



THE FLORIDA BENCHMARKS FOR EXCELLENT STUDENT THINKING (B.E.S.T.) STANDARDS

Parent Guide for Grade 4 English Language Arts

PREPARING FLORIDA CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

The B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future.

Education leaders across the state of Florida improved the academic content standards, creating new expectations for what students need to know and be able to do. These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that **all** students reach their greatest potential.

THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE:

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- A deep respect for literature from historic time periods
- Knowledge building through content-rich texts

Preparing your child for success begins in Kindergarten and continues as your child moves up through each grade. This guide will support parents and families with children in fourth grade by helping you:

LEARN

about the B.E.S.T. Standards and why they matter for your child.

TALK

with your child's teachers about what he/she will be learning in the classroom.

LOCATE

activities and resources to support your child's learning in practical ways at home.

UNDERSTAND

important educational (academic) words that you will see in your child's grade-level standards.

LEARN ABOUT THE FOURTH GRADE STANDARDS

YOUR CHILD WILL EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH TEXT BY:

- Using and applying knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to read and write single-syllable and multisyllabic words.
- Fluently read grade-level texts.
- Demonstrating legible cursive writing skills.
- Writing a personal or fictional narrative, write to make a claim and write expository texts that follow rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling.
- Improving writing by planning, revising and editing, with guidance and support from adults.

IN READING AND WRITING, YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Summarize a text to enhance comprehension.
- Explain how relevant details support the central idea.
- Explain how text features contribute to the meaning of the text.
- Explain how setting, events, conflict and character development contribute to the plot in a literary text.
- Figure out the meaning of unknown words using context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials and/or background knowledge.
- Conduct research to answer a question, organizing information about the topic from multiple and valid sources.



LOCATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- ✓ Listen to your child read and reread a text at their reading level to build their fluency.
- ✓ Read aloud with your child for 20 minutes each day.
- ✓ Be a reading role model. If your child sees you reading he/she will see the importance of reading.
- ✓ Be frequent visitors to your local public library. Let him or her see you choosing, checking out, and enjoying books. Encourage your child to choose and check out books.
- ✓ Have your child research information about a topic. Encourage them to find books based on topics that they are interested in and that they would like to become an expert on. Talk about what is happening in the text. Have them write about what they learned.
- ✓ Have your child engage in real-world writing. Write a letter to a family member, write a short story, or have them keep a daily journal.
- ✓ Encourage your child to give detailed responses during conversations. Ask your child questions about what he/she sees and experiences. Be sure your questions call for sentence answers (more than yes/no answers).

FOURTH GRADE SUGGESTED BOOK LIST



Fish Cheeks by Amy Tan

Fort Mose: And the Story of the Man Who Built the First Free Black Settlement in Colonial America by Glennette Tilley Turner

The Declaration of Independence by Elaine Landau

Tales of the Odyssey (series) by Mary Pope Osborne

Mother Doesn't Want a Dog by Judith Viorst

Halfway Down by A.A. Milne

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

The Castle in the Attic by Elizabeth Winthrop

Aaron and Alexander:

The Most Famous Duel in American History by Don Brown

Homer Price by Robert McCloskey

The Story of Science: Aristotle Leads The Way by Joy Hakim

Who Would Win? (series) by Jerry Pallotta

Carry on, Mr. Bowditch by Jean Lee Latham

Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes

The Wolf's Story by Toby Forward

William Shakespeare and the Globe by Aliki

Casey at the Bat by Ernest Lawrence Thayer

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder

To Catch a Fish by Eloise Greenfield

Florida by Tamra Orr

Chester Nez and the Unbreakable Code:

A Navajo Code Talker's Story by Joseph Bruchac

On the Wings of Heroes by Richard Peck

Toliver's Secret by Esther Wood Brady

Reaching for the Moon by Buzz Aldrin

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America by Sharon Robinson

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

Where Was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May? by Jean Fritz

SUPPLEMENTAL READING OPTIONS

Black Beauty
by Anna Sewell

Heidi
by Johanna Spyri

The Secret Garden
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

The Velveteen Rabbit
by Margery Williams Bianco

The Black Stallion
by Walter Farley

The Wind in the Willows
by Kenneth Grahame

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
by Washington Irving

Anne of Green Gables
by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Treasure Island
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Ralph S. Mouse
by Beverly Cleary

Mary Poppins
by P.L. Travers

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
by Roald Dahl



TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Remember, you are your child's first teacher. Think about a conference as a "team meeting" in which you will discover the special contributions each of you can bring to your fourth grader's success. Here are some questions you could ask to prompt discussions:

In the area of literacy, what are my child's strengths? How are those strengths supported during instruction?

What literacy skills should my child have mastered at this point? Has my child mastered them? Can I see an example of a task in reading and writing that my child is working through?

What topics in connection to science and social studies is my child learning about through reading?

Where is my child struggling and how can I help?

What types of books is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific reading level? Can I see an example of the type of texts my child is reading independently?

Can my child show you that they understand what they are reading and learning about through talking and writing? If not, what challenges are they facing?

EDUCATIONAL (ACADEMIC) WORDS TO KNOW

AUTOMATICITY: When reading, it is the ability to read words quickly and accurately.

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (PRIOR KNOWLEDGE): Information that is important to understanding a situation or problem; what you already know from experience.

CENTRAL IDEA: What the text is mostly about and connects the ideas found throughout the text.

CLAIM: To say that something is true or is a fact, although you cannot prove it and other people might not believe it.

CONTEXT CLUES: Context clues are hints that an author gives to help define a difficult or unusual word within a book. The clue may appear within the same sentence as the word or it may follow in the next sentence. Because most vocabulary is gained through reading, it is important that students are able to recognize and take advantage of context clues.

DECODING: Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of letter-sound relationships; also, the act of reading a new word by sounding it out.

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION: Teacher/parent-led interactive instruction that is direct and includes a clear explanation of the targeted skill.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: When you use a word or phrase that does not have its normal everyday literal meaning.

FLUENCY: Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.

MULTISYLLABIC WORDS: A syllable is a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u), with or without surrounding consonants (e.g., m, n, s, t) that form the whole or a part of a word. A multisyllabic word is a word of many syllables (e.g., there are two syllables in water and three in inferno).

NARRATIVE: A story that is told in full detail.

PHONICS: Teaches students how to connect sounds of letters or groups of letters in order to read words.

PLOT: The way that an author arranges the events, in a meaningful way, to shape the story.

READING LEVEL: Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can read text very quickly with very few errors.

SUMMARIZE: To express or cover the main points briefly.

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION: A carefully thought out and planned sequence of instruction.

TEXT FEATURES: The parts of a story or article that are not the main body of the text; includes the title, headings, captions, graphs, maps, glossaries and/or illustrations.

VALID SOURCE: A source that is truthful in respect to the information presented.

