



Benchmark

E D U C A T I O N

Building Literacy and Language for Life™

Instructional Shifts

Benchmark Advance resources were built to support the College and Career Ready Standards for Literacy. Key instructional shifts are:

- Regular practice with complex text
- Using text evidence in reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Building content knowledge

Key Components

- Vertical alignment across K-5
- Three-week units centered around knowledge strands
- Write-in text sets + digital access to materials
- Writing aligned to reading
- Foundational skills instruction
- English learner scaffolds
- Targeted intervention tools
- Built-in assessments



Vertically Aligned Standards

Staircase of Complexity, Progression of Learning
Practice/Apply Skills and Strategies Across the Grade

Unit	Knowledge Strand	GRADES						
		K	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Life Science	Plants and Animals Have Needs Why do living things have different needs?	Plants and Animals Grow and Change Why do living things change?	Habitats Around the World How do living things get what they need to survive?	Animal Characteristics How do living things survive in their environment?	In the Wild How do we respond to nature?	Partners in Survival How do living things help one another survive?	
2	Character	Every Story Has Characters How are characters different?		Many Kinds of Characters How do we learn about characters?		Characters Facing Challenges What can we learn when we face problems?		Ways Characters Shape Stories How do our actions influence our lives?
	3	Government and Citizenship	Why do we have rules?	Why do people get involved in their communities?	Why do we need a government?	Why do people participate in government?	How can government influence the way we live?	Why do laws continue to evolve?
	4	Perspectives in Literature	Writers Tell Many Stories Why do people tell stories?	Stories Have a Narrator How do people create stories?	Different Characters, Different Points of View How can a story change depending on who is telling it?	Different Perspectives, Different Points of View What makes people view the same experience differently?	Through the Storyteller's Eyes What do we learn when we look at the world through the eyes of others?	Distinct Voices, Diverse Perspectives How can other perspectives help us evaluate the world?
	5	Technology and Society	Technology at Home and School Why do we use technology?	Technology at Work How can technology make a difference in our lives?	Technology and Invention Where do ideas for inventions come from?	Technological Advancements What is the value of innovation?	Robot Revolutions How do we make decisions about developing new technology?	Innovation in a Changing World What value does technology bring to people's lives?
	6	Themes Across Cultures	Stories Have a Message How do we know what is right?	Stories Teach Many Lessons What can we learn from a mistake?	Tales That Teach Us What can different cultures teach us?	Decisions, Decisions What helps us solve problems?	Heroes and Villains What motivates a hero?	Struggles for Survival What compels us to survive?
	7	History, Culture, and Geography	Holidays and Celebrations Why do we celebrate people and events?	Past, Present, and Future Why is the past important?	Pioneers in Flight How does understanding the past shape the future?	Communities Past and Present What is a community?	Changing Lives, Changing Communities How do communities evolve?	The American Revolution How does conflict shape a society?
	8	Earth Science	Weather and Seasons How do our lives change with the seasons?	Observing the Sky Why do the sun and moon capture our imagination?	Wind and Water Shape the Land How do we react to changes in nature?	Earth's Surface How do we understand change?	Nature's Fury How do Earth's natural processes impact our lives?	Water What does water mean to people and the societies they live in?
	9	Economics	Meeting Our Needs and Wants Why do we make choices?	We Use Goods and Services Why do people trade with each other?	Making, Buying, and Selling How do the goods we make, buy, and sell connect us?	Time, Money, and Values What do our economic choices tell us about ourselves?	Resources Impact Economies How does access to resources influence people's lives?	Economies in Transition How do economic changes impact society?
	10	Physical Science	Forces What makes things move?	How would our lives be different without sound, light, and heat?	How can matter change?	How does understanding science help us achieve our goals?	How do scientific discoveries help us?	Measuring Matter Why do we measure and describe the world?

Before Unit 1: Review and Routines

- First 15-20 days of instruction to allow students to learn the classroom procedures through direct instruction, rather than through trial and error.
- Time to explicitly model, teach and practice literacy behaviors and expectations students will use consistently throughout the year.
- Parents should not expect to see homework or graded work coming home during this time.
- Teachers will gather anecdotal and formative data in order to assess students' reading skills for placement in small, flexible, needs-based groups, but will not report reading or writing grades until Unit 1 begins.

Close Reading

Topic 6: Stories Have a Message

Crow Learns a Lesson



Crow found a piece of cheese and flew up to a tree to eat it. Fox saw her and had a plan.

“You have such a wonderful voice!” he said. “Please sing for me!” So Crow sang and the cheese fell down! Then Fox ran away with the cheese.



2

In Grades K–1, students learn how to interact with texts as a first step toward close reading and text annotation.

Short Read 2

Remember to annotate as you read.

The San Francisco Earthquake, 1906: An Eyewitness Account

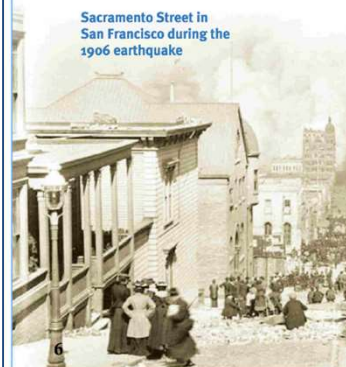
by Emma Burke

At 5:12 a.m. on April 18, 1906, residents of San Francisco, California, were jolted out of their beds by the first shock of a violent earthquake. More than a century later, this quake still ranks as one of the most significant geological events of all time. Emma M. Burke, who lived on Waller Street near Golden Gate Park at the time of the earthquake, published this account of her experiences that fateful day.

Notes

- 1 No one can comprehend the calamity to San Francisco in its entirety. The individual experience can probably give the general public the clearest idea. I was one of the fortunate ones, for neither personal injury nor death visited my household. But what I saw and felt I will try to give to you.

Sacramento Street in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake



In Grades 2–5, students annotate each text and take margin notes as they read closely to and answers and evidence.

Using Text Evidence in Writing

Using Text Evidence in Writing

During writing to sources mini lessons in Grades K–1, students learn how to find and use key details from a text they have read to support an idea or opinion. Students also use texts as inspiration for their creative writing.

Beginning in Grade 2, students write informational, opinion, and narrative texts based on one or more sources they have read. Through engaging prompts and explicit mini-lessons, they become proficient in the kind of writing they will be required to do on new assessments.

Writing to Sources

Opinion

In the play “The True Jack?,” each character shares his or her opinion of Jack, the main character in “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Which character’s point of view do you most agree with? State your opinion, and support it using details from both texts.

Sample Grade 3 Writing to Source prompt

Home-School Connections

- This letter exists for each unit at each grade level.
- The first page has an overview of the topic and big idea of the unit.
- The second page consists of connections to the topic, vocabulary, comprehension, and word study concepts taught in the unit, with ideas for activities parents can complete with their children at home.

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, "Ways Characters Shape Stories."

In this unit, we'll be reading folktales, myths, poems, and stories. We'll meet some well-known characters like King Midas and Paul Bunyan, and we'll also get to know new ones like a Russian girl called Snow White. As we read the selections, we'll be looking carefully at the characters, noticing how they are described and what personality traits we can infer from their actions. We'll also examine character motivations and discuss what characters learn as a result of their actions.

"Ways Characters Shape Stories" is an interesting unit that will stimulate some lively discussions that will take place at home. I look forward to working together with you to help your child learn. Should you have any questions about our reading program or your child's progress, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Ways Characters Shape Stories

In this unit, we read different kinds of fiction and think in depth about the question "How do our actions influence our lives?" Here are some activities designed to continue the character and story analysis we've done in class and to build on the skills and concepts your child has learned. Hopefully you'll even have some fun, too, as you work together!

Character Connection

What a Character!

It's not just when we're reading books or watching movies that we find ourselves thinking about characters. Understanding the people we meet in fiction helps us understand the people we meet in our lives. So the next time you and your child are watching a movie, reading a book or interacting with someone, take a moment to talk about character traits and motivations.

Vocabulary Connection

Vivid Verbs

Authors use active, vivid verbs to help make their stories come alive. In our current unit, we've learned a few new vocabulary words including the verbs *stroll* and *mutter*. Discuss the meaning of the words with your child. How is *stroll* different from *walk*? How about *mutter* and *say*? Try to come up with other words for *walk* and *say*.

Comprehension Connection

Summing Up!

Being able to identify and summarize key events is an important reading skill. Try to help your child practice this skill when you are reading together or watching a TV program or movie. Ask your child which events in a story are the most important. Why?

Word Study Connection

Compound Words

In our word study instruction, children are learning compound words created by joining two separate words with different meanings). To help your child with this skill, get 24 index cards and write one compound word on two cards (for example—"head" on one, "first" on the next). Then shuffle the cards and take turns flipping them over. The first person to call out the compound word wins. Below is a list of compound words from the unit.

headfirst freight mountainop lakeside
graveyard blacksmith grasshopper butlercup
firwood midnight marketplace sunflowers

Example from
Grade 3, Unit 2

Name: _____

Grade 3 Daily Take Home Calendar

Unit 1: Government for the People

Daily Take-Home Activity Calendar

Check off each activity as you complete it.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Working Together pp. 4-5 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud the selection. Discuss the different tasks the volunteers performed. Why was filling sandbags so important? 	Working Together pp. 4-5 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the images and captions that accompany the text. What does the map show us? How does the photograph and caption help your understanding of the text? 	Election Day pp. 6-7 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read aloud the first two pages of the selection together, alternating paragraphs. Ask your child to explain the main idea of paragraph 3? (how candidates campaign) Ask: <i>What key details support the main idea?</i> (give speeches; run ads; meet voters) 	Election Day pp. 8-9 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish reading aloud the selection together, alternating paragraphs. Ask your child to explain the sequence of how African Americans, women, and young people gained the right to vote. 	Robert's Rules of Order p. 10 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get scrap paper and pencils. Set a timer for sixty seconds and see who can find and list the most short vowel sounds on the page.
Week 2	It Is My Right! pp. 12-13 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud the first two pages of the selection. Point to the word suffragists in paragraph 2 and ask your child to look for clues about what that word means. Then take turns making up sentences using the term. 	It Is My Right! pp. 14-17 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read aloud the next four pages together, alternating paragraphs. Ask your child to explain why Rosa Parks refused to move her seat. Discuss how Rosa Parks's actions inspired others. 	It Is My Right! pp. 18-19 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to complete the selection. Ask your child to explain how Cesar Chavez used peaceful protest to bring about change. Ask: <i>What other examples of peaceful protest are mentioned in this text?</i> 	It Is My Right! pp. 12-19 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your child to explain the overall message of this text. Ask: <i>How does each section support this message?</i> Ask: <i>What do all these leaders have in common?</i> 	Thomas Paine p. 20 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud the selection. Work together to find different spelling combinations that result in long a sounds. (became, swayed, raised, vain)
Week 3	Winning the Right to Vote pp. 22-24 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud paragraphs 1-7 of the text. It took many years and many laws to ensure the right to vote for African Americans. Ask: <i>What details in the text support this idea?</i> 	Winning the Right to Vote pp. 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud paragraphs 8-11 of the text. After reading, ask your child to explain the sequence of events that led to women's right to vote. 	Winning the Right to Vote pp. 26-29 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish reading aloud the selection together, alternating paragraphs. Point to the word citizens in paragraph 12. Ask your child to find clues that tell what the word citizen means. Discuss how state laws prevented some American citizens from voting. 	Winning the Right to Vote pp. 22-29 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask your child to explain how time lines and primary source photographs help him or her understand the text. 	One Nation from Many p. 30 <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite your child to read aloud the selection. Then search for different spelling combinations that result in long e and long o sounds. (league, told)

Student Portal

There is an online student portal available so that students can log on and access materials from home using the internet.

Look for more information on this to be coming home soon.

