



Blackbird & Company ELA Benchmarks

The following is a checklist that will help you assess annual student growth as a reader, writer, and thinker during grades K–2. Over time, following our methodology, your student will become confident in the following ELA (English Language Arts) benchmarks. As you assess your student’s work, you will be pleased to discover mastery in these areas. Keep in mind, mastery does not ever mean these benchmarks are a thing of the past, but rather, part of the active heart and mind of the student. There will be considerable overlap year after year, and you will observe maturity within a given skill over time. Use check marks to indicate the skill is being utilized by the student.

PRIMARY K–2nd Grade Tracking

READING

READING - Concepts of Print and Print Awareness

- Holds book right side up, turns pages moving from front to back
- Identifies parts of a book: Cover, Title, Title Page, Book Back Cover
- Identifies information that different parts of a book provide (title, author, illustrator)
- Knows upper and lowercase letter names and matches them
- Recites the order of the alphabet
- Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between oral and printed words
- Identifies and distinguishes between letters, words, and sentences
- Recognizes distinguishing features of a paragraph
- Tracks print (top to bottom of page, left to right on a line)
- Recognizes first and last name in print

READING - Phonological Awareness

(Able to recognize and work with the sounds of spoken language)

- Distinguishes rhyming pairs of words from non-rhyming
- Identifies and practices rhyming words in response to an oral prompt
- Counts each syllable in a spoken word
- Segments and blends syllables in spoken words
- Recognizes and produces words beginning with the same sounds
- Recognizes and produces words ending with the same sounds

READING - Phonemic Awareness

(Able to hear, identify, observe, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words)

- Identifies and isolates beginning, middle, and ending sounds in spoken words
- Blends sounds orally to make words
- Segments words or syllables into sounds
- Counts sounds in spoken words for syllables and syllables in words
- Distinguishes long and words sounds in orally stated single syllable words
- Reads simple high frequency words



ELA Benchmarks: K-2

READING - Phonics

(Able to read by correlating sounds with letters or groups of alphabetic letters)

- Understands and applies that spoken words are comprised of sounds represented by letters
- Knows sound/letter relationships and matches sounds to letters
- Generates sounds from letters and blends to decode
- Decodes consonants, consonant blends, and consonant digraphs
- Decodes short vowel words with consonants, consonant blends, and consonant digraphs
- Decodes long-vowel patterned words
- Decodes vowel digraph patterned words
- Decodes bossy consonant patterned words
- Decodes silent consonant patterned words
- Decodes word endings patterned words

READING - Decoding Strategies

(Translates print into speech by rapidly matching combination of letters to their sounds)

- Applies knowledge of letter/sound relationships to read words
- Applies knowledge of word structure to read
- Uses context and syntax along with letter/sound relationships and word structure to read
- Self-corrects during reading

READING - Fluency

(Able to read easily and accurately)

- Reads aloud with accuracy and appropriate pace, with attention to punctuation and phrasing
- Reads independently Lexile-leveled books
- Reads silently for increasing periods of time

READING - Reading Comprehension

(Able to construct meaning from a text)

- Actively listens, processes, and participates during story time
- Makes, modifies, and confirms predictions while reading
- Resolves difficulties while reading by adjusting reading rate, re-reading
- Summarizes what is read
- Able to construct details and facts from the story
- Able to construct main ideas from supporting details
- Recognizes story chronology
- Identifies main ideas and visualizes via mental imagery
- Follows character development, setting, and plot progression
- Answers explicit and implicit story questions
- Draws conclusions and inferences
- Recalls and re-tells stories
- Differentiates between facts and opinions



READING - Vocabulary Development

- Develops vocabulary through direct instruction, reading, and listening to texts
- Uses context clues in sentences to determine meaning of unfamiliar words
- Recognizes that words and phrases might have multiple meaning
- Uses root words to determine meaning of new words (add, addition, additional and so on)
- Recognizes new words being formed by simple prefixes (un, re, pre, and so on)
- Uses knowledge of individual words to determine meaning of compound words
- Uses a beginning dictionary to clarify meaning

Writing

WRITING - Concepts of Print

- Writes upper and lowercase letters
- Prints own name and copies words
- Writes using pictures, some letters and some transitional spelling to convey meaning
- Creates text for others to read
- Writes left to right on a line and top to bottom on a page

WRITING - Phonics

(Able to use conventional spelling)

- Writes consonant-vowel-consonant words
- Writes short vowel words with consonant blends and consonant digraphs
- Writes long vowel patterned words
- Writes vowel digraph patterned words
- Writes bossy consonant patterned words
- Writes silent consonant patterned words
- Writes words with simple endings (ed, ing, s, es, and so on)

WRITING - Word Choice

- Uses simple words in concise ways
- Uses clear, precise, and appropriate language
- Selects effective and vivid words to communicate ideas
- Uses a beginner dictionary or a beginner Thesaurus

WRITING - Conventions

- Demonstrates command of simple conventions of sentence capitalization and punctuation
- Capitalizes holidays, product names, and geographic names
- Uses commas to pause, in greetings, in lists, and in dates
- Use an apostrophe to form simple contractions and in frequently occurring possessives.
- Uses conventional spelling according to phonics mastery
- Uses a beginning dictionary



WRITING - Sentences

- Recognizes the potential of and uses the four types of sentences
- Produces complete simple sentences
- Produces complete compound sentences

WRITING - Paragraphs

- Crafts a simple topic sentence
- Crafts 2 or 3 supporting sentences
- Crafts a simple concluding sentence
- Organizes ideas in a logical and chronological order

WRITING - Focus and Idea

- Able to write a simple idea in sentence form
- Combines sentences to expand an idea
- Keeps focus simple and clear
- Uses sensory details and simple imagery

WRITING - Writing Process

- Participates in simple edits of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation
- Re-reads writing and makes simple changes to improve idea
- Creates a final polished draft

WRITING - Voice

- Beginning to develop a confident, identifiable voice

WRITING - Habits of Being

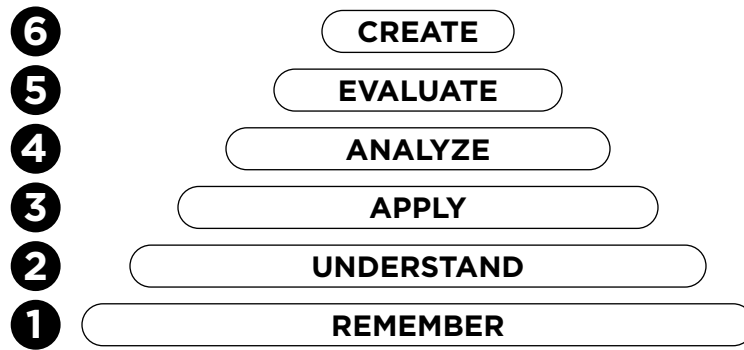
- Writes on a daily basis
- Uses writing as a tool for learning, giving, and self-discovery
- Cares about creating ideas and the work of the writer



HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS - *HOTS*

(Applying information beyond observation and rote memory.)

Bloom's Taxonomy



Back in the 1950s, educational psychologist, Richard Bloom developed a framework, now known as Blooms Taxonomy, to help us teachers evaluate HOTS. These skills enable students to actually apply knowledge. Students who apply will analyze, evaluate, and create. This is how ideas are born! As students progress through the CORE Integrated Literature & Writing journals, they will be analyzing character development, tracing story arc, evaluating actions, observing story themes, and much more. But most significantly, each week, students will be crafting original ideas that spring from the reading—students will be creating! The Blooms Taxonomy framework is good for you, the teacher, to keep in mind as you observe and evaluate student progress.

Following is a general checklist of Higher Order Thinking Skills:

STORY

- Able to describe a story by connecting its essential ideas
- Evaluates ideas presented
- Makes judgment about ideas presented
- Organizes and synthesizes ideas and information
- Recognizes basic characteristics of a fictional story
- Identifies basic characteristics of a non-fiction story
- Identifies basic characteristics of poetry and song
- Makes judgments about ideas

CHARACTERS

- Recognizes and describes traits, actions, and motives of characters
- Analyzes relationships
- Analyzes internal conflict of characters
- Analyzes external conflict between characters
- Analyzes the effect of characters on plot and conflict



SETTING

- Relates setting to story problem/solution
- Identifies how the setting contributes to story mood

PLOT

- Recognizes the beginning, middle, end of a story or story section
- Traces overarching goals and outcomes toward resolution

THEMES

- Analyzes the central and significant message of a story

LITERARY APPRECIATION

- Shows interest in books and reading
- Engages in social interaction about books
- Reads a variety of grade-level fiction and non-fiction
- Reads from a variety of genres for a variety of purposes
- Chooses texts by drawing on personal interests, familiarity of authors, and recommendations

LITERARY DEVICE

- Begins to recognize the point of view of a story (1st Person, 3rd Person, Omniscient)
- Identifies the speaker or narrator in a selection
- Recognizes the difference between dialogue and narration
- Senses the basic mood of a story

LITERARY RESPONSE

- Reflects on reading through recollection and discussion
- Asks and answers questions
- Ruminates on what is written
- Uses evidence from the text to support interpretations, opinions, and conclusions
- Makes connections: text to text, text to self, and text to world