

End of Grade 4

Understanding Provincial Achievement Standards in Reading and Writing

Helping your child to be successful



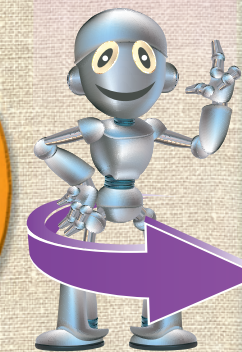
Your child's ability to read and write effectively will be one of the most important tools that she or he will use to build a successful future.

Be a part of your child's learning by encouraging his or her progress and providing everyday opportunities to read and write at home.



You can be involved in building your child's writing skills.

Tear off these handy tips for helping your child develop strong reading and writing skills.



Share examples of good writing with your child.

- Reread effective passages and sentences from your own reading or from what your child is reading.
- Discuss your reactions to powerful writing by sharing how it impacts your thoughts and feelings about a topic.

Help your child to think like a writer by noticing details about everyday experiences.

- Ask your child to describe what she or he sees or feels.
- Suggest that your child nurture a special interest by writing to an admired person or taking action on a local issue through letter writing.

Find everyday chances to encourage your child to write.

- Begin a family journal to keep favourite family stories, or create an online space to share family events and updates.
- Get your child involved in writing at home through to-do lists, thank-you notes, invitations or emails.

Recognize the signs of a successful writer.

Teachers look at six areas of a student's writing to identify success, as reflected in the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 4. The *Dear Mayor Doe* letter on this page is an example of acceptable writing by a student at the **end of Grade 4**.

Content is what a student writes. In the *Dear Mayor Doe* example, the content is an attempt to convince the mayor of the need for picnic tables on the playground. It stays focused and includes details that support the argument (the need for somewhere to sit; seniors could eat lunch with students).

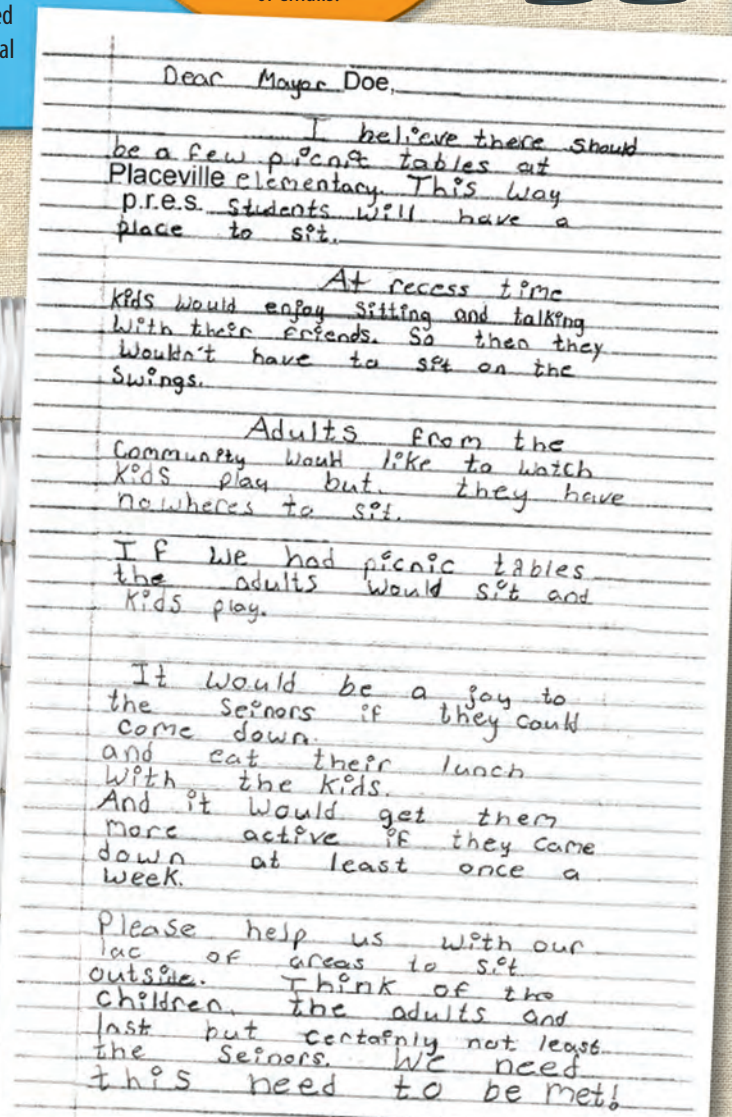
Organization means that the writing has a logical order or sequence. *Dear Mayor Doe* starts by giving the writer's opinion (I believe there should be...), includes at least three arguments to back up that opinion and sums up these ideas in the final paragraph.

Word Choice means some interesting words and phrases are used. The *Dear Mayor Doe* example uses some effective phrases (joy to the seniors; get them to be more active; Please help us with our lack of areas to sit outside) to convince the reader.

Voice means that the student's personality or style comes through in the writing. In *Dear Mayor Doe*, the writer makes his or her feelings understood (Please help us; Think of the children; We need this) and gives a glimpse of some personal style (and last but certainly not least).

Sentence Structure means the type of sentence(s) used. In *Dear Mayor Doe*, sentences have a variety of beginnings and are mostly complete. A few longer, more complex sentences are also attempted (Think of the children, the adults and last but certainly not least the seniors).

Conventions means spelling and punctuation. In the *Dear Mayor Doe* example almost all punctuation and use of capital letters is correct. Most common and familiar words are spelled correctly with the exception of "senior" (seiners).



Help your child be a successful writer.

When looking at your child's writing together, ask these questions with your child to build effective writing skills:

Did I

- ✓ narrow my focus to one main idea, with lots of detail?
- ✓ organize my writing into paragraphs that make sense?
- ✓ include a title, introduction and proper ending?
- ✓ use a variety of sentences and start them in different ways?
- ✓ choose some exciting words and phrases that stand out?
- ✓ write about something I care about and share my thoughts and feelings?
- ✓ remember to use capital letters, periods, commas and apostrophes?



Help your child be a successful reader.

Encourage the use of these **reading strategies** to help your child improve understanding of what she or he reads. Make a game of choosing one or two strategies to apply when reading or have family members each pick a strategy to practice as a reading game.

Encourage Your Child to...

Make predictions

Ask

What do you think this reading will be about? What are your clues?



Ask questions

Ask

Do you have any questions about what you are reading? What clues may help you to discover the answer?



Clarify reading when meaning is lost

Ask

What strategy might help you figure out the tricky word? Can you reread or slow down for the tricky part? Are there other clues in the reading to help you understand?



Visualize

Ask

Can you see a picture in your mind as you read? Tell me what you see.



Summarize

Ask

Can you tell me what happened first, next and last? Can we look back together to remember?



Recognize the signs of a successful reader.

In Grade 4, your child will read more challenging texts (fiction and non-fiction) for information and enjoyment. You and your child's teacher can tell whether your child is reading successfully by watching for growth in the following **reading behaviours**, drawn from the Provincial Achievement Standards for the **end of Grade 4**.

Knowing when meaning is lost and using reading strategies for understanding

Encourage your child to reread difficult sections and make corrections to reading errors.

Improving in the use of strategies to solve longer words and learning new words independently

Encourage your child to look for clues to the meaning by thinking about what has already been read. Rereading or slowing the reading down can help.

Recognizing a growing number of more challenging common words

Practice reading a variety of materials every day. Encourage your child to find common words on websites, in cookbooks, newspapers, magazines, comics...

Reading familiar texts smoothly and with expression

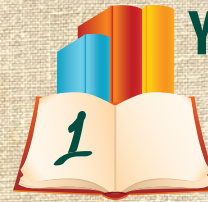
Encourage your child to read and reread texts until reading sounds like talking, with correct pausing, phrasing (grouping of words) and expression.

Using text features (table of contents, glossary, diagrams, headings, graphs...) to locate information

Help your child use all sources of information to better understand content and word meaning.

Recounting events/instructions/details to show understanding of a text

Engage your child in retelling, explaining and talking about what was read.



Before reading, ask:

- Why did you choose to read this book?
- What do you already know about this topic? What do you expect to find out?



During reading, ask:

- What extra information does the picture/diagram tell you?
- Skim this part to find information on _____ and tell me about it.



After reading, ask:

- How are you and the main character alike? How are you different?
- What is your opinion of this book? Would you recommend it?

You can be involved in building your child's reading skills.

By the **end of Grade 4**, your child should be able to read and understand texts similar to the one on the right. Topics often go beyond personal experiences and introduce cultural, historical and social points of view. Chapter books have few or no pictures while non-fiction texts have more text features (i.e. photos, glossaries, diagrams, graphs) to support meaning. There are many lines of print on a page. Print is organized in paragraphs with more complex (compound) sentences as well as longer simple sentences. Texts make greater use of dialogue (talking) and figures of speech (metaphors and similes). Readers will be challenged to figure out new content words and words with more than three syllables (e.g., environment, amphibian).



Photos by Don Vail

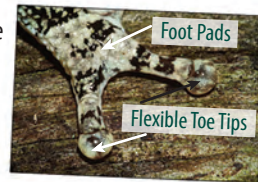
Eastern Grey Treefrog

Imagine a minuscule animal about half as big as your thumb that can change colours and stick to just about anything. You have the Eastern Grey Treefrog!

Appearance

Naming this frog the Eastern *Grey* Treefrog is misleading as it may also be green, brown or white. The colours of this tree frog vary depending on its environment or if it is under stress. The Eastern Grey Treefrog has rough skin and a very warty back.

This unique frog has large foot pads and flexible toe tips that help it climb trees and bushes. The large toe pads produce **mucous** to adhere to smooth bark or other objects.



Habitat

This tree frog is rare in New Brunswick. One place it can be found is Hyla Park in Fredericton. The park was named Hyla Park because the scientific name of the Eastern Gray Treefrog is *Hyla* versicolor.

The **habitat** of Hyla Park has what the Eastern Grey Treefrog needs in order to survive:

- trees or shrubs growing in or near water
- wetlands
- damp rotten logs or hollow trees

There are many fascinating **amphibians** in New Brunswick. Look around. There might be one hiding somewhere near you!!

Glossary

Amphibian:	A cold-blooded vertebrate that spends some time on land but must breed and develop into an adult in water
Habitat:	Environment in which a plant or animal lives
Mucous:	A thick, gelatinous fluid secreted by cells that line body organs

Books to build reading skills

Early Grade 4

- **Fantastic Mr. Fox** by Roald Dahl
- **The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs** by Jon Scieszka
- **Adventures of the Shark Lady** by Ann McGovern
- **A Book About Planets and Stars** by Betty Polisar Reigot
- **Outside and Inside Snakes** by Sandra Markle
- **Harry Houdini: Master of Magic** by Robert Kraske

End of Grade 4

- **Encyclopedia Brown series** by Donald J. Sobol
- **Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs** by Tomie dePaola
- **The Twits** by Roald Dahl
- **What Do Sharks Eat for Dinner?** by Melvin & Gilda Berger
- **All About the Moon** by Wes Lipschultz
- **My Favorite Dinosaurs** by Ruth Ashby



Contact Us

The Department of Education is committed to your child's reading and writing success. If you have any questions about your child's progress or about how you can be an active part of his or her learning, contact your child's teacher or the provincial literacy team at 506-453-2812.