

Kindergarten Reading Tips

In kindergarten, children begin to grow as independent readers and become more familiar and comfortable with reading. Reading is intertwined into the daily life of a kindergartner. A kindergarten classroom is full of words and labeled objects. Students read and talk about books, as well as read the day's schedules, class letters, songs, and poems throughout the day.

In order to build reading skills, a kindergartner:

- Learns all of the letters of the alphabet (upper case and lower case) and their sounds.
- Begins to "read" books himself, mainly by memorization.
- Recognizes several basic sight words such as I, my, you, is, and are.
- Reads and listens to stories and then talks about the stories, including their plots, characters, and events.
- Follows words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
- Recognizes and can produce rhyming words.
- Identifies the beginning, middle, and end sound of a word
- Blends sounds together to read CVC words
 - o CVC, or CONSONANT, VOWEL, CONSONANT — for example, "Cat," "Big," or "Rug."
- Adds or substitutes individual sounds in simple, one-syllable words to make new words, such as replacing the "C" in "Cat" with an "R" to create the word "Rat."

Reading Activities

- Read and Repeat: Have your buddy "read" a favorite book to you, using her memory, associations, and clues from the pictures. You can even make up story together using just the illustrations.
- Alphabet Books: Illustrate your own ABC book! Begin with a letter and an object that begins with that letter on each page.
- Fill in the Blank: When you read a favorite picture book to your buddy and come across a short word that rhymes or is familiar to your child, stop and let them say the word. Point to the word as they say it and spell it out.

In kindergarten, a child really begins to grow as a writer. Kindergartners start to write words (often using their own creative or invented spellings), and even write their own books and stories about their lives and what they've learned. Creative or invented spelling is a crucial part of developing writing skills. Using this method, your child spells words using the letters and sounds they hear. This is an important part of your child's writing development as they gain a deeper understanding of letters, words and their sounds. In addition, most of the words a kindergartner learns to spell correctly are one syllable words which often follow the pattern of CVC, or CONSONANT, VOWEL, CONSONANT — for example, "Cat," "Big," or "Rug." The reading that your kindergartner does is directly connected to developing his writing and literacy skills.

In order to build writing skills, a kindergartner:

- Writes uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Writes his/her name.
- Writes some letters and words when they are dictated.
- Uses invented or creative spelling to write a variety of words.
- Uses conventional spelling to write some words (CVC and basic sight words).
- Writes, Draws and Dictates about a variety of topics, including his opinion and descriptions of objects or moments and events in his life.

Writing Activities

- Guessing Games: Draw a picture and have your buddy guess the spelling of that word. Give your child a few letters in a word. For example show your child “_AT,” and ask him to make as many words as he can with it.
- Label illustrations: Draw pictures together and label different parts of it together.
- Have a Letter Treasure Hunt: When you’re reading a book, or sitting together in the library, ask your child to find certain uppercase and lowercase letters (in the book or in the room). They can keep a list of all the letters they find and write them down as they find them.
- Doodle Book: Make a random squiggle on a page, and have your buddy turn it into a drawing, and write about it.

First Grade Reading Tips

First grade reading is one of the most exciting learning periods in elementary school! Beginning with matching letters to their respective sounds (decoding), see patterns in the spelling of words, and learn to correctly pronounce words. By the end of first grade reading, students will recognize many words and be able to read easy books by themselves.

Read and Re-Read

Help your buddy's first grade reading by having them re-read favorite books and poems. Don't be frustrated if they choose the same book(s) week after week, seeing the same words over and over helps them build word banks in their mind so they will recognize them more quickly in different contexts. Here are a few more ways to help build these mental word collections:

- Help your buddy create their own silly poems or rhymes using words from their favorite books.
- When you're reading these books aloud, take turns reading each page.
- Have your buddy illustrate their favorite parts of the book.
- Encourage them to borrow a book you read together home (from the Sharing Library) to read aloud to siblings (or stuffed animals!)

Give It Time

Patience is key in the early stages of reading!

If a whole word is difficult for your buddy to understand, use an index card to cover up the latter half of the word and have them sound out only the first part. Once they say the first part correctly, cover that part up and have them sound out the rest.

Choosing books that are "just right" during first grade reading will enhance their reading skills by keeping a variety of mildly challenging words flowing through their mind. Use [The Five Finger Rule](#) to pick a book that is right for your buddy!

- Have your buddy pick out a book and open to any page
- Instruct them to put down one finger for every word they don't know
 - o 0-1 fingers: Too Easy
 - o 1-2 fingers: Perfect Choice
 - o 3-4 fingers: Give it a Try
 - o 5+ fingers: Too Hard! Pick Another!

If you ever need help finding a book, ask a RIF Staff member, they will be happy to help!

Write On!

Writing during first grade reading will help your buddy practice sound and letter patterns as well as fine motor coordination. Try some of these activities to enhance first grade reading through writing:

- Have your buddy create short lists of important words from their favorite books. Make a personalized dictionary! You can even illustrate it.
- Write lists and letters. A bucket list of things to do over a school break, or a letter to their teacher or friend.
- Journal with your buddy. Draw pictures and label them, write about the books you read together, or the things you want to do together next week.

Second Grade Reading Tips

Second graders continue to develop their reading skills as they learn to read more complex words and read longer, more complex texts in a variety of genres, such as fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. They also develop their reading comprehension skills as they talk about what they read and use it for developing and presenting further ideas. In addition, 2nd graders continually practice their reading skills as they read for other subjects they learn throughout the day.

In order to build reading skills, a 2nd grader:

- Reads more complex words such as two-syllable words.
- Reads words with common prefixes and suffixes, for example: pre-, re-, un-, -able, -ad, and -er.
- Reads grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words
- Reads a variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction, fables, and poetry.
- Understands the structure of a story, specifically the purpose of beginnings (introducing the text) and endings (concluding the text).
- Understands the most important details of a text: its main purpose and the “who”, “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how” of a text.
- Talks about characters’ responses, main events, the lessons in texts, and important ideas or concepts.
- Begins to make connections within and between texts.
- Compares at least two different versions of the same story, such as two versions of a classic fairy tale.

Reading Activities

- Make a “W” Chart: While you and your buddy read books together, make a “W” chart. Fill out the “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” of the book as they are learned. Talk about it after the book is finished!
- Pay Attention to Prefixes and Suffixes: When you or your buddy uses a word with a prefix or suffix, stop to talk about it. Break down the word and talk about what the prefix or suffix and the root word mean together.
- Make Up Your Own Version of a Story: After your buddy reads a story, make up your own version, changing details such as setting, time, or even the ending. You can change the story so it occurs in places or with characters you know. This helps your buddy understand story structure and make comparisons. Alternatively, make up your own version of a fairy tale or known story.

Writing in 2nd Grade

Second graders refine and expand their writing, growing as writers as they begin to write texts that are more detailed, longer, and of different types.

Similar to reading, writing occurs throughout the day as students learn a variety of subjects in addition to the specific writing lessons or times in class. For example, students may write about a math problem, explaining how they solved it, or write about a topic they learned in science or social studies. All of this work makes them better writers overall.

Writing Activities

- Keep a journal during your time together. You can write about what you did together during Everybody Wins!, what books you read, any goals the two of you have
 - o Ie. Read a chapter book by the end of the year!
- Read Other People's Writing: Second grade is a great time for your buddy to start reading magazines like Sports Illustrated Kids or Nat Geo Kids that are made especially for them. These often have many types of texts including narratives, fiction, non-fiction, and opinion pieces. Read the magazines together and talk about the articles. Reading these pieces will help your child become a better writer, and can break up a session and provide a fun alternative to a traditional book.

Third Grade Reading Tips

After mastering reading skills in earlier grades, 3rd graders become better and more independent readers. Third grade reading work focuses on teaching kids how to think and talk about what they read in deeper and more detailed ways. Students read longer texts, and specifically, most read chapter, fiction books. Many reading lessons are dedicated to writing about and talking about texts to think about their meanings, lessons, and important ideas. Third graders are also encouraged to develop their own points of views about books and texts that they read, talking about their ideas about a text or characters. As 3rd graders read more, they become more fluent readers and learn to read harder and more complex words. In addition, students learn the definition and pronunciation of complex words they encounter.

In order to build reading skills, a 3rd grader:

- Reads multi-syllable and grade appropriate, irregularly spelled words
- Talks about and answers questions about a text using specific example from the text and connects different parts of a text.
- Reads a variety of texts including, fiction, non-fiction, fables, and poetry and understands and talks about their main ideas and lessons.
- Begins to understand the difference between literal and non-literal text such as metaphors and analogies.
- Uses the text and context to determine the meaning of words.
- Is able to express their own point of view about characters or a text.
- Makes comparisons between books written by the same author and books such as series that are about the same characters.

Reading Activities

- Get Serious About Series: Find a series that interests your buddy and begin to read it together. You can read to them, they can read to you... You can keep a chapter book in our "Books in Progress" bin to read over a few weeks.
- You and your buddy can interview each other as you read — ask about main ideas, events, and thoughts you each have about the books and characters.
- Look It Up: When your buddy encounters a word they don't know the meaning of, look up the meaning together. You can even begin to keep your own dictionary, recording words and their definitions. Your buddy can create illustrations that show definitions of the words, as well.

Writing in 3rd Grade

Third graders grow as writers as they write more structured and complex pieces. They continue to practice writing the pieces they learned to write in 2nd grade, but the ones they write in 3rd grade have more detail and are longer. In addition, 3rd graders use more sophisticated language as described below, using phrases and

terms to connect writing within one piece and provide examples. More time is also spent on planning, revising and editing texts so that students really learn the “writing process” that writers go through. As a result, students may spend a long period of time such as a few weeks, working on one writing piece. They also practice how to write pieces in a shorter amount of time, for example within one sitting, through class and homework. Third graders continue to use and become comfortable with technology as they use computers for writing pieces and research.

Writing Activities

- Journal! Write about books you are reading together, books you want to read together, or things that happened over the weekend, at school, during the session... You can do it together.
- Learn How to do Something New: find a “how-to” book in the RIF library (or bring one in from a public library to read together) and learn a new skill. There are great books that teach kids how to draw animals, how to make origami, how to write poems...
 - o Once you try a tutorial together, try writing one together
- Make Your Own Magazine: Read magazines for children, such as Sports Illustrated Kids, to familiarize your child with the format of magazines. Then work together to create your own magazine about whatever topic they want!