

# Introduction

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## Curriculum Overview

Congratulations on choosing an outstanding fifth-grade curriculum! This curriculum allows you and your student the opportunity to read and respond to texts from a wide variety of genres and practice correct usage of the English language. The student use skills learned to create wonderful writings that are sure to delight anyone who reads them. One of the true advantages in selecting Texas Tech University K-12 is that you will have an all-encompassing curriculum written according to state standards by Texas-certified educators.

This course is completed entirely online in Blackboard using the PDF **Unit Lessons** and **Worksheets** documents, along with the textbooks.

For each Unit assessment, the student will download and complete PDF **Unit Test** pages, then scan or take a digital photograph of the completed pages showing his or her work. Combine the images into a single PDF (see **Requirements for Creating PDFs** on the course home page) and upload the file for grading as instructed in the assignment.

## English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 5

### Reading

Reading is an important, life-long skill that we all use daily. This curriculum reviews key concepts with which your student is already familiar. It also introduces vital new concepts to help the student become a more proficient reader. As the student reads, we hope to emphasize the entertainment and joy in reading. We also want your student to gain an appreciation for literature and to develop a strong desire to read for a variety of purposes.

The textbook for this course, *Texas Treasures, Grade 5*, contains wonderful stories, both fiction and nonfiction, full of rich vocabulary and interesting characters. Each week you and your student will focus on specific reading skills. At the end of each story, the student will “meet” the authors and illustrators who created these beautiful writings and pictures. Your student will also be asked to select age-appropriate books to read as part of some lessons.

Your student should read independently for at least 30 minutes each day from a book of his or her choice. Take the student to the local library and let him or her check out age-appropriate books in a variety of genres. Encourage the student to choose books that go along with the genres from which you are reading during instruction time. Allow the student to read independently; silently and out loud, and to be read to by you or another fluent reader. Make sure the person reading aloud uses emotion in his or her voice while reading to the student. Hearing the emotions with which you read will help bring the characters and storylines to life. It will help to strengthen the student’s own reading skills as he or she listens to you. Encourage the student to ask

questions as he or she reads or is read to and allow the student to write summaries and comprehension questions from the stories.

Emphasize that you can NEVER read too much!

## Vocabulary

Your student will be reading many unfamiliar words during this course. He or she will learn to decode these words and to use word parts to figure out the meanings of these words. Strategies such as using affixes (prefixes and suffixes) and context clues should be used. The student should learn the correct pronunciation and the definition of these words, as well as be able to use them correctly in a sentence. You will use the **Define/Example/Ask** routine.

- **Define:** Define the words using language the student easily understands. (Example: The word *frigid* means *bitterly cold*.)
- **Example:** Give an example of how the word is used in a sentence, again using language the student easily understands. (Example: *The weather in the Arctic is frigid; therefore, plants must be very sturdy to survive its harsh conditions.*)
- **Ask:** Finally, ask the student a question that will help him or her connect the word to known words. Encourage the student to use the word in a sentence. (Example: *When have you ever been exposed to frigid weather? What word(s) can you think of that are synonyms for the word frigid? What are some antonyms?*)

It is important to have the student pronounce the words several times to ensure that he or she understands how to say them correctly and to use them in a sentence.

## Grammar and Composition

The Grammar and Composition lessons are very teacher-guided, much like the reading lessons. You will be modeling new skills and strategies for the student. Then, the student will have the opportunity to practice and apply those skills and strategies to all content areas. The interaction between you and the student is very important. It will aid in the student's development of oral language and social skills and lead to greater achievements, increased self-esteem, and higher motivation for learning.

Just as it is imperative that children read every day, it is also essential that they spend time writing every day. Students who are given the opportunity and encouragement to write every day will become more fluent writers, readers, spellers, and speakers as their skills improve and comfort with words grows.

Your student will practice writing paragraphs, poems, and complete essays. You should encourage the student to use vocabulary and spelling words learned in daily lessons to expand writings and make them more interesting. The student will keep a Writer's Journal. Encourage the student to write in it not only for assignments but whenever he or she has an idea, comes upon a new word or phrase he or she may want to use in his or her writing, or any other time he or she wishes. The Writer's Journal can also be used to write responses to readings to help your student develop a better understanding of the text.

The student should always have access to a dictionary and thesaurus; therefore, you will see both listed in each day’s material list.

### Phonics/Spelling and Handwriting

A new set of spelling words will be introduced each week. The spelling lists are developed around phonics elements, spelling patterns, and high frequency words. The lists and lessons are designed to help students spell any word, not just the words on the spelling lists. The words are organized according to patterns they remember and ideas to which they can relate. There are daily opportunities for independent practice, as well as independent activities for integrating writing and language arts. Cumulative, systematic review and assessment are regular parts of weekly instruction, so the words your student learns weekly will still be with him or her next week, next month, and next year. The student will be tested on the spelling words each week. Spelling activities develop writing skills to help the student become a successful writer as well as a good speller. Encourage the student to use these words in his or her daily writings.

Students in fifth grade should be proficient in cursive handwriting. The daily handwriting activity will provide additional practice as students continue to develop and perfect this skill. A handwriting grade will be part of the student’s composition grade.

In order to help the student start off strong in writing, create and display a chart somewhere in his or her learning area with a list of words that are NOT to be used, along with alternate words to use instead. Below is a list of “tired” words along with possible substitutions.

Tired Verbs	Strong Verbs
sat	plopped (down)
ran	scrambled; jogged; hustled
jump	leap; bound; spring
said	uttered; declared; stated; whispered; shouted; roared
got	earned; received
went	left; departed; exited; traveled
walked	skipped; meandered; sauntered; strolled; ambled
laugh	giggle; chuckle; snicker
saw	witnessed; observed; noticed; spotted

Tired Adjectives	Strong Adjectives
pretty	gorgeous
big	gigantic; humongous
little	petite; miniature
happy	content; joyful; blissful; cheerful
sad	gloomy; depressed; miserable
mad	angry; upset; livid
good	superior; excellent; first-rate
nice	pleasant; polite; agreeable
funny	humorous; hilarious; amusing; comical

## Proofreading Marks

Teach your student the proofreading marks shown below. Instruct the student to write them on the inside cover of the Writer’s Journal. Use these marks when you proofread the student’s writings. You might also want to post a chart showing these marks in the student’s work area or classroom for him or her to see and use.

### Proofreading Marks

Editor’s Mark	Meaning	Example
≡	Capitalize.	<u>d</u> avid gobbled up the grapes.
/	Make it lower case.	My mother hugged <del>Me</del> when I came <del>H</del> ome.
⊙	Add a period.	The clouds danced in the sky⊙
sp	This is a spelling mistake.	<sup>sp</sup> I laffed at the story.
∩	Reverse the words or letters.	How(you/are)?
∧	Add a word.	Would you <sup>please</sup> ∧ pass the pizza?
∧,	Add a comma.	I have two cats, two dogs,∧ and a goldfish.
∩	Delete (get rid of) something.	Will you call <del>call</del> me on the phone tonight?

## Unit Overview

The theme for Unit 4 is “Team Up to Survive.” The student will learn about teaming up to work together in a difficult situation. The student will read, write, and listen about extreme conditions, teams on the job, helping out, family teams, and camping out. He or she will apply comprehension skills that good readers use while developing writing skills.

The theme for Unit 5 is “The American West.” The student will learn about the American West and how it changed during the country’s early years. The student will read, write, and listen about the role the American West played in the history of the United States. He or she will learn about the Spanish in the early West, cowboys, explorations, tall tales, and the right to vote. He or she will apply comprehension skills that good readers use while developing writing skills.

The theme for Unit 6 is “Changes.” The student will learn about how certain events that take place in our lives can change our way of thinking. The student will read, write, and listen about overcoming obstacles, growing up, improving lives, fitting in, and taking a chance. He or she will apply comprehension skills that good readers use while developing writing skills.

## Course Objectives

The English Language Arts curriculum covers all of the [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills \(TEKS\)](#) for fifth grade. At the end of this course, the student should be able to master the following:

- **Reading/Fluency.** Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to read aloud grade-level stories with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension.
- **Reading/Vocabulary Development.** Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes;
  - ◇ use context (e.g., in-sentence restatement) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple-meaning words;
  - ◇ produce analogies with known antonyms and synonyms;
  - ◇ identify and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and other sayings; and
  - ◇ use a dictionary, a glossary, or a thesaurus (printed or electronic) to determine the meanings, syllabication, pronunciations, alternate word choices, and parts of speech of words.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre.** Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ compare and contrast the themes or moral lessons of several works of fiction from various cultures;
  - ◇ describe the phenomena explained in origin myths from various cultures; and
  - ◇ explain the effect of a historical event or movement on the theme of a work of literature.

- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Poetry.** Students understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of poetry and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze how poets use sound effects (e.g., alliteration, internal rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme) to reinforce meaning in poems.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama.** Students understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the similarities and differences between an original text and its dramatic adaptation.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction.** Students understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ describe incidents that advance the story or novel, explaining how each incident gives rise to or foreshadows future events;
  - ◇ explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts; and
  - ◇ explain different forms of third-person points of view in stories.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Literary Nonfiction.** Students understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to identify the literary language and devices used in biographies and autobiographies, including how authors present major events in a person’s life.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Sensory Language.** Students understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about how an author’s sensory language creates imagery in literary text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to evaluate the impact of sensory details, imagery, and figurative language in literary text.
- **Reading/Comprehension of Text/Independent Reading.** Students read independently for sustained periods of time and produce evidence of their reading. Students are expected to read independently for a sustained period of time and summarize or paraphrase what the reading was about, maintaining meaning and logical order (e.g., generate a reading log or journal; participate in book talks).
- **Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History.** Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the author’s purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to draw conclusions from the information presented by an author and evaluate how well the author’s purpose was achieved.

- **Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text.** Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ summarize the main ideas and supporting details in a text in ways that maintain meaning and logical order;
  - ◇ determine the facts in text and verify them through established methods;
  - ◇ analyze how the organizational pattern of a text (e.g., cause-and-effect, compare-and-contrast, sequential order, logical order, classification schemes) influences the relationships among the ideas;
  - ◇ use multiple text features and graphics to gain an overview of the contents of text and to locate information; and
  - ◇ synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.
  
- **Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Persuasive Text.** Students analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusions about persuasive text and provide evidence from text to support their analysis. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ identify the author’s viewpoint or position and explain the basic relationships among ideas (e.g., parallelism, comparison, causality) in the argument; and
  - ◇ recognize exaggerated, contradictory, or misleading statements in text.
  
- **Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Texts.** Students understand how to glean and use information in procedural texts and documents. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ interpret details from procedural text to complete a task, solve a problem, or perform procedures; and
  - ◇ interpret factual or quantitative information presented in maps, charts, illustrations, graphs, timelines, tables, and diagrams.
  
- **Reading/Media Literacy.** Students use comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ explain how messages conveyed in various forms of media are presented differently (e.g., documentaries, online information, televised news);
  - ◇ consider the difference in techniques used in media (e.g., commercials, documentaries, news);
  - ◇ identify the point of view of media presentations; and
  - ◇ analyze various digital media venues for levels of formality and informality.

- **Writing/Writing Process.** Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea;
  - ◇ develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare-contrast) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing;
  - ◇ revise drafts to clarify meaning, enhance style, include simple and compound sentences, and improve transitions by adding, deleting, combining, and rearranging sentences or larger units of text after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed;
  - ◇ edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and
  - ◇ revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.
  
- **Writing/Literary Texts.** Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ write imaginative stories that include:
    - ◆ a clearly defined focus, plot, and point of view;
    - ◆ a specific, believable setting created through the use of sensory details; and
    - ◆ dialogue that develops the story; and
  - ◇ write poems using:
    - ◆ poetic techniques (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia);
    - ◆ figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors); and
    - ◆ graphic elements (e.g., capital letters, line length).
  
- **Writing.** Students write about their own experiences. Students are expected to write a personal narrative that conveys thoughts and feelings about an experience.
  
- **Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts.** Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ create multi-paragraph essays to convey information about the topic that:
    - ◆ present effective introductions and concluding paragraphs;
    - ◆ guide and inform the reader’s understanding of key ideas and evidence;
    - ◆ include specific facts, details, and examples in an appropriately organized structure; and
    - ◆ use a variety of sentence structures and transitions to link paragraphs; and

- ◇ write formal and informal letters that convey ideas, include important information, demonstrate a sense of closure, and use appropriate conventions (e.g., date, salutation, closing); and
  - ◇ write responses to literary or expository texts and provide evidence from the text to demonstrate understanding.
- **Writing/Persuasive Texts.** Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write persuasive essays for appropriate audiences that establish a position and include sound reasoning, detailed and relevant evidence, and consideration of alternatives.
  - **Oral and Written Conventions/Conventions.** Students understand the function of and use the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
    - ◇ use and understand the function of the following parts of speech in the context of reading, writing, and speaking:
      - ◆ verbs (irregular verbs and active voice);
      - ◆ collective nouns (e.g., *class, public*);
      - ◆ adjectives (e.g., descriptive, including origins: *French windows, American cars*) and their comparative and superlative forms (e.g., *good, better, best*);
      - ◆ adverbs (e.g., frequency: *usually, sometimes*; intensity: *almost, a lot*);
      - ◆ prepositions and prepositional phrases to convey location, time, direction, or to provide details;
      - ◆ indefinite pronouns (e.g., *all, both, nothing, anything*);
      - ◆ subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *while, because, although, if*); and
      - ◆ transitional words (e.g., *also, therefore*);
    - ◇ use the complete subject and the complete predicate in a sentence; and
    - ◇ use complete simple and compound sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.
  - **Oral and Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation.** Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions. Students are expected to:
    - ◇ use capitalization for:
      - ◆ abbreviations;
      - ◆ initials and acronyms; and
      - ◆ organizations;
    - ◇ recognize and use punctuation marks including:
      - ◆ commas in compound sentences; and
      - ◆ proper punctuation and spacing for quotations; and

- ◇ use proper mechanics including italics and underlining for titles and emphasis.
- **Oral and Written Conventions/Spelling.** Students spell correctly. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ spell words with more advanced orthographic patterns and rules:
    - ◆ consonant changes (e.g., /t/ to/sh/ in *select, selection*; /k/ to/sh/ in *music, musician*);
    - ◆ vowel changes (e.g., long to short in *crime, criminal*; long to schwa in *define, definition*; short to schwa in *legality, legal*); and
    - ◆ silent and sounded consonants (e.g., *haste, hasten*; *sign, signal*; *condemn, condemnation*);
  - ◇ spell words with:
    - ◆ Greek roots (e.g., *tele, photo, graph, meter*);
    - ◆ Latin roots (e.g., *spec, scribe, rupt, port, ject, dict*);
    - ◆ Greek suffixes (e.g., *-ology, -phobia, -ism, -ist*); and
    - ◆ Latin derived suffixes (e.g., *-able, -ible; -ance, -ence*);
  - ◇ differentiate between commonly confused terms (e.g., *its, it's; affect, effect*);
  - ◇ use spelling patterns and rules and print and electronic resources to determine and check correct spellings; and
  - ◇ know how to use the spell-check function in word processing while understanding its limitations.
- **Research/Research Plan.** Students ask open-ended research questions and develop a plan for answering them. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ brainstorm, consult with others, decide upon a topic, and formulate open-ended questions to address the major research topic; and
  - ◇ generate a research plan for gathering relevant information about the major research question.
- **Research/Gathering Sources.** Students determine, locate, and explore the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically record the information they gather. Students are expected to:
  - ◇ follow the research plan to collect data from a range of print and electronic resources (e.g., reference texts, periodicals, web pages, online sources) and data from experts;
  - ◇ differentiate between primary and secondary sources;
  - ◇ record data, utilizing available technology (e.g., word processors) in order to see the relationships between ideas, and convert graphic/visual data (e.g., charts, diagrams, timelines) into written notes;

- ◇ identify the source of notes (e.g., author, title, page number) and record bibliographic information concerning those sources according to a standard format; and
  - ◇ differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism and identify the importance of citing valid and reliable sources.
- **Research/Synthesizing Information.** Students clarify research questions and evaluate and synthesize collected information. Students are expected to:
    - ◇ refine the major research question, if necessary, guided by the answers to a secondary set of questions; and
    - ◇ evaluate the relevance, validity, and reliability of sources for the research.
  - **Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas.** Students organize and present their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience. Students are expected to synthesize the research into a written or an oral presentation that:
    - ◇ compiles important information from multiple sources;
    - ◇ develops a topic sentence, summarizes findings, and uses evidence to support conclusions;
    - ◇ presents the findings in a consistent format; and
    - ◇ uses quotations to support ideas and an appropriate form of documentation to acknowledge sources (e.g., bibliography, works cited).
  - **Listening and Speaking/Listening.** Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to:
    - ◇ listen to and interpret a speaker’s messages (both verbal and nonverbal) and ask questions to clarify the speaker’s purpose or perspective;
    - ◇ follow, restate, and give oral instructions that include multiple action steps; and
    - ◇ determine both main and supporting ideas in the speaker’s message.
  - **Listening and Speaking/Speaking.** Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to give organized presentations employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, natural gestures, and conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively.
  - **Listening and Speaking/Teamwork.** Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in student-led discussions by eliciting and considering suggestions from other group members and by identifying points of agreement and disagreement.

*Source: The provisions of this §110.16 adopted to be effective September 4, 2008, 33 TexReg 7162.*



# Teaching Handwriting

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Students at Texas Tech University K-12 begin cursive writing at the beginning of third grade and continue throughout their educational careers. Because the cursive style of handwriting connects letters, rather than forming letters individually as in manuscript, cursive handwriting increases the speed at which students can write. This skill promotes accuracy and time efficiency when taking notes in high school or college courses.

Teaching handwriting requires patience on the part of the teacher and the student. Fine motor skills do not develop at a uniform rate in all children. The teacher should choose reasonable expectations and provide daily practice. Your child may not be able to form the letters perfectly in the beginning lessons, but will show progress with continued practice and encouragement. Keep handwriting sessions short to prevent fatigue and frustration. Feel free to tailor the worksheets to your student. If the student shows signs of fatigue, you may reduce the number of times the student is required to write each letter. Always supervise writing sessions to make sure your student is establishing proper writing habits and letter formations. Give frequent praise for letters that are well written and have your student erase and rewrite letters that are not formed correctly. It is very difficult to undo bad writing habits; therefore, it is well worth the effort to make sure the student learns the proper writing habits in the beginning.

The first step in teaching writing is to make sure the student is sitting in the proper position. Provide a flat surface on which the student's arms can rest comfortably. The student should sit up straight with the paper placed on the table parallel to the right forearm for the right-handed student and parallel to the left forearm for the left-handed student. The hand opposite to the writing hand should hold the paper in place. The pencil should be held with the thumb and first two fingers about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch from the pencil lead with the hand slightly arched over the paper. Check to make sure your student does not grip the pencil too tightly because too much tension will be tiresome and painful.

It is recommended that the teacher adhere closely to the formation of the letters as demonstrated in the Cursive Alphabet Chart on the next page.

Your child should be using cursive in all of his or her writing assignments. This expectation will continue from the second semester of Grade 3 throughout the later grades.

Even though we live in a world filled with communication technology, legible handwriting is still an important skill. Young students are often eager to learn this new skill, but are sometimes quickly overwhelmed if they do not have the guidance of an understanding teacher. Every effort should be made to make this new experience of learning to write letters and words as enjoyable as possible.



# Traditional Cursive

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff

Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll

Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww

Xx Yy Zz



# Help Your Child Learn to Write Well

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*This is a resource courtesy of the United States Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement that parents can use to help their children learn how to write. Included are helpful hints and tips, and pointers for parents so their children can look at the world with an eye for expression and thought through writing.*

**American children must be ready to learn from the first day of school. And of course, preparing children for school is a historic responsibility of parents.**

Should you help your child with writing?

Yes, if you want your child to:

- do well in school
- enjoy self-expression
- become more self-reliant

You know how important writing will be to your child's life. It will be important from first-grade through college and throughout adulthood.

Writing is:

## **Practical.**

Most of us make lists, jot down reminders, and write notes and instructions at least occasionally.

## **Job-Related.**

Professional and white-collar workers write frequently — preparing memos, letters, briefing papers, sales reports, articles, research reports, proposals, and the like. Most workers do *some* writing on the job.

## **Stimulating.**

Writing helps to provoke thoughts and to organize them logically and concisely.

## **Social.**

Most of us write thank-you notes and letters to friends at least now and then.

## Therapeutic.

It can be helpful to express feelings in writing that cannot be expressed so easily by speaking.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) suggests that you help your child with writing. OERI believes you, a parent, can make a big difference. You can use helping strategies that are simple and fun. You can use them to help your child learn to write well — and to enjoy doing it! This article tells you how.

## Things to Know

Writing is more than putting words on paper. It's a final stage in the complex process of communicating that begins with *thinking*. Writing is an especially important stage in communication, the intent being to leave no room for doubt. Has any country ratified a verbal treaty?

One of the first means of communication for your child is through drawing. Do encourage the child to draw and to discuss his/her drawings. Ask questions: What is the boy doing? Does the house look like ours? Can you tell a story about this picture?

Most children's basic speech patterns are formed by the time they enter school. By that time children speak clearly, recognize most letters of the alphabet, and may try to write. Show an interest in, and ask questions about, the things your child says, draws, and may try to write.

Writing well requires:

- **Clear thinking.** Sometimes the child needs to have his/her memory refreshed about a past event in order to write about it.
- **Sufficient time.** Children may have “stories in their heads” but need time to think them through and write them down. School class periods are often not long enough.
- **Reading.** Reading can stimulate a child to write about his/her own family or school life. If your child reads good books, he/she will be a better writer.
- **A Meaningful Task.** A child needs meaningful, not artificial, writing tasks. You'll find suggestions for such tasks in the section “Things To Do.”
- **Interest.** All the time in the world won't help if there is nothing to write, nothing to say. Some of the reasons for writing include sending messages, keeping records, expressing feelings, or relaying information.
- **Practice.** And more practice.
- **Revising.** Students need experience in revising their work—i.e., seeing what they can do to make it clearer, more descriptive, more concise, etc.

## Pointers for Parents

In helping your child to learn to write well, remember that your goal is to make writing easier and more enjoyable.

**Provide a place.** It's important for a child to have a good place to write — a desk or table with a smooth, flat surface and good lighting.

**Have the materials.** Provide plenty of paper — lined and unlined — and things to write with, including pencils, pens, and crayons.

**Allow time.** Help your child spend time thinking about a writing project or exercise. Good writers do a great deal of thinking. Your child may dawdle, sharpen a pencil, get papers ready, or look up the spelling of a word. Be patient — your child may be thinking.

**Respond.** Do respond to the ideas your child expresses verbally or in writing. Make it clear that you are interested in the true function of writing, which is to convey ideas. This means focusing on *what* the child has written, not *how* it was written. It's usually wise to ignore minor errors, particularly at the stage when your child is just getting ideas together.

**Don't you write it!** Don't write a paper for your child that will be turned in as his/her work. Never rewrite a child's work. Meeting a writing deadline, taking responsibility for the finished product, and feeling ownership of it are important parts of writing well.

**Praise.** Take a positive approach and say something good about your child's writing. Is it accurate? Descriptive? Thoughtful? Interesting? Does it say something?

## Things To Do

**Make it real.** Your child needs to do real writing. It's more important for the child to write a letter to a relative than it is to write a one-line note on a greeting card. Encourage the child to write to relatives and friends. Perhaps your child would enjoy corresponding with a pen pal.

**Suggest note-taking.** Encourage your child to take notes on trips or outings and to describe what he/she saw. This could include a description of nature walks, a boat ride, a car trip, or other events that lend themselves to note-taking.

**Brainstorm.** Talk with your child as much as possible about his/her impressions and encourage the child to describe people and events to you. If the child's description is especially accurate and colorful, say so.

**Encourage keeping a journal.** This is excellent writing practice as well as a good outlet for venting feelings. Encourage your child to write about things that happen at home and school, about people he/she likes or dislikes and why, things to remember or things the child wants to do. Especially encourage your child to write about personal feelings — pleasures as well as

disappointments. If the child wants to share the journal with you, read the entries and discuss them — especially the child’s ideas and perceptions.

**Write together.** Have your child help you with letters, even such routine ones as ordering items from an advertisement or writing to a business firm. This helps the child to see firsthand that writing is important to adults and truly useful.

**Use games.** There are numerous games and puzzles that help a child to increase vocabulary and make the child more fluent in speaking and writing. Remember, building a vocabulary builds confidence. Try crossword puzzles, word games, anagrams, and cryptograms designed especially for children. Flash cards are good, too, and they’re easy to make at home.

**Suggest making lists.** Most children like to make lists just as they like to count. Encourage this. Making lists is good practice and helps a child to become more organized. Boys and girls might make lists of their records, tapes, baseball cards, dolls, furniture in a room, etc. They could include items they want. It’s also good practice to make lists of things to do, schoolwork, dates for tests, social events, and other reminders.

**Encourage copying.** If a child likes a particular song, suggest learning the words by writing them down — replaying the song on your stereo/tape player or jotting down the words whenever the song is played on a radio program. Also encourage copying favorite poems or quotations from books and plays.

OERI’s strategies for helping children learn to write well are helping youngsters throughout the country. We hope they will help your child.

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# Books and Materials for ELAR 5 this Semester

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## Textbooks:

### ***Texas Treasures: A Reading/Language Arts Program:***

- August, Diane, et al., *Texas Treasures, Grade 5* (2011). Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.  
ISBN 978-0-02-200028-8
- *Texas Treasures Practice Book, Grade 5* (2011). Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.  
ISBN 978-0-02-206206-4
- *Texas Treasures Grammar and Writing Handbook, Grade 5* (2011). Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.  
ISBN 978-0-02-201078-2
- *Texas Treasures Grammar Practice Book, Grade 5* (2011). Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.  
ISBN 978-0-02-206326-9
- *Texas Treasures Phonics and Spelling Practice Book, Grade 5* (2011). Macmillan/McGraw-Hill.  
ISBN 978-0-02-208017-4

## Required Materials:

- colored pencils
- dictionary
- dry erase board and markers
- encyclopedia (optional)
- glue or tape
- highlighter
- markers
- paper: construction, lined notebook
- pencils
- pictures of student at different ages
- poster board or long strip of butcher paper
- stapler
- tape (optional)
- thesaurus
- Writer's Journal (from ELAR 5A, or use new folder with brads or small 3-ring binder with notebook paper)



# Grading Procedures and Unit Assessment Checklists

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Grades are calculated for Unit 4, Unit 5, and Unit 6. The semester grade is an average of the three unit grades. Each unit grade will be a combination of the following:

- Reading Comprehension test
- Grammar test
- Spelling test
- Composition
- A handwriting grade assessed from the spelling test and composition

Each of the five required assessments will count 20%. The Unit 4 and Unit 5 assessments are located in their respective Unit folders in this online course; the Unit 6 assessment is in the Final Exam folder. The composition choices are given on the test.

The Unit assessments will be uploaded to Texas Tech University K-12 to be graded. After the student has finished each test, scan or take a digital photograph of the assigned pages showing his or her work. Combine the images into a **single PDF** (see “Requirements for Creating PDFs” on the course home page). When you save the document, use the naming convention given for each Unit Test as the name of your file. Upload the file according to the instructions given in the assignment.

## Schedule for tests and compositions

### Unit 4, Day 100

The Unit 4 Assessment consists of the following parts:

- Spelling/Phonics Test
  - ◇ 25 spelling words
- Reading Test
  - ◇ 16 multiple-choice questions and 2 short-answer questions
- Grammar Test
  - ◇ 30 questions
- Composition/Handwriting
  - ◇ Three topic choices

## **Unit 5, Day 150**

The Unit 5 Assessment consists of the following parts:

- Spelling/Phonics Test
  - ◇ 25 spelling words
- Reading Test
  - ◇ 16 multiple-choice questions and 2 short-answer questions
- Grammar Test
  - ◇ 25 questions
- Composition/Handwriting
  - ◇ Three topic choices

## **Unit 6, Day 175**

The Unit 6 Assessment consists of the following parts:

- Spelling/Phonics Test
  - ◇ 20 spelling words
- Reading Test
  - ◇ 16 multiple-choice questions and 2 short-answer questions
- Grammar Test
  - ◇ 28 questions
- Composition/Handwriting
  - ◇ Three topic choices