

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language

The K–5 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Note on range and content of student language use

To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students must gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have nonliteral meanings, shadings of meaning, and relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.

Language Standards K-5

The following standards for grades K-5 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. *Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.* Beginning in grade 3, skills and understandings that are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking are marked with an asterisk (*). See the table on page 30 for a complete list and Appendix A for an example of how these skills develop in sophistication.

Kindergartners:	Grade 1 students:	Grade 2 students:
Conventions of Standard English		
<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Print many upper- and lowercase letters. Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs. Form regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/ (e.g., <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>). Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., <i>who, what, where, when, why, how</i>). Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., <i>to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with</i>). Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities. 	<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Print all upper- and lowercase letters. Use common, proper, and possessive nouns. Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., <i>He hops; We hop</i>). Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., <i>I, me, my; they, them, their; anyone, everything</i>). Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., <i>Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home</i>). Use frequently occurring adjectives. Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., <i>and, but, or, so, because</i>). Use determiners (e.g., articles, demonstratives). Use frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., <i>during, beyond, toward</i>). Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts. 	<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use collective nouns (e.g., <i>group</i>). Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns (e.g., <i>feet, children, teeth, mice, fish</i>). Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., <i>myself, ourselves</i>). Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., <i>sat, hid, told</i>). Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (e.g., <i>The boy watched the movie; The little boy watched the movie; The action movie was watched by the little boy</i>).
<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun <i>I</i>. Recognize and name end punctuation. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes). Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships. 	<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize dates and names of people. Use end punctuation for sentences. Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series. Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words. Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions. 	<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names. Use commas in greetings and closings of letters. Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives. Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., <i>cage</i> → <i>badge</i>; <i>boy</i> → <i>boil</i>). Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.

Language Standards K-5

Kindergartners:	Grade 1 students:	Grade 2 students:
Knowledge of Language		
3. (Begins in grade 2)	3. (Begins in grade 2)	3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Compare formal and informal uses of English.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use		
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>kindergarten reading and content</i> . <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately (e.g., knowing <i>duck</i> is a bird and learning the verb <i>to duck</i>). Use the most frequently occurring inflections and affixes (e.g., <i>-ed</i>, <i>-s</i>, <i>re-</i>, <i>un-</i>, <i>pre-</i>, <i>-ful</i>, <i>-less</i>) as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word. 	4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 1 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from an array of strategies. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Use frequently occurring affixes as a clue to the meaning of a word. Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., <i>look</i>) and their inflectional forms (e.g., <i>looks</i>, <i>looked</i>, <i>looking</i>). 	4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 2 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from an array of strategies. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., <i>happy/unhappy</i>, <i>tell/retell</i>). Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., <i>addition</i>, <i>additional</i>). Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words (e.g., <i>birdhouse</i>, <i>lighthouse</i>, <i>housefly</i>; <i>bookshelf</i>, <i>notebook</i>, <i>bookmark</i>). Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.
5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent. Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites (antonyms). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are <i>colorful</i>). Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action (e.g., <i>walk</i>, <i>march</i>, <i>strut</i>, <i>prance</i>) by acting out the meanings. 	5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent. Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a <i>duck</i> is a bird that swims; a <i>tiger</i> is a large cat with stripes). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at home that are <i>cozy</i>). Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., <i>look</i>, <i>peek</i>, <i>glance</i>, <i>stare</i>, <i>glare</i>, <i>scowl</i>) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., <i>large</i>, <i>gigantic</i>) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings. 	5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are <i>spicy</i> or <i>juicy</i>). Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs (e.g., <i>toss</i>, <i>throw</i>, <i>hurl</i>) and closely related adjectives (e.g., <i>thin</i>, <i>slender</i>, <i>skinny</i>, <i>scrawny</i>).
6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.	6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., <i>because</i>).	6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., <i>When other kids are happy that makes me happy</i>).

Language Standards K-5

Grade 3 students:	Grade 4 students:	Grade 5 students:
Conventions of Standard English		
<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences. Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. Use abstract nouns (e.g., <i>childhood</i>). Form and use regular and irregular verbs. Form and use the simple (e.g., <i>I walked; I walk; I will walk</i>) verb tenses. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.* Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences. 	<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use relative pronouns (<i>who, whose, whom, which, that</i>) and relative adverbs (<i>where, when, why</i>). Form and use the progressive (e.g., <i>I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking</i>) verb tenses. Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., <i>can, may, must</i>) to convey various conditions. Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., <i>a small red bag</i> rather than <i>a red small bag</i>). Form and use prepositional phrases. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.* Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to, too, two; there, their</i>)*. 	<p>1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences. Form and use the perfect (e.g., <i>I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked</i>) verb tenses. Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.* Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., <i>either/or, neither/nor</i>).
<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize appropriate words in titles. Use commas in addresses. Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue. Form and use possessives. Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., <i>sitting, smiled, cries, happiness</i>). Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings. 	<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use correct capitalization. Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed. 	<p>2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use punctuation to separate items in a series.* Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence. Use a comma to set off the words <i>yes</i> and <i>no</i> (e.g., <i>Yes, thank you</i>), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., <i>It's true, isn't it?</i>), and to indicate direct address (e.g., <i>Is that you, Steve?</i>). Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

Language Standards K-5

Grade 3 students:	Grade 4 students:	Grade 5 students:
Knowledge of Language		
<p>3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose words and phrases for effect.* Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English. 	<p>3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.* Choose punctuation for effect.* Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion). 	<p>3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use		
<p>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on <i>grade 3 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., <i>agreeable/disagreeable</i>, <i>comfortable/uncomfortable</i>, <i>care/careless</i>, <i>heat/preheat</i>). Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., <i>company</i>, <i>companion</i>). Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. 	<p>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 4 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>telegraph</i>, <i>photograph</i>, <i>autograph</i>). Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. 	<p>4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 5 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>photograph</i>, <i>photosynthesis</i>). Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
<p>5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., <i>take steps</i>). Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are <i>friendly</i> or <i>helpful</i>). Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., <i>knew</i>, <i>believed</i>, <i>suspected</i>, <i>heard</i>, <i>wondered</i>). 	<p>5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., <i>as pretty as a picture</i>) in context. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs. Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms). 	<p>5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret figurative language, including similes and metaphors, in context. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms, antonyms, homographs) to better understand each of the words.
<p>6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., <i>After dinner that night we went looking for them</i>).</p>	<p>6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., <i>quizzed</i>, <i>whined</i>, <i>stammered</i>) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., <i>wildlife</i>, <i>conservation</i>, and <i>endangered</i> when discussing animal preservation).</p>	<p>6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., <i>however</i>, <i>although</i>, <i>nevertheless</i>, <i>similarly</i>, <i>moreover</i>, <i>in addition</i>).</p>

Language Progressive Skills, by Grade

The following skills, marked with an asterisk (*) in Language standards 1–3, are particularly likely to require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.

Standard	Grade(s)							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9–10	11–12
L.3.1f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.								
L.3.3a. Choose words and phrases for effect.								
L.4.1f. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.								
L.4.1g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to/too/two</i> ; <i>there/their</i>).								
L.4.3a. Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.*								
L.4.3b. Choose punctuation for effect.								
L.5.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.								
L.5.2a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.†								
L.6.1c. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.								
L.6.1d. Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).								
L.6.1e. Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.								
L.6.2a. Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.								
L.6.3a. Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.‡								
L.6.3b. Maintain consistency in style and tone.								
L.7.1c. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.								
L.7.3a. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.								
L.8.1d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.								
L.9–10.1a. Use parallel structure.								

*Subsumed by L.7.3a

†Subsumed by L.9–10.1a

‡Subsumed by L.11–12.3a