



**Diocese of Joliet**  
Catholic Schools

# First Grade Curriculum Guide for Parents

## Language Arts and Reading

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# **DIOCESE OF JOLIET CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Academic excellence is a pillar of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Joliet. To assist schools in maintaining academic excellence, the Catholic Schools Office has developed curriculum guides for grades preschool through eight. The purpose of the curriculum guide is to identify what we want our students to know and be able to do at the end of each grade based on Catholic faith standards and content standards. With these guides as a template, each individual school develops a plan to clearly articulate what is taught, how it is taught, and how student achievement is assessed for each grade.



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### CARDINAL NEWMAN STANDARDS

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Catholic Education released a [document](#) in 2014 to guide Catholic schools in their approach to educational standards. The Cardinal Newman Society responded to this call by creating the Cardinal Newman Catholic Curriculum Standards with support from more than eight Catholic universities and colleges.

This curriculum guide is aligned to those standards. The Cardinal Newman Catholic Standards for reading and language arts in this curriculum guide are:

#### Reading

- Analyze works of fiction and non-fiction to uncover authentic Truth.
- Share how literature can contribute to strengthening one's moral character.
- Recognize Christian and Western symbols and symbolism.
- Recite prayers and poems of substance that encourage all to strive for virtue and goodness.
- Identify examples of noble characteristics in stories with virtuous heroes and heroines.
- Identify the causes underlying why people do the things they do.
- Analyze how literature assists in the ability to make judgments about what is true, what is false, and to make choices based on these judgments.
- Use imagination to create dialogue between the readers and the characters in a story.
- Analyze the author's reasoning and discover the author's intent.

#### Language Arts

- Recite prayers and poems of substance that encourage all to strive for virtue and goodness.
- Use imagination to create dialogue between the readers and the characters in a story.
- Use language as a bridge for communication with one's fellow man for the betterment of all involved.
- Write in various ways to naturally order thoughts, align them with truth, and accurately express intent, knowledge, and feelings.
- Use grammar as a means of signifying concepts and the relationship to reason.
- Share beautifully told and well-crafted works, especially those with elements of unity, harmony, and radiance of form.
- Share how literature ignites the creative imagination in healthy ways.
- Delight and wonder through the reading of creative, sound, and healthy stories, poems, and plays.
- Recognize literary characters possessing virtue and begin to exhibit these virtuous behaviors, values, and attitudes.
- Share how beauty and cadence of poetry impacts human sensibilities and forms the soul.



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### READING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

The following standards outline what foundational skills of reading the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do by the end of First Grade:

- Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
- Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).
- Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
- Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.
- Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.
- Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words.
- Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).
- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Know the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs.
- Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.
- Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds.
- Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word.
- Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables.
- Read words with inflectional endings.
- Recognize and read grade-appropriate sight words using norm-referenced assessments lists.
- Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
- Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.



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### READING LITERATURE

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in reading literature by the end of First Grade:

- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson. Identify the beginning, middle, and end in sequence.
- Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings, appeal to the senses and/or cultivate growth in virtue.
- Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
- Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.
- Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, and the story's events.
- Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories, which may include Bible/religious stories.
- With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for First Grade.



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### READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in reading informational text by the end of First Grade:

- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- Identify the main topic and story's events using the language beginning, middle, and end.
- Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
- Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.
- Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.
- Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
- Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text (may include religious text).
- Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
- With prompting and support, read grade-level informational texts.



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### WRITING

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in writing by the end of First Grade:

- Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
- Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
- With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of traditional and digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers (e.g., age-appropriate prayer, class book on a topic including religious topics).
- Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).
- With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.



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# LANGUAGE

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in language arts by the end of First Grade:

- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Print all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Use common, proper, and possessive nouns.
- Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., He hops; We hop).
- Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., I, me, my; they, them, their; anyone, everything).
- Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., Yesterday I walked home. Today I walk home. Tomorrow I will walk home).
- Use frequently occurring adjectives.
- Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or, so, because).
- Use determiners (e.g., articles, demonstratives).
- Use frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., during, beyond, toward).
- Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Capitalize dates and names of people.
- Use end punctuation for sentences.
- Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.
- Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.





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### LANGUAGE (CONTINUED)

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in language arts by the end of First Grade:

- Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on Grade 1 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use frequently occurring affixes as a clue to the meaning of a word.
- Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., look) and their inflectional forms (e.g., looks, looked, looking).
- With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- Sort words into categories (e.g., colors, clothing) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.
- Define words by category and by one or more key attributes (e.g., a duck is a bird that swims; a tiger is a large cat with stripes).
- Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at home that are cozy).
- Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., large, gigantic) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.
- Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).



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### SPEAKING & LISTENING

The following standards outline what the Diocese of Joliet expects students to know and do in speaking and listening by the end of First Grade:

- Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, kindness, and respect; speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
- Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges that are respectful.
- Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.
- Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
- Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.