

A Quick Reference Guide to First Grade at Hopewell Area School District Elementary Schools



Welcome to First Grade!

First Grade is one of the most important changes in a child's world. It is a time when basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills must be mastered. It is a time when a child is faced with a big responsibility. Fortunately, most first graders have a natural curiosity and are very eager to learn. They respond wonderfully to praise and encouragement. They are very active participants in class discussions and activities. They are eager to learn to read. The best way parents can prepare their child for reading is to read to them. Parents can read to their children in bed or on their laps for the security of being close and for a reassuring voice. That, combined with the printed page and the story element, will make learning to read a natural and pleasing experience. We look forward to working with you during this very important year in your child's life.

Language Arts

The Hopewell Area School District has adopted **McGraw-Hill Wonders** as the reading/language arts program for our Kindergarten through Grade 4 students. This language arts program incorporates reading, writing, spelling and grammar, and is comprised of all of the essential learning tools that students need to become literate adults.

Also, this year the district has implemented an exciting new reading program called Guided Reading by **Scholastics**. Each student will be assessed and placed into small reading groups where students can read about

topics they are interested in and on their reading level.



In Grades K-2, as the students learn to read, the emphasis is on phonemic awareness, phonics, listening skills, and strategies that teach learning to read. There is an emphasis on increasing vocabulary through the primary grades and bridging phonics and comprehension. The students are encouraged to express their ideas through words and pictures as they venture into the new world of reading. This language arts program also provides opportunities for enrichment in Social Studies and Science.

Mathematics

The philosophy of the **Everyday Mathematics** program is to enable children in elementary grades to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematical thinkers. The key components of the Everyday Math program are to solve problems using everyday situations, develop concepts through hands-on explorations and activities, practice through games, and

provide ongoing cumulative review of skills previously taught.

In First Grade, the focus is on counting up and back, skip counting by 2s and 5s, telling time to the nearest hour and half-hour, understanding coin values, developing the ability to calculate the value of coin combinations, solving simple number stories, finding simple sums and missing addends, basic addition facts, place value, greater than and less than, beginning to identify polygons, and beginning fractions.

Homework Policy

The purpose of homework assignments is to teach the children responsibility. The children are responsible for taking their class work, notices, and assignments home in a folder each day. They must also remember to return their folder and any assignments to school every day. This sets the purpose of the school day by developing a ready-to-learn routine.

Homework also provides an opportunity for the children to practice basic reading and mathematical skills. The children must practice letter/sound recognition, reading vocabulary, and spelling words, and they must reread their text (reading book) each week. Parents can help by:

- *Reviewing the folder & work each day
- *Returning the empty folder
- *Providing a quiet homework area
- *Providing a structured homework routine.

Art

In a sequential art curriculum, each activity is tied to the next so that what is learned today will be used tomorrow, and can be added to and made more significant. Students learn to identify visual elements such as lines, colors, shapes, and textures. Their art is based on imagination and personal interpretations. They acquire basic skills in using media for drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, and sculpture. Students become aware of art in everyday life through lessons on architecture, clothing, and other environmental art. Students also learn to perceive and describe the subject matter of their artwork to others.



Physical Education

Students will identify and use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms such as running, skipping, hopping, galloping, and sliding. Non-loco-motor skills consist of bending, twisting, stretching, turning, and lifting. Students learn control in travel activities, balance activities, and basic object control skills. Activities include circle games, ball skills of soccer, kickball, floor hockey, and balance skills.

Library

Children in first grade have a 40 minute Library period each week. During this time, the children review the library rules and routines learned in kindergarten. They are introduced to a variety of books, including fairy tales and easy readers, and learn about the difference between fiction and non-fiction. The roles of author and illustrator are discussed. Children are given time to select books for leisure reading.

Music

The students in first grade sing songs, enjoy listening selections and create expressive quality of music by moving, playing instruments, and creativity. They learn to recognize instruments, sounds, rhythm patterns, and environmental sounds. The students sing songs related to special holidays. They demonstrate their musical talents at special performances throughout the year. The students study and develop music that can form a foundation for a lifelong interest in music.

Computer

First grade students continue to develop mouse control as well as learning to type completed sentences with proper formatting. Students connect their text to personally created digital illustrations. Coding skills are strengthened using robots and online activities. Students continue to develop understanding of the characteristics of a good Digital Citizen.