

English in Year 3 and Year 4



In Year 3, your child will build on their work from KS1 to become more independent in both their reading and their writing. Most children will be confident at decoding most words – or will have extra support to help them to do so – and so now they will be able to use their reading to support their learning about other subjects.

They will begin to meet a wider range of writing contexts, including both fiction and non-fiction styles and genres

Speaking and Listening

The Spoken Language objectives are set out for the whole of primary school, and teachers will cover many of them every year as children's spoken language skills develop. In Years 3 and 4, some focuses may include:

- Use discussion and conversation to explore and speculate about new ideas
- Begin to recognise the need to use Standard English in some contexts
- Participation in performances, plays and debates
- Explain thinking and feeling in well-structured statements and responses

Reading skills

- Extend skills of decoding to tackle more complex words, including words with unusual spelling patterns
 - Read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and literary books
 - Recognise some different forms of poetry
 - Use dictionaries to find the meanings of words
 - Become familiar with a range of traditional and fairy tales, including telling some orally
 - Identify words which have been chosen to interest the reader
 - Ask questions about what they have read
 - Draw simple inferences about events in a story, such as how a character might be feeling
 - Make predictions about what might happen next in a story
 - Summarise ideas from several paragraphs of writing
 - Find and record information from non-fiction texts
 - Take part in discussions about reading and books
- Children begin to identify how authors choose words for effect, for example by selecting 'wailed' instead of 'cried', or 'enraged' rather than 'cross'. They may begin to make such choices in their own writing, too.

Writing skills

- Write with joined handwriting, making appropriate join choices
- Spell words that include prefixes and suffixes, such as anticlockwise
- Spell some commonly misspelt words correctly, taken from the Y3/4 list
- Use a dictionary to check spellings
- Use examples of writing to help them to structure their own similar texts
- Plan out sentences orally to select adventurous vocabulary
- Use paragraphs to organise ideas
- Use description and detail to develop characters and settings in story-writing

- Write interesting narratives in stories
- In non-fiction writing, use features such as sub-headings and bullet points
- Review their own work to make improvements, including editing for spelling errors
- Read others' writing and suggest possible improvements
- Read aloud work that they've written to be clearly understood
- Extend sentences using a wider range of conjunctions, including subordinating conjunctions
- Use the present perfect verb tense
- Use nouns and pronouns with care to avoid repetition
- Use conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to add detail about time or cause
- Use fronted adverbials
- Use direct speech, with correct punctuation
- Use possessive apostrophes correctly in regular and irregular plurals, such as children's and boys'

Young children have a tendency to repeat nouns or pronouns, leading to several sentences containing 'He' or 'They'. They can use alternatives to make writing more interesting. For example, alternatives for describing an individual character might include: he, the burglar, Mr Smith, John, the criminal, the villain, etc.

To add information to a sentence about its location, children might use conjunctions ("Although it was still early..."), adverbs ("Early that morning...") or prepositions ("At about six-thirty that morning..."). Often these techniques allow children to write more complex sentences.

Grammar Help

For many parents, the grammatical terminology used in schools may not be familiar. Here are some useful reminders of some of the terms used:

- Present perfect tense: a tense formed using the verb 'have' and a participle, to indicate that an action has been completed at an unspecified time, e.g. The girl has eaten her ice-cream
- Fronted adverbial: a word or phrase which describes the time, place or manner of an action, which is placed at the start of the sentence, e.g. "Before breakfast,..." or "Carrying a heavy bag,..."
- Direct speech: words quoted directly using inverted commas, as opposed to being reported in a sentence

Please see our School Grammar Guide for further advice or please see your child's class teacher.

Parent Tip When children are writing outside of school – or when you are looking at school work with them – why not discuss their choices of vocabulary? Some common words, such as 'went' and 'said' can often be replaced by more specific words that give a sense of the action, such as 'raced' or 'yelled'. You can also take opportunities to look at words like this that appear in books you read with your child, considering how the choice of word affects your understanding of a story. Suggest your child looks up unknown words in a dictionary and finds suitable alternative synonyms in a thesaurus.

Reading in Year 3 – your child will

- apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes to read aloud and understand the meaning of new words they meet
- read a range of fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction texts
- re-tell stories orally
- perform poems and play scripts, showing understanding through intonation and action
- infer characters' feelings through their actions, justifying their inference with evidence
- identify main ideas drawn and summarise these

Children will choose a book at school to take home with them to read. You may write your comments in their Reading journal when you read with them.

Children will also read with their teacher in groups once a week (this is called guided reading). Children are encouraged to begin using Accelerated Reader during Year 3 and will be reading from a variety of colour banded books.

Parent Tip:

We offer a range of books to read at home; these range from a mix of books which your child can read to you, and those which are more complex that they can listen to you read to them – both are important skills. We also have a link to Oxford Owl where there are over 250 free online children's books available. <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/reading-owl/find-a-book/library-page>

Try this at home:

- Keep reading together: even if your child is fluent, you can share stories and talk about themes
- Branch out – children develop favourite authors or themes at this age, but it's good to broaden their choices by offering alternatives. Ask at your local library for ideas for new authors to try
- Word puzzles can be fun – encourage them to try a simple wordsearch

Writing in Year 3 – your child will:

- understand how to spell words with a variety of prefixes and suffixes
- become more confident in joining their handwriting, increasing its legibility and quality
- use a wider range of conjunctions and adverbials (when, before, after, while, so, because)
- start using inverted commas to punctuate speech
- create settings, characters and plot in narratives using a range of descriptive language
- use organisational devices such as bullet points and sub-headings
- assess, edit and improve their writing

We use Nelson Handwriting to teach letter joins in Year 3:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Try this at home:

- Play 'hangman' - it's a simple game but it reinforces spelling and letters
- Let your child send an email or help them find a penpal - typing a letter to a friend or relative is good spelling and keyboard practice
- Make up stories together - gather together some favourite toys and make up an adventure for them (put your child in the story, too)
- Encourage children to develop their vocabulary

Year 3 and 4 Word List

accident(ally)	early	knowledge	purpose
actual(ly)	earth	learn	quarter
address	eight/eighth	length	question
answer	enough	library	recent
appear	exercise	material	regular
arrive	experience	medicine	reign
believe	experiment	mention	remember
bicycle	extreme	minute	sentence
breath	famous	natural	separate
breathe	favourite	naughty	special
build	February	notice	straight
busy/business	forward(s)	occasion(ally)	strange
calendar	fruit	often	strength
caught	grammar	opposite	suppose
centre	group	ordinary	surprise
century	guard	particular	therefore
certain	guide	peculiar	though/although
circle	heard	perhaps	thought
complete	heart	popular	through
consider	height	position	various
continue	history	possess(ion)	weight
decide	imagine	possible	woman/women
describe	increase	potatoes	
different	important	pressure	
difficult	interest	probably	
disappear	island	promise	