Mountain (8 Lessons)
- Unit 9: A Bargain for Frances (8 Lessons)
- Unit 10: Beatrix Potter (12 Lessons)
- Unit 11: My Father's Dragon (20 Lessons)
- Unit 12: Sam the Minuteman (4 Lessons)
- Unit 13: Rikki-Tikki-Tavi (4 Lessons)

### **Grammar and Composition**

Grammar instruction is aimed primarily at the proper use of language. Proper oral use of grammar is reinforced at this level through practice using various forms of the verbs to be, to do, to see, and to sit or to set as well as reviewing proper use of pronouns.

Students continue to examine carefully selected sentences and participate in Socratic discussions about those sentences as a means of exposure to grammatical topics, including common and proper nouns, pronouns, adjectives, action verbs, adverbs, and prepositions. Students will also discuss various sentence types. Exposure, rather than mastery, is still the goal at this level.

Students will practice applying the writing conventions by copying a sentence of 8-15 words in neat manuscript following the discussion. Whenever possible, the sentences for discussion are to be well-constructed sentences from familiar classic literature, history, and science texts with which the students are familiar. Conventions practiced include capitalization, end marks, subject-verb agreement, quotation marks, and basic comma rules. Students will also practice oral composition skills through narrations of 3-4-paragraph passages. By the end of the 4th quarter, the teacher will dictate a simple, well-constructed sentence of 6-10 words that the students transpose with neat manuscript, correct conventions, and accurate spelling.

- Unit 1: Introducing Copywork and Narration (4 Lessons)
- Unit 2: Common and Proper Nouns, Capitalization (16 Lessons)
- Unit 3: Declarative Sentences; Subject and Predicate (16 Lessons)
- Unit 4: Interrogative Sentences (12 Lessons)
- Unit 5: Exclamatory and Imperative Sentences (20 Lessons)
- Unit 6: Student Assessments Semester I (2 Lessons)
- Unit 7: Pronouns (12 Lessons)
- Unit 8: Adjectives (8 Lessons)
- Unit 9: Prepositions and Conjunctions (16 Lessons)
- Unit 10: Dictation, Verbs, and Adverbs (16 Lessons)
- Unit 11: Narration, Dictation, and Copywork (16 Lessons)
- Unit 12: Student Assessments Semester II (3 Lessons)
- Optional Unit: Letter Writing (12 Lessons)

### **Poetry and Sayings**

Discussing, memorizing, and reciting Poetry engages the students' natural sense of wonder, not only about the poem's content, but the words carefully chosen by 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 will gain further appreciation for the English language by memorizing, discussing, and illustrating various core sayings--expressions that represent linguistic and cultural nuances unique to our tradition.

Students listen to, discuss, memorize, illustrate, and recite poems throughout the year. They continue to explore rhyme and the practice rhythmic patterns, accurate memorization, and recitation skills such as tone, fluency, speed, posture, projection, and expression. Poetic form will be taught through observation of stanzas and line breaks, with an emphasis on commas and capitalization.

- Unit 1: Posture and Body Language (36 Lessons)
- Unit 2: Speed and Clarity (36 Lessons)
- Unit 3: Tone and Expression (36 Lessons)
- Unit 4: Endurance and Meaning (36 Lessons)