



Highlands School District

# *Curriculum Connections*



## *First Grade*

# *Foreword*

The Highlands School District has developed and published this handbook especially for parents. The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with an overview of basic first grade skills. Parents are strongly encouraged to use this information to reinforce these skills at home with their children as they are presented in class.



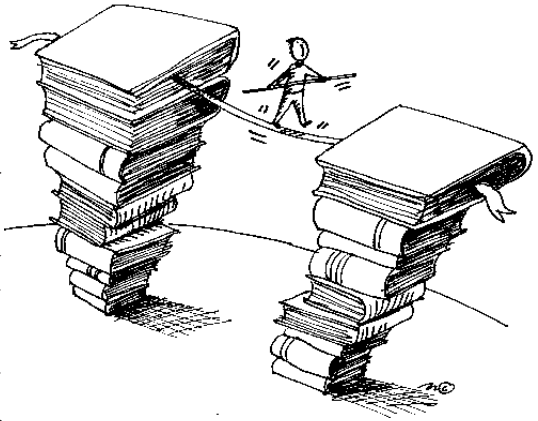
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# Language Arts

Highlands School District utilizes the Houghton Mifflin Reading/Language Arts Series in first grade. This series integrates reading, writing, spelling and grammar, providing systematic instruction to promote the proficiency of reading, writing, speaking, and listening fluency required to succeed academically. **By the end of the year your child should be able to:**



## **1. Recognize and utilize letter names and sounds of all 26 letters both upper and lower case.**

First grade reading instruction begins where kindergarten finished last year by establishing each child's individual ability with letter/sound recognition and association.

**Suggestion:** Rhyming games, rhyming books, and playing with words will develop phonemic awareness and provide young children with an understanding that new words can be made from known words. Ape in a Cape, by Fritz Eichenberg. (Harcourt Brace, 1952); Jake Baked the Cake, by B. G. Hennessey. (Viking, 1990); Pretend You're a Cat, by J. Marzollo. (Dial, 1990) are favorites for first graders.

## **2. Blend "word family" words.**

For example: cat, sat, mat, rat, etc. This skill reinforces beginning consonant sounds, short/long vowel sounds, and word families. The following word families will be introduced in first grade. We will also be utilizing the Reading Achievement Center's (RAC) Word Building.

-at	-an	-it	-ig	-ot	-ox	-en	-ut	-ug
-ack	-ail	-ain	-ake	-ale	-ame	-ank	-ap	-ash
-ate	-aw	-ay	-eat	-ell	-est	-ice	-ick	-ide
-ight	-ill	-in	-ine	-ing	-ink	-ip	-ir	-ock
-oke	-op	-ore	-or	-uck	-ug	-ump	-unk	

**Suggestion:** When reading for fun with your child, look for rhyming words and key word family words the class is currently working on, and write them down. Then brainstorm and write down other rhyming words from the same "family".

### 3. Learn High Frequency Words.

These are words that become known through repetition. Each first grade classroom will have their own pacing to introduce these words. These words should be recognized instantly and should not to be confused with story vocabulary and words that should be learned phonetically. The following is a suggested list of words that are essential for first grade memorization.

after	down	I	out	they
all	eat	in	over	thing
am	favorite	is	people	this
and	for	it	play	to
animal	friend	jump	pretty	up
are	from	kick	quit	us
at	fun	like	rain	very
be	get	little	ride	want
because	girl	look	said	was
best	give	made	saw	we
big	go	make	school	went
boy	good	me	see	what
brother	had	my	she	when
but	has	new	sister	where
can	have	nice	some	who
car	he	night	talk	why
children	her	no	teacher	will
come	here	not	tell	with
day	him	of	that	you
did	his	off	the	your
do	house	old	them	zoo
	how	on	there	

**Suggestion:** The above list of words contains the words children will encounter most frequently as they begin to read simple books. As your child brings home reading materials this year, find and highlight or circle high frequency words that you find. Make lists of these words and post them on walls, doors, etc. Make flash cards of a few of these words at a time and work on memorizing them out of context.

#### **4. Understand Print Concepts.**

“Print” is what is read and written. It includes all the letters, punctuation, and space between words. Beginning readers must learn the “concepts of print”. The following is a check-list similar to the one first grade teachers will use to evaluate your child's understanding of these concepts.

- Starts to read at the left of page
- Reads/writes in a left-to-right direction
- Makes return sweep to the next line of print
- Matches words by pointing to each word as reading
- Can point to just one word
- Can point to just one letter
- Can point to the first and last letter in a word



**Suggestion:** Model, model, and model the above activities as you read to your child on a consistently frequent basis. Talk to your child about these concepts.

**Example:** “Look at the first word in the second sentence. How does that begin? What letter makes that sound?” Please remember to introduce activities as you see them introduced in your child’s classroom.

#### **5. Learn Reading Strategies to develop fluency.**

**Suggestions:** REMEMBER THIS SHOULD BE FUN - NOT FRUSTRATING!  
Do not push your child too hard!

- When your child finishes a page, say, “Wow, that was wonderful! Let's go back and see if we can find all the words that begin like your name.”
- Try a reading game called, “I Start, You Finish”. The parent begins the sentence or paragraph and then stops, the child continues.
- Use “tracking” by pointing to the words as you read them to show your child that the words you are saying are the words on the page. Eventually your child will take over this task.
- For a shy reader, use the “Fade In, Fade Out” approach. Begin by reading together. As you hear your child's voice getting stronger, fade out by lowering your voice. If your child struggles, fade in again and provide help.

## STUCK ON A WORD?



1. Wait three or four seconds to see what she/he does. If this doesn't work, then go on to the next step.
2. Say, "Can you sound out the word?" Make the first sound(s) to get him started. If this doesn't work, then go on to the next step.
3. If she sounds out each letter but still doesn't know what the word is, then suggest she look at the picture. Does this help? If this doesn't work, then go on to the next step.
4. Read the sentence again and stop before the unfamiliar word. Does this help? If this doesn't work, then go on to the next step.
5. Skip the word and have the child continue reading. Does he figure it out by reading to the end of the sentence?

### **6. Develop Reading Comprehension.**

First grade students will receive instruction designed to develop their understanding of what they have read and be able to "transfer" this understanding to what they read in other "subjects" or life experiences.

**Suggestions:** Use questioning techniques that help your child to think about a story you are reading. Questions that help children to think about stories include:

- "How are you like the character in the story?"
- "What would you do if you were in the story?"
- "Does this story remind you of something that has happened to you?"
- Say, "I really liked the part when, \_\_\_\_\_," and then let your child finish the phrase.

**Encourage your child to read about topics that interest him/her.**



## **7. Learn and use spelling patterns to write words.**

Starting with Theme 3, first graders will have a list of weekly spelling words. Each classroom will begin this routine according to the pacing determined by the teacher. Most classrooms will begin spelling in October or November. Throughout the year, students will learn spelling patterns for words containing short and long vowels, consonant clusters, digraphs, and vowel pairs.

### **Spelling Suggestions:**

- See it, say it, and spell it. This strategy asks the child to look at the word (see it), pronounce it aloud (say it), and repeat aloud the letters he sees (spell it). This can be done orally or written.
- Use Blocking. As your child looks at a word, have her draw a box around it as shown, using the shape of the letters to guide her.
- Picture the word in your head. When a child is struggling with the spelling of a word, write the word correctly. Then, ask him to close his eyes and try to picture the word in his head. Then, have him write down what he sees.
- Cut-apart-word: Try cutting each spelling word into individual letters or use magnetic letters, etc. to spell each word using a “tactile” method.

## **8. Learn to use writing as a means to communicate and express thought.**

First graders will be exposed to the writing process, and various forms of writing throughout the year. They will write every day, or most days, in their “journals” independently on self-selected topics, and will receive instruction to write a **complete paragraph** by the end of the year for both creative and reflective writing.

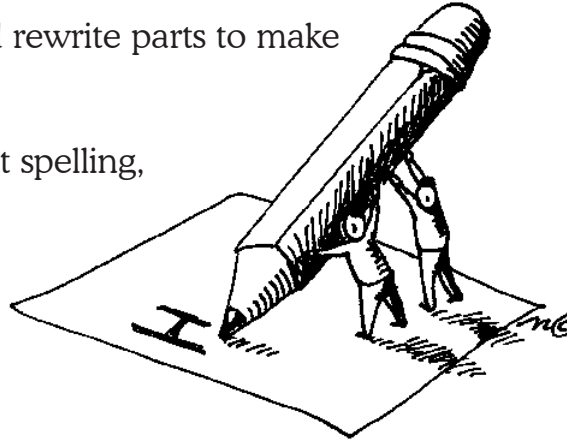
**Suggestions:** You can encourage your child’s writing development at home.

- Provide lots of different writing tools for your child to try.
- Display your child’s writing around the house.
- Leave notes for your child to read. Model your own writing often.
- Comment on what your child has written before saying anything about how it was written.
- Ask your child to tell you about his writing so you can see the thinking and ideas that contributed to his creation.
- **BALANCE** allowing children to sound out words for themselves and helping them with spelling when they ask for it.



## **THE WRITING PROCESS**

- 1. Prewriting.** Children are encouraged to decide on a writing topic.
- 2. Drafting.** Children write their pieces focusing on the ideas they are writing about.
- 3. Revising.** Children go back over their writing and rewrite parts to make their ideas clearer to a reader.
- 4. Editing.** Children work on their writing to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 5. Publishing.** Children display their writing in some way so that it can be shared with others.



### **9. *Develop grammar skills.***

First graders will receive instruction designed to enable them to understand the “mechanics” of writing and reading.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Model and discuss using capital letters properly when writing for and with your child.
- Model and discuss using proper punctuation to end sentences.
- Speak and write using complete sentences.
- Speak and write creative sentences that are questions. Do the same for sentences that are exclamatory and telling sentences.
- Use good describing and comparing words when talking and writing with your child.



# Everyday Mathematics



Everyday Mathematics is a comprehensive curriculum that follows the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards. This program spirals based on the philosophy that children benefit from the continuous introduction of skills/concepts that are consistently reviewed and reinforced throughout the year and also the following years of elementary school. Children are encouraged not only to solve problems but to share the thought process that leads to the solutions. Throughout the primary grades, understanding the concepts behind basic facts and procedures is equally as important as mastering the basic facts.

Each child will bring home memos (Home link) pages on a regular basis. Each parent and caregiver is strongly encouraged to not only read this information but save it as a resource as you work with your child at home. These Home links explain each unit's skills, provide hints, and also have the **correct answers for each problem!**

**It is important to realize that many of the concepts introduced in first grade will be reviewed throughout the year and the years ahead. Therefore, your child is not expected to master many of the skills introduced. Your child's report card and assessments are based on the following rubric.**

## MATH ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

### Beginning (B)

Children cannot complete the task independently.  
They show little understanding of the concept or skill.

### Developing (D)

Children show some understanding. However, errors or misunderstandings still occur.  
Reminders, hints, and suggestions are needed to promote children's understanding.

### Secure (S)

Children can apply the skill or concept correctly and independently.

To benefit the purpose of this handbook, the following concepts/skills reflect the skills each student is expected to achieve at a secure level by the end of the year. The skills are listed in the order in which they will be taught. Please follow the pacing demonstrated in your child's classroom. It will be evident by the concepts listed on the Home link pages.

**1. Count up and back by 1s, starting with any number up to and including 20.**

**Suggestion:** A calendar is one way to work on this skill. This provides your child with a "sense of numbers".

**2. Count up to 20 objects.**

**Suggestion:** Count anything and everything! Count your steps walking up a big hill, candy in a bag, etc.

**3. Count up and back by 1s on the number grid.**

Your child's teacher will provide a number grid for you to use at home.

**4. Tell time to the nearest hour.**

**Suggestion:** You can make a simple clock using a paper plate. Try to point out the time on a real clock on a regular basis. Say, "We will eat dinner at 6:00, take a bath at 7:00, bedtime is at 8:00, etc."

**5. Exchange pennies for nickels.**

**Suggestion:** Begin finding reasons to use coins with your first grader. The more practical experience they have with coins, the better grasp they will develop for counting coins. A play store is a fun way to exchange coins for objects.



**6. Count by 2s to 20. Count by 5s to 50.**

**Suggestion:** You may use a number grid for this activity at first. To commit this skill to memory, count by 2s and 5s while jumping rope, climbing a slide, or at any time when you used to count by 1s with your child for fun.

## 7. Order and compare numbers to 22.

**Suggestion:** Cut up that old calendar into number squares, mix up the numbers and put them back in numerical order.



## 8. Tell time to the nearest half hour.

**Suggestion:** Practice this skill using the same suggestions for time to the hour. Simply add the half hour to your conversation. Say, "Tonight we will have dinner at 6:30 instead of 6:00." Watch the clock for opportunities to point out the time for the hour and half-hour.

## 9. Know addition facts for +1, +0, doubles, and sums of 10.

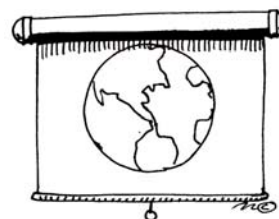
**Suggestion:** Your child will bring home "triangles", a form of flashcard that you may keep at home for practice with these facts. Find short periods of time to "verbally" review and reinforce the facts your child has mastered as well as one or two that need work. Remember to make this a fun, rewarding activity!



## Computers

The use of computers in first grade is integrated with the curriculum. For instance, the Houghton Mifflin reading series has websites with activities suggested for each theme. Each classroom will incorporate the use of technology when deemed appropriate by the teacher. Parents are strongly encouraged to support the use of computers at home. There are many appropriate games and activities for first graders readily available on the market.

## Social Studies



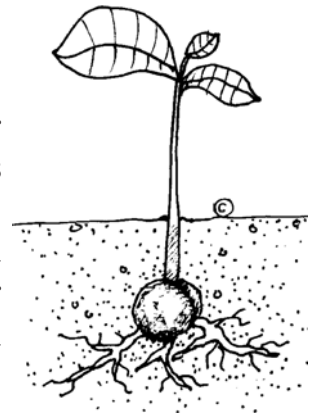
The Highlands School District utilizes My World Adventures in Time and Place as the text book for social studies in first grade. This series helps young students to develop a sense of history, geography, and citizenship in an integrated approach. At the beginning of the year, most first grade teachers utilize this curriculum by integrating it with major holidays and themes. For instance, the chapter about Christopher Columbus is taught in October, the chapter about the pilgrims and Plymouth Rock in November, etc.

## Social Studies Suggestions:

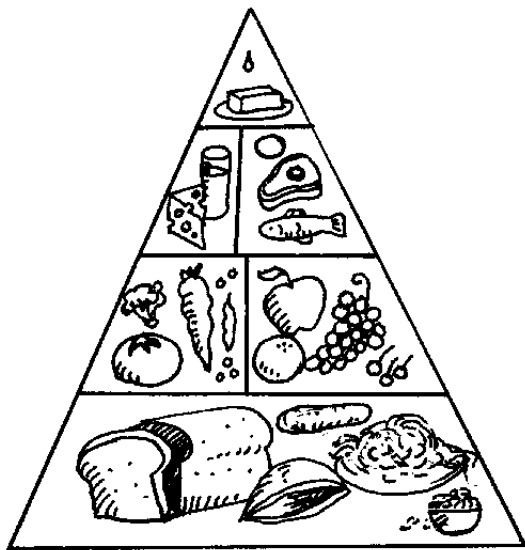
- As you read folk tales from different countries or parts of the United States, take time to find those locations on a map or globe.
- Talk about your own family's history and past. Invite grandparents, other relatives and family friends to do the same.
- Use maps for local towns, streets, etc. to help your child draw a map of their own room, house, street, etc.

## Science

In first grade, science is incorporated with other subjects in order that children may realistically grasp those concepts. Highlands uses the Science Companion series. First grade science themes are: weather, motion, and life science. These units are complete with many hands-on activities that encompass the scientific approach for observing and documenting. Each child will have a journal in which to record many of the activities in which they participate.



**Suggestion:** When your child brings home the parent letters that accompany most of the activities/concepts that your child will explore, please read this information and utilize the hints and home activities listed.



## Health

Highlands School District first graders receive instruction for health and safety incorporated with other subjects. The topics covered at some point in each classroom are the following: feelings, friendship, nutrition, dental hygiene, staying healthy and traffic / bicycle / community safety.

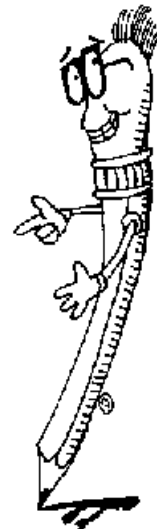
# *Conflict Resolution*

**Conflict Resolution** is a program designed to provide elementary students with the knowledge and skills they need to be responsible, effective problem-solvers. The curriculum that was adopted by the Highlands School District is called **Second Step**. This program has a leveled curriculum for every grade from Kindergarten through Middle School. By thinking about how they like to be treated, students begin to recognize the actions and communication skills which help them to solve problems.

## *Penmanship*

Highlands School District uses *We Write To Read* curriculum from the Peterson Handwriting Company to teach penmanship to first grade students. This program is designed to provide students with a perceptual pattern for symbolic language. **By the end of the year the students should be able to:**

- Sit with a healthy posture
- Hold the pencil properly with a relaxed grip
- Hold the paper in a position that accommodates a left-right movement
- Make simple strokes using top-down movements
- Make simple strokes using left-to-right movements



### **Suggestions:**

- Practice holding a pencil correctly. Say, “pointer on the point, thumb on side, let the other fingers slide”.
- At the beginning of the year use paper that has colored lines. Refer to the lines as the “top line”, “middle line”, and “base line”.
- Remind your child that no letters are formed correctly with bottom-up strokes. Letters or strokes always begin from either the top or middle lines.
- **Realize that short amounts of time and praise for even very small improvements ensure growth and development with this skill.**

