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### Contact:

Michigan Department of Education  
Office of School Improvement  
Dr. Yvonne Caamal Canul, Director  
(517) 241-3147

[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)



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# A Parent's Guide to ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS  
TO KNOW BY THE END OF  
**FOURTH GRADE**



## Welcome to Our School!

This school year promises to be an exciting time for your child, filled with learning, discovery, and growth. It is also a time to share a new guide the Michigan Department of Education has developed for you. *A Parent's Guide to Grade Level Content Expectations* outlines the types of literacy and mathematics skills students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade.

Please feel free to share this guide with your family and friends. Use it when you talk with your child's teacher. Ask what *you* can do to support learning in the classroom and reinforce learning at home. You can find more ideas and tools to help you stay involved in your child's education at [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde).

We value and share your commitment to your child's education. We look forward to working together to help your child achieve and succeed.

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## **A Parent's Guide to Grade Level Content Expectations**

### **Michigan Sets High Academic Standard—for ALL**

This booklet is a part of Michigan's Mathematics and English Language Arts Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE). It is just one in a series of tools available for schools and families. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will provide similar booklets for families of children in kindergarten through eighth grade by June, 2005.

Teacher versions of the Grade Level Content Expectations are finished for grades Kindergarten through eight. They state in clear and measurable terms what students in each grade are expected to know and be able to do. They also guide the design of the state's grade level MEAP tests required in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) legislation.

Educators and classroom teachers from Michigan school districts have been involved in the development and/or review of Michigan's GLCE. The expectations were designed to ensure that students receive seamless instruction, from one grade to the next, leaving no gaps in any child's education. More importantly, they set high expectations in literacy and mathematics so we can better prepare all K-12 students for the challenges they will face in a global 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To learn more about the Michigan Curriculum Framework, visit [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde) and click on "**K-12 Curriculum.**"

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**Fourth Grade English Language Arts (ELA)** is more than just reading and writing. It includes skills like speaking, listening, and viewing as well. ELA offers us a way to communicate. Through ELA, your child can apply what s/he learns to solve real problems at home, at school and in the community.



### Glossary Terms

Words that have asterisks (\*) are defined in the Glossary located in the back of this booklet.

*By the end of the Fourth Grade, your child should know and be able to do the following:*

## READING

### Word Recognition and Word Study

- ❑ Easily recognize familiar fourth grade words.
- ❑ Steadily increase the number of words that can be read fluently\* throughout the year.
- ❑ Self correct and use fix-up strategies if a word does not sound right or make sense while reading.
- ❑ Use strategies to help figure out the meaning of unknown words and phrases.
- ❑ Fluently read fourth grade text and text that increases in difficulty throughout the year.



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## Narrative Text (Fiction)

- ❑ Describe and discuss how the characters have similar experiences in literature from around the world.
- ❑ Identify and describe a variety of genre\* of narrative texts; poetry, myths/legends, fantasy, and adventure.
- ❑ Identify and describe different story elements:
  - what characters do and say
  - who is the hero, villain, narrator
  - what is the problem and solution
  - know point of view\* – first person tells story using *I, me, my*; third person tells story using *he, she, they*
- ❑ Identify how authors/artists use:
  - past (flashback\*) or future (flash forward\*) events to enhance the plot/story or create suspense.
  - metaphor/simile\* to compare characters or actions to other people or things.
- ❑ Show through their discussions, drawings and writing that they know how two or more stories are connected.

## Informational Text (Non-fiction)

- ❑ Identify and describe the characteristics of informational text, such as autobiography/biography, personal essay, almanac, or newspaper.
- ❑ Describe patterns found in informational text, such as compare/contrast, state a position and give supporting facts, or state a problem and identify a solution.
- ❑ Explain how authors use indexes, headings, subheadings, notes in the margin, keys\*, legends\*, and bibliographies\* to help readers understand key and supporting ideas.
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## Comprehension

- ❑ Use their own knowledge and experiences of the world to understand new ideas to connect themes\* and ideas when reading texts.
- ❑ Retell, using their own words, information and details from both fiction and non-fiction.
- ❑ Compare and contrast relationships among characters, ideas, and events.
- ❑ Connect and compare a story to their lives, to other stories, and to past events, and to other cultural situations.
- ❑ Classify\* and categorize\* ideas and events within texts.
- ❑ Ask questions while reading to check understanding.
- ❑ Remember and use what is read in other subject areas, such as science and social studies.



## Metacognition\*

- ❑ Know when they need help to understand what they read.
- ❑ Know when they do or do not understand the texts.
- ❑ Use simple strategies to increase understanding of texts, such as rereading.
- ❑ Talk about why the author wrote the text – to tell a story or to give information.
- ❑ Make predictions and draw conclusions while reading.
- ❑ Create mental pictures of characters and events to improve understanding.
- ❑ Ask questions before, during, and after reading.
- ❑ Sort details and events to make charts, lists, and other graphic organizers\*.
- ❑ Use roots words, context clues\*, and word endings to help figure out new words.
- ❑ Discuss understanding of text with teacher and other students.

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## Critical Standards\*

- ❑ Decide and discuss what qualities make a good story.
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## Reading Attitude

- ❑ Be excited about reading and learning how to read.
- ❑ Choose to read and write on his/her own during free time at school and at home.



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### Ways to praise your child...

**You are on the way!**  
**You are doing so well!**  
**This is great work!**

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# WRITING

## Writing Genre



- ❑ Write myth/legend, fantasy, adventure stories that include characters, problem/solution, events in order, and a place/time for the story to happen that relates to a central theme or idea.
- ❑ Write poetry based on reading a variety of grade level poetry.
- ❑ Produce a compare/contrast essay based on a central theme, include supporting ideas, and show a clear sense of organization.
- ❑ Use the steps in the writing process to produce and present a research project using a teacher-approved topic.

## Writing Process

- ❑ Think about the audience and the purpose of their writing before they begin to write.
- ❑ Draft stories using graphic organizers\* to organize thoughts, ideas, and details.
- ❑ Use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary to construct clear, grammatically correct paragraphs.
- ❑ Give specific suggestions to help others improve their writing, such as rearranging paragraphs, connecting main idea to details, using transition words\*.
- ❑ Edit their own writing for errors in grammar, spelling, and sentence structure.



### Study Tip...

**Get organized. Keep all your homework supplies in one place, ready to be used. Try to keep your supplies in a box or other container so that you will have all that you need when you are ready to study.**

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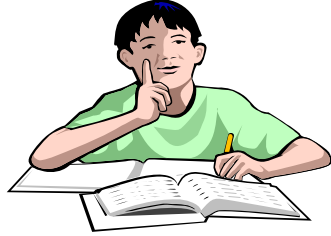
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## Personal Style

- ❑ Develop a style where their personality comes through. In fiction, use strong verbs, metaphors/similes\*, and detailed descriptions. In non-fiction, use accurate details and clear transitions between ideas.

## Grammar and Usage

- ❑ Write complete, simple, and compound sentences using correct capitalization and end punctuation.
- ❑ Use direct and indirect objects\*, prepositional phrases\*, and adjectives.
- ❑ Use common and proper nouns as subjects and objects.
- ❑ Use pronouns to refer to proper nouns.
- ❑ Use apostrophes in contractions and commas to set off words, phrases, and dialogue.
- ❑ Use quotation marks to identify titles or names.



## Spelling

- ❑ Correctly spell words often used in reading and writing.
- ❑ Use letter sounds, word lists, word walls, dictionaries, and glossaries to figure out how to spell new words.

## Handwriting

- ❑ Use cursive writing often and be able to write neatly so that others can read it.

## Writing Attitude

- ❑ Be eager to write and learn to write.

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# SPEAKING

## Conventions\*

- ❑ Use more complex ideas when speaking.
- ❑ Change use of language for different audiences or different purposes. Example: Use of science vocabulary in science discussions.
- ❑ Make presentations or reports using Standard English\* or their version of Standard English if they are in the process of learning English.
- ❑ Be aware that language differs from region to region of the country and among different cultures.

## Spoken Discourse

- ❑ Participate in discussions and share understandings about information learned.
- ❑ Tell or retell stories in an organized way that makes sense from beginning to end with details about characters, setting, events and themes\*.
- ❑ Plan and deliver informational presentations and reports in an organized way that includes a key question or idea and provides supporting facts or details.
- ❑ Give presentations or tell stories using appropriate facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language.



### **Brain Research says...**

**To increase the ability to learn in school, students need a good night's sleep. With a good night's rest, your child will be able to stay alert and focused on the lessons of the day.**

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## LISTENING AND VIEWING

### Conventions\*

- ❑ Respond to questions when asked, providing additional information and details as needed.
- ❑ While in large and small groups, pay attention and listen carefully to others.
- ❑ While in conversations, use eye contact and pay attention to the speaker.
- ❑ Be able to identify different ways of communicating, such as persuade, flatter, explain, and challenge.



### Response

- ❑ Choose, listen to, or view and discuss a variety of good books, both classic and recently written.
- ❑ Make connections between two or more stories by discussing, drawing pictures, or writing about them.
- ❑ Retell in their own words major ideas heard in messages and presentations.
- ❑ Use two or more strategies together to respond to text. Example: Listen to a story then give an opinion orally, or read text and write a summary.

### Ways to praise your child...

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## GLOSSARY TERMS



**bibliography** - list of the resources referred to in a text, essay, or report

**categorize** - organize ideas, events, objects, or people into groups based on common features

**context clues** - hints from the surrounding words, phrases or sentences about the unknown word

**conventions** - the rules about how words and language works when speaking or writing

**critical standards** - the high level of quality students must be able to recognize to determine if their work will meet expectations

**direct (indirect) object** - a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. Indirect objects are what receive the direct objects. Example: *Ted gave Ms. Smith an apple.*

direct object – apple    indirect object – Ms. Smith

**flashback** - literary device that tells events that have happened in the past

**flash forward** - literary device that tells events that will happen in the future

**fluency (fluently)** - ability to read text accurately and quickly

**genre** - a category used to describe different kinds of texts, such as poetry, fantasy, legend

**graphic organizer** - a form or pattern that is used to organize information

**key** - tool that gives an explanation of symbols or abbreviations on maps, charts, or graphs

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## Glossary, continued.

**metacognition** - the process of thinking about one's own thinking. Example: Being able to know when they do or do not understand what they are reading.

**metaphor/simile** - figures of speech in which two things or ideas are compared. Metaphors compare two things in such a way as to imply that one is another. Example: *The fog **is** a wet blanket.* Similes use words such as "like" or "as" to compare. Example: *The fog is **like** a blanket.*

**point of view** - the viewpoint from which a story is told

**prepositional phrases** - a group of words that usually indicate a location. Example: in the sky or under the table

**rubric** - a scoring guide to assess student performance

**Standard English** - the form of English widely accepted as being clear and understood

**theme** - the central idea or message in a piece of writing

**transition words** - words used to tell the order events happened or to move from one idea to the next in writing.

Examples of transition words are *first, then, next, afterwards, following, and finally.*



Questions to ask your child's teacher...

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