



What children should be able to do by the end of third grade

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Phonics and word recognition

By the end of third grade, a child . . .

- **Uses phonics knowledge and word parts (prefixes, roots, suffixes) to figure out how to pronounce words she doesn't recognize**

Reading Together™ targets children with adequate graphophonic skills; however, the program recognizes that emerging readers need continued decoding support. Tutors are trained to offer this support, and to help tutees in a way that improves fluency and allows tutees to take the initiative. A bookmark reinforces word recognition strategies, such as "chunking," that tutees can use to help themselves; a second bookmark reminds tutors how to offer phonics assistance.

Each passage is read twice, the second time for fluency. Tutors keep a running record of accurate reading; before the second tutee reading, tutors review any missed words (as noted on the running record) so that tutees can be successful as they reread. Repeated reading helps tutees increase their store of sight words.

Free Language Arts Enrichment Activities focus on segmenting words into phonemes, word parts such as prefixes and suffixes, and vocabulary. Tutees use manipulatives to make and reorganize words, recognized as a key activity in phonemic awareness instruction by the National Reading Panel.

Reading

By the end of third grade, a child . . .

- **Reads with fluency**

Modeled reading and rereading are recognized as key fluency strategies. Reading Together™ tutees first hear the tutor model good reading; they then read aloud, answer simple factual questions about the text, and read the passage a second time. They are encouraged to read the second time with more expression.

If corrections must be made, tutors allow tutees to finish the sentence, pause to allow for self-correction, and then follow a defined procedure that preserves fluency.

- **Reads a variety of third grade level texts (for example, story books, informational books, magazine articles, computer screens) with fluency and comprehension**

Appropriately leveled trade books of high interest offer a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction. Fluency and comprehension are the two key components of Reading Together™, helping students learn to read critically, interactively, and with ease and understanding. Computers are outside the scope of the program.

- **Reads longer stories and chapter books independently**

Trade books are high-interest picture books at an appropriate level (tutor read aloud books in Phase I are written at a higher level than the passages and trade books which tutees read). Several are chapter books, which are continued as part of a subsequent lesson, or are read independently at the end of lessons. There is shared reading between tutor and tutee in Phase II, and tutees move to independent selection and reading of books in Phase III. In this phase, tutors help direct tutees to books of an appropriate level of difficulty.

- **Summarizes major points from both fiction and non-fiction books**

Retelling and paraphrasing are important Reading Together™ strategies. In the early lessons, tutors model the retelling. By Lesson Three, tutees are retelling each passage after reading it for the second time. Lessons follow the same structure, and tutees soon realize they are responsible for retelling every time they read. They begin to pay attention to details, and to identify main ideas and characters as they read. Tutors may have tutees reread parts of the passage if they have difficulty retelling, and have a series of questions to use as prompts to elicit the retelling. Both fiction and non-fiction text are used in the lessons.

Once tutees are comfortable with a basic retelling, tutors prompt them to elaborate with supporting details. Post-reading activities such as graphic organizers and structured writing also help students sequence what they read, and put the main ideas into a logical order.

- **Identifies and then discusses specific words or phrases that interfere with comprehension**

Reading Together™ instruction is explicit; tutees learn the correct terminology for comprehension strategies, such as selecting a purpose for reading and activating prior knowledge. They become actively involved in their own learning, and comfortable asking their tutors for help when they come to words or phrases that interfere with comprehension. In each take-home letter, tutees identify a strategy they have learned, and explain why it helps them. They also write about areas where they have improved or need to improve.

- **Discusses the themes or messages of stories**

Communication about books is central to the format of Reading Together™. Tutees come to know and trust their tutors, and feel comfortable sharing ideas about the text. Every lesson includes discussions about the passage and book. The tutee makes predictions, relates what he/she knows about a subject, identifies main ideas and retells the story or informational text.

Lessons are grouped by themes, each starting with a semantic web that tutor and tutee discuss and add to as they read more about the subject.

- **Asks “how,” “why,” and “what-if” questions**

Each reading of the passage is followed by increasingly more complex questions. Answers to questions after the first reading are found in the text; higher-level questions following the second reading require tutees to think beyond information presented in the text. Post-reading activities require tutees to write their own questions in response to text.

- **Distinguishes cause from effect, fact from opinion, and main ideas from supporting details.**

Structured writing activities such as T-charts are used to help tutees distinguish cause from effect and fact from opinion; other graphic organizers prompt tutees to list the main ideas with supporting details.

- **Uses information gathered and his own reasoning to evaluate the explanations and opinions he reads about**

Tutees learn to read critically. They set a purpose for reading, and discuss whether they achieved their purpose; they discuss the author’s purposes for writing, and whether he/she achieved those purposes. Using a T-chart, tutees separate fact from opinion.

- **Understands and reads graphics and charts**

Tutees use charts many of the lessons to organize information. They become familiar with Venn diagrams, T-charts, semantic webs and other organizers.

- **Uses context clues to get meaning from what she reads**

Tutees learn to look back to the pictures or illustrations for context clues, and to ask themselves “Does it look right?” and “Does it sound right?” when they are trying to get meaning from unfamiliar words. The bookmark reinforces this behavior. Language Arts Enrichment Activities include worksheets that practice semantic and syntactic context clues.

- **Uses metacognitive strategies to comprehend text (e.g., reread, read ahead, ask for help, adjust reading speed, question, paraphrase, retell)**

Reading Together™ instruction is explicit; tutees learn the correct terminology for comprehension strategies, such as selecting a purpose for reading and activating prior knowledge. They become actively involved in their own learning, and become skilled at identifying the strategy that is most likely to help in any given situation.

In each take-home letter, tutees identify a strategy they have learned, and explain why it helps them become better readers. They also write about areas where they have improved or need to improve.

Spelling and writing

By the end of third grade, a child . . .

- **Correctly spells previously studied words**

Spelling is not a focus of Reading Together™. The emphasis is on having tutees express themselves in response to their reading. Tutors are instructed to help tutees spell if requested, and coordinators may give activity sheets to classroom teachers for further revisions.

- **Independently reviews her own written work for errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation**

Spelling is not a focus of Reading Together™. The emphasis is on having tutees express themselves in response to their reading. Tutors are instructed to help tutees spell if requested, and some coordinators give activity sheets to classroom teachers for further revisions.

- **Combines information in compositions from a variety of sources, including books, articles, and computer information**

Grade Three is organized around themes, with structured writing assignments that require tutees to pull together information from books and passages read over several lessons. Graphic organizers help tutees sort information before writing. Post-reading activities may require tutees to access common classroom resources, such as a dictionary or atlas.

- **With assistance from teachers and classmates, edits and revises her compositions to make them easier to read and understand**

Reading Together's emphasis is on having tutees form and express opinions about what they have read. While tutees write after each lesson, editing is done at the discretion of the classroom teacher, who may elect to allow time for discussion and revisions. The emphasis is on responding to reading, not writing mechanics.

- **Discusses her own writing with other children and responds helpfully to the writing of other children**

Cooperative learning is the heart of one-on-one tutoring. Tutors discuss writing assignments with their tutees. Writings are posted on a sharing board, where they are reviewed and discussed by other Reading Together™ tutees.

Vocabulary

By the end of third grade, a child . . .

- **Wants to learn and share new words at school and at home**

Rich and authentic literature of diverse genre exposes tutees to advanced vocabulary. Rereading helps tutees learn words in context; discussion and writing activities after the lessons give tutees many opportunities to use their new vocabulary. Word maps in the Language Arts Enrichment Activities also offer tutees the chance to explore new words. Tutors are always available to help tutees understand unfamiliar words.

- **Uses clues from context to figure out word meanings**

Tutors are prepped during training to identify words that may be unfamiliar to their tutees. Sometimes the definition is given before reading, but most often the tutee is encouraged to figure the word out in context. The tutor will know from the questions after the first reading whether vocabulary is an issue, and can intervene as needed.

- **Uses her knowledge of word parts such as prefixes, suffixes, and root words to figure out word meanings**

Language Arts Enrichment Activity sheets offer practice in word parts to help tutees with vocabulary.

- **Increases his vocabulary through the use of synonyms and antonyms**

Language Arts Enrichment Activity sheets offer practice in synonyms and antonyms.

- **Is able to use different parts of speech correctly, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs**

Language Arts Enrichment Activity sheets offer practice in these parts of speech.

- **Develops her vocabulary and knowledge through independent reading**

The goal of Reading Together™ is independent reading. In Phase III, tutors guide tutees in selecting media center books that are at the appropriate level to challenge their vocabulary, without being too difficult and frustrating.

- **Explores and investigates topics of interest on his own**

An interest inventory at the end of Phase II helps tutees identify topics and genre of interest to them. The three lessons of Phase III motivate tutees to explore these interests and read independently, critically and with comprehension.

- **Uses a variety of sources to find information, including computers**

Tutees learn to use the media center to find and check out informational books. They regularly use a table of contents to identify and locate information. Some lessons also require them to access common classroom resources, such as a dictionary or atlas. Computers are beyond the scope of Reading Together™.