



The Core Knowledge Sequence UK

English Language and Literature: Year 1

Building non-fiction background knowledge in a coherent and sequenced way within and across years can be accomplished most effectively by integrating the topics from history, geography, science and the arts in the *Core Knowledge Sequence UK* into English Language and Literature. In the *Sequence UK* there are many cross-curricular connections between Language and Literature (e.g. poems, stories and sayings) and topics in history, science, visual arts and music, which are advantageously integrated.

I. LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Teachers: Shortly after a baby is born, an amazingly complex, interactive communication process begins between the infant and others in his/her environment. Whilst it may seem like an obvious statement, it is nonetheless worth making the point that listening and speaking are the primary means of communication throughout the early years of a young child's development. Furthermore, reading and writing competencies are intricately connected with competencies in listening and speaking. Traditional literacy teaching has typically accorded little, if any, attention to the ongoing development of children's listening and speaking abilities and, instead, focus on reading and writing skills. However, it is important to work deliberately to develop and extend children's listening and speaking skills while simultaneously beginning to introduce reading, and then writing. Children who are fortunate enough to participate in literacy teaching that recognises the importance of continuing to build listening and speaking competencies while also beginning reading and writing instruction will, in the end, be far more literate adults.

A. CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- Participate in age-appropriate activities for Year 1 involving listening and speaking.
- Speak clearly with volume appropriate to the setting.
- Use agreed-upon rules for group discussions. For example: look at and listen to the speaker, raise hand to speak, take turns, say 'excuse me' or 'please,' etc.
- Ask questions to clarify conversations, directions, exercises and/or classroom routines.
- Carry on and participate in a conversation over four to five turns, staying on topic, initiating comments or responding to a partner's comments, with either an adult or another Year 1 child.
- Identify and express physical sensations, mental states and emotions of self and others.
- Understand and use language to express spatial and temporal relationships. For example: up, down, first, last, before, after, etc.
- Understand and use narrative language to describe people, places, things, locations, events and actions.
- Understand and use common sayings and phrases such as 'Better safe than sorry' and 'Look before you leap'.

B. PRESENTATION OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION

- Follow multi-step, oral directions.
- Give simple directions.
- Provide simple explanations.
- Recite a nursery rhyme, poem or song independently.

C. COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION OF TEXTS

Teachers: Written text makes use of richer vocabulary and more complex syntax than conversational language. It is important for young children to be exposed not only to the language of everyday conversation but also to the richer and more formal language of books. This can be done through frequent reading aloud. Helping children develop the ability to listen to and understand written texts read aloud is an integral part of building literacy skills.

In Year 1, a child's ability to understand what s/he hears far outpaces her or his independent ability to read and understand written text. By listening to stories or non-fiction selections read aloud, children can experience the complexities of written language without expending cognitive energy on decoding; they can likewise access deeper and more complex content knowledge than they are presently able to read independently.

Careful consideration has been given to the poetry, fiction and nonfiction selections below to ensure that the vocabulary and syntax presented is rich and complex. Levelled texts (texts for beginner readers) will not provide the rich language experience that is desired during read-alouds and should only be used here as a starting point for reading aloud with pupils for whom English is a second language. Non-fiction read-alouds have been selected on the basis of the history, science, music and visual arts topics identified in the *Sequence UK* for Year 1 children, with an emphasis on history and science read-alouds. It is strongly recommended that daily read-alouds focus on a single topic over a sustained period of time—about two weeks—rather than intermingling read-alouds on a variety of subjects. Careful consideration should be given to the order in which non-fiction read-alouds are presented to ensure that knowledge about a topic builds in a progressive and coherent way.

Prior to a read-aloud, teachers should identify what pupils know and have learned that may be related to the specific story or topic to be read aloud. Use pictures accompanying the read-aloud to check and support children's understanding of the read-aloud.

Following any read-aloud, children should participate in rich, structured conversations with an adult in response to the written text that has been read aloud. In this way, they can begin to practise orally comparing, analysing, and forming ideas in written text in much the same way as they will be expected to do as independent readers in the later years.

- Listen to and understand a variety of texts read aloud, including fictional stories, fairy tales, fables, historical narratives, drama, informational text and poems.
- Grasp specific details and key ideas.
 - Describe illustrations.
 - Sequence four to six pictures illustrating events in a read-aloud.
 - Answer questions requiring literal recall and understanding the details and/or facts of a read-aloud, i.e. who, what, when, where, why.
 - Retell key details.
 - Ask questions to clarify information in a read-aloud.
- Observe craft and structure.
 - Understand and use words and phrases heard in read-alouds.
 - Compare and contrast similarities and differences within a single read-aloud or between two or more read-alouds.
 - Make personal connections to events or experiences in a read-aloud and/or make connections among several read-alouds.
- Integrate information and evaluation evidence.
 - Make predictions prior to and during a read-aloud, based on the title, pictures and/or text heard thus far and then compare predictions to the actual outcomes.

- Answer questions that require making interpretations, forming judgments, or giving opinions about what is heard in a read-aloud, including answering 'why' questions that require recognising cause/effect relationships.
- Identify who is telling a story or providing information in a text.

D. COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION OF READ-ALOUDS—FICTION, DRAMA AND POETRY

- Retell or dramatise a story, using narrative language to describe characters; setting(s); and a beginning, a middle and an end to events of the story in proper sequence.
- Change some story events and provide a different story ending.
- Create and tell an original story, using narrative language to describe characters; setting(s); and a beginning, a middle and an end to events of the story in proper sequence.
- Distinguish fantasy from realistic text in a story.
- Demonstrate understanding of literary language and use some of these terms in retelling stories or creating own stories, including: author, illustrator, characters, setting, plot and dialogue.

E. COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION OF READ-ALOUDS—NON-FICTION AND INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Teachers: Select non-fiction read-aloud topics from the Year 1 history, science, music and visual arts topics, placing an emphasis on history and science.

- Retell important facts and information from a non-fiction read-aloud.
- With assistance, categorise and organise facts and information within a given topic.
- With assistance, create and interpret timelines and lifelines related to read-alouds.
- Distinguish read-alouds that describe events that happened long ago from those that describe contemporary or current events.

II. READING

A. PRINT AWARENESS

- Demonstrate a sense of understanding that what is said can be written and that the writing system is a way of writing down sounds.
- Understand that reading consists of a specific sense of directionality: reading left to right, return sweep after finishing reading a line, reading top to bottom, reading a book from front to back.
- Identify the parts of a book and the function of each part: front cover, back cover, title page and table of contents.
- Distinguish between letters, words, sentences and stories.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic print conventions by tracking and following print word for word when listening to text read aloud.
- Demonstrate an understanding that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds in the spoken word.
- Recognise and name the 26 letters of the alphabet in both their upper-case and lower-case forms.
- Learn the difference between consonants and vowels.

B. PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- Identify whether pairs of environmental sounds (keys jingling, scissors cutting, clapping) are the same or different.
- Count the number of environmental sounds heard, e.g., clapping, rhythm band instruments.
- Orally segment sentences into discrete words.
- Demonstrate an understanding that words are made up of sequences of sounds.

- Given a pair of spoken words, select the one that is longer (i.e. contains more phonemes).
- In riddle games, supply words that begin with a target phoneme.
- Indicate whether a target phoneme is or is not present in the initial, medial or final position of a spoken word. For example: hear /m/ at the beginning of *mat* and /g/ at the end of *bag*.
- Listen to one-syllable words and tell the beginning or ending sounds. For example: given *dog*, identify /d/ or final /g/.
- Recognise the same phoneme in different spoken words. For example: recognise /b/ in *ball*, *bug* and *big*.
- Identify whether pairs of phonemes are the same or different, including pairs that differ only in voice. For example: examine /b/ and /p/.
- Orally blend two to three sounds to form a word. For example: given the sounds /m/... /a/... /t/, blend to make *mat*.
- Segment a spoken word into phonemes. For example: given *bat*, produce the segments /b/ /a/ /t/.
- Given a spoken word, produce another word that rhymes. For example: given *hit*, supply *bit* or *mitt*.
- Identify the number of syllables in a spoken word.

C. PHONICS: DECODING AND ENCODING

Teachers: Learning to read requires understanding and mastering the written English code through explicit and systematic phonics instruction. Research suggests that phonics instruction is most effective when specific letter-sound relationships are taught and reinforced by having children both read and write the letter-sound correspondence being studied. Research has also shown that children who are taught to read using approaches based on synthetic phonics make the most rapid progress. Reading and writing—decoding and encoding—are complementary processes that ensure mastery of the written code. Teachers and schools should choose a phonics programme that works best for them. Some popular published programmes are: *The Butterfly Book* by Irina Tyk (Civitas), Jolly Phonics (Jolly Learning), Read-Write Inc. (Ruth Miskin Literacy) and *Step by Step Reading* by Mona McNee (Galore Park).

- Demonstrate a sense of understanding that a systematic, predictable relationship exists between written letters (graphemes) and spoken sounds (phonemes).
- Blend individual phonemes to pronounce printed words.
- Read and write any CVC word. For example: *sit* or *cat*.

D. ORAL READING AND FLUENCY

- Read decodable stories that incorporate the specific code knowledge that has been taught.
- Use phonics skills in conjunction with context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and use commas and end punctuation while reading orally.
- Read aloud, alone or with a partner for at least 15 minutes each day.

E. READING COMPREHENSION: ALL TEXTS

Teachers: It is important to recognise that Year 1 children are taught only some of the many letter-sound correspondences a reader needs to know to read a wide range of printed material. As a result, many Year 1 children will be able to read independently only simple written texts. At this level, mental energy will be directed primarily to the act of reading, i.e. decoding. A focus on the mechanics of decoding is appropriate and desirable at this early stage in the reading process. Attention to reading comprehension should be directed to ensuring a fundamental understanding of what has been read. In Year 1, it will generally be more effective and efficient to devote time to higher level thinking and comprehension skills at the listening and speaking level in response to written texts that are read aloud.

- Demonstrate an understanding of simple, decodable text after reading independently.

- Grasp specific details and key ideas.
 - Answer questions requiring literal recall and understanding details and/or facts (i.e., who, what, where, when) about a text that has been read independently.
 - Retell or dramatise a story, using narrative language to describe characters; setting(s); and a beginning, a middle and an end to events of the story in proper sequence.
 - Use narrative language to describe people, places, things, locations, events, actions, a scene or facts from a text that has been read independently.
- Observe craft and structure.
 - Understand and use words and phrases from a text that has been read independently.
- Integrate information and evaluate evidence (Note: prior to reading, teachers should identify what pupils know and have learned that may be related to the specific story or topic to be read. Use pictures accompanying the written text to check and support understanding.)
 - Make predictions prior to and while reading, based on the title, pictures and/or text read thus far and then compare the actual outcomes to predictions.
 - Identify who is telling a story or providing information in a text.

III. WRITING

Teachers: It is important to recognise that of all the communication skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—writing is the most demanding and challenging, especially for Year 1 children who are just learning not only the code, but also the fine motor skills and letter strokes necessary to put something down on paper.

At some point during Year 1, however, most children will feel comfortable enough with the basic skills to begin making a transition to writing more independently. Young children’s desire to express themselves in writing should be heartily encouraged. To this end, it is important that teachers have age-appropriate expectations about what Year 1 pupils’ writing should resemble. It is therefore premature to expect that words in their independent writing will be spelled correctly. It is reasonable to expect pupils to use the letter-sound correspondences they have learned to set down plausible spellings for the sounds in the word. For example, a pupil who writes *bote* for *boat*, *dun* for *done*, or *hed* for *head* has set down a plausible spelling for each sound in the word. Dictionary-correct spelling will be a realistic goal when pupils have learned more spellings and learned how to use a dictionary to check spelling.

In addition, pupils can also participate in shared writing exercises modelled by an adult. The focus in shared writing should be on encouraging the pupils to express themselves verbally in a coherent manner and in complete sentences, as the teacher serves as a scribe.

- Write to reflect audience, purpose and task.
 - Draw pictures to represent a text that has been heard or read independently.
 - Draw pictures to represent a preference or opinion.
 - Write narratives, informative and explanatory texts, and offer an opinion through shared writing exercises.
 - With assistance, add details to writing.
 - Create a title or caption to accompany a picture and/or shared writing.

IV. LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

A. HANDWRITING AND SPELLING

- Hold a pencil with a pincer grasp and make marks on paper.
- Trace, copy and print from memory the 26 letters of the alphabet in both their upper-case and lower-case forms.

- Write from left to right, leaving spaces between words, and using return sweep from top to bottom.
- Children may write phonetically plausible spellings for words by applying their current level of phonic knowledge.
- Write words, phrases and sentences from dictation, applying phonics knowledge.
- Apply basic spelling conventions.

B. PARTS OF SPEECH AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE

- Form letters, words, phrases and sentences to communicate thoughts and ideas.
- Use and understand question words such as: what, where, when, who, how.
- Form regular plural nouns by adding 's' or 'es'. For example: dog, dogs; wish, wishes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of frequently occurring prepositions. For example: to/from, in/out, on/off.
- Produce and expand complete sentences orally and in shared writing exercises.

C. CAPITALISATION AND PUNCTUATION

- Use basic capitalisation and punctuation in sentences to convey meaning.
 - Capitalise the first word in a sentence and the pronoun 'I'.
 - Identify and use end punctuation, including: full stops, question marks and exclamation marks.

V. POETRY

Teachers: Children should be introduced to a varied selection of poetry with strong rhyme and rhythm. Children should hear these rhymes read aloud, and should say some of them aloud. Some rhymes may also be sung to familiar melodies. The poems listed here represent some of the most popular and widely anthologised titles; children may certainly be introduced to more Mother Goose rhymes beyond the selection below. Although children are not expected to memorise the following rhymes, they will delight in knowing their favourites by heart, and will experience a sense of achievement and satisfaction in being able to recite some of the rhymes. [Note regarding Reception: some of the poems and stories specified here are appropriate for Reception children. Indeed, one would hope that most Reception children would enter Year 1 having heard, for example, some Mother Goose rhymes or the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.

This is a selected core of poetry for Year 1 that children should become familiar with. You are encouraged to expose children to more poetry, old and new. To bring children into the spirit of poetry, read it aloud and encourage them to speak it aloud so they can experience the music in the words.

A. TRADITIONAL POEMS

- Baa, Baa, Black Sheep
- Diddle, Diddle, Dumpling
- Early to Bed
- Georgie Porgie
- Hey, Diddle, Diddle
- Hickory, Dickory, Dock
- Hot Cross Buns!
- Humpty Dumpty
- It's Raining, It's Pouring
- Jack and Jill
- Jack Be Nimble
- Jack Sprat

- Ladybird, Ladybird
- Little Bo Peep
- Little Boy Blue
- Little Jack Horner
- Little Miss Muffet
- Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary
- Old King Cole
- Old Mother Hubbard
- One, Two, Buckle My Shoe
- Rain, Rain, Go Away
- Roses Are Red
- Seesaw, Margery Daw
- Simple Simon
- Sing a Song of Sixpence
- Star Light, Star Bright
- There Was a Little Girl
- There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe
- Three Blind Mice

B. OTHER POEMS, OLD AND NEW

- Boat (Michael Rosen)
- Happy Thought (Robert Louis Stevenson)
- I Do Not Mind You, Winter Wind (Jack Prelutsky) [See Year 1 Science]
- Mary Had a Little Lamb (Sarah Josepha Hale)
- Rain (Robert Louis Stevenson) [See Year 1 Science]
- The More It Snows (A. A. Milne) [Cross-curricular connection with Year 1 Science]
- The Wind (Christina Rossetti) [Cross-curricular connection with Year 1 Science]
- Three Little Kittens (Eliza Lee Follen)
- Time to Rise (Robert Louis Stevenson)

VI. FICTION

Teachers: The following works make up a strong core of literature, including stories, fables and poems that provide an excellent foundation for children. This selection also develops children's operational knowledge of how written symbols represent sounds, and how those sounds and symbols convey meaning. The stories specified below are meant to complement, not to replace, materials designed to help children practise decoding and encoding skills (see above, section II. Reading and section III. Writing).

The following works constitute a core of stories for Year 1, which are meant to be read-aloud texts. Expose children to many more stories, including classic picture books and other read-aloud books. (In schools, teachers across years should communicate their choices in order to avoid undue repetition.) Children should also be exposed to non-fiction prose: biographies, books on science and history, books on art and music, etc. Children should also be given opportunities to tell and write their own stories.

A. STORIES

- The Bremen Town Musicians (Brothers Grimm)
- Chicken Little (also known as 'Henny-Penny')
- Cinderella (Charles Perrault)
- Goldilocks and the Three Bears (traditional)
- King Midas and the Golden Touch (traditional)
- The Little Red Hen (traditional)

- Little Red Riding Hood (traditional)
- Snow White (Brothers Grimm)
- The Three Billy Goats Gruff (traditional)
- The Three Little Pigs (traditional)
- The King with Horse's Ears (Irish folktale)
- Tug-of-War (African folktale)
- The Tiger, the Brahmin and the Jackal (Indian folktale)
- The Ugly Duckling (Hans Christian Andersen)
- Selections from *Winnie-the-Pooh* (A. A. Milne)
- The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids (Brothers Grimm)
- The Velveteen Rabbit (Margery Williams)

B. AESOP'S FABLES

- The Lion and the Mouse
- The Grasshopper and the Ants
- The Dog and His Reflection
- The Hare and the Tortoise

C. FOLK HEROES AND TALL TALES

- St. George and the Dragon [Cross-curricular connection with Year 1 Visual Arts]
- King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table [Cross-curricular connection with Year 1 Visual Arts]
 - The Sword in the Stone

D. LITERARY TERMS

Teachers: As children become familiar with stories, discuss the following terms (first introduced in section I. D.).

- Author
- Illustrator

VII. SAYINGS AND PHRASES

Teachers: Every culture has phrases and proverbs that make no sense when carried over literally into another culture. The sayings have been one of the categories most appreciated by teachers who work with children from different cultural backgrounds. For some children, this section may not be needed; they will have picked up these sayings by hearing them at home and among friends.

- A dog is a man's best friend.
- April showers bring May flowers.
- Better safe than sorry.
- Do as you would be done by. (Also known as 'the golden rule').
- The early bird gets the worm.
- Great oaks from little acorns grow.
- Look before you leap.
- A place for everything and everything in its place.
- Practice makes perfect.
- It's raining cats and dogs.
- Where there's a will there's a way.