

First grade is packed with important and exciting transitions as children leave behind much of the play of preschool and kindergarten, and begin to develop more academic skills.

Your child will also go through a significant transition to more extensive learning. As your child adjusts, they may get tired at the end of the day or have trouble focusing as the day progresses — that's normal! Just check with your child's teacher on their progress, and work together to develop strategies if they're having trouble adjusting, especially at the beginning of the year.

Most importantly, prime your child for success by continuing the learning process at home with enriching books and activities that support what they're learning in class. When your first grader spends time learning new skills with you, it not only makes that time more valuable to them, but also helps them reach the milestones expected at this age. Here is everything you need to know about the exciting year of 1st grade, and the materials that will help your child thrive.

First Grade Reading Skills

Building reading skills is an essential part of a first grader's learning process and academic success down the road. Even when students are not specifically learning "reading," they are constantly using this skill to learn other subjects—which is why it's crucial for your child's success in all subjects. As first graders develop their reading comprehension, they will talk more about certain topics and gain a deeper understanding of what they read.

To build their reading skills, your first grader:

- Recognizes the features of a sentence (for example: first words, capitalization, and ending punctuation).
- Recognizes the spelling and sound of two letters that represent one sound, such as *th*, *ch*, *wh* (these are also known as digraphs).
- Learns to read regularly spelled one-syllable words.
- Understands how an “e” at the end of a word changes a vowel within the word.
- Breaks up longer words into syllables in order to read them.
- Reads grade-level words that have “irregular” spellings.
- Knows the difference between and reads fiction texts (such as *Baby Shark*) and non-fiction texts (like *LEGO Nonfiction: Super Sharks*) with purpose and an understanding of the plot and important ideas and characters.
- Talks about and answers questions about the text they read.
- Reads texts aloud at an appropriate speed and with expression.
- Compares different characters, events, or texts.
- Understands the purpose of and uses common features in a book, such as headings, tables of contents, and glossaries.
- Begins to read grade-appropriate poetry and identifies words and phrases that relate to emotions and the senses.

First Grade Reading Activities

Put on a Show: Read a favorite story or poem out loud as though it’s a play, using different voices for the character and the narrator to help your child practice pacing and expression. Your child can also read a dramatic book (like *Giraffes Can’t Dance*) to you!

Become Poets: Read small and simple poems together and talk about the feelings they convey. Next, try writing your own poems together about objects, people you know, or anything else you like!

Create Your Own Dictionary: As your child learns to read new words and understand the meaning of those words, keep track of them in your own personal dictionary. Your child can write them down, draw a picture to illustrate the word or its definition, or write a sentence using the word.

1st Grade Writing Skills

Once your child has mastered writing letters and begins to improve their spelling skills, they can begin to write longer pieces in a variety of genres. First grade is that magical time in which your child progresses from simply writing words to becoming a “writer,” and their spelling skills will improve in the meantime.

Students also begin to use technology in 1st grade, specifically for writing and research. You can help by using the Internet and other technology at home with your child in an appropriate and supervised manner.

As with reading, your child will use writing throughout the day in a variety of subjects. For example, students may write about a math problem, explaining how they solved it, or write about a topic they learned in science or social studies. All of this work makes them a better writer—and learner—overall.

To build their writing skills, your first grader:

- Writes a variety of texts including, opinion pieces, narratives, and explanatory/informational pieces.

- Writes with structure, including an introductory sentence, supporting or accurate details, and some sense of closure.
- Begins to use digital tools, including computers, to practice and “publish” writing.
- Gathers information as a class, with the aid of a teacher, to answer a question or create a shared research or writing project.

First Grade Writing Activities

Write Your Own Stories: After your child experiences an important moment or event, ask them to write about it and illustrate it as though it is a story — and if they'd like, they can then share it with your family and friends!

Answer a Question: When your child asks a question, research the answer together using books like a *Children's Dictionary* or computers (under your supervision). Then, work together to craft an informative poster or collage with the question and the answer, using both text and pictures to show what you learned.

Make a Family Magazine or Book: Task your first grader with illustrating a book using drawings and text to describe different family members or friends. Each person can have their very own page!