Kindergarten Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your kindergartener grows as a reader.

Language

Learning Letters:

- Recognize the shapes and names of every letter of the alphabet, both upper- and lowercase.
- Sound out some letters.
- Tell the difference between letters and words.
- Understand that the order of letters in a written word stands for the order of letters when you speak that word.
- Identify words that rhyme (cat rhymes with bat).
- Say words that start with a sound (cat starts with c).

Talking It Out:

- Regularly use words that are important to school work or daily life (colors, numbers, street names).
- Listen to others and take turns when speaking.
- Speak clearly to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas.
- Use question words in discussions (what, who, when, how).
Reading

Connecting to Texts:

- Listen attentively to books read in class.
- Understand how books are held and read.
- Identify authors and illustrators and explain their roles.
- Describe the difference between nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.
- Participate in reading familiar books by supplying some words.
- Talk about books they read with the class, asking and answering questions about the text.
- Make connections between a book and their own lives.
- Make predictions about what will happen in a story.
- Compare the adventures of characters in familiar stories.
- Retell a story in order, including details about the characters, settings, and major events.
- Act out stories they have read.

Lit Facts

Each year, most students spend about 7,800 hours at home compared to only 950 hours at school—one of the many reasons you are the most influential and important teacher your child will ever have!
Learning the Basics:

- Follow print from left to right and top to bottom with their eyes.
- Read some sentences with more than six words.
- Read books with two to six lines of text per page.
- Recognize many high-frequency words (I, the, as, is).
- Read basic single-syllable words, and continue down a page without stopping to worry about unknown words.
- Understand spaces and periods (basic punctuation).

Writing

Beginning to Spell:

- Read and write their names (first and last), plus the first names of some family and friends.
- Write letters correctly in both upper- and lowercase.
- Spell some words correctly, mainly words that they can sound out (a, mat, wig, mom).

Putting Thoughts on Paper:

- Use illustrations and creative spelling to tell stories.
- Write an opinion of a topic or book.
- Make an effort to reread their own writing.
First-Grade Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your first grader grows as a reader.

**Language**

**Breaking Down Words:**

- Sound out and shape every letter of the alphabet.
- Put together and break apart sounds in most one-syllable words (dog, bake, or creak).
- Count the syllables in a word.
- Know the difference between nouns (house) and verbs (run).

**Exploring Meaning:**

- Use new words when speaking at home and in class.
- Express ideas and feelings clearly, describing people, places, and things in detail.
- Understand that some words have multiple meanings and tell which meaning is meant using context clues (such as fly a kite and a fly on the wall).
- Understand that some words mean the same thing (synonyms, such as cold and freezing) and some mean the opposite (antonyms, such as cold and hot).
- Think about why near-synonyms exist (walking, prancing, and strolling) and why you would use each one.
Reading

Learning the Basics:

- Recognize 300–500 sight words and words easily sounded out (thank, let, or from).
- Read words with more complex spelling patterns (hairless or amphibians).
- Recognize some irregularly spelled words (have, said, you, are).
- Use context clues to understand unfamiliar words.
- Recognize the first word of a sentence or paragraph, and the end punctuation (such as a period or question mark).
- Understand that spaces come between words in print.
- Notice when simple texts and sentences fail to make sense.
- Read and understand simple written instructions.
- Identify and use a table of contents, index, and glossary.

Connecting to Texts:

- Use what they already know to enrich what they are reading.
- Describe in detail what they’ve learned from a book.
- Identify main ideas, and talk about them in an organized way.
- Ask questions and make predictions about what they’re reading.
- Identify the reasons an author gives to support a point.
- Describe the characters, settings, events, and messages in a story.
- Compare and contrast the experiences of different characters.
- Identify who is telling a story.
- Recommend books to classmates.

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Writing

Forming Sentences:

- Write some familiar and common words correctly from memory.
- Understand that there is a correct way to spell words, even though they may not always use the correct spelling.
- Write and expand on various kinds of sentences, such as statements, questions, commands, and exclamations.
- Use correct punctuation (periods, commas, exclamation points).
- Write upper- and lowercase letters where appropriate.

Writing With Purpose:

- Write for many different purposes, such as to tell a story, give an explanation, compose a letter, give an opinion, or structure a list.
- Compose a short report about a topic, supplying a few facts and providing a sense of opening and closing.
- Combine facts and information from multiple writings to craft an opinion or essay.
- Write things for others to read, revising drafts after they've shared them with the class.
Second-Grade Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your second grader grows as a reader.

Language

Breaking Down Words:

- Identify common 1- and 2-syllable words by sight (such as could, think, and after).
- Figure out what words they don’t know sound like by:
  - Breaking the word down into syllables.
  - Sounding out letters they recognize in the word.
- Figure out what words they don’t know mean by:
  - Finding clues in the sentence around the word.
  - Finding the root of the word (such as add in addition).
- Understand synonyms (cold and freezing) and antonyms (cold and hot).
- Use adjectives (such as big or pretty), adverbs (such as strongly or clearly), and other parts of speech correctly.
- Point out when words rhyme (such as cat and bat).

Talking About Texts:

- Retell the beginning, middle, and end of a story.
- Talk about the main idea of a text and describe details.
- Act out the stories they are reading or telling.
- Speak in front of a group about topics they are studying.
- Say what they like about a book and make reading recommendations to friends.
Reading

Becoming Strong Readers:

- Pick both fiction and nonfiction books on topics that interest them and that they can read on their own.
- Read silently.
- Ask and answer questions about texts they read.
- Point out characters in a story and understand what makes them different from each other.
- Make connections between a story and their own lives.
- Figure out the lesson, or moral, of a story they read or hear.
- Learn new words while reading on their own.

Exploring Texts:

- Read storybooks, poems, fairy tales, journals, picture books, nonfiction books, articles, and many other kinds of text.
- Read so that they can find the answer to a specific question.
- Pull important information from graphs, diagrams, and charts.
- Look for captions, indexes, and sidebars to find information.
- Connect and compare information they read in one book to related information found in another.
- Figure out the main idea of a text and point out how the author makes that clear.

Writing

Writing With Purpose:

- Write for different purposes, such as to give an opinion, provide information, or tell a story.
- Choose what to include and what to delete in their writing, over the course of multiple drafts.
- Create a story that flows from one event to another in an order that makes sense.
- Describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of their characters.
- Introduce topics or opinions and use facts to develop their points.
- Develop a clear beginning, middle, and end to a story.
Building Spelling and Grammar:

- Spell common words correctly.
- Capitalize words properly, including at the beginning of sentences and when using proper nouns (such as Paris or Miguel).
- Use punctuation, such as periods and question marks, correctly.
- Add to and reorder sentences ("the girl bounced the ball" → "the girl bounced the red ball" → "the red ball was bounced by the girl").
- Revise and edit what they have written.
- Tell the difference between formal and informal English (such as hello vs. hey).
Third-Grade Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your third grader grows as a reader.

Language

Breaking Down Words:

- Use context to read irregularly spelled words (knight, write).
- Recognize and use nouns (house), verbs (run), adjectives (big), and adverbs (strongly), as well as prefixes (un-) and suffixes (-ly).
- Recognize homographs (words that are spelled the same but have different meanings, such as fly a kite and fly on the wall) and homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently, such as wait and weight).
- Use figurative speech (such as as small as a mouse or it was music to my ears).

Talking About Texts:

- Retell the beginning, middle, and end of a story in detail.
- Prepare notes and ideas about a text before a group discussion.
- Follow respectful discussion rules (e.g., taking turns).
- Connect their own thoughts during discussion to others' remarks by:
  - Listening intently.
  - Asking follow-up questions.
  - Building off what someone else has said.
- Determine the main idea and supporting details of a text by comparing it to other texts, audio recordings, and pictures.
Reading

Connecting to Texts:

- Make predictions.
- Retell the beginning, middle, and end of a story, focusing on the characters, events, and settings.
- Compare and contrast the events of one story to their own lives and to other stories.
- Recognize sequence and cause and effect.
- Understand the motivations of a character.
- Identify the author's message or the moral of the story.
- Begin to understand abstract concepts, humor, and complex themes.
- Understand the different perspectives of different characters.

Reading With Purpose:

- Pick books that match their own reading level.
- Ask and answer questions about texts.
- Read so that they can find the answer to a specific question.
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Identify the main idea and supporting evidence in a text.
- Pull important information from graphs, diagrams, and charts.
- Look for captions, indexes, and sidebars to find information.
- Connect and compare information they read in one book to related information they read in another.

Writing

Writing With Purpose:

- Make informed decisions about what to include in their writing.
- Create a story that flows from one event to another in an order that makes sense.
- Create strong beginnings and conclusions.
- Write pieces that include multiple perspectives.
- Plan and structure writing to support an opinion or argument.
- Use writing to explore and express thoughts and ideas.
- Take notes on other texts, and recall and use that information for evidence in personal writing.
- Use a range of descriptive words and transition words.

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Enhancing Sentences:

- Spell high-frequency words correctly.
- Take apart words with multiple syllables in order to spell them correctly, or close to correctly.
- Use punctuation, like periods and question marks, where appropriate.
- Use linking words and phrases (e.g., furthermore, alternatively, because) to create longer, more complex sentences.
- Use temporal words (e.g., first, in the afternoon, after that) to signify time has passed.
- Use tense correctly (e.g., past, present, future).
- Revise or edit what they have written.
Fourth-Grade Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your fourth grader grows as a reader.

Language

Using Powerful Words:

- Break apart words with multiple syllables (such as *company*, *tomorrow*, or *necessary*), using sound knowledge.
- Self-correct mistakes in pronunciation.
- Recognize and use portmanteau words (words that combine two words to create a new word, such as *motel* or *brunch*).
- Use idioms (phrases such as *raining cats and dogs*).
- Use the correct tense in a sentence (past, present, or future).
- Change the tense of a verb to match the tense of a sentence.

Discussing Texts:

- Be prepared to discuss material.
- Use evidence to support their arguments.
- Serve as discussion leader occasionally.
- Connect to others’ input by:
  - Paraphrasing comments.
  - Asking follow-up questions.
  - Agreeing, partially agreeing, or disagreeing.
- Talk about things that might or might not happen or be true (hypotheticals).
- Understand when to use academic and when to use casual language and vocabulary (such as *hello* vs. *hey*).
Reading

Connecting to Texts:

- Recognize how an author uses evidence to support a claim.
- Recognize the building blocks of a story and compare and contrast them to how they appear in other texts.
- Identify the author’s message or the moral of the story.
- Read texts with long, descriptive passages.
- Use background knowledge to better understand a text.
- Make inferences about characters’ feelings and motivations.
- Track how characters change and develop throughout a story.
- Form questions that can be answered by a text.

Reading With Purpose:

- Use the details in a text to explain what it’s trying to say and make inferences based on the details where necessary.
- Use images, charts, and diagrams in the text to gather information.
- Retell stories in detail, including the characters, setting, plot, and main idea.
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Recognize that a main idea or claim in an informational text is supported with evidence.
- Understand multiple ways a text can be structured (such as in order of events, or in a textbook/instructional format).
- Compare and contrast primary (firsthand accounts) and secondary (secondhand accounts) resources.

Writing

Writing With Purpose:

- State an opinion and support it with reasons and facts.
- Organize events or ideas in a sequence that makes sense and works well.
- Use multiple, interesting types of transitions between scenes or ideas.
- Create well-developed characters and a narrator.
- Include clear subplots.
- Understand and use descriptive language.
- Create strong conclusions.
Language (such as, The room smelled tany like apple cider),
Include transition words (such as next and then) and sensory
Use dialogue with variations other than said,
Subject they are writing about,
Be precise with language and use vocabulary appropriate to the
Use quotations from other authors to support their points,
Include illustrations, graphs, and paragraph breaks where needed.

Enhancing Meanings

Fourth-Grade Milestones
Fifth-Grade Milestones

Your child will work hard to meet many literacy goals this year! These pages describe some common milestones to watch for as your fifth grader grows as a reader.

**Using Powerful Words:**

- Understand that words may have a root or origin (such as *add* in *addition*).
- Understand that changing the ending of an adjective transforms it to an adverb (-ly) or a noun (-ness).
- Read and comprehend some abbreviations (such as *appt.* for *appointment*) and acronyms (such as *SAT* for *Scholastic Assessment Test*).
- Break apart words with more than one syllable (such as *request, equator, or extinguish*) in order to pronounce them correctly, or close to correctly.
- Read clearly and with expression.
- Use context to understand vocabulary words.
- Self-correct when necessary.

**Discussing Texts:**

- Start or lead a group discussion, and be polite during it.
- Come to class prepared and ready to discuss material.
- Use both fact and opinion in order to make strong statements.
- Connect to what other students share by:
  - Summarizing comments.
  - Asking follow-up questions.
  - Agreeing, partially agreeing, or disagreeing.
- Be mature when dealing with sensitive themes (such as racism).
Reading

Connecting to Texts:
- Understand longer pieces of text with multiple subplots.
- Make inferences about significant events not shown in the text.
- Understand perspectives and events that are very different from their own experiences.
- Use knowledge of story structure and hints in the text to make predictions.
- Find the main theme and understand how subplots support it.
- Recognize story structure and understand how events unfold.
- Identify multiple meanings of a word or phrase.

Reading With Purpose:
- Use context to determine the varied meanings of figurative language.
- Recognize and explain how graphics, charts, and illustrations add meaning to a text.
- Compare and contrast books that are structured differently.
- Analyze multiple books on the same topic and talk about similarities and differences.
- Use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Recognize that a main idea or claim is supported with evidence.

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Writing

Writing With Purpose:

- Create well-developed characters and a narrator.
- Engage their readers with clear, focused, and exciting stories.
- Construct a well-organized opinion essay that clearly states their opinion using reason and facts.
- Use varied and interesting introductions in their first paragraph.
- Include historical context, facts, and science in both fiction and nonfiction pieces.

Enhancing Meaning:

- Explore using varied and interesting punctuation.
- Carry out interesting and varied transitions.
- Create longer passages using figurative and descriptive language.
- Use quotations to include words from other authors.
- Include dialogue.
- Be precise with language and use vocabulary that is specific to certain areas of study, such as scientific wording.