

First Grade Reading/Language Arts Routines and Practices

Phonics: After two weeks of review, we start our phonics program this week. We will be using the Orton-Gillingham approach for phonics instruction. This is the same approach used in kindergarten, so the students are familiar with our routine. OG is a multi-sensory approach to teaching phonics. Students are engaged visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically with phonics skills daily. We continually review past phonics skills while introducing a new skill(s) each week. You will notice dictation papers in your child's homework folder. This will let you know what skill(s) we are working on for the week.

Accelerated Reading: We will also be starting Accelerated Reading next week. Your child will bring home a library book (they are allowed to check out three). They will need to read their book **three times** before taking a test on the book. For the first couple of weeks, they will be required to take at least one AR test per week. If they choose to take more, that is GREAT! In a couple of weeks, once they get used to taking tests, they will be taking two tests a week and work their way up to three.

Testing: We will be taking the following tests most weeks. We will test on Friday afternoons. If for some reason your child needs to check out early on Friday, please let me know and we can arrange for them to take their tests earlier that morning.

1. **Spelling test:** There will NOT be a set list of words for students to memorize each week. We practice tapping and writing words using our phonics skills for that week daily. We will take a practice test on Thursday using the same method with similar words. If your child makes 100 on Thursday, they do not have to take the test on Friday. A final test will be given on Friday (words are not necessarily the same as the practice test...we are testing proficiency with the phonics skill(s), not memorization). The spelling test will include phonetic words, red words (sight words) for the week, and eventually, sentences using both phonetic and red words. Although the phonetic words are not sent home in advance, the red word(s) will be. We do red words on Tuesday, and the practice paper(s) will be sent home in the homework folder in the front pocket. It is best if it is left in the pocket for the week. When you listen to your child read their decodable each night, you can also practice the red word(s).
2. **Reading comprehension test:** We will take a comprehension test on our story of the week. We read and discuss the story every day!
3. **Grammar test:** We will take a grammar test on our skill of the week most weeks.
4. **Vocabulary test:** We will take a test on our vocabulary words from our story of the week. We will use the easier picture version for the time being while practicing on the harder sentence version together. Our goal is to get where they can take the sentence test with help and eventually, independently.
5. **Reading fluency and accuracy test:** We will not start taking this test until second nine weeks. Students will be given a fresh read passage (one they have not practiced), and they will read the passage for one minute. We take the number of words read for a fluency grade and the number of words read accurately for an accuracy grade. Their grade will be based on their reading proficiency compared to the benchmark required for first grade.

Homework: I do not like to give a lot of homework. (As a parent myself, I've been there and know the struggle is REAL!) Rarely, I will need to send home work that we did not get to in class or that your child

failed to complete. Please check your child's blue folder daily! Important announcements and complete classwork are in the back "keep at home" pocket. This needs to be cleaned out daily or at least weekly. Homework or anything that needs to be returned to school is in the "return to school" pocket. Daily homework will consist of a decodable reader...read 3 times (to practice fluency and reinforce our phonetic skill(s)) and their Accelerated Reader book (read three times before taking a test). Please help your child with the decodable reader...listen to them read and assist as necessary, initial, and return to school.

Parent Communication/DoJo: We will be using class DoJo for parent communication. It's hard for me to check in the afternoons while I'm teaching reading, so if you have an emergency (like a change in transportation for that day) please call the school.