

# English / Language Arts

## Second Grade

Before they enter the second grade, most students have already learned the foundational skills of word analysis and have a rudimentary understanding of the elements of narrative text. They are able to spell three- and four letter short vowel words and some common sight words (e.g., *the, have, said, come, give, of*). In addition, they possess basic skills in penmanship and in the use of writing to communicate knowledge and ideas. In the second grade the language arts curriculum and instruction are focused on enhancing word-recognition fluency, extending understanding of dimensions of narrative and informational text, and increasing proficiency in written and oral communication. The second-grade curriculum and instruction should emphasize increasing students' facility with the alphabetic writing system and with larger and more complex units of text and on applying knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to decode unfamiliar words. Further efforts should be made to help students link phonemic awareness of words and knowledge of letter-sounds to build lexicons of familiar words; use knowledge of spelling patterns, prefixes, and suffixes; and increase sight vocabulary through extensive practice. Adequate initial reading instruction requires that students use reading to obtain meaning from print and have frequent opportunities to read. They should extend their repertoire of reading-comprehension strategies for both narrative and informational text with instructional adjuncts (e.g., graphs, diagrams) and more sophisticated techniques for analyzing text (e.g., comparison and contrast). Initial skill in editing and revising text must be developed at this grade level, and increased emphasis should be placed on legible and coherent writing. Students should continue to work on written and oral communication conventions as they develop their awareness of the parts of speech and the correct spelling of more complex word types. Listening comprehension and speaking expectations increase as second graders learn to paraphrase, clarify, explain, and report on information they hear, experience, and read.

### Curriculum Outline

**Below are the Montana content standards for the English / Language Arts and the local Ronan School District #30 standards that further explain the goals of our program:**

#### **MONTANA STANDARDS FOR READING**

*Reading is essential to learning. It is the pathway to lifelong learning and the key to life's opportunities. Reading is a strategic problem-solving process of gaining personal meaning from text. Students use a range of skills and strategies in the process of reading to comprehend what they read. Reading is not only a basic skill, it is an indispensable tool for critical and creative thinking. There are a diversity of purposes for which readers read a variety of materials. Reading literacy allows students to make connections between their own and others' experiences, to inquire systematically, to access, analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate information. Early reading achievement is a reliable predictor of later school performance. Success in school is often determined by student proficiency in reading. Proficient readers monitor and evaluate their own progress in reading.*

**Montana Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, and respond to what they read.**

**Montana Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to read.**

**Montana Standard 3—Students set goals, monitor, and evaluate their progress in reading.**

**Montana Standard 4—Students select, read, and respond to print and nonprint material for a variety of purposes.**

**Montana Standard 5—Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.**

## **MONTANA STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE**

*Literature, a primary vehicle for teaching reading, attempts to show life in its uncertainties, complexities, and imperfections, offering many insights for the reader. Responding to print and nonprint media allows participants to experience vicariously other lives and to measure their own experiences against those of others. The exploration of literature and films encourages students to become critical and reflective thinkers and to develop personal aesthetic standards for print and nonprint media as art forms.*

**Montana Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, analyze and respond to literary works.**

**Montana Standard 2—Students recognize and evaluate how language, literary devices, and elements contribute to the meaning and impact of literary works.**

**Montana Standard 3—Students reflect upon their literary experiences and purposefully select from a range of works.**

**Montana Standard 4—Students interact with print and nonprint literary works from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditional and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders.**

**Montana Standard 5—Students use literary works to enrich personal experience and to connect to the broader world of ideas, concepts and issues.**

### **1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

#### **Decoding and Word Recognition**

- 1.1 Recognize and use knowledge of spelling patterns (e.g., diphthongs, special vowel spellings) when reading.
- 1.2 Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules when reading (e.g., vowel consonant- vowel = *su/per*; vowel consonant/ consonant-vowel = *sup/per*).
- 1.3 Decode two-syllable nonsense words and regular multisyllable words.
- 1.4 Recognize common abbreviations (e.g., *Jan.*, *Sun.*, *Mr.*, *St.*).
- 1.5 Identify and correctly use regular plurals (e.g., -s, -es, -ies) and irregular plurals (e.g., *fly/flies*, *wife/wives*).
- 1.6 Read aloud fluently and accurately and with appropriate intonation and expression.

### **Vocabulary and Concept Development**

- 1.7 Understand and explain common antonyms and synonyms.
- 1.8 Use knowledge of individual words in unknown compound words to predict their meaning.
- 1.9 Know the meaning of simple prefixes and suffixes (e.g., *over-*, *un-*, *-ing*, *-ly*).
- 1.10 Identify simple multiple-meaning words.

## **2.0 Reading Comprehension**

Students read and understand grade-level appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources). The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, by grade four, students read one-half million words annually, including a good representation of grade-level appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade two, students continue to make progress toward this goal.

### **Structural Features of Informational Materials**

- 2.1 Use titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings to locate information in expository text.

### **Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text**

- 2.2 State the purpose in reading (i.e., tell what information is sought).
- 2.3 Use knowledge of the author's purpose(s) to comprehend informational text.
- 2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g., *why*, *what if*, *how*).
- 2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas.
- 2.6 Recognize cause-and-effect relationships in a text.
- 2.7 Interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- 2.8 Follow two-step written instructions.

### **Evaluation of Progress in Reading.**

- 2.9 Set fluency goals for use with SRI sub-category.
- 2.10 Participate in a home/school program to promote value and enjoy books and reading.
- 2.11 Maintain a record of books read at home

## **3.0. Literary Response and Analysis**

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and the literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, characters). The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

### **Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text**

- 3.1 Compare and contrast plots, settings, and characters presented by different authors.
- 3.2 Generate alternative endings to plots and identify the reason or reasons for, and the impact of, the alternatives.
- 3.3 Compare and contrast different versions of the same stories that reflect different cultures.
- 3.4 Identify the use of rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration in poetry.

### **Cultural Reading**

- Read grade appropriate American Indian Text
- Read Text from various cultures and ethnic groups.
- Read texts written by both genders.
- Read about traditional and contemporary viewpoints.
- Listen and discuss.

**Literary works from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditional and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders are to be used.**

## **MONTANA STANDARDS FOR WRITING**

*The standards set in this document represent what research and experience have described as important in the process of writing. Writing is essential to thinking and learning. As a strategic, problem-solving process, writing is a key element of communication and a critical part of comprehension. In addition to being a developmental basic skill, writing is also indispensable to critical, ethical, and creative thinking. Writers use a range of skills and strategies in the process of writing to communicate with diverse audiences and for diverse purposes. Writing proficiency enables individuals to learn, make connections between their own and others' experiences, create meaning, and evaluate information.*

**Montana Standard 1—Students write clearly and effectively.**

**Montana Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.**

**Montana Standard 3—Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.**

**Montana Standard 4—Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.**

**Montana Standard 5—Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to their own writing.**

**Montana Standard 6—Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.**

### **1.0 Writing Strategies**

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

#### **Organization and Focus**

- 1.1 Group related ideas and maintain a consistent focus.

#### **Penmanship**

- 1.2 Create readable documents with legible handwriting.

#### **Research**

1.3 Understand the purposes of various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, atlas).

### **Evaluation and Revision**

1.4 Revise original drafts to improve sequence and provide more descriptive detail.

## **2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)**

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0. Using the writing strategies of grade two outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences:

- a. Move through a logical sequence of events.
- b. Describe the setting, characters, objects, and events in detail.

2.2 Write a friendly letter complete with the date, salutation, body, closing, and signature.

## **1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions**

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

### **Sentence Structure**

1.1 Distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences.

1.2 Recognize and use the correct word order in written sentences.

### **Grammar**

1.3 Identify and correctly use various parts of speech, including nouns and verbs, in writing and speaking.

### **Punctuation**

1.4 Use commas in the greeting and closure of a letter and with dates and items in a series.

1.5 Use quotation marks correctly.

### **Capitalization**

1.6 Capitalize all proper nouns, words at the beginning of sentences and greetings, months and days of the week, and titles and initials of people.

### **Spelling**

1.7 Spell frequently used, irregular words correctly (e.g., *was, were, says, said, who, what, why*).

1.8 Spell basic short-vowel, long-vowel, *r* controlled, and consonant-blend patterns correctly.

### **Evaluation and Reflection of Writing**

Dialog with the teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses in their writing.

## **MONTANA STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

*Oral communication is the bridge to the future. It provides the basis of language development, thinking, gathering information, and shaping how we see ourselves and how others see us. Studies show that over 80 percent of communication is spent in speaking and listening, which lends credence to the belief that teaching these skills is not just desirable, but critical. It is the responsibility of education to ensure that students are prepared for their roles as family members, workers, and citizens through oral communication instruction. The National Communication Association defines*

*speaking as “the uniquely human act or process of transmitting and exchanging information, ideas, and emotions using oral language” while listening is “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages.”*

**Montana Standard 1—Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the communication process.**

**Montana Standard 2—Students distinguish among and use appropriate types of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes.**

**Montana Standard 3—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to speaking and listening.**

**Montana Standard 4—Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.**

## **MONTANA STANDARDS FOR MEDIA LITERACY**

*We have long understood the importance of literacy to becoming productive citizens in a democratic society. In our world of powerful images, sounds and words, students must be media literate. Studies show that students view an average of 3,000 or more hours of television prior to graduation from high school than they spend in class. Media literacy is the tool students need to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms. Students need to understand the ways words, images and sounds influence the way meanings are created and shared in our contemporary global society.*

**Montana Standard 1—Students recognize that media messages are constructed using specific techniques which manipulate sound, image, text and movement to convey meaning.**

**Montana Standard 2—Students distinguish among and use appropriate types of media for a variety of purposes.**

**Montana Standard 3—Students apply knowledge, skills and strategies to design and create media messages.**

**Montana Standard 4—Students identify, analyze and evaluate the impacts of media on individuals and societies.**

### **1.0 Speaking, Listening, and Media Strategies**

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation.

#### **Comprehension**

- 1.1 Determine the purpose or purposes of listening (e.g., to obtain information, to solve problems, for enjoyment).
- 1.2 Ask for clarification and explanation of stories and ideas.
- 1.3 Paraphrase information that has been shared orally by others.
- 1.4 Give and follow three- and four-step oral directions.

### **Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication**

- 1.5 Organize presentations to maintain a clear focus.
- 1.6 Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace for the type of communication (e.g., informal discussion, report to class).
- 1.7 Recount experiences in a logical sequence.
- 1.8 Retell stories, including characters, setting, and plot.
- 1.9 Report on a topic with supportive facts and details.

### **2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)**

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0. Using the speaking strategies of grade two outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

- 2.1 Recount experiences or present stories:
  - a. Move through a logical sequence of events.
  - b. Describe story elements (e.g., characters, plot, setting).
- 2.2 Report on a topic with facts and details, drawing from several sources of information.

### **Media**

Use media to build background knowledge as another avenue of communication.

Use knowledge box clips to gain media information and knowledge.

**Below is a narrative that describes and elaborates best practices research in English Language Arts and is the standard to which we strive.**

## Reading

### **Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development**

#### **Decoding and Word Recognition**

At the *beginning* of the second grade, students should be able to (1) generate the sounds for all consonants, consonant blends, and long and short vowels; (2) recognize common sight words; and (3) process word families and inflectional endings of words.

Development of word-analysis and word-recognition skills in the second grade proceeds systematically, building on first grade skills and extending those fundamental understandings purposefully and interdependently. Instruction should carefully sequence the introduction of new skills and strategies. If students lack proficiency in prerequisite skills, those skills must be taught before more advanced word structures are presented. Early in the second grade, decoding operations are mechanical and not automatic for many learners. During this year students typically make great strides in decoding fluency (Ehri and McCormick 1998). Over the course of the year, they develop fluency through instruction in advanced phonics units (e.g., vowel diphthongs) and in the use of larger orthographic units of text, such as onset and rime. (Onset is the consonant or consonants that come before the first vowel; rime is the remainder of the word beginning with the first vowel [e.g., *h-ill*, *p-ill*] to read words.) Redundancy in letter sounds and orthographic units in words allows students to process words more efficiently. They learn to read phonetically regular words more fluently as they become familiar and facile with chunks of text. *Note:* Students have not merely memorized the larger units but, when necessary, can apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to work their way through the words. Students in the second grade should also continue instruction and practice in learning reliable rules to assist in decoding. For example, learning that an *e* at the end of a word usually causes the medial vowel to be long (or say its name) is a rule that advances word-analysis skills. A primary goal of second-grade word-analysis instruction is to increase systematically students' ability to read words because of their knowledge of more complex spelling patterns. Another essential component of fluency development is the opportunity for students to practice unfamiliar words many times in text, allowing them to use their decoding skills with a high degree of success. Text that students practice should be at their instructional level, with no more than one in ten words read inaccurately.

Advanced instruction in decoding is more effective if it relies on the following principles of design and delivery. Suggested procedures to follow are to:

- Teach the advanced phonic-analysis skills as explicitly as was done for the earlier letter-sound correspondences: first in isolation, then in words and connected text, and, when the students become proficient, in trade books.
- Avoid assuming that learners will automatically transfer skills from one word type to another. When introducing a new letter combination, prefix, or word ending, model each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-combination, prefixes), blending the word and then reading the whole word.
- Separate auditorily and visually similar letter combinations in the instructional sequence (e.g., do not introduce both sounds for *oo* simultaneously; separate *ai*, *au*).
- Sequence words and sentences strategically to incorporate known phonics units (e.g., letter combinations, inflectional endings).

- Ensure that students know the sounds of the individual letters prior to introducing larger orthographic units (e.g., *ill*, *ap*, *ing*).
- Provide initial practice in controlled contexts in which students can apply newly learned skills successfully.
- Offer repeated opportunities for students to read words in contexts where they can apply their advanced phonics skills with a high level of success.
- Use decodable text, if needed, as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the student's ability to read quality trade books.
- Incorporate spelling to reinforce word analysis. After students can read words, provide explicit instruction in spelling, showing students how to map the sounds of letters onto print.
- Make clear the connections between decoding (symbol to sound) and spelling (sound to symbol). At this point students have three powerful tools to facilitate word learning: ability to hear sounds in words, knowledge of the individual letter sounds or letter-sound combinations, and knowledge of the letters. Teach and remind students to rely on those skills and strategies when they encounter unfamiliar words or need to spell a word. However, ensure that students understand that some words are not spelled as they sound. The spelling of those words must be memorized at this stage.
- Teach decoding strategies initially, using words with meanings familiar to students. *Multisyllabic word reading*. As students progress in word-analysis skills, they encounter more complex words, particularly words with more than one syllable.

In the second grade students learn the rules of syllabication. Two strategies aid multisyllabic word recognition—breaking the word into syllables and learning prefixes and suffixes.

*Sight-word reading*. Second-grade word analysis instruction must systematically teach children sight-word recognition of high-frequency words. When sight words (high-frequency irregular words) are being taught, it is important for the teacher to:

1. Select words that have high utility; that is, words that are used frequently in grade-appropriate literature and informational text.
2. Sequence high-frequency irregular words to avoid potential confusion. For example, high-frequency words that are often confused by students should be strategically separated for initial instruction.
3. Limit the number of sight words introduced at one time (five to seven new words).
4. Preteach the sight words prior to reading connected text.
5. Provide a cumulative review of important high-frequency sight words as part of daily reading instruction (two to three minutes).

*Fluency*. The benchmark of fluent readers in the second grade is the ability to read grade-level material aloud and accurately in a manner that sounds like natural speech. The essential questions to be asked: What should second-grade speech sound like? How do we define fluency for second graders? Research studies indicate that students reading at the fiftieth percentile in spring in the second grade read 90 to 100 words per minute correct orally (Hasbrouck and Tindal 1992) and that, on average, they increase their reading fluency approximately 1.46 correct words per minute per week (Fuchs et al. 1993).

### **Vocabulary and Concept Development**

In the second grade curriculum and instruction extend the understanding of concepts and vocabulary in four primary ways:

- Knowledge and use of antonyms and synonyms
- Use of individual words in compounds to predict the meaning

- Use of prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning
- Learning multiple-meaning words

Two emphases in vocabulary development initiated in kindergarten should carry through into the second grade:

- (1) direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text; and
- (2) exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories and informational texts.

Of the new vocabulary skills introduced in the second grade, the use of prefixes and suffixes to aid in word meaning is a skill that students may use frequently as they read more complex and challenging texts. When teaching prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning, teachers should emphasize those that occur with the greatest frequency in second-grade material. Prefixes and suffixes that are most useful in understanding word meaning should be introduced before less useful ones.

In presenting instruction in prefixes and suffixes, the teacher should:

1. Introduce the prefix or suffix in isolation, indicating its meaning and then connecting it in words.
  2. Illustrate the prefix or suffix with multiple examples.
  3. Use examples when the roots are familiar to students (e.g., *remake* and *replay* as opposed to *record* and *recode*) (Cunningham 1998).
  4. Integrate words into sentences and ask students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence.
  5. Review previously introduced words cumulatively.
1. Separate prefixes that appear similar in initial instructional sequences (e.g., *pre*, *pro*).

## Reading

### Reading Comprehension

In the second grade informational text gains greater prominence than before as students learn to (1) use conventions of informational text (e.g., titles, chapter headings) to locate important information; (2) ask clarifying questions; and (3) interpret information from graphs, diagrams, and charts. Concurrently, students learn the importance of reading in locating facts and details in narrative and informational text and recognizing cause-and-effect relationships. Given the great number of comprehension skills and strategies to be learned, instruction should be organized in a coherent structure. A question that might be asked here is, Which skills and strategies should be used during prereading, reading, and postreading?

Instruction in reading comprehension is the intentional teaching of information or strategies to increase a student's understanding of what is read. When the second-grade standards are considered in conjunction with the big picture of instruction in reading comprehension, it is important to recognize that such instruction consists of three phases. In the *acquisition phase* the skill or strategy is taught explicitly with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice. This phase may consist of one or more days depending on the skill or strategy being taught. The *focused application phase* should continue across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy. The *strategic integration phase*, occurring over the course of the year, is designed to connect previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text.

Curriculum and instruction should cumulatively build a repertoire of skills and strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. As students begin to develop reading-comprehension skills, effective teachers foster interest and motivation to read and assist students in developing an appreciation of the rewards and joys of reading.

## Reading

### Literary Response and Analysis

In the second grade students work extensively in analyzing the elements of narrative text and comparing and contrasting elements within and among texts. Building on their prior schemata of stories, students read versions of stories written by different authors to gain an understanding of the influence of the writer and the culture. They use the narrative text structure to write brief narratives and retell stories. Emphasis on comprehension is centered on teaching students to analyze narratives, compare and contrast, and generate alternative endings. The connections with the listening, speaking, and writing domains are clear in this strand. Instructional effectiveness and efficiency can be gained by employing inherent connections in content. As students learn to compare and contrast, many will benefit from a structure specifying the dimensions that will be compared and contrasted. The story grammar structure works elegantly in this instance as a tool for prompting information to compare and contrast, organizing information, and grouping related ideas to maintain a consistent focus. This feature will be the focus of the instructional and curricular profile that appears at the end of the second-grade section.

## Writing

### Writing Strategies and Writing Applications

Students become more comfortable and familiar with writing when it is a regular and frequent activity. In the second grade writing progresses to narratives in which students move through a logical sequence of events. They learn to write about an experience in the first grade and to write for different audiences and purposes in the second grade. The narrative structure and requirements expand in the second grade multiple paragraphs that integrate knowledge of setting, characters, objectives, and events to develop more complex and complete narratives. In addition, second graders learn an additional text structure, the friendly letter, as a form of written communication. Applications of narrative and letter writing depend on well-developed writing strategies, including grouping of related ideas, facility with various stages of writing, and legible handwriting. In the second grade students focus on learning to revise text to improve sequence and increase descriptive detail. Concurrently, they require instruction in distinguishing between complete and incomplete sentences, extending grammatical proficiency with parts of speech, applying correct capitalization and punctuation, and expanding their repertoire of correctly spelled words. Spelling instruction progresses to include inflected endings and irregular or exception words (e.g., *said*, *who*, *what*, *why*). The instructional guidelines for systematic instruction introduced in the first grade are equally important in the second grade. They consist of small sets of words that are introduced explicitly, reviewed frequently, and integrated into writing exercises.

The research says that writing strategies and applications should be conceived as discrete skills that learners apply. Alternatively, and more effectively, the individual skills can be conceptualized in strands. Within a single writing lesson, instruction might occur along each of the major strands in writing strategies (e.g., organization, penmanship, revision) and written and oral English conventions (e.g., sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). Instruction in each strand can address the specific dimensions of grammar and punctuation appropriate to the individual student.

In instruction according to strands, incremental and progressive skills and strategies within and across a range of strands related to a larger domain are introduced and learned to provide a precise, coherent course of study. Such instruction, both specific and related, which focuses on specific skills and strategies and incorporates them into exercises once learners are proficient with individual skills, is especially appropriate for writing. Features of this instruction are as follows:

1. Dimensions of a complex task are analyzed, and the strands are identified (e.g., organization, grammar, sentence structure, and stages of writing).
2. Specific objectives within a strand are identified and sequenced individually.
3. Cross-strand skills are integrated once learners are proficient in individual strand skills and strategies.
4. Previously taught skills and strategies are reviewed cumulatively.
5. The instructional analysis of the content and proficiency of the learner will prescribe the length of the instructional sequence.

## Listening and Speaking

### Listening and Speaking Strategies; Speaking Applications

In the second grade the students' proficiency in speaking and listening expands quantitatively and qualitatively. The students are responsible for comprehending larger amounts of information presented orally (e.g., three- to four-step instructions) and for communicating their ideas with increased attention to detail and substance (e.g., reporting on a topic with supportive facts and details). Speaking strategies are applied in two primary formats—recounting experiences or stories and reporting on a topic with facts and details.

Narrative experiences or stories and reports, which are the focus of second grade instruction, have identifiable and generalizable structures taught in reading and writing and can be used to communicate ideas orally. Although students may be quite facile in identifying the common elements of stories by the second grade, identifying or recognizing is a simpler task in most cases than generating and producing the elements of text in oral reports.

Instruction to prepare students to recall stories or experiences or to report on a topic should proceed from (1) the reading of text for which students know the elements (e.g., characters, setting, problem, important events, resolution to the problem, conclusion); to (2) the identification of those elements in stories and topics; and (3) the production or generation of the elements. Students should be introduced to the simple strategy of organizing both narrative and expository texts chronologically. That type of organization is particularly applicable to language arts activities that reinforce the history–social science standards for this grade level. In addition to understanding chronological organization, students can build on the *who, what, when, where, and how* strategy learned in the first grade as another way of organizing oral and written communication.

## Content and Instructional Connections

The following activities integrate standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Reinforce the connections between phonemic awareness (hearing the sounds in words), phonological recoding (translating a printed word into its letter-sound correspondences), and translating sounds into print (spelling).
2. Extend the words that students can read (e.g., special vowel spellings, plurals) into their spelling and writing.

3. Incorporate words taken from vocabulary instruction (e.g., synonyms, words with prefixes) into exercises providing systematic opportunities to use words in sentences throughout the day.
4. Incorporate comprehension strategies into other content areas (e.g., reading a science textbook when appropriate) and practice those strategies.
5. Use story grammar elements as a common structure for comprehending, retelling, and composing stories.
6. Select appropriate content standards in science, mathematics, and history–social science to address within the instructional time allotted for instruction in the language arts.

*Prerequisite standards.* **Kindergarten Literary Response and Analysis:**

Identify characters, settings, and important events.

**First-Grade Literary Response and Analysis:** Identify and describe the elements of plot, setting, and characters in a story as well as the story’s beginning, middle, and ending.

1. Identify the major events (plot), settings, and characters of stories.
2. Compare and contrast those elements.

Successful comparison and contrast of story elements depend on the ability to identify the major elements of individual stories. In this standard second graders use the literary elements of stories to identify similarities and differences between and among a wide, varied sampling of children’s literature.

Comparing and contrasting textual elements involve a host of factors that make this task either manageable or extraordinarily difficult. Initial instruction is likely to be most effective and efficient if it adheres to the following guidelines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Begin with a review and practice of identifying story grammar elements (e.g., setting, characters, problems, attempts to solve the problem or sequence of events, and resolution of the problem or conclusion).
2. Support readers’ identification of story grammar elements with a think sheet or story note sheet that outlines the elements students should identify.
3. Select stories with parallel structures that adhere to conventional story lines.
4. Use stories in which elements are explicit and clearly identifiable.
5. Do not proceed to a comparison and contrast analysis until students can identify elements of individual stories reliably. (Provide additional practice if necessary.)
6. Model how to compare and contrast explicitly, focusing on specific elements.
7. Begin with an oral comparison and contrast analysis. Have the students read the same story as a group and use a comparison and contrast version of the story grammar elements to indicate whether elements are the same or different.
8. Include stories in which some elements are comparable and some are different.
9. Begin with shorter stories and proceed to longer ones.
10. Use stories with largely familiar vocabulary. Stories that are not presented orally should be within the readability level of students.
11. Support learners in initial analyses by providing a concrete, overt strategy for comparing and contrasting elements that designates similarities and differences.
12. Provide sufficient practice in both components of instruction: (a) identifying elements; and (b) comparing and contrasting elements between and among stories.

**Progression of Examples for Comparison and Contrast Analysis**

- *First teaching sequence*: two stories, relatively brief, with explicit story grammar elements. Some elements in both stories should be comparable and some should differ (e.g., Peter Rabbit and Curious George are both “curious, mischievous”).
  - *Second teaching sequence*: two stories of moderate length, with explicit story grammar elements. Some elements in both stories should be comparable, and some should differ.
  - *Third teaching sequence*: two or three stories that parallel the reading requirements of second graders. Elements are explicit. *Note*: Each teaching sequence may require several days of instruction and practice for students to become proficient. This sequence is not intended to connote that this range of proficiency can be mastered in three days.
1. Begin the instructional sequence with a review of the elements of an individual story in which the students identify setting, characters, problems, attempts to solve the problem or sequence of events, and resolution of the problem or conclusion. One of the stories should be included in the subsequent comparison and contrast analysis.
  2. Identify explicitly for the students the critical elements; that is, read a section of the story and talk students through the process of identifying individual elements (see the previous description). If the students have difficulty with specific elements, provide further practice with additional stories.
  3. Follow up teacher-directed identification of the elements with guided practice during which the students (as a whole class or in respective reading groups) identify the elements with the teacher’s assistance.
  4. Conclude this segment of instruction with independent practice. Students should use story note sheets or summary sheets to identify the elements of a story.
  5. Model the process of comparing and contrasting story elements by using a structured tool. Walk students through the comparison and contrast process, thinking out loud as you model. (For example, “In *Peter Rabbit* the story takes place in a small garden in the country. In *Curious George* the story takes place in a busy city. The settings of these stories are different.”) Continue modeling through all the elements in the story.
  6. Explain the steps in the strategy: “When you read stories, they often have the same parts or elements. We are going to look at those parts to see how the stories are the same and how they are different.”
  7. Model multiple examples.
  8. Guide students through the process of using the story elements to compare and contrast stories, using questions: “Where do these stories take place? Who are the characters? How are they the same? How are they different?” Provide corrective feedback. In this phase decrease prompts and assign greater responsibility to students.
  9. Test students, using the same text format as in the teaching sequences. Do so immediately after the last teaching example to determine whether the students have acquired the strategy.
  10. If students cannot use the strategy to compare and contrast story elements, analyze their responses to determine (1) whether the difficulties are specific to certain elements or are more generic; or (2) whether the difficulties are specific to certain students. Provide appropriate instruction and practice.
  11. Present additional examples to assess student understanding.

## Meeting Students’ Diverse Needs

### 1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*

- a. Students reading below grade level will require reading selections taken from below-grade-level literature. At this stage the goal is for students to learn the elements of story grammar and the comparison and contrast analysis strategy. This strategy can be

- introduced, discussed, and applied to stories that are read aloud to students. They can then use the analysis strategies with texts they read on their own.
- b. Students with disabilities or learning difficulties may need more extensive instruction in comparison and contrast. Materials should include examples of elements easily identifiable for basic comparison and contrast exercises.
  - c. Students may need scaffolded story sheets that not only identify the story grammar elements, such as setting or resolution, but also define setting—where and when the story takes place; and resolution—how the problem was solved.
  - d. Instructional materials should provide a range of examples to allow more extensive practice.

## 2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners*

- a. Advanced learners who have demonstrated above-gradelevel comprehension skills and who have extensive reading experience may be grouped and given higher-level materials and a more sophisticated analysis of story elements. Regardless of how they are grouped, the teacher should substitute an advanced assignment for the regular lesson.
- b. Advanced students might develop their own stories, orally or in writing, that compare and contrast a given story provided in class. They might compare and contrast two versions of the same story by different authors. Or they might rewrite a portion of a story to illustrate differences. These students may make connections that vary from the expected, given their ability to think creatively and abstractly and to generalize at an age earlier than that of their chronological peers.

## 3. *Students Who Are English Learners*

- a. Through carefully designed instruction students should learn the process of identifying elements of stories and comparing and contrasting those elements. For students whose primary language is not English (English learners), a foremost problem can be the vocabulary used in the stories. The concepts and vocabulary may require more extensive development than is necessary for other students. English learners can be helped to develop vocabulary through preteaching; providing vocabulary instruction; modeling the pronunciation of words; scaffolding (e.g., through summary sheets, visuals, realia, and compare and contrast sheets); and encouraging the students to use the vocabulary from the stories in class discussions and writing assignments. These students should learn more than the meaning of words. To accomplish grade-level objectives, they need to know how to use in their writing the words they have learned. To do so, they must learn the grammatical rules governing the use of words. When teaching words, the teacher should make sure to provide students with numerous examples of sentences containing the words, encourage them to use words in their speech and writing, and provide corrective feedback when appropriate.
- b. English learners may require more extensive instruction in comparison and contrast. Resources should include explicit instruction in words and expressions used to compare and contrast (“In comparison with . . . , *X* is different from *Y* because . . . ; both *X* and *Y* have a similar setting”).
- c. English learners benefit from extensive exposure to narrative models, comparison and contrast analyses, and multiple opportunities to use story elements to compare and contrast stories.
- d. The teacher should select some texts that children of diverse cultures can relate to easily. Whenever possible, the texts should be authentic. Simplified texts should be used only with students with weak proficiency in English. Students who use the simplified texts need intensive English language instruction to enable them to catch up with their peers.

