



## PREPARING FLORIDA CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

The B.E.S.T. Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) are literacy standards for Florida students that will shape their education and make Florida the most literate state in the nation. The B.E.S.T. Standards will pave the way for Florida students to receive a world-class education and prepare them for a successful future.

Education leaders across the state of Florida improved the academic content standards, creating new expectations for what students need to know and be able to do. These benchmarks are goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. The B.E.S.T. Standards are designed to ensure that **all** students reach their greatest potential.

### THESE STANDARDS EMPHASIZE:

- Explicit and systematic phonics instruction
- Critical thinking skills
- A deep respect for literature from historic time periods
- Knowledge building through content-rich texts

Preparing your child for success begins in Kindergarten and continues as your child moves up through each grade. This guide will support parents and families with children in third grade by helping you:

#### LEARN

about the B.E.S.T. Standards and why they matter for your child.

#### TALK

with your child's teachers about what he/she will be learning in the classroom.

#### LOCATE

activities and resources to support your child's learning in practical ways at home.

#### UNDERSTAND

important educational (academic) words that you will see in your child's grade-level standards.

## LEARN ABOUT THE THIRD GRADE STANDARDS

### YOUR CHILD WILL EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH TEXT BY:

- Decoding multisyllabic words and words with suffixes such as -ful, -less and -est.
- Fluently read grade-level texts.
- Writing all upper and lowercase letters in cursive.
- Writing narrative, opinion and expository texts that follow rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling.
- Using grade-appropriate vocabulary in both speaking and writing.

### IN READING AND WRITING, YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Summarize a text.
- Discuss how characters grow and change across a text.
- Explain how text features contribute to the overall meaning of the text.
- Identify the central idea and the relevant details within a text.
- Figure out the meaning of unknown words using context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials and/or background knowledge.
- Compare and contrast how two authors present information on the same topic.
- Conduct research to answer a question, organizing information about the topic from multiple sources.



# LOCATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

## EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING:

- ✓ Listen to your child read and reread a text at their reading level to build their fluency.
- ✓ Read aloud with your child for 20 minutes each day.
- ✓ Be a reading role model. If your child sees you reading he/she will see the importance of reading.
- ✓ Be frequent visitors to your local public library. Let him or her see you choosing, checking out, and enjoying books.
- ✓ Encourage your child to choose and check out books.
- ✓ Have your child research information about a topic. Encourage them to find books based on topics that they are interested in and that they would like to become an expert on. Talk about what is happening in the text. Have them write about what they learned.
- ✓ Have your child engage in real-world writing. Write a letter to a family member, write a short story or have them keep a daily journal.
- ✓ Encourage your child to give detailed responses during conversations. Ask your child questions about what he/she sees and experiences. Be sure your questions call for sentence answers (more than yes/no answers).

## THIRD GRADE SUGGESTED BOOK LIST



*My Doggy Ate My Essay* by Darren Sardelli

*Frederick Douglass Fights for Freedom* by Margaret Davidson

*Matilda* by Roald Dahl

*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

*There was an Old Man with a Flute* by Edward Lear

*Honest Abe Lincoln* by David A. Adler

*Miracle on 133<sup>rd</sup> Street* by Sonia Manzano

*The Real McCoy: The Life of an African-American Inventor* by Wendy Towle

*Toward Those Short Trees* by Masaoka Shiki

*If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levine

*Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11* by Brian Floca

*The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleischman

*Tula ["Books are Door-shaped"]* by Margarita Engle

*Give Bees a Chance* by Bethany Barton

*Pablo Neruda: Poet of the People* by Monica Brown

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Frank Baum

*Abraham Lincoln: A Life of Honesty* by Tonya Leslie

*In a Pickle and other Funny Idioms* by Marvin Terban

*Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgren

*To the Moon and Back* by Buzz Aldrin

*Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White

*Living or Nonliving?* by Kelli Hicks

*Revolutionary Friends: General George Washington and the*

*Marquis de Lafayette* by Selene Castrovilla

*Who was Betsy Ross?* by James Buckley, Jr.

*Flight* by Robert Burleigh

*Mango, Abuela, and Me* by Meg Medina

*Rosa Parks* by Eloise Greenfield

*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan

*Stuart Little* by E.B. White

*The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner

*The Children's Book of Virtues* by William Bennett

## SUPPLEMENTAL READING OPTIONS

*Black Beauty*  
by Anna Sewell

*Heidi*  
by Johanna Spyri

*The Secret Garden*  
by Frances Hodgson Burnett

*The Velveteen Rabbit*  
by Margery Williams Bianco

*The Black Stallion*  
by Walter Farley

*The Wind in the Willows*  
by Kenneth Grahame

*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*  
by Washington Irving

*Anne of Green Gables*  
by Lucy Maud Montgomery

*Treasure Island*  
by Robert Louis Stevenson

*Ralph S. Mouse*  
by Beverly Cleary

*Mary Poppins*  
by P.L. Travers

*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*  
by Roald Dahl



## TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Remember, you are your child's first teacher. Think about a conference as a "team meeting" in which you will discover the special contributions each of you can bring to your third grader's success. Here are some questions you could ask to prompt discussions:

In the area of literacy, what are my child's strengths? How are those strengths supported during instruction?

What literacy skills should my child have mastered at this point? Has my child mastered them? Can I see an example of a task in reading and writing that my child is working through?

What topics in connection to science and social studies is my child learning about through reading?

Where is my child struggling and how can I help?

What types of books is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific reading level? Can I see an example of the type of texts my child is reading independently?

Can my child show you that they understand what they are reading and learning about through talking and writing? If not, what challenges are they facing?

## EDUCATIONAL (ACADEMIC) WORDS TO KNOW

**AUTOMATICITY:** When reading, it is the ability to read words quickly and accurately.

**BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE (PRIOR KNOWLEDGE):** Information that is important to understanding a situation or problem; what you already know from experience.

**CENTRAL IDEA:** What the text is mostly about and connects the ideas found throughout the text.

**CONTEXT CLUES:** Context clues are hints that an author gives to help define a difficult or unusual word within a book. The clue may appear within the same sentence as the word or it may follow in the next sentence. Because most vocabulary is gained through reading, it is important that students are able to recognize and take advantage of context clues.

**DECODING:** Translating a word from print to speech by using knowledge of letter-sound relationships; also, the act of reading a new word by sounding it out.

**EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION:** Teacher/parent-led interactive instruction that is direct and includes a clear explanation of the targeted skill.

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:** When you use a word or phrase that does not have its normal everyday literal meaning.

**FLUENCY:** Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression.

**MULTISYLLABIC WORDS:** A syllable is a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u), with or without surrounding consonants (e.g., m, n, s, t) that form the whole or a part of a word. A multisyllabic word is a word of many syllables (e.g., there are two syllables in water and three in inferno).

**NARRATIVE:** A story that is told in full detail.

**PHONICS:** Teaches students how to connect sounds of letters or groups of letters in order to read words.

**READING LEVEL:** Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can read text very quickly with very few errors.

**SUFFIX:** A letter or group of letters added to the ending of words to change their meaning (e.g., -ing, -ment, -ful).

**SUMMARIZE:** To express or cover the main points briefly.

**SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION:** A carefully thought out and planned sequence of instruction.

**TEXT FEATURES:** The parts of a story or article that are not the main body of the text; includes the title, headings, captions, graphs, maps, glossaries and/or illustrations.

