

In 4th grade, students learn how to deeply think about and make connections in new material, and grasp more complex concepts across all subjects. They also write with clarity, flow, and structure similar to that of traditional essays. Fourth graders are encouraged to be more independent in how they learn, and depend less on their teacher's guidance. They research, plan, and revise their work more by themselves — setting the foundation to be lifelong, self-starting learners.

Reading in 4th Grade

Much of the 4th grade reading curriculum teaches students how to analyze the books they read. Rather than just understand the plot and information given in a text, students are encouraged to think about the messages and how they relate to their own lives. They also compare texts to each other and make connections both within one text and across multiple texts.

In short, 4th graders begin to learn how to think and talk about a text to find deeper meanings and messages. This is done both with texts students read independently and those read by the whole class or smaller groups of students. Teachers may often use a class read-aloud to show students strategies for thinking about and analyzing what they read, encouraging them to do this in their own reading. Students also do this as they write in more detail about the texts they read.

To build reading skills, your 4th grader:

- Uses specific examples from the text to explain characters' motivations, main events, central themes, or ideas about a text.
- Uses the context of a text to determine the meaning of a word.

- Understands and can explain the differences between narrative prose, drama, and poetry.
- Identifies and refers to the different parts of poems and plays, such as verses, settings, and characters.
- Interprets and connects information from illustrations, graphs, charts, or other sources related to the text.
- Identifies, compares, and contrasts different perspectives from which texts are written (for example, first and third person).
- Compares and contrasts the way different texts address the same issue, theme, or topic.
- Makes connections between people, events, or important ideas in a text.
- Uses previous knowledge to read unfamiliar multi-syllable words.
- Reads grade-level texts with accurate comprehension, pacing, and expression.

Fourth Grade Reading Activities

Read and Research Together: Read the same book as your child independently, together, or a combination of both. Talk about the book as you read it, reviewing main ideas and plots and expressing your opinions. Then read an additional book or books on the same subject and compare and contrast how they dealt with the same issue.

Compare Perspectives: Read two texts — one written in first person and one in third person — about the same event. Talk with your child about the differences and why they think these differences exist. Or, try it yourself! After sharing an experience with your child, each of you can write about it from your own perspective. Talk about the differences between what you wrote to gain a better understanding of perspective.

Read magazine and newspaper articles. Focus on the illustrations, graphs, or charts. Point out to your child what they show, ask them to help you interpret them, and discuss how they help explain or elaborate on the text.

Writing in 4th Grade

Much of the 4th grade writing curriculum focuses on developing writing that has clarity and structure, and that uses reasons, facts, and details to support and strengthen arguments. Fourth graders are taught to organize their writing, ensure that it flows well, and group together related components. As students learn to think more deeply about concepts they are taught, they are encouraged to write in deeper ways as well. They do this by going beyond simply stating the facts — they express ideas, make connections, and provide details and emotions when appropriate.

To build writing skills, your 4th grader:

- Writes opinion pieces that express a point of view; have an introduction, a conclusion, reasons, and facts to support the opinion; and group together related ideas.
- Writes informative/explanatory pieces that present information on a topic, use facts and details, and group together related topics; provides introductions and conclusions in these pieces.
- Writes narrative pieces that use specific details, descriptions, and dialogue to convey a real event; includes an introduction and conclusion in each piece.
- Plans, revises, and edits their writing.
- Uses technology to publish, research, and communicate with others under the proper guidance of an adult or teacher.

- Types with a beginner’s accuracy and ability (for example, types one page of text within one sitting).
- Completes research projects by taking notes, organizing them, and presenting them; lists the texts and resources used.
- Writes for both long (over weeks) and shorter (one sitting or a couple of days) periods of time.

Fourth Grade Writing Activities

Ask Why: When your child expresses their opinion about something, ask them why they think that or how they know it is true. This will help them learn to support their opinion with reasons and/or facts. Do the same when you express your opinion or ideas about something.

Email with your Child: Set up an email account for your child and write emails describing your days to each other. Include details, conversations, thoughts, and emotions you had. This can be done in addition to generally encouraging (and supervising) your child’s use of technology — helping them use it for research, writing, and communicating with others. As always, be cautious of your child’s technology use by monitoring and supervising how much it is used and with whom they communicate.

Practice Note Taking: When you and your child go somewhere like a museum or a new city, pretend to be reporters and take notes (give them a journal they’ll love to take notes in). Later on, use those notes to describe what you learned. You can even relay your “reports” like a newscaster would.

Books and Authors

100+ Free Video Read Alouds: High quality picture book video read alouds collected by The Indianapolis Public Library.

<https://www.indypl.org/blog/for-parents/free-video-read-alouds>

Authors Everywhere: A YouTube Channel created and run by middle grade author Susan Tan, and made possible by an amazing community of children's book writers and illustrators.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCowhHSUaWp3KJDcul0nR0vw/featured>

The Big List of Children's Authors Doing Online Read-Alouds & Activities: Comprehensive and updated list provided by We Are Teachers. <https://www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/>

Resources available through Launchpad:

Sora: Sora is Overdrive's app designed for K-12 schools. Happy eBook reading!

Tumblebooks: eBook database for children Kindergarten-6th grade.

Epic: Epic! is an American kids subscription-based reading and learning platform. It offers access to books and videos for children ages 12 and under.

iXL: IXL uses insights from student work in the curriculum and the Real-Time Diagnostic to generate personalized guidance for each learner. These personalized action plans seamlessly link students to the skills that will help them build on their knowledge and remediate gaps in understanding.