

Dear Parent,



We're excited to have your child in First Grade at Whitmore Lake Elementary School.

This is a very important year in your child's life, and we're pleased to be part of it.

At school, we're building on the skills that your child has already learned and we're introducing new ones. See this side of the brochure for details about what we're doing this year in English and Language Arts.

At home, your child can practice the skills we're learning at school. See the other side of this brochure for easy things that you can do to encourage that practice.

By working together, we can make sure that your child acquires the skills he or she needs to be successful in school and life.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year. When you have questions, please feel free to contact us at 449-2051.

Sincerely,
The First Grade Teachers

In every grade, we teach English/Language Arts skills that will help students:

Communicate Ideas

- Read and understand fiction and non-fiction materials.
- Write clear and correct sentences, paragraphs and compositions.
- Create meaning as they listen, speak, view, read and write.
- Use language to express ideas to different audiences and for different purposes.



Understand Literature

- Read, respond to, and reflect on ideas found in a variety of materials.
- Explore and reflect on universal themes in oral, visual, and written texts.
- Apply what is learned to everyday life.

Use Language

- Identify and use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Describe and use various story elements.
- Use main ideas with supporting details in writing.
- Express ideas creatively.
- Explore and use tools found in books and media to help with understanding.

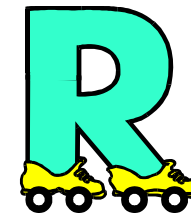
Apply Knowledge

- Develop and use strategies to connect what they're learning to their lives.
- Check their own progress when using these strategies.
- Evaluate their work using set guidelines.

In First Grade, we teach English/Language Arts skills that will help your child:

Communicate Ideas

- Identify and explain the difference between letters, words and sentences.
- Recognize that sounds in words are expressed by letters of the alphabet.
- Learn the 70 phonemes (letter combinations) that create sounds.
- Decode words by using letter-sound matches (b-a-t = bat).
- Use word families to sound out unfamiliar words ('ell' ends 'well', 'bell', etc.).
- Change the sound in a word to make a new or rhyming word (cat, bat...).
- Blend two-to-four sounds into words.
- Practice instant recognition of the 100 most common 'sight words' ('and', 'my', 'will', etc.).
- Look for 'little words' in a big (compound) word (e.g. sun + shine = sunshine).
- Use words in sentences to figure out unknown words...What word 'makes sense' in that sentence? (The dog can bark. "What can a dog do that starts with b?").
- Recognize that words can sound alike but have different meanings.
- Find 'root' words and endings ('walk' is the root word of 'walked' and 'walking').

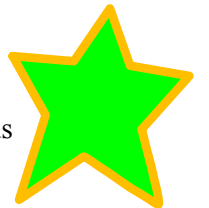


Understand Literature

- Identify the purpose for reading.
- Make predictions with text, information or experiences.
- Compare information.
- Recall important ideas in fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Create and use graphic organizers (webs or diagrams) with help to show comprehension.
- Check understanding of independently or group read texts by asking and answering questions.
- Give own interpretation of story.
- Identify the characters, setting, events, problem and solution in a story.
- Retell a story in proper sequence.
- Identify different types of stories...fantasy/folktales/fiction.
- Discuss similarities and differences between two stories.
- Find predictable patterns in stories and poems.
- Be able to name the theme or central idea of the story.

Use Language

- Use a variety of strategies to spell words during writing.
- Print clearly, spacing letters, words and sentences appropriately.
- Spell high frequency words correctly.
- Use end punctuation correctly.
- Use correct capitalization for the first word in a sentence, names and "I."



(-continued in next column-)

In First Grade, we teach English/Language Arts skills that will help your child:

Use Language

- Write complete sentences using nouns, verbs and descriptive words.
- Create a main idea for writing.
- Write simple stories with a beginning, middle and ending that include descriptive words and details.
- Write messages, journals, notes, poems.
- Use lists, webs, diagrams to plan writing.
- Use the classroom word wall and other references to select and spell words.
- Proofread writing to improve grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.
- Rewrite and illustrate writing for display and sharing.

Apply Knowledge

- Write responses to stories that show simple judgments about the text.
- Use tools/checklists to judge writing.
- Develop strategies for decoding unknown words like:
 1. Sounding out the word .
 2. Looking for “little” words within the unknown word.
 3. Asking what word might make sense in the story.
 4. Skipping the word and reading to end of sentence. Then reread sentence and say first sound of unknown word.
 5. Using picture clues.



Communicate Ideas

- Get your child a library card and visit the library together, regularly.
- Read aloud to your child every day. Choose all kinds of material.
- Talk to your child about his or her favorite things.
- Ask questions about the movies you watch together.
- Model good listening for your child. Pay attention when your child is talking.
- Encourage conversations at home (dinner together, a “No TV” night).
- Say a simple three letter word and have your child say the sounds s/he hears.

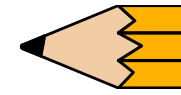


Understand Literature

- Ask “wh” questions as you read a book together or when your child is talking about a book (Who, What, When, etc.)
- Have your child retell the story/ information after reading including as many details as possible. What happened at the beginning? Middle? End?

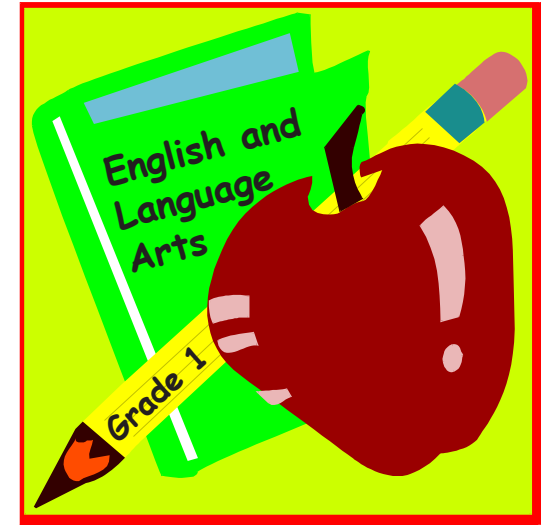
Use Language

- Have your child keep a diary of family trips, etc.
- Write notes to your child and put them in his/her lunch.
- Encourage your child to write stories, notes, lists, letters.



Apply Knowledge

- Give your child a reason to write (thank-you notes, a journal, grocery list).
- Help your child make connections between what is read and himself or herself, other material that was read, and what your child knows about the world.



Whitmore Lake Elementary School

In First Grade,
we're teaching
your child
important
reading and
language skills.

What are these skills?

How can you help your child practice them?

*...exceptional,
personalized education*

For more good ideas, ask your child's teacher, or contact:
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(734) 449-2051 • <http://www.wlps.net>