

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS RESOURCES

LANGUAGE ARTS :: ELEMENTARY RESOURCES :: ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

Preschool-First Grade

Students need to be able to use language appropriately for a broad range of functions and perceive the functions for which others use language.

Oral language is the foundation skill that students bring to school. Although students come to school with different levels of competence in their speaking and listening abilities, they bring their oral language and experiences as strengths to literacy learning. Oral language is the foundation on which reading is built. Students' oral language abilities are interwoven with learning to read and write. The oral language students acquire as preschoolers helps them connect words and sounds with print. Throughout the school years, oral language is both a means whereby students learn about reading and is a goal of literacy instruction. Any competence that students develop in oral language pays dividends in their reading and writing development. Encouraging oral language in the classroom and at home is a continuing process. It is not something that can be accomplished in a month or even a year; it requires time and patience to reap the harvest. Parents, teachers, and the entire school community must work together to support students in the process.

The purpose of the Oral Language Development Continuum for Preschool & Grade 1 is to provide information for parents, teachers, and other significant adults as they work with young students. It is a useful tool for assessing students' development along a continuum of oral language growth as well as providing information about the competencies that students are expected to learn in preschool and first grade. On the continuum, descriptors list specific behaviors that detail students' development at particular ages or grades. The competencies list specific behaviors that students are expected to learn in kindergarten and first grade according to the 1999 North Carolina Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts.

Oral Language Developmental Continuum

Preschool: 3-4 years

Descriptors

- Listen attentively for short time periods (e.g., stories, poems, music, rhymes, etc.).
- Follow directions during daily/classroom routines.
- Focus on own needs when listening.
- Talk about daily experiences.
- May/May not use complete sentences.
- Communicate nonverbally.
- Ask what unfamiliar words mean.

Preschool 4-5 years

Descriptors

- Respond to stories, poems, rhymes, music, action songs.
- Follow 2-3 step directions.
- Respond to questions.
- Listen attentively for increasing periods.
- Connect information and events to life experiences.
- Know that print is read in stories.
- Retell stories or events in chronological order.
- Pay attention to repetitive sounds/patterns.
- Use new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Demonstrate literal comprehension of stories by asking questions and making comments.
- Use more complex sentences.
- Seek/Share information and appreciation during social interactions.

Kindergarten 5-6 years

Competencies

- Demonstrate understanding that spoken language is a sequence of identifiable speech sounds.
- Demonstrate sense of story (beginning, middle, end, characters).
- Connect information and events in text to experience.
- Understand and follow oral-graphic directions.
- Demonstrate understanding of literary language: (e.g., "once upon a time" and other vocabulary specific to a genre).
- Use words that describe color, size, and location in a variety of texts (e.g., oral retelling).
- Use new vocabulary in own speech and writing.
- Maintain conversation and discussions:
 - attending to oral presentations.
 - taking turns expressing ideas and asking questions.

Descriptors

- Follow directions that have a series of steps.
- Express the main point of a conversation.
- Adjust language and syntax to different situations.
- Adjust rate and volume to situation.
- Use talk to clarify ideas or experiences.
- Track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.

First Grade 6-7 years

Competencies

- Use specific words that name and tell action in oral and written language.
- Extend skills using oral and written language:
 - clarifying purposes for engaging in communication.
 - using clear and precise language to paraphrase messages.
 - engaging in more extended oral discussions.
- Compose a variety of products: (e.g. oral retellings).
- Elaborate on how information and events connect to life experiences.
- Discuss unfamiliar oral vocabulary after listening to text.
- Develop phonemic awareness:
 - count number of syllables in a word.
 - blend the phonemes of one syllable word.
 - segment the phonemes of one syllable words.
 - change the beginning, middle, and ending sounds to produce new words.

Descriptors

- Express personal ideas, feelings, information, and experiences.
- Summarize what has been said.
- Make predictions.
- Ask speaker to repeat what has been said for understanding and clarity.
- Communicate effectively for variety of purposes and audiences.
- Use words to convey meaning, entertain, or share information.
- Evidence expanding language repertoire (e.g., standard language usage, informal conversation, dialogue, etc.).

Functions of Written Language

People use written language for different purposes. Parents and teachers can use this chart to encourage students in their written language development.

	Instrumental	Informative	Personal
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to get what we want • Asserting personal rights/needs • Asserting positive/negative expressions • Requesting an opinion • Incidental expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to represent the world to others • Language to impart what one knows • Labeling, noting details • Noting incidents, sequences • Making generalizations • Comparing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to develop and maintain one's own unique identity

<p>Examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want some milk. • I'm first because I'm the oldest. • I need a pencil. • It tastes good to me. • Do you like my new shirt? • My goodness! • You're too loud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's a Lexus. • It's green and blue. • My cookie is bigger than yours. • My sister is in the hospital. • I have twenty dollars. • I'm taller than anyone else my age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My name is Anne Catherine. • I'm good at music. • I like Siamese cats. • I'm the only child in my family. • I want to be a teacher when I grow up. • I'm smart at language.
<p>Ways to Promote Oral Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to state their requests clearly. • Help children become aware of how people use language to get what they want. • Encourage children to provide assistance to and seek assistance from peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage children in experiences which require them to observe, record, summarize, and draw conclusions. • Use open-ended questions. • Collect data over time. Interpret and draw conclusions from records. • Have children revise reports and presentations (their own and others'). • Encourage children to share what they know in a variety of formats and settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to share personal opinions, interpretations, and experiences. • Listen to and talk with the students personally. • Create opportunities for students to listen to and talk with others.

	<p>Heuristic</p>	<p>Regulatory</p>	<p>Interactional</p>	<p>Aesthetic</p>
<p>Functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to speculate and predict what will happen • Noting cause/effect relationships • Noting an event • Drawing conclusions • Requesting a reason • Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to control others and the world around us • Requesting directions • Requesting others' attention • Controlling self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language to establish and maintain relationships with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language for its own sake, to express imagination, to entertain
<p>Examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The airplane crashed because the landing gear didn't work. • The rock is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do it this way (to self). • Give me the biggest one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's be friends. • Tell me about... • I like you because... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let me tell you a story. • Let's pretend. • Let's sing a song. • Let's play

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> too heavy to float. It might rain tomorrow. We better not run away from home. Why can't I go? Why does this happen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give me your paper and I'll give it to the teacher. Give me a blue crayon. Show me how to do it. Where shall I put it? Watch this. Look at me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you play with me? Would you like for me to help you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> house. Once upon a time... Peter Piper picked...
Ways to Promote Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage children in problem solving. Create an environment that encourages inquiry, promotes investigations, and generates new questions. Invite predictions when reading fiction or non-fiction and in content area studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about why, where, and when people use regulatory language. Let children give directions and explain class rules. Encourage children to use more appropriate regulatory language as teachers use less. Let children be in charge of large and small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule opportunities for students to share their strengths with others. Provide opportunities for students to work in collaborative groups. Provide opportunities for students to read and write together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for students to use their imaginations through drama, poetry, role playing, puppetry, music, dance, mime, and discussion. Schedule storytelling, read alouds, and performances Schedule reading and writing workshops as a part of the instructional routine.

References

- Allen, Leanne. West Australia Department of Education. (1994). First Steps: Oral Language Resource Book: Melbourne, Australia: Addison Wesley Longman Australia Pty Limited.
- Children's Choices. (October, yearly). Primary Level Books. The Reading Teacher. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Gambrell, Linda B. and Almasi, Janice F. (Eds.). (1996). Lively Discussions! Fostering Engaged Reading. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Heibert, E.H., Pearson, P.D., Taylor, B.M., Richardson, V., and Paris, S.G. (1998). Every Child a Reader: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Instruction.
- North Carolina English Language Arts Standard Course of Study. (December, 1999). Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., and Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. Washington, D.C.: National Academic Press.
- Staab, Claire. (1992). Oral Language for Today's Classroom. Pippin Publishing Limited.
- Teachers' Choices. (November, yearly). Primary Level Books. The Reading Teacher. International Reading Association.

<< [Back](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next](#) >>