

English Language Arts (K-5)

Students, when provided with systematic, scaffolded instruction, driven by data and aligned to the [PA Core ELA Standards](#), will develop a firm foundation of literacy in order to foster a lifelong love of reading and writing. In West Allegheny, we strive to have 95% or more of our students reading on or above grade level. Reading on grade level by the end of third grade is a critical predictor of future academic success.

High-quality Tier 1 instruction is the most important form of intervention that we can offer to our students, and thus, most children can learn to read without intensive intervention. In our approach to reading instruction, informed by the structured literacy competencies, instruction is guided through four domains which include the following:

Word Knowledge addresses the explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, sight vocabulary, phonics, word meaning, structural analysis, and conceptual understanding. During the reading process, students use all foundational literacy skills to construct meaning from print. They use their understanding of the author's intent and their background knowledge or semantic cues, their knowledge of language patterns or syntactic cues, and their awareness of sound-symbol relationships or graphophonic cues.

Fluency Instruction refers to reading speed/automaticity, oral reading accuracy, phrasing, intonation, and expression. Students need to develop automaticity, which refers to the readers' abilities to process graphophonemic information so rapidly that they are free to direct attention to comprehending the text material for meaning. Consequently, students will be equipped to develop higher-level comprehension skills. Repeated readings (e.g., reader's theater), choral reading, and echo reading are proven methods for strengthening fluency.

Comprehension is the goal for reading instruction. Explicit instruction of reading strategies and skills has been proven to help students become skillful, independent readers. A critical part of this explicit instruction is teacher modeling, in which the teacher identifies and models (e.g., think-aloud) specific strategies needed for comprehension skills. Another critical part of effective comprehension instruction is providing the students with abundant practice of the strategies with various, authentic texts. Also, a wide repertoire of strategies needs to be taught so that students are equipped to monitor their comprehension and to overcome any difficulties they encounter as they read. Being skillful with these strategies leads readers to further develop their comprehension skills and be independent readers.

Writing Instruction addresses the purposes, processes, and audiences of written communication. This approach focuses upon exploring and understanding what writers do throughout a writing task. Teachers work closely with students guiding them through stages of writing across the curriculum and helping them to understand writing as a communication process. The importance of the creation, expression, and comprehension of meaning is emphasized. Students can achieve language fluency and conventional usage and spelling through experiences with various language models and through instruction.

Literacy skills are complex and extensive; therefore, we dedicate 120 minutes of daily instruction. Literacy skills are relevant to all disciplines; therefore, all educators share responsibility for literacy instruction. With the alignment to the PA Standards, there is an increase in rigor and relevance as students read fiction and non-fiction texts and text sets that are complex. There is an emphasis on regularly interacting with complex text and its academic, robust vocabulary.

The District’s literacy curriculum is a roadmap to standards mastery. It is organized in units of study and includes a high-level scope and sequence, which is intended to help teachers judiciously provide and pace instruction and practice throughout the school year. English Language Arts instruction is provided through the utilization of research-based instructional routines that address the foundational skills of phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency; understanding and language through comprehension, vocabulary, and conventions; and writing through learning to write and writing to learn through narrative, informative, and opinion passages. Students utilize the *Journeys* reading program, novel units, and anchor units as they learn skills and concepts related to reading literature and informational text via lessons designed by our staff.

Grade Levels	Instructional Programs
Kindergarten	Journeys, Reading Horizons, Heggerty, Lexia
First Grade	Journeys, Reading Horizons, Heggerty, Lexia
Second Grade	Journeys, Reading Horizons, Heggerty, Lexia, Morpheme for Little Ones, Accelerated Reader
Third Grade	Journeys, Reading Horizons, Morpheme for Little Ones, Study Island, Accelerated Reader
Fourth Grade	Journeys, Morpheme Magic, Study Island, Accelerated Reader
Fifth Grade	Journeys, Morpheme Magic, Study Island, Accelerated Reader

*Journeys instructional program is currently under review with a plan to adopt a new program for implementation during the 2025-2026 school year.

[Journeys](#)

[Reading Horizons Discovery](#)

[Heggerty](#)

[Lexia](#)

[Morphemes for Little Ones](#)

[Morpheme Magic](#)

[Accelerated Reader](#)

[Study Island](#)