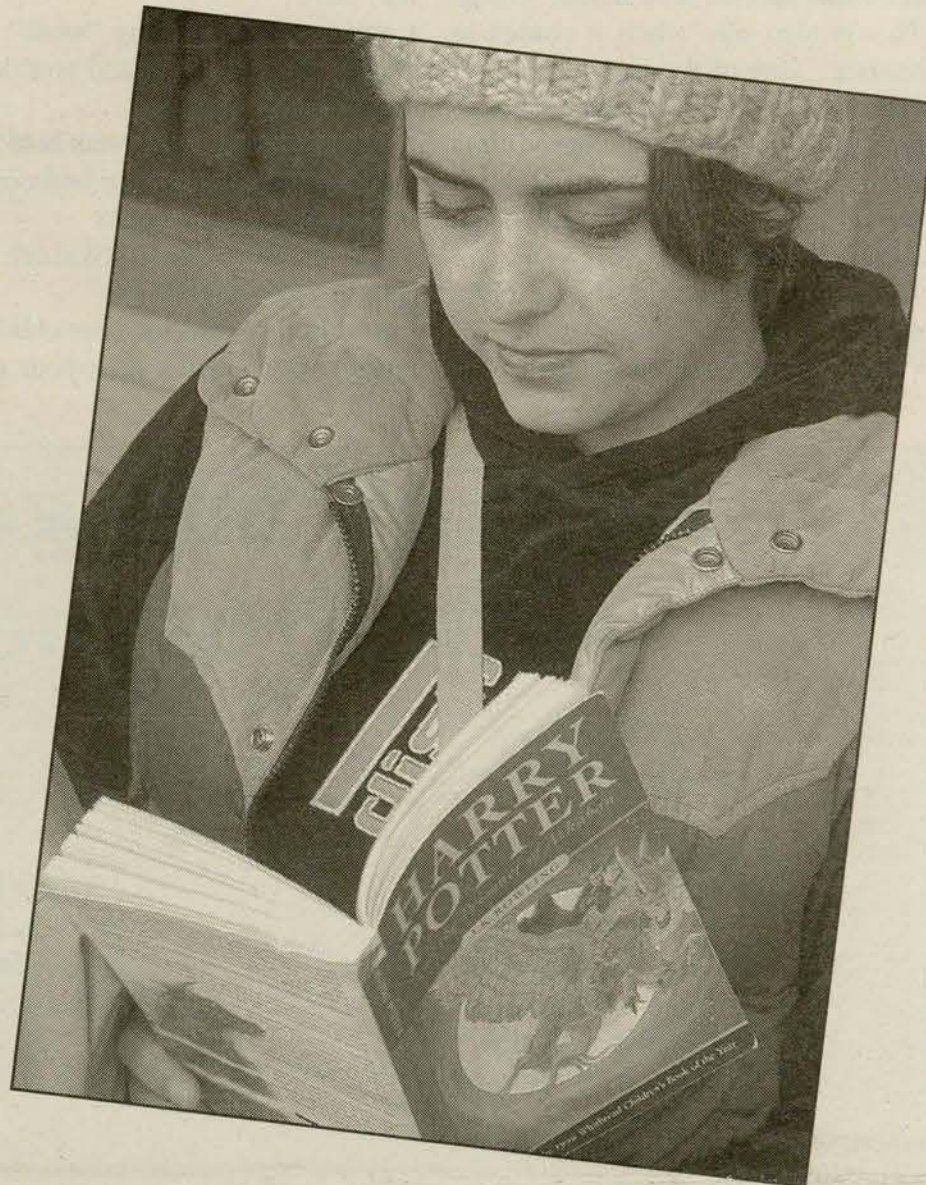
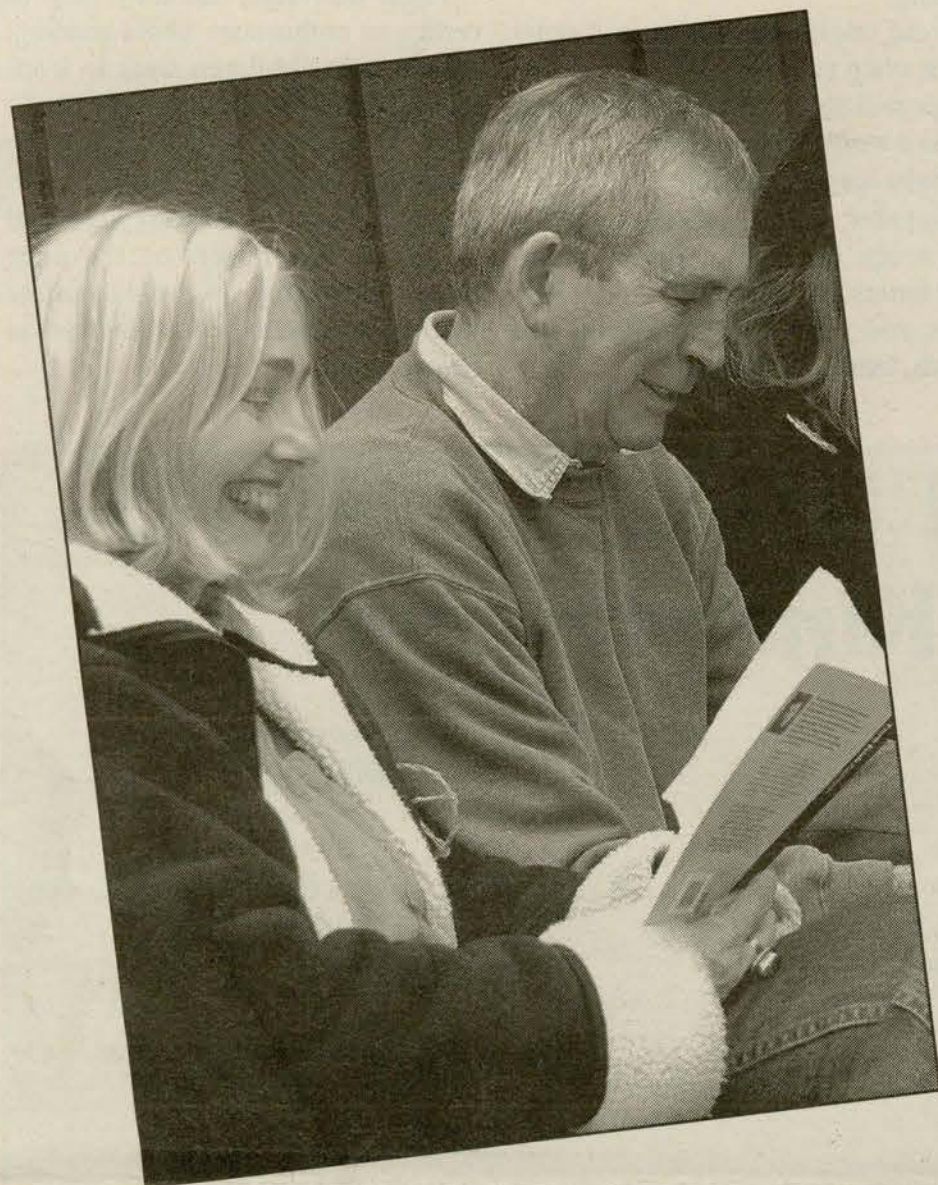




Focus on literacy



LITERACY — THE LIFELONG GIFT

Having the ability to read and to share our thoughts through writing are two of the most gratifying and powerful skills a person can have. Becoming literate begins in the womb and continues on for our entire lives. It can bring pleasure as well as information and provides access to the world in a multitude of ways.

Research has discovered that the most important time that leads to the laying of the foundation for reading happens in the first five years. Parents can provide the stepping stones to suc-

cess by the enthusiasm they show for stories, by taking the time to read to their children every day and by the modeling that they do in writing messages, sending letters, emails, and other forms of communication.

Becoming literate is the work of many. Parents, supportive family and friends and the school all play a part in developing literacy. Every one of us is a valuable teacher: we are all teachers of literacy every minute of every day. It is our attitude and support that creates the hubris in which litera-

cy can grow.

At the center is the student: the joy and interest that a child feels about reading and writing are markers for their future success. The Gulf Islands School District is eager for every child to have strong reading and writing skills. The Early Success Program, two years in existence, is working to ensure that the early literacy skills are well established with our kindergarten and grade one students. Research has shown that reading and writing skills need to be developed continuously not

just in the early grades and teachers are working to help students to increase their skills at every grade level throughout the system.

Thanks to the work of many, parents, grandparents, friends, extended families, our local library volunteers, proprietors of local bookstores, parent volunteers, seniors in schools, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, and many, many others, our community of learners in the Gulf Islands School District is enjoying the gift of becoming literate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS TO:

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The home/school partnership is essential

It has been well documented that parents and teachers need to work together to help children experience academic success in a school setting. This is also true when it comes to reading. One of the best things parents can do is to encourage their children to read at home and spend time with their children reading with them. There are many ways that can accomplish this:

1. Spend time reading to your child everyday
 - find a quiet cozy corner and read

- books that you will both enjoy
 - discuss the story as you read, answering any questions your child may have
 - avoid making reading "work"; this should be a relaxing and wonderful time to share together
2. Surround your child with books
 - put a bookshelf in the bedroom to hold their favourite books
 - take trips to the bookstore and choose books together
 - get a library card for your child and make regular visits; take your child

3. Model reading for your child
 - Allow your child to witness you reading.
 - Avoid television and sit in a quiet place when you read.
 - This will show your child that reading is a worthwhile exercise.
4. Make language visible.
 - Alphabet posters, puzzles, books and songs can help children recognize letters and sounds
 - As you read together, point out words, letters and sounds.

- Purchase some magnetic letters for the fridge and spell out a word of the week.

These activities not only help to create an enthusiasm about reading, which makes children want to learn to read on their own, but also shows them how books work. They learn to recognize which way is up, to turn pages, to look from left to right, and to expect that letters on the page mean something. All this assists teachers in helping your child want to learn to read.

Authors and good books to read with Preschool/Kindergarten

Good Night Moon
by Margaret Wise Brown
Corduroy
by Don Freeman
The Very Hungry Caterpillar
by Eric Carle
If you give a Mouse a Cookie
by Laura Numeroff
Big Sarah's Little Boots
by Paulette Bourgeois
Frederick
by Leo Lionni
Jillian Jiggs
by Phoebe Gilman

The Mitten
by Jan Brett
Koala Lou
by Mem Fox
Where the Wild Things Are
by Maurice Sendak
Edwina the Emu
by Sheena Knowles and Rod Clement
Olivia
by Ian Falconer
Stella Luna
by Janelle Cannon
The Doorbell Rang
by Pat Hutchins

Quick as a Cricket
by Don and Audrey Wood
Green Eggs and Ham
by Dr. Seuss
Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten
by J. Slate

plus any other books by the above authors

A wide variety of non-fiction books, rhyming books, alphabet books, number books

Building foundations for reading and writing . . . in pre-school and kindergarten

Pre-school language skills are directly connected to children's success in school. The skills needed for successful reading and writing development begin long before children read or write their first word. In the pre-school years children are clearly on a steep learning curve when it comes to speech and language development.

Learning to express yourself and understand what other people are saying provides more than just a means to communicate effectively through verbal means. It also provides an essential foundation for later reading and writing development which are both language-based skills.

Among the many important language abilities that are connected to success with reading and writing, three of the most important are phonemic awareness, the connection of print to meaning, and letter naming.

The words we say are made up of separate sounds that are referred to as phonemes. For example, the word "dog" is made up of the three sounds /d/ /o/ /g/. Phonemic awareness refers to the understanding that

the words we say have individual sounds that are put together to convey meaning. In pre-school, children start learning about the sound structure in words through word play and rhyming (e.g., "dog" and "log" rhyme).

Dr. Seuss books take word play to a new level by combining rhymes with fun, nonsense words that encourage children to think about sound structure.

Many other popular children's books are filled with rhyme or with words that start with the same sound (alliteration). Word play is also observed when children make-up a "silly" language by playing with the sounds in words and when they are entranced with songs that emphasize word parts.

During the first few years of life, one of the most important things that can be done to foster reading development includes reading age-appropriate books that relay a message of comfort, fun, and learning. Early childhood books are filled with big, colorful pictures that are meant to encourage expressive language development through labeling and description. As they grow, chil-

dren start to figure out that the things we say can also be represented in print and that print is meaningful.

Consequently, it is important for them to see many examples of reading and writing throughout their every day life. Children who observe the reading of newspapers, magazines, e-mails, etc. and the writing of grocery lists, letters, etc. are much more likely to make the connection that reading and writing are associated with a purpose. In addition, they start to recognize print in their environment that has importance to them. Initially, their "reading" is connected to pictures or common logos. A common example is the realization that the red road sign on the corner says "stop."

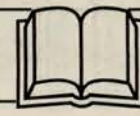
In terms of writing, it is very common to see children attempting to print their name or write a "note" to a family member. What looks like scribbles on a piece of paper is often evidence that they are connecting what they are writing to a meaningful, functional activity.

Naming the letters of the alphabet is another essential skill for reading and writing development. Even

prior to school entry, children will start to name letters that have importance to them. Of course, their name is very important so that is usually the starting point. By the end of kindergarten, most children have developed the ability to name all of the letters in the alphabet (letter identification) and are able to stretch out words into individual sounds (phonemic awareness).

You could say letter naming and phonemic awareness are "pre-phonics" abilities that set the stage for reading and writing success. Once children have these abilities they are well on their way to connecting the sounds they hear to the letters in the alphabet that we read and write (sound-letter correspondence). They continue to learn more sophisticated language skills but they are also learning to think about language and apply that knowledge to functional reading and writing activities throughout their school years and beyond. The abilities to read, write, and speak with ease, clearly have important roots in pre-school and kindergarten language development.

—Colleen Belliveau



Authors and good books for Grade 1/2

- The Jolly Postman
by Janet Ahlberg
- Jeremiah Learns to Read
Jo Ellen Bogart
by Eric Carle
- If You Give a Moose A Muffin
by Laura Numeroff
- the Franklin series
by Paulette Bourgeois
- Brown, Bear, Brown Bear
by Bill Martin Jr.

Any other books by the above authors and any books by the following ones:

- Dr. Suess
- Kevin Henkes
- Eve Bunting
- Nancy Carlson
- Tomie dePaola
- Mem Fox
- Robert Kraus
- Leo Lionni
- Arnold Lobel
- Robert Munsch
- Audrey Penn
- David Shannon
- Rosemary Wells
- Audrey Wood
- Jane Yolen

- I Spy series by Jean Marzollo
- Asterix series
- Tin-Tin series

Include a wide variety of non-fiction-books on animals including insects, gymnastics, dinosaurs, fairies and rhyming books, alphabet books, number books

Reading Expectations for your child in March/April Grade 1

Aspects	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs someone else to read the story to them. 	The student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads short, simple stories with pictures with some help • may be able to reread familiar stories independently 	The student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads short, simple illustrated selections without help • rereads familiar selections by themselves 	The student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads a variety of short simple materials independently • often chooses to read • needs little help
STRATEGIES Does the child • use phonics to read unknown words? • try to predict what comes next in a story? check to see if their prediction was right? • recognize letters and words? • recognize punctuation when reading?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often asks for help • may know most letters • beginning to match beginning sounds and letters in familiar words • knows how books work (e.g., front-to-back) • beginning to match printed words with spoken words • recognizes that books tell stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often hesitates with new stories • knows all letters; tries to use phonics to sound out words • uses pictures and background knowledge to aid understanding if helped • can read some commonly used words (e.g. in, on, the at) • knows some basic punctuation (e.g. question marks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seldom hesitates; uses various strategies to figure out meaning • uses phonics to sound-out new words • uses pictures and background knowledge to aid understanding on their own • can read many common sight words (e.g. family, they) • knows basic punctuation (e.g. question marks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasingly confident and self-reliant • uses phonics and word families (i.e. (look, book, took..)) • uses background knowledge and clues in the story to gain understanding • recognizes an increasing number of commonly used words • uses punctuation to help understanding
COMPREHENSION Can the child • predict what might happen next? • retell the story? • locate the details? • read between the lines?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often cannot predict reasonably what might happen next • uses pictures to find details and retell the story • can tell about some characters and events with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes reasonable predictions when helped • retells some important events or ideas; can name some main characters • can find some details in the story; may need clues • focuses on facts found directly in the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes reasonable predictions • retells most important events or ideas in correct order, can name all main characters • can find important details in the story • draws simple conclusions about characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predicts story events; can "read between the lines" • completely retells a story • independently can find important details • draws conclusions about characters • may be able to identify the message in a story
RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS Does the child • make personal connections with the story? • form opinions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has difficulty making personal connections with the story • expresses like or dislike for a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes simple personal connections with the story • expresses like or dislike for a story and tries to tell why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can compare a story to own experiences with help • expresses like or dislike for a story; can give a reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes obvious connections to own experiences or to other selections on their own • offers simple opinions beyond like or dislike; gives some reasons

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions should be helpful as you work through the following pages.

READING—is a complex process that gives us new understandings, makes us better thinkers, and helps us gain information. It is when we make meaning from written text. What we already know and have experienced are important in the reading process. Writing and talking about what we read are essential to learning to read.

STRATEGIES—These are the tools and skills people use when tackling reading material.

- They include:
- Predicting or thinking what might come next in the story.
 - Word attack skills (commonly known as phonics) When children come across a word that they cannot read, the first tendency is to ask them to "sound it out". It is important that this be only one strategy we ask them to use; the others are equally as important!
 - Getting information from pictures.
 - Recognizing the pattern or sequence of a story.
 - Connecting what they know with what they are reading.
 - Thinking about what they are reading and making sure that it makes sense.
 - Rereading when something

does not make sense.

- Picturing what is happening when there are no pictures to look at.

COMPREHENSION—We read for understanding at two levels: literal and inferential.

Literal comprehension means that a reader can repeat back information that is written in the story. If the story says, "The cat is black.", the reader can answer the question, "What colour was the cat in the story?"

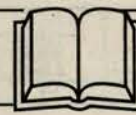
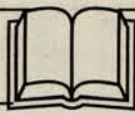
Inferential comprehension means that a reader can read between the lines of what is written. If a story says, "A white cat fell down a sooty chimney", a reader can figure out the answer to the question, "What colour is

the cat now?" and read between the lines to say "Black".

MAKING CONNECTIONS

When a readers draw upon what they already know to help them understand what they are reading, they are making connections. When they can form and express opinions and judgments, they are making connections. When they make connections, they are thinking beyond what the print on the page says.

Set aside time to read and keep reading and talking about what you read with your children. You will find that when they get into adulthood, they will want to continue dialogue about good books.



Keep up the encouragement

Once your child is in school and learning the fundamentals of reading and writing, you can continue to support and encourage him.

1. continue reading with your child, pick books that are exciting and beyond her capabilities
2. let your child read to you
3. ask your child what he is reading in school
4. continue to buy books and visit the library
5. play games that encourage reading and thinking like scrabble and boggle
6. make sure that your child has lots of writing supplies—maybe a journal or diary

Authors of good books for Grade 2/3

Gary Paulson
 Phoebe Gilman
 Robert Munsch
 Mary Osborne
 Debbie Dadey
 Roald Dahl
 Beverly Clearly
 Astrid Lindgren
 Helen Lester
 McDermott
 Leo Lionni
 Kevin Henkes
 Jon Scieszki
 Mary Hoffman

The Magic School Bus Series
 by Joanna Cole

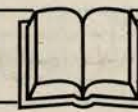
The Anansi series
 by McDermott
 Betty Waterton

Please include a wide variety of non-fiction and children's magazines

Reading Expectations for your child in March/April Grade 2

Aspects	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs individual help reading and understanding simple, short stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads a variety of short, simple stories with some help (e.g. in a group) • work is partially accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads a variety of short simple stories on their own and with understanding. • Work is generally accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads an increasing variety of simple stories on their own and with understanding • work is clear, accurate, complete
STRATEGIES Can the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read out loud? • use strategies to understand the story? • predict what might come next? • use phonics? • read some words by sight? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncomfortable when reading out loud; tends to read one word at a time rather than smoothly in sentences; may lose place • needs someone reading with them • often cannot predict reasonably what might happen next • knows all letters and may try to sound words out; • often waits to be given the word or reading strategy e.g, Look at the picture. • can read some commonly used words (e.g. the, at, want, they little) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads slowly with little expression; • often stops to correct mistakes or get help • hesitant to read new stories; looks for help; • may rely on pictures • can make simple obvious predictions with help • sounds out new words; • if given help will use what they already know and their experiences to figure out unknown words • can read an increasing number of commonly used words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can read out loud with confidence; reads more smoothly as the story progresses • pays attention to the meaning of what she reads; checks that it makes sense; (may need to be reminded) • uses what he already knows from experience and about story pattern, as well as picture clues, to make predictions, and to check understanding • combines strategies to figure out unknown words; usually successful with simple words • can read increasing variety of commonly used words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reads aloud with confidence and expression • catches his own mistakes • pays attention to the meaning • uses what she already knows from experience and about story pattern, as well as picture clues to make thoughtful predictions and to check her understanding • combines strategies successfully to figure out unknown words • can read a wide range of sight words
COMPREHENSION Can the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the story and characters? • retell and explain events? • understand the relationships in the story? • read between the lines? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • needs help finding answers that show understanding of the story. • answers may be incomplete or incorrect. • may identify the main character(s) • needs help to retell the story; might make up their own story based on the pictures. • recalls few details • cannot "read between the lines" because they do not understand the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answers questions about the story with some accuracy; ideas may be incomplete • identifies the main character; may have difficulty with others • can identify some events in the story. These may be in the wrong order • provides few accurate details; may invent some • can tell some details directly found in the story; has trouble "reading between the lines" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually answers questions about the story accurately and completely • accurately identifies main and supporting characters • retells main events in the right order • includes some details in answers and explanations • can read between the lines to broaden understanding of characters and events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answers questions about the story accurately, clearly and completely • accurately describes main and supporting characters • provides a detailed accurate retelling • uses important details in answers and explanations • can read between the lines to broaden understanding of characters and events. • may be able to understand the author's message.
RESPONSES AND ANALYSIS Does the child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make connections to experiences and other selections? • express opinions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often unable to connect the story with what they already know • limited reading or listening experiences to draw on • may express simple opinions, but these are often unrelated to the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can make connections with support • expresses simple opinions about stories or characters but cannot explain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes connections between own experiences and other stories when asked • expresses simple opinions about stories or characters and provide simple reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may make connections to own experiences and other stories • can give reasons for his opinions and judgments

There's nothing quite like a good book . . .
 except, perhaps, a newspaper.



Authors of good books for Grade 4/5

Reading Expectations for your child in March/April Grade 4

Roald Dahl
Philip Pullman
Katherine Patterson
Beverly Cleary
Andrew Clements
John Reynolds Gardiner
George Selden
Richard Scrimger
Tim Wynne-Jones
Louis Sacher
Jerry Spinelli
Christopher Paul Curtis
John Christopher
Monica Hughes
Judy Blume
Brian Jacques
Kit Pearson
Kenneth Oppel
C.S.Lewis
Mordecai Richler
Patricia Wrede
Junie B. Jones
Gordon Korman
J.R.Tolkien

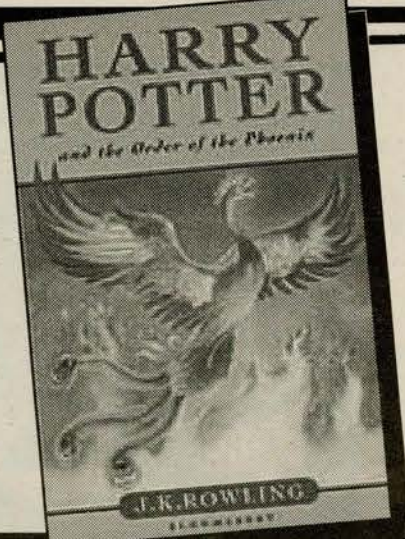
Please continue to read a wide variety of non-fiction books and children's magazines

More ideas

As your children mature further, create more sophisticated reading activities like

1. a book club where you read the same book separately and discuss
2. use the internet, library, or teacher to get suggestions for good, challenging books to read
3. subscribe to magazines that they will be interested in
4. obtain a subscription to the local newspaper and discuss news stories
5. take time to meet the teachers of your children to establish reading/writing/homework expectations
6. minimize time spent in front of the T.V. or computer

Aspects	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	Often needs one-to-one help reading and understanding brief, simple stories and poems. Work is often inaccurate or incomplete; tends to rely on guessing.	Reads, understands, and responds to simple and direct stories, novels, and poetry with help. Work is generally accurate with little detail.	Able to read, understand, and respond to simple and direct stories, novels and poems on their own. Work is generally accurate and complete; students can explain their answers when asked.	Able to read, understand and respond to straight-forward stories, novels, and poems on their own. Can independently answer complex questions about the story. Answers often go beyond what is expected.
STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check understanding • word skills • predictions • comprehension strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has few strategies for correcting • tries to sound-out new words; may give up quickly • predictions are often guesses and may not be logical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checks that the story makes sense when reminded • asks for help before using word strategies • makes simple obvious predications • may have difficulty finding details in the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks that the story makes sense • uses a variety of word strategies; may need prompting • makes logical predications • rereads and skims to find specific details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checks that the story makes sense • uses a variety of word strategies successfully • often goes beyond the obvious when making predictions • efficiently rereads and skims for specific details
COMPREHENSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy, use of detail and support • characters • events • sequence • reading between the lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work is often incomplete, inaccurate; may give up • may be confused about what is happening in the story • may identify the main character(s) and some events • difficulty retelling events in the correct order • cannot read between the lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to questions or tasks are generally correct, but may lack detail • correctly identifies most main characters • retells most main events in correct order • may be able to identify how a character is feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answers to questions are generally correct and complete, with some explanation • accurately describes main characters in some detail • retells main events in the correct order • can logically identify how a character is feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responses to questions are clear, complete and detailed, accurate, detailed; with explanations • accurately describes main characters and their relationships in detail • retells accurately making relationships among events clear • can figure out characters' feelings and motivations
RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connection to experiences and other selections • opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can make obvious connections with help • may be able to offer simple reactions or opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can make obvious connections with help • offers simple reactions or opinions. May retell the story instead of saying what they think about it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sometimes draw their own conclusions • offers reactions and opinions with some explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes and explains thoughtful connections to personal experiences or other selections • offers reactions and opinions with some explanation



Bring this coupon to West of the Moon with the correct answer to the following trivia question and reserve your copy of

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

at 10% off!

What treat are children able to sneak past teachers and have in class?

Jelly Slugs Sugar Quill
 Drooble's Best Blowing Gum Black Pepper Imps

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West of the Moon



Reading suggestions for Grades 6-8

Many boys, particularly as they reach their teens, are not interested in reading fiction. They much prefer non-fiction and will spend hours pouring over the Guinness Book of World Records, manuals, "how-to" books and magazines about their favourite sports or martial arts. Biographies of sports stars and the "Eyewitness" series of books such as Arms and Armour, Knights, World War II, Military Uniforms, and many other titles may be more appealing than novels. While they may not appear to be reading with the same intensity, they are still engaged with books and reading may be more than either you or they realize.

For those boys who will read fiction, try westerns by Louis L'Amour, fantasy by Robert Jordan, the Redwall series by Brian Jacques, Gordon Korman's Shipwreck and Everest trilogies, and survival stories by Gary Paulsen.

A lot of girls at the middle school level are reading books with strong female characters. Tamara Pierce is a very popular author of fantasy books, while Caroline Cooney, Lois Duncan, and Joan Lowery Nixon are favourite authors of mystery/horror stories. Garth Nix's science fiction books and the Royal Diaries historical fiction by a variety of authors round out the list. This year's big hit with the girls, though, are Louise Rennison's hilarious trilogy of the diaries of Georgie Nicolson.

At this level whether they're reading newspapers, magazines or paperback fiction, as long as young people remain engaged with the printed word they will be getting important practice in this vital skill. There will be time as they mature to guide their awareness of the quality of what they are reading.

—Carole Eyles
Teacher/Librarian
SIMS

Reading Expectations for your child in March/April Grade 6

Aspects	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	With help may be able to read short, simple and direct fiction and poetry selections with familiar language. Work is often unclear, incomplete or inaccurate. May need one-on-one support to complete task	Able to read generally straightforward fiction and poetry and complete most assigned tasks. Work is often inconsistent; parts are accurate and complete; others unclear, incomplete	Able to read straightforward stories poetry and complete assigned work on their own. Work is generally accurate and complete, with specific explanations from the story.	Able to read fiction and poetry with some complicated language or ideas. Work is thorough, independent, and goes beyond the obvious. • Can explain their thinking using examples from story May look for challenges.
STRATEGIES • comprehension strategies • word skills • knowledge of genres • efficiency	• Often does not check that the story makes sense; may need help choosing strategies when they don't understand • Often relies on sounding-out • If reminded, will use what they know about the story to help them read a difficult word • Has difficulty finding specific details	• Checks that the story makes sense; may need help choosing strategies when they don't understand • Often relies on sounding-out • If reminded, will use what they know about the story to help them read a difficult word • Has difficulty finding specific details	• checks that stories make sense; uses a variety of strategies for understanding • uses knowledge of word structure (for example, syllables) to read unknown words • makes logical predictions • skims and rereads for details	• checks that stories make sense; uses a wide variety of strategies effectively • uses knowledge of word structure without help • independent • uses knowledge of story structure to make logical predictions • efficiently skims and rereads for details
COMPREHENSION • accuracy, completeness • story elements • relationships • inferences • theme	• with direct help, may makes some simple and obvious connections to own experiences or other stories • offers simple and often unclear reactions and opinions; may be unable to explain	• work is based on accurate information; but often unclear and sometimes incomplete • identifies most main characters, events, and obvious conflicts between the characters; gives some details if asked • explains some relationships among events • can read between the lines, but may not be able to explain their thinking • understand the author's message at a basic level	• work is clear, complete, based on accurate information, with specific details/explanations from the story • describes setting, main characters, conflict and events accurately and in some detail • explains obvious relationships among events • reads between the lines with help • understands the author's message and can offer logical explanations	• work is thorough and precise, incorporating specific detail • describes setting, characters, conflict and events accurately and in own words. • explains less obvious relationships among events; often suggest other ways the story might have unfolded • reads between the lines and can explain thinking • understand the author's message and can offer logical explanations
RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS • connections to experiences and other selections • reactions	• with direct help, may makes some simple and obvious connections to own experiences or other stories • offers simple and often unclear reactions and opinions; may be unable to explain	• makes direct and obvious connections to own, experiences, and feelings, or to other selections • offers simple and direct reactions; reasons • uses a model or frame (chart or guide) to stretch their thinking	• can make connections beyond the obvious • offers reactions and opinions about selections with some explanation or examples	• makes some thoughtful connections to own ideas, beliefs, experiences and feelings or to other stories; gives reasons • offers reactions and opinions about selections with logical support; goes beyond the obvious

Put us on your reading list.

Gulf Islands
Driftwood





From reading to writing

In elementary classrooms, writing is also important. Strategies such as performance standards, and school or grade-wide writes may be used. In the middle and high school years, when "learning to read" shifts to "reading to learn", writing becomes increasingly necessary for student success.

Using the grade-appropriate Performance Standards, student writing models, and frequent practice opportunities, teachers try to help students recognize their own strengths and improve their weak areas.

Writing

Writing is a powerful tool for thinking because it can give students a way of getting control of their thoughts. Writing shapes their perceptions of themselves and their environment. It aids in their personal growth and enables them to affect others, even to make a change in their world.

A developing writer needs:

- to develop an awareness of the phases of the writing process
- to write frequently on a variety of topics for a variety of purposes or audiences
- to develop an understanding of the structures and conventions of language

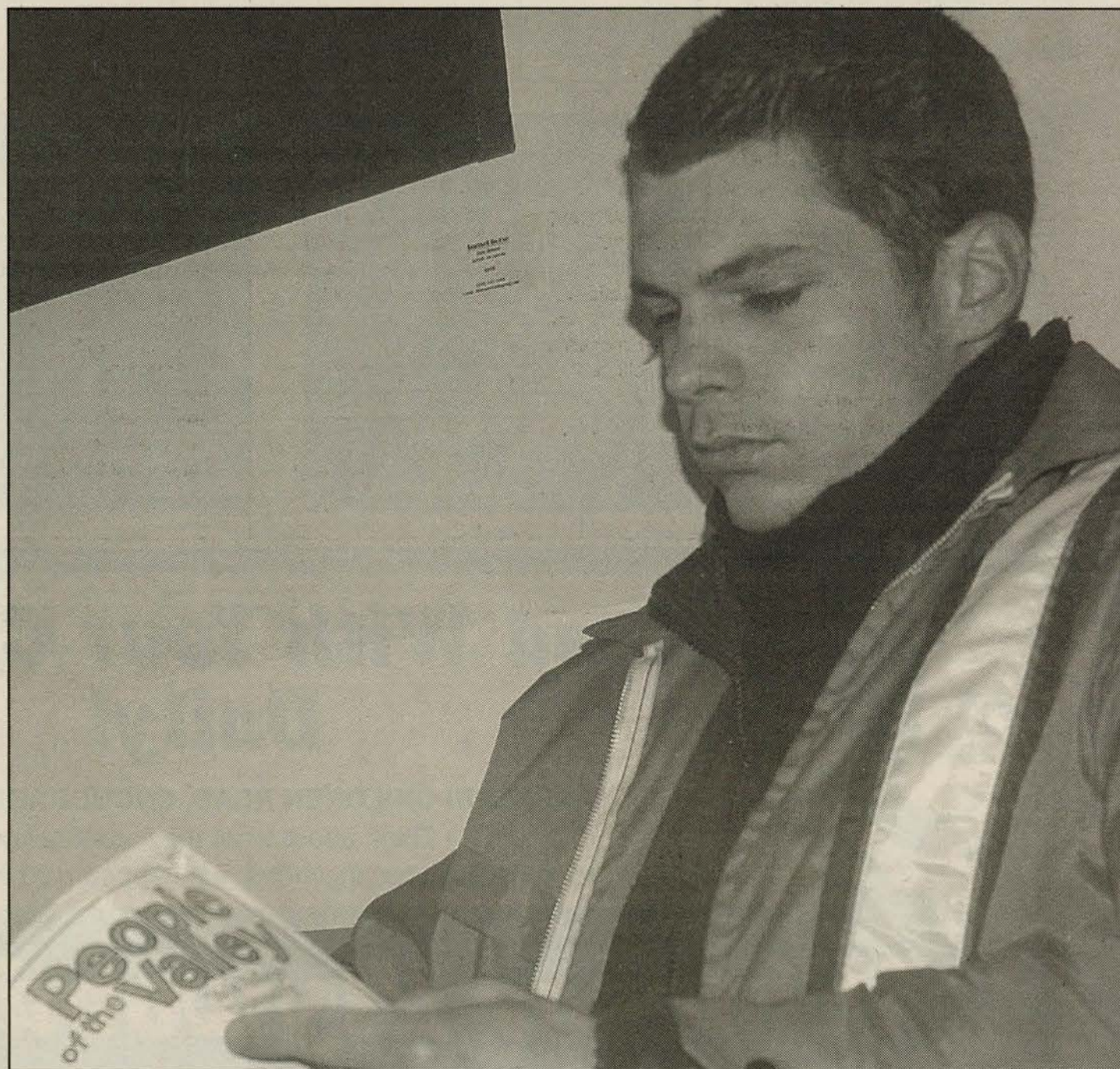
The writing process

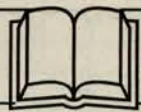
Writing is a messy process. It is not linear, it is a "loop" not "a straight line." The writer writes, then plans or revises, then writes again. Students can be helped by having them examine their own creative process. As they try to discover what works best for them, teachers or parents can guide them through a few basic phases in the writing process:

- Prewriting
 - using techniques like brainstorming or researching to gather ideas
 - deciding on a purpose and an audience
 - ordering ideas using strategies such as mind maps
- Drafting
 - putting down ideas on paper
 - exploring new ideas while writing
- Revising
 - Editing: considering ideas and organization
 - Proofreading: correcting errors including sentence structure, usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization
- Polishing
- Presenting
- Sharing their writing

Quick Scale: Personal, Impromptu writing Grade 7

Aspects	Not Yet Within Expectations	Meets Expectations (Minimal Level)	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
SNAPSHOT	The writing consists of loosely connected ideas; often includes serious errors.	The writing is somewhat general, but completes the basic task; may be flawed by errors.	The writing is clear, with some insight and development.	The writing is clear, with some insight and development. The writing is expressive, with some sophistication or complexity.
MEANING • ideas and information • use of detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose or point of view unclear • relies on retelling or listing • ideas are not developed; information may be misinterpreted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant reactions and ideas • straightforward and direct • uses details and examples; some may be inaccurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reactions and ideas with some insight • may speculate, generalize • accurate details, examples; logical explanations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some insight and originality • often uses humour or comparisons • details, examples, and explanations develop analysis or arguments
STYLE • clarity, variety, and impact of language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple repetitive language • short, simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some descriptive or expressive language • variety of sentence lengths; repeats simple patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and varied language • variety of sentence lengths and patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong opening; well-defined middle and end • flows smoothly; variety of sentence structures
FORM • opening • organization and sequence • conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weak introduction; abrupt conclusion • sequence may be confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction is often effective; middle and end undeveloped • "stream of consciousness" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often starts strong, then develops in predictable ways • logical sequence and connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong opening; well-defined middle and end • logical sequence and connections; effective paragraphing
CONVENTIONS • complete sentences • spelling • punctuation • grammar (e.g. agreement, verb tense)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequent errors in simple words and structures • no control of sentence structure; often runs on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that do not interfere with meaning • may include some run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may include errors in complex language, but these do not interfere with meaning • most sentences are correctly constructed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may include occasional errors in complex language, but these do not affect meaning • sentences are correctly constructed





Writing in the upper grades

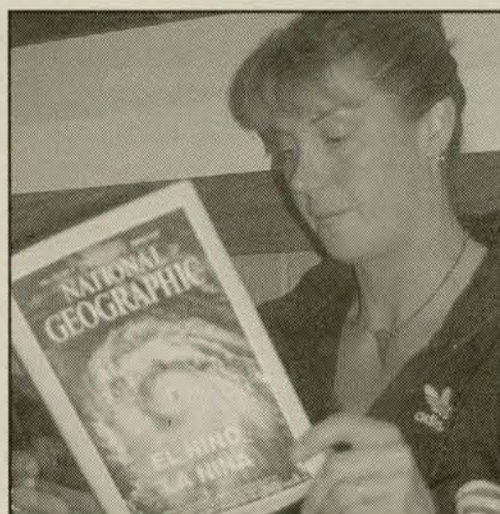
As students reach grades 11 and 12 in high school, longer and more analytical writing is stressed. In preparation for the Provincial Examination in English at the end of Grade 12, the students are introduced to the six-point scale which is used by the examiners. The headings are the same as the ones used in earlier grades, but there are finer distinctions made within the "Meets Expectation" category. Students are given practice in judging sample essays so that they learn to examine their own writing with a critical eye.

Popular new books in the GISS library

- The Ash Garden** by Dennis Bock
- Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy series** by Douglas Adams
- Broken Bridge** by Lynne Reid Banks
- Death Wind; Stones** by William Bell
- Girl with a Pearl Earring** by Tracy Chevalier
- Artemis Fowl** by Eoin Colfer
- Midwife's Apprentice** by Karen Cushman
- Skin and Other Stories** by Roald Dahl
- Ender's Shadow** by Orson Scott Card
- Heart of a Champion** by Carl Deuker
- White Oleander** by Janet Fitch
- Dare** by Marilyn Halvorse
- The Poisonwood Bible** by Barbara Kingsolver
- Life of Pi** by Yan Martel
- Sabriell** by Garth Nix
- Dark Side of the Sun** by Terry Pratchett
- His Dark Materials trilogy** by Philip Pullman
- Unless** by Carol Shields
- The Boy in the Burning House** by Tim Wynne-Jones

Essay Writing Rubric – Essay Writing Comments Grade 11 & 12

Area Needing Attention:	1 or 2 paper	3 paper	4 paper	5 paper	6 paper
Meaning: • thesis • ideas	• no thesis/no opinion • ideas not developed • re-telling of story • not engaging or interesting • did not answer question	• thesis is weak • minimal support for statements made • minimal references to work • story re-told instead of referred to • not interesting	• thesis is apparent/not original • loss of focus- gets off topic • support used in form of too-long or too many quotes • needs to show more original thinking, somewhat interesting	• good thesis • more creativity/originality needed in interpretation and presentation • interesting, but not engaging	• the 6 paper is outstanding and original in every respect
Style • voice and tone • sentence structure (syntax) • vocabulary	• inappropriate level • all sentences are same length • no attempts to use new words, misuse of vocabulary	• level is colloquial • sentence type is limited • vocabulary limited, no attempt to use new words	• level is appropriate for the topic • some attempts to vary sentence length • some attempt to use new vocabulary	• good level • sentence length varied to suit purpose • vocabulary could be enhanced	
Form • structure • organization	• the essay structure not apparent • poorly organized, not logically developed, ideas simply written down (no outline)no transitions	• essay structure poor • thesis paragraph weak • poorly organized, no/poor transitions (between sentences, paragraphs) • no conclusion or weak	• essay structure apparent but simplistic, predictable • organized but without flair or imagination • some transitions • conclusion evident	• tighter structure/more control needed • some creativity shown • conclusion somewhat forceful	
Conventions • spelling • grammar • punctuation	• serious errors • many spelling mistakes • consistent mistakes in verb agreement, tenses • pronouns, articles • overuse/misuse of commas, questions	• several spelling mistakes (distracting) • verb errors (subject agreement, tense) • comma errors that distract • incorrect use of questions	• errors in spelling and grammar – more care needed • mistakes in pronoun, verb agreement in complex sentences • some punctuation errors	• minimal errors • minimal errors when attempting more complex language	



Read With Your Children Daily!

AS YOUR CHILDREN READ, ENCOURAGE THEM TO:

- Think about what they already know.
- Predict what they think will happen next in the story.

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