

First Grade

Knowing the essential skills and strategies our kids will be learning in school helps us know how to support them all year. Find out, by subject, what your kids will be learning this year and read on for strategies to help them be successful students.

Reading at School:

- Using phonics (matching letters and sounds) and word analysis skills to figure out unfamiliar words when reading and writing.
- Describing characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- Identifying the correct meaning for a word with multiple meanings, based on the sentence or paragraph in which the word is used (e.g., deciding whether the word *bat* means a flying mammal or a club used in baseball)
- Getting facts and information from different writings.

Support Reading at Home:

Read with your child every day.

The public library allows you to have books checked out for up to three weeks. If you build a library visit into your weekly or monthly routine, hundreds of books (and reading opportunities) can pass through your child's hands - for free!

Try these things to help reinforce the learning your child is doing in first grade:

- Read aloud, but every now and then, pause and have your child provide the next word
- Choose books, magazines, and articles that are non-fiction to read with your child - discuss the facts you read
- Talk about stories together - retell them in order to reinforce sequencing
- Ask questions that get your child to think and talk about written text
- Act out stories together - become the characters and imagine the details of setting that put you in the story



Speaking and Listening at School:



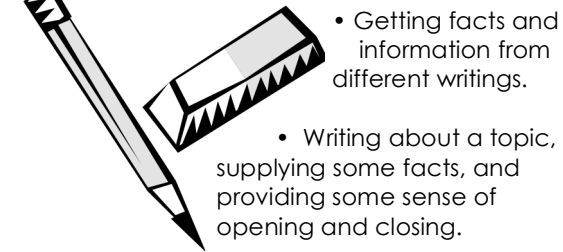
- Taking part in conversations about topics and texts being studied by responding to the comments of others and asking questions to clear up any confusion.
- Speaking clearly and in complete sentences.
- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text or other information read aloud

Support Speaking and Listening at Home:

Being able to talk to people is an extremely important skill. Listening for information and direction is also very important. Some ways you can work on building these skills at home include:

- Sequentially discuss the day
- Listen to your child talk about their day
- Look your child in the eye when you are speaking and listening
- Have your child read stories, poems, and plays aloud
- Give clear directions and help your child complete them
- Encourage your child to put on plays

Writing at School:



- Getting facts and information from different writings.
- Writing about a topic, supplying some facts, and providing some sense of opening and closing.
- Participating in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of “how-to” books and using them to write a sequence of instructions)
- Describing people, places, things and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly and with complete sentences.
- Producing and expanding complete simple and compound statements, questions, commands, and exclamations.
- Learning to think about finer distinctions in the meanings of near-synonyms (e.g., *marching, prancing, strutting, strolling, walking*)

Support Writing at Home:

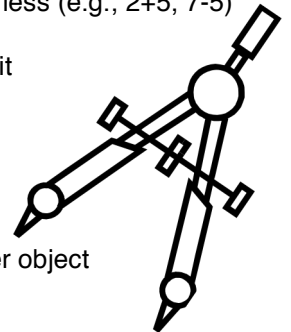
In first grade, students are using the letter sounds they are learning during reading to help them tell their own stories. Students need encouragement and practice with putting their thoughts to paper.

You can grow skill your first graders' writing skill in these areas by:

- Modeling writing – keep a journal and work on it when your child is working with pencil and paper at home
- Encourage your child to share stories, ideas, or events in their day
- Link sounds in words to letters by spelling together
- Write down words together to help build the visual connection between sounds and letters
- Read stories together, discuss authors and author's craft

Math at School:

- Solving addition and subtraction word problems in situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing (e.g., a taking from situation would be: “Five apples were on the table. I ate some apples. Then there were three apples. How many apples did I eat?”)
- Adding with a sum of 20 or less, and subtracting from a number 20 or less, for example by using strategies based around the number 10 (e.g., to solve $13-4$, one can start with 13, subtract 3 to reach 10, and then subtract 1 more to reach 9)
- Quickly and accurately adding with a sum of 10 or less, and quickly and accurately subtracting from a number 10 or less (e.g., $2+5$, $7-5$)
- Understanding what the digits mean in two-digit numbers (*place value*)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract (e.g., $38+5$, $29+20$, $64+27$, $80-50$)
- Measuring lengths of objects by using a shorter object as a unit of length.
- Making composite shapes by joining shapes together, and dividing circles and rectangles into halves or fourths.



Support Math at Home:

The three major math concepts students are responsible for learning in first grade are place value, basic addition and subtraction, and the ability to manipulate basic geometric shapes.

Help with place value by grouping and breaking apart items by tens. Trading ten little things for one big thing is good way to build skill with place value. Counting by ones and tens will also help reinforce this skill.

Addition and subtraction begin to make sense to first graders, but they need lots of practice. A goal of first grade is for students to easily and automatically know sums to 10. Repetition of basic addition and subtraction facts will make these facts automatic.

Geometric shapes can be built and taken apart with pattern blocks, and pictures to reinforce how they work together can be helpful for cementing these concepts for students.

Science:

First grade science students are learning about the natural world through examination of characteristics and properties of objects, living organisms, and Earth materials. They are developing an understanding of how living and non-living things interact, the motion of objects when a force is applied, and the tools that help observe the natural world.

Support your developing scientist by sharing their curiosity and keeping track of ways to learn that demonstrate critical thinking, collecting evidence and communicating about ways of thinking.

