

English Language Arts & Literacy

Building the stamina and skills to read challenging fiction, nonfiction, and other materials is fundamental in 4th grade. Your child will continue to learn about the world as well as build vocabulary skills by reading more complicated stories and poems from different cultures and a range of books on history, science, art, and music. Fourth grade students also will make important strides in their ability to explain plainly and in detail what a book says — both explicitly and what is implied from its details. By 4th grade, your child will be writing effective summaries, book reports, and descriptions of characters or events that use correct grammar and punctuation.

A Sample of What Your Child Will Be Working on in 4th Grade

- Describing the basic elements of stories — such as characters, events, and settings — by drawing on specific details in the text
- Paying close attention to key features of informational books and articles: these include understanding the main and supporting ideas; being able to compare and contrast information; and explaining how the author uses facts, details, and evidence to support particular points
- Comparing ideas, characters, events, and settings in stories and myths from different cultures
- Writing summaries or opinions about topics supported with a set of well-organized facts, details, and examples
- Independently conducting short research projects on different aspects of a topic using evidence from books and the Internet
- Paraphrasing and responding to information presented in discussions, such as comparing and contrasting ideas and analyzing evidence that speakers use to support particular points
- Reporting orally on a topic or telling a story with enough facts and details
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling
- Relating words that are common in reading to words with similar meanings (*synonyms*) and to their opposites (*antonyms*)

Talking to Your Child's Teacher

Keeping the conversation focused.

When you talk to the teacher, do not worry about covering everything. Instead, keep the conversation focused on the most important topics. In 4th grade, these include:

- Comprehending a range of grade-level stories, poems, and informational texts such as biographies, articles, or guidebooks about history, science, or the arts
- Building understanding of relationships between words and nuances in word meanings — *synonyms*, *antonyms*, *idioms* — and using this knowledge to convey ideas precisely

Ask to see a sample of your child's work. Ask the teacher questions such as: Is this piece of work satisfactory? How could it be better? Is my child on track? How can I help my child improve or excel in this area? If my child needs extra support or wants to learn more about a subject, are there resources to help his or her learning outside the classroom?