

Grades 4 & 5 Literacy Activities for At Home



Oral Language

Oral Language is sometimes called spoken language. It includes speaking and listening and is the way people communicate with each other. In third grade, readers can effectively participate in discussions and ask and answer questions with detail. They can share the main idea of information that is read or heard.

Practice Activities

- Conversation Starters: Engage in conversation with the child to build their oral language skills. Conversation starters can serve as ice-breakers to initiate a meaningful conversation and build confidence to converse with others. Follow up by asking who, what, when, why, where, and how questions. [Conversation starters](#) (optional).
- New Experiences: Give your child opportunities to participate in new experiences. Visit museums, historical sites, theaters or discover new hobbies and interests together. Ask questions and discuss your experiences together to build vocabulary and speaking skills.
- Current Events: Talk about current events together. Discuss with the child so they understand what is happening and how it connects to their lives, other events they may have seen or read about, and other parts of their community.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- CROWD Strategy: Use the CROWD (complete, recall, open-ended, wh- questions, and distance) strategy to ask different types of questions and begin conversation about the book, passage, or article. Access printable materials here: [Trifold 1](#), [Trifold 2](#), [Trifold 3](#).
- Conversation Cards: Use conversation cards any time or place to increase the child's use and understanding of oral language. Suggestions include at the dinner table, while waiting in a store or restaurant, and during bedtime routines. Use follow up questions to increase the number of turns taken in a conversation. [Conversation Cards](#)

Phonics

Phonics refers to the ability to learn the individual sounds in spoken language and map those sounds to specific written letters in the English language. Students who have strong phonics skills are able to connect individual sounds with letters and use those sounds to read words. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)) In 4th and 5th grades, children are combining their knowledge of letter-sound relationships, syllable patterns, and word/segment meanings to read unfamiliar multisyllabic words. They can break words into their parts and analyze each component to help them read and understand grade appropriate words.

Practice Activities

- Syllable Hunt: Use newspapers, magazines, and books to hunt for words with a specific syllable type with the child. List the words found and discuss the syllable types (e.g., "Look! I found table and apple to go under Consonant-le, because ta/ble and ap/ple both have consonants followed by the letters -le in the second syllable!"). [Syllable Types](#) (optional)

- Break it Down: Stop and help the child find base words when they come to an unfamiliar word. Sometimes there may be two base words, as are found in compound words (e.g., baseball, mailbox, railroad). Other times, a root word may be used and have additional beginnings or endings attached (prefixes or suffixes) that change the meaning of the word. Being able to break an unfamiliar word into its parts can help children figure out how to read the word and uncover its meaning.
- Making New Words: Use small pieces of paper or index cards to jot down a collection of base words (words in their simplest form) and common prefixes and suffixes. Take turns selecting a base word and then a prefix or suffix to create a new word. See how many different combinations you each can make. Discuss the meaning of each new word as they are made. [Prefixes and Suffixes](#) (optional)
- Word Building Games: Play word building board games such as Scrabble®, Boggle®, or Word Up® with the child.
- Sharing Our Writing: Consider connecting the child with a relative or pen-pal as a meaningful opportunity to practice their writing skills. This could be through email or hand-written letters. Encourage the child to add descriptive words throughout and to incorporate new vocabulary they have been learning.
- H, H, & H: As your child is reading or through your conversations, take notice of the three unique word types listed below. Isolate the word and discuss how variations can differ in spelling, pronunciation, and meaning.

Unique Word Type	Definition	Examples:
Homonyms	Words that have the same spelling and pronunciation, but have different meanings.	<p>Point</p> <p>-The pin has a sharp point.</p> <p>-Can you point to the small one?</p>
Homophones	Words that have the same pronunciation, but different spellings and meanings.	<p>ate/eight</p> <p>knight/night</p> <p>no/know</p>
Homographs	Words that are spelled the same, but have different pronunciations and meanings.	<p>Close</p> <p>-What time does the office close today?.</p> <p>-I live close to my best friend.</p> <p>Wind</p> <p>-The wind was blowing hard today!</p> <p>-Can you wind up the toy?</p>

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Four Word: Play this game by determining if words on the provided cards are derived from a set of base words. [Four Word](#)
- Domino Duo: Combine various letter combinations that can make the same sound while using the domino-like cards provided. [Domino Duo](#)
- Homophone Bingo: Find and match common homophones (words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings). [Homophone Bingo](#)
- Syllable Score: Practice breaking apart syllables in words and recording the number of syllables. Check the child's responses with the included answer key. [Syllable Score](#)
- Select Syllables: Sort the included cards into two categories, initial syllables and final syllables. Each player selects 5 cards from the initial syllable pile and 5 cards from the final syllable pattern. Then each player makes as many words as they can by combining an initial syllable with a final syllable. If desired, set a timer and challenge one another. [Select Syllables](#)

Online Activities

- **Rough Riders:** This game has players track down diamond thieves while practicing digraphs, vowel sounds, compound words, and syllables.
- **Multisyllabic Words:** This game provides practice matching open and closed syllables to build a new word with game cards. This [similar game](#) allows children to match open and closed syllables as well. A quick [overview of syllable types](#) can be found here.
- **Grammar Police:** This game provides practice with compound words and affixes while policing the highways.
- **Grammar Gladiator:** This game provides practice with articles, verbs, homophones, and punctuation while unleashing fireballs.
- **Prefix Popper:** This game has children match a prefix to its meaning while popping balloons.
- **Bounce:** This game has players smash boxes that contain misspelled words.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to knowledge of the meanings of individual words being read. Vocabulary knowledge is important to a student's ability to read and comprehend what is read. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#))

Practice Activities

- **My Dictionary:** Help the child keep track of new/unfamiliar words and their meanings by helping the child create their own dictionary or word catcher. The child can write the words, draw pictures to illustrate the word or definition, and write sentences using the words.
- **Family Vocabulary Project:** Create a decorative jar or container to initiate a vocabulary building family project. Family members can write down new vocabulary words they read or hear and include the definition on the back. The vocabulary words are shared, discussed, and added to the jar. Family members can include the new words in their everyday writing and speaking. You may even choose to make a "word of the day" or "word of the week" to help focus the family on using one or two of the newly learned words.
- **Synonym/Antonym Brainstorm:** Name a word. Take turns brainstorming words that mean the same thing as the word that was named. Alternate antonym version: Play the game brainstorming words that mean the opposite of the word that was named.
- **Affix Activity:** Using newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, or storybooks, have the child search for words with a targeted prefix or suffix, writing the words found on a piece of paper. Once several words have been found, work together to break the words into the affix (prefix or suffix) and root word and explain what the word means (e.g., "I found the word unthinkable! If I break it into the root and affixes, it is un-think-able. That means that if something is unthinkable, you are not able to think of it.").
- **Word Categories:** Play a word association game with your child. Call out a category name, and take turns brainstorming other words that make you think of the category word (e.g., "The category is weather." "Thunderstorm!" "Snow!" "Cumulus Clouds!" "Typhoon!"). Afterward, have the child sort the words into other categories, based on their similarities. Have the child explain what is similar about all of the words in their new categories (e.g., "I put train, monorail, boats, and strollers in the same category because they are all types of transportation people use at theme parks.").

Practice Activities (with Printables)

- **Homograph Hook:** Match words that sound the same but have different meanings with the cards provided. [Homograph Hook](#)
- **Homophone Go-Fish:** Match homophones with their meanings by playing a card game. [Homophone Go-Fish](#)

- Opposite Meanings: Match words with opposite meanings while playing with the domino-like cards provided. [Opposite Meanings](#)
- Synonym Bingo: Play this spin on the classic bingo game for practice identifying synonyms of the called word. [Synonym Bingo](#)
- Up with Words: Practice using more precise language in writing by using synonyms to complete the provided sentence cards. [Up with Words](#)
- Meaning Extender: Draw cards with specific questions around new vocabulary words and apply the new words to a variety of contexts. [Meaning Extender](#)
- Context Clues: Assist the child in determining the meaning of unfamiliar words by reading context clues. Then sort the words by type. [Context Clues](#)

Online Activities

- [Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle](#): This game has children apply vocabulary as they complete a crossword puzzle by matching a definition and word from a given list.
- [Vocab Vik](#): This game has children match words to a given vocabulary word.
- [ANTonyms](#): This game has children find the matching ants to form antonym pairs.
- [Figurative Language Exploration](#): This Classroom Connect lesson teaches children about figurative language by practicing with similes and metaphors. [Extension Activity](#) (optional)
- [Grammar Gladiator](#): This game provides practice with articles, verbs, homophones, and punctuation while unleashing fireballs from dangerous lava vents.
- [Prefix Popper](#): This game has children match a prefix to its meaning while popping balloons.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with reasonable speed and expression while understanding what is read.

Practice Activities

- Read Together: Select various types of texts/genres that are of interest to the child and read them together.
- Recorded Reading: Create opportunities for the child to listen and read along with audio recordings. The homepage of this website contains links to many free digital libraries or visit your local library and check out the book version so your child can read along.
- Echo Reading: Model expression while reading to the child. Then, have the child read the same sentence or phrase fluently. This activity can also be used with books, poetry, lyrics, and more. Watch [Echo Reading](#).
- Repeated Reading: Take turns reading passages or completing repeated readings of the same passage (my turn/your turn).
- Fluent Phrases: Print or write out on notebook paper the lyrics of your child's favorite songs in short phrase format. Have your child practice reading a single line until it is read smoothly and with expression, then move onto the next. This activity can also be done with poetry or rhyming books.
- Act it Out!: Provide your child opportunities to act out a story, poem, or other text as if it were a play. They can use/make props and select different voices for the characters. This can assist your child in practicing appropriate pacing and expression while reading.
- [mCLASS Home Connect](#): Access Accurate and Fluent Reading activities to practice reading at home or on the go here.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Give Me Five: Help the child improve their word speed and accuracy with this activity as they work to beat their personal record. [Give Me Five](#)
- Fleeting Phrases: Support speed and accuracy by having the child read phrases quickly. [Fleeting Phrases](#)
- Reading Chunks: Help the child improve fluency by practicing reading text that has been divided into meaningful chunks, then reread it fluently without separation. [Reading Chunks](#)
- Reader's Theater: Assign parts of reader theater's scripts to family members and friends or have the child read each character's lines with expression. [Reader's Theater](#)

Online Activities

- [Say What](#): This game provides a space for children to create their own silly stories, blindly choosing from nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Read the story created and reread to increase fluency.
- [Online Libraries](#): Free Digital Library Resources Collections of free online books.

Comprehension

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand what one reads. It is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#))

Practice Activities

- Exploring Poetry: Read short, simple poems together. Discuss what they are about and the feelings they convey. Create your own poems together and share. Providing notebooks, journals, or stapled paper allows children to keep a collection of their writings to reread and share with others.
- Family Book Club: Encourage different family members to pick the book. Discuss the main ideas, plots, characters, and personal opinions about the book together. This is a great way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together.
- Two Texts, Different Authors: Read two or more texts about the same topic or event. Discuss how the content, author's perspective, or approach to the text are similar and different.
- Prior Knowledge: Have a discussion with the child to learn what they already know about the topic before reading nonfiction. Ask the child if there are any questions about the topic they hope to find answers to as they read the book. Talk about answers that were found in the book after reading.
- Check-ins: Stop every few pages to "check-in" while the child is reading or as you are reading together. This is one way to know if the child is understanding what is being read or heard. Use open-ended questions to gauge their understanding (e.g., "What are your thoughts about this part of the story?", "How do you know?", "What do you think might happen next?"). You can vary how frequently you check-in based on how well your child is understanding the text. For more challenging texts, check-in more frequently.
- Order Up: Have the child sequence (put in order) the events of the story to better understand what is happening when reading both fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Read Between the Lines: Help your child learn how to infer meaning from what is not said in the text. When a character has a major event, ask your child to think about how the character might feel or what their next steps might be based on what he/she has already done in the story.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Text Feature: Find Identity, locate, and explore various features of texts (e.g., table of contents, diagrams, glossary). [Text Feature](#)

- Super Summary: Identify main ideas using a graphic organizer and write a summary with the child. A graphic organizer provides structure for children to write a summary based on the main ideas of the text. [Super Summary](#)
- Write Cause or Effect: Explore cause and effect by playing a completion game using the provided cards. Read the "cause" on each card. Take turns or work together to complete the "effect" section. [Write Cause or Effect](#)
- Text Structure Sort: Sort the passages into text structure categories (e.g., cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence) using the provided cards. [Text Structure Sort](#)
- Character Consideration: Work together with the child to describe a character using a graphic organizer. [Character Consideration](#)
- Story Pieces: Discuss story elements with the child (e.g., characters, setting, plot, problem, solution) by using a graphic organizer or question cards. [Story Pieces](#)

Online Activities

- [Make Reading Connections](#): This game provides practice making mental connections between the text and things the reader already knows (e.g., text-to-text, text-to-world, text-to-self).
- [Question Cube](#): This game provides a short story to read. Click the question cube and answer the question based on the story.
- [Detective's Notebook](#): The game is designed to get students thinking about what they are reading and answering questions that require inferencing.
- [Main Idea Millionaire](#): This game has players find the sentence that does not fit with the main idea of the paragraph.
- [Cannonball Cats](#): This game has players use a circus cannon to shoot cats through the correct figurative language fire ring.
- [Sir Readalot](#): This game has players smash boxes to find a key that will unlock the treasure box while practicing skills around fact and opinion, drawing conclusions, context clues, and syllables.
- [Author's Purpose](#): This game provides practice identifying the author's purpose after reading a brief passage. Is it to entertain, inform, or persuade?
- [Figurative Language Exploration](#): This Classroom Connect lesson teaches children about figurative language by practicing with similes and metaphors. [Extension Activity](#) (optional)
- [Inferencing with Informational Text](#): This Classroom Connect lesson teaches children how to make inferences about informational text by citing evidence from the text. [Extension Activity](#) (optional)
- [Inferencing with Poetry](#): This Classroom Connection lesson teaches children how to make inferences about a poem by citing evidence from the text. [Extension Activity](#) (optional)
- [Poetry and Theme](#): This Classroom Connection lesson teaches children how to make inferences about a poem by citing evidence from the text. [Extension activity](#) (optional)
- [Summarizing Poetry](#): This Classroom Connection lesson teaches children how to make inferences about a poem by citing evidence from the text. [Extension activity](#) (optional)
- [Author's Reasoning](#): This Classroom Connection lesson teaches children how to make inferences about a poem by citing evidence from the text. [Extension activity](#) (optional)