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*Office of School Improvement*

# A Parent's Guide to

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS  
TO KNOW BY THE END OF

# FIRST GRADE

### Contact:

Michigan Department of Education  
Office of School Improvement  
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## A Parent Guide to Grade Level Content Expectations

### *Michigan Sets High Academic Standards –for ALL*

This booklet is a part of Michigan’s Mathematics and English Language Arts Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE). It is just one in a series of tools available for schools and families. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides similar booklets for families of children in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Teacher versions of the Grade Level Content Expectations are finished for grades Kindergarten through eight. They state in clear and measurable terms what students in each grade are expected to know and be able to do. They also guide the design of the state’s grade level MEAP tests required in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) legislation.

Educators and classroom teachers from Michigan school districts have been involved in the development and/or review of Michigan’s GLCE. The expectations were designed to ensure that students receive seamless instruction, from one grade to the next, leaving no gaps in any child’s education. More importantly, they set high expectations in literacy and mathematics so we can better prepare all K-12 students for the challenges they will face in a global 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To learn more about the Michigan Curriculum Framework, visit [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde) and click on “**K-12 Curriculum.**”

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**First Grade English Language Arts (ELA)** is more than just reading and writing. It includes skills like speaking, listening, and viewing as well. ELA offers us a way to communicate. Through ELA, your child can apply what s/he learns to solve real problems at home, at school and in the community.

### Glossary Terms

Words that have asterisks (\*) are defined in the Glossary located in the back of this booklet.

*By the end of First Grade, your child should know and be able to do the following .....*

## Reading

### Word Recognition & Word Study

#### Phonemic Awareness (\*)

- Change the sounds of words by changing letters that can make new words. Example: "hat" becomes "\_at".
- Recognize that words are made of sounds blended together and that words have meaning.

#### Phonics (\*)

- Use letter-sound clues to recognize a few one-syllable words, blends and consonant diagraphs (\*) such as letter-sounds, word chunks, word families and diagraphs th, ch, sh.



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### ***Word Recognition***

- Easily recognize familiar first grade words they see in print.
- Automatically recognize a growing number of basic sight vocabulary words. (Obtain a list from your child's teacher.)
- Be able to use prefixes, suffixes (\*) and context clues (\*) to read and understand unknown words. (**untie**, **replay**, **careless**, **playful**)

### ***Vocabulary***

- Know the meaning of words they hear and see often. (Ask the teacher for a grade-level vocabulary list.)
- Use strategies to make sure the words used in texts sound right and make sense.
- Use strategies to help figure out the meaning of words that describe objects, actions, etc, when they appear in a story.

### ***Fluency (\*)***

- Automatically read words first graders see often, whether they appear alone or in a sentence.
- Read aloud using expression reacting to the periods and question marks.
- Independently read aloud new text with 95% accuracy in books matched to their ability.

### ***Narrative Text (Fiction)***

- Recognize how various cultures are represented in high-quality literature.
- Identify and describe a variety of genre including realistic fiction, fantasy and folktales.
- Identify a story's problem/solution, order of events, and beginning/middle/end.
- Identify how authors/artists use:
  - Pictures to support ideas
  - Words like before, after, now, etc., to show the order of events
- Show through their conversations, drawings, or writing that they know how two or more stories are connected.

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## Informational Text (Non-fiction)

- Name and describe different types of informational text, such as how-to books, science and social studies magazines.
- Discuss patterns such as the order in which things happen or ways they are described.
- Explain how authors and illustrators use features like headings, titles, captions and pictures to help readers understand ideas.
- Show through drawings, writing or conversations how two or more informational texts are connected.



## Comprehension

- Use their own experiences to help understand new ideas and connect to ideas in texts.
- Retell up to three events, in order, from a familiar story.
- Connect and compare a story to their lives as well as compare a story other stories.
- Compare and contrast relationships among characters, events and key ideas.
- Use drawings to show key ideas and details in stories.
- Ask questions as they read.
- Remember and use what has been read from other subject areas.

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- Remember and use what has been read from other subject areas.

### Metacognition (\*)

- Know when to ask questions when reading familiar text.
- Know when they do or do not understand the texts.
- Use simple strategies to increase their understanding of texts.  
Example: Reread the story.
- Use book covers and/or pictures to predict what might happen next.
- Talk about the author's purpose.
- Begin to sort and put information in order with the help of the teacher.
- Discuss with teacher which comprehension strategies worked.



### Critical Standards (\*)

- Decide and discuss what qualities make stories good.
- With help from the teacher, begin to know how to measure the quality of their own work and the work of others.

### Reading Attitude

- Be excited about reading and learning how to read.
- Choose to read and write on their own during free time in school and at home.

### Ways to Praise Your Child

*I'm so proud of you.*

*I knew you could do it!*

*That's exactly right!*

*You're doing much better today.*



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## Writing

### Writing Genre (\*)

- Write a brief personal story using pictures, words, and/or sentences.
- Write a short informational piece that can include headings, titles, or pictures to help readers understand their ideas.
- Help with a class research project by adding key information gathered from materials supplied by the teacher.



### Writing Process

- With help from the teacher, think about how those who will read the paper will react as they plan to write.
- Write three or more connected sentences using first grade punctuation and spelling.
- Use word lists to try to correct their spelling
- Make changes to their own writing by reading it to a friend, and asking for ideas to improve it to make the meaning more clear.
- Use book language when writing stories. ("Once upon a time...")

### Personal Style

- Develop a personal style when speaking, writing or acting out messages. Example: they may express feelings, use details and show examples.

### Grammar and Usage

- Write with complete sentences beginning with a capitol letter and ending with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

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## Spelling

- Correctly spell one-syllable words they see often from common word families.
- Use beginning and simple ending sounds, or words lists provided by the teacher to figure out how to spell more words.

## Handwriting

- Form upper and lower case letters neatly, so that people can read them.

## Writing Attitude

- Be eager to write and learn to write.



## Ways to Praise Your Child

*This looks wonderful!*  
*That's a neat idea.*  
*That's great!*  
*You're learning fast.*



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## Speaking

### Conventions (\*)

- Use singular and plural nouns (boy/boys, mouse/mice) and contractions. (isn't, can't, won't)
- Use singular possessive pronouns. (my, mine, hers, his)
- Use words to show relationships of events in sentences or stories (if, because and after).
- Use words endings while speaking ( -s, -es, -ed, -ing or -er).
- Use language to communicate with all kinds of people for all kinds of reasons. (express wants and needs, solve problems)
- Be able to speak out loud to the teacher:
  - stand straight and tall
  - make eye contact
  - use illustrations
- Make presentations using Standard English (\*) or their version of Standard English if they are in the process of learning English.
- Give examples of how language in story books is used differently than in real life.



### Spoken Discourse (\*)

- Stay on topic while responding to comments and questions from others during conversations.
- Briefly tell or retell familiar stories in an organized way that makes sense from the beginning to end.
- Be able to talk about the meanings of and the connections between two or more stories.
- Plan and deliver simple presentations or reports that are organized and include several facts and details.

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## Listening and Viewing

### Conventions (\*)

- Give, restate and follow two-step directions.
- Ask good questions during a report or presentation.
- While in conversations, use eye contact and pay attention.
- While in large or small groups pay attention and listen carefully to others.
- Be able to tell who is giving a message and who is receiving the message.

### Response

- Choose, listen to or view and discuss a variety of good books, both classic and recently written.
- Listen to or view and discuss a variety of genres. (fairy tales, poetry, stories)
- Make connections between two or more stories as they think about them They can do this by discussing the stories, drawing pictures and/or writing.

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*You did a lot of work today.  
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# Glossary Terms



**consonant diagraphs** - two consonants together that make one sound. Examples: ch, sh, th.

**context clues** - hints from the surrounding words, phrases or sentences about the unknown word.

**conventions** - the rules about how words and language works.

**critical standards** - the high level of quality students must be able to recognize, to determine if their work reaches that expectation.

**fluency** - the ability to recognize letters or read words with speed and accuracy.

**genre** - a category used to describe different kinds of texts, such as poems, fairy tales, fables, etc.

**metacognition** - the process of thinking about one's own thinking. Example: Being able to monitor when you know or don't understand a lesson.

**phonics** - the predictable relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of the alphabet that represent those sounds in written language.

**phonemic awareness** - the ability to notice, think about and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.

**prefixes/suffixes** - word parts known as affixes. These parts are added to words. Prefixes are added to the beginning of words (untie) and suffixes are added to the end of words (cheerful).

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## Glossary Terms continued...

**spoken discourse** - to participate in conversation or discussion.

**Standard English** - the form of English widely accepted as being clear and proper.

**syllable** - a word part that contains a vowel or vowel sound. Words can have 1 or more syllables. Example:

- 'hat' has 1 syllable      hat
- 'letter' has 2 syllables      let ter

**writing genre** - a category used to describe different kinds of writing, usually by form such as poetry, stories, fairy tales, etc.

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