

Summary of National Academy of Sciences Guidelines for Kindergarten

By the end of kindergarten, a student should be able to do the following:

- Write his first and last name.
- Write most letters and some words when they are dictated.
- Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Provide the sound for most letters.
- Recognize some words by sight.
- Retell, reenact, or dramatize simple stories that are read to him.
- Correctly answer questions about stories read aloud.
- Identify single syllable words that rhyme.
- Produce a word that rhymes with another.
- Identify the beginning sounds in words.
- Break a spoken word into syllables.
- Use correct or invented spelling to write.*
- Listen attentively when an adult reads a story.

* Invented spelling refers to the ability to correctly sequence the sounds in a word even if the word is spelled incorrectly. For example, c-a-t could be spelled as k-a-t or i-s could be spelled as i-z.

Summary of National Academy of Sciences Guidelines for First Grade

By the end of first grade a student should be able to do the following:

- Have a reading vocabulary of 300–500 words.
- Read aloud first-grade fiction and nonfiction books with *accuracy and understanding*.
- Accurately read phonetically regular, one-syllable words and nonsense words (e.g., stop, cat, zot, thin, bush).
- Use letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.
- Monitor own reading to self-correct mistakes and to understand what is read.
- Recognize by sight some common irregularly spelled words (e.g., have, said, where, is).
- Read and understand simple directions.
- Spell correctly three- and four-letter short vowel words (e.g., cat, sun, chin, let, shop).
- Create fairly readable first drafts using appropriate parts of the writing process (some attention to planning, drafting, re-reading for meaning, and some self-correction).
- Answer simple written comprehension questions based on material read.
- Use basic punctuation and capitalization.

Summary of National Academy of Sciences Guidelines for Second Grade

By the end of second grade, a student should be able to do the following:

- Accurately read and comprehend second-grade fiction and nonfiction books, recalling facts, details, and main ideas.
- Accurately decode orthographically regular words of more than one syllable at the second-grade level (capital, Kalamazoo).
- Accurately read many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings.
- Be able to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Read voluntarily for pleasure.
- Correctly spell previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.
- Represent in correct sequence all sounds in a word when spelling independently.
- Produce a variety of types of compositions (stories, reports, correspondence).
- Reread sentences when meaning is not clear.
- Recall facts and details of texts.
- Produce a variety of types of compositions (stories, reports, and correspondence).

Summary of National Academy of Sciences Guidelines for Third Grade

By the end of third grade a child should be able to do the following:

- Read third-grade level books with accuracy, fluency, and understanding.
- Sound out unfamiliar words.
- Read grade-appropriate chapter books of fiction independently.
- Summarize major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Discuss the underlying theme or message when interpreting works of fiction.
- Ask “how,” “why,” and “what if” questions when interpreting nonfiction texts.
- Use information and reasoning to examine bases of hypotheses and opinions.
- Infer word meanings from taught roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Correctly spell previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.
- With some guidance, use all aspects of the writing process in producing own compositions and reports.
- Combine information from multiple sources in writing reports.
- With assistance, suggest and implement editing and revision to clarify and refine own writing.
- Produce a variety of written works (e.g., literature responses, reports, “published” books, semantic maps) in a variety of formats, including multimedia forms.

Guidelines for Determining the Reading Level for Students in Grades 4–12

Once children enter the fourth grade, there is no longer instruction in decoding as part of the mainstream curriculum. Students may have instruction in other language arts skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and higher-level reading comprehension, but decoding skills are no longer taught. At this point students are expected to have well developed reading skills and be able to use those skills to learn new information in subjects such as social studies and science. What you really need to know at this stage is whether your child can read the grade-level material that is assigned in class and for homework.