

# Parent Handbook for English–Language Arts



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Copyright 2004 by the California Department of Education **A Message from State  
Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell**

As I travel around California, I see firsthand what decades of research prove: Children are more likely to succeed in school when their families actively support them—at every age. You give your children a tremendous advantage when you read with them, help them with homework, and meet with their teachers. This involvement is especially important in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

This parent handbook provides an overview of the *English–Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*. It also provides suggestions for home activities that help students succeed, along with examples of literature that students will enjoy. There is a special section devoted to children under the age of five as well as information on how you can help your children even if your home language is not English. The handbook will help you prepare questions for teacher and counselor conferences, select reading materials, and shape your visits to libraries and other places of interest.

Guiding students to academic success through adolescence is one of the greatest challenges we face as parents and educators. If your children are in high school, you can help them make wise course selections and decisions about their futures. To help you in this process, this document provides information about high school graduation and admission requirements for the University of California and California State University systems.

We hope you and your children will enjoy the activities suggested in this book and develop many more of your own. Thank you for your commitment to your children's future; it is the greatest gift you can give them.

JACK O'CONNELL  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

## **I. Introduction: Why the English–Language Arts Are Important**

The English–Language Arts consist of four important communication processes: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The ability to communicate is a goal that all parents have for their children. You might think of the language arts as the four strands of a rope. All four strands are important and can be woven together in many different ways. Strengthening each strand helps reinforce the others and makes the entire rope stronger.

All students need to develop a strong foundation in language skills because competency in oral and written language provides a foundation for further learning and job success. Such a foundation not only fosters personal enrichment but also empowers students to become participating citizens in a democracy and promotes better understanding among people.

In this handbook parents will find an explanation of why the English–language arts occupy a central place in school. They will find helpful suggestions for supporting children who study this subject area—including children who are learning English. In addition to a clarification of some commonly used terms, the handbook presents an overview of California’s English–language arts curriculum as well as high school graduation requirements and college/university entrance requirements for this subject area. Perhaps most importantly, the handbook offers parents and teachers a list of sample resources that support children’s learning— titles of literature suitable for reading aloud to children and for students’ independent reading, along with resources for adults who are interested in the English–language arts.

## **II. Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in The English–Language Arts**

## **A. If You Have a Child Under the Age of Five**

Parents can help children under the age of five to gain oral language skills. The activities below not only are fun but also help develop skills that children need to become good listeners, speakers, readers, and writers.

### ***For Your Baby and Toddler (Six Weeks to Three Years)***

You are your child's first teacher. You pave the way for your child's success at every stage of development. Here are some simple things you can do to help in the development of language skills:

- Talk to your child and encourage your child to talk.
- Introduce your baby to cardboard or cloth books with big, simple pictures of everyday things.
- Provide a comfortable place for story time. Read aloud to your child.
- Read with expression, showing your baby the pictures in the book.
- Pay attention to how your child responds and stop when he is tired.
- Try to work up to 30 minutes each day reading to and with your child.
- Talk with your child about what you are reading.
- Help your child learn to enjoy sounds in spoken language by together singing songs and reading nursery rhymes aloud.
- Ask a librarian to help you find wonderful and suitable books for your child.
- Help your child choose books for you to read aloud when your child becomes a toddler.
- Stop now and then and point to letters and words as you read them.
- Point out letters on signs and labels, such as the first letter of your child's name.
- Show your child that you like to read.
- Give your child crayons and paper to scribble on when she is about two years old.
- Praise him as he talks, scribbles, draws, and looks at books.
- Encourage your child to "pretend read," joining in where she has memorized a word or phrase.
- When you ask questions, give your child enough time to think and respond.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Tie ideas in the book to things familiar to your child. Notice if your child does so independently.
- Let your child know how much you like his ideas and encourage him to tell more.

### ***For Your Preschooler (Three to Four Years)***

As your child turns three and four, continue with the reading habits described above. You can also introduce a variety of more focused and enjoyable activities to reinforce your child's growing understanding of language, including the following:

- Sing songs, read nursery rhymes, and tell stories with your child.
- Share books with your child.
- Point out environmental words to your child (for example, signs, labels, and posters)
- Make a game of rhyming words and sounds. (For example, the parent says, "Let's go have some *fun*, out in the \_\_\_\_." The child says a rhyming word, such as *sun*, to end the sentence.)
- Clap to the rhythm of songs and music.
- Move to the beat of different nursery rhymes.
- Play nonsense word games with your child (for example, le, li, la; be, bi, ba; se, si, sa).
- Say a series of rhyming words that each start with a different letter (for example, *cat*, *rat*, *bat*, *fat*, *sat*; *dig*, *big*, *jig*, *pig*). Have your child repeat each word or think of additional words.
- Talk with your child about special activities and children's TV programs.
- Provide books and magazines at home.
- Have a quiet reading time each night during which everyone reads or is read to.
- Visit the library with your child to check out picture and easy reading books.
- Point out to your child the title, author, cover, back, page numbers, and pictures in a book.
- Have your child help turn the pages of a book while you are reading. Talk about reading the book from the front to the back cover.
- Play a game, "How many claps (syllables) in the word *apple*?"
- Read stories to your child that have repeated phrases and have your child help in repeating the phrases.
- Provide a variety of writing tools to encourage spontaneous writing.
- Make an imagination box that has items such as markers, paper, crayons, paper towel tubes, small boxes, and stickers.
- Use appropriate language when talking with your child and avoid babytalk.
- Encourage your child to use words instead of pointing.
- Restate a word properly in a sentence when your child incorrectly pronounces a word so that he can hear the correct pronunciation.
- Take your child to places like the zoo, a circus, a park, or a farm. Children will have a wider vocabulary and be able to understand stories better if they have personal and prior knowledge of these topics.
- Stop occasionally when reading aloud before finishing a sentence and let your child predict what comes next.

You may wish to enroll your child in a preschool. Research suggests that children who attend preschool do better throughout their school careers. If your child attends a preschool or child care center, be involved by talking with the teacher about your child, talking to your child about his experiences daily, and participating in preschool activities if possible.

## **B. Reading in a Language Other Than English**

There is much that you can do to help your child if his first language is not English. He is a step ahead if he is beginning to learn many words and is interested in learning to read in his first language. You can help by supporting him in his first language as he learns English. Talk with him, read with him, and encourage him to draw and write. In other words, do the same kinds of activities that appear throughout this chapter but do them in your child's first language.

When your child first enters school, you may want to talk with her teacher. Schools welcome such talks. Usually, you may ask for a meeting at any time. If it will help, ask a relative, neighbor, or someone else in your community to go with you. When you go, share with teachers your knowledge of your child's activities (reading, writing, talking, drawing) and interests and discuss how your child seems to learn best. Children who can switch back and forth between languages have accomplished something of great value that can become an important advantage to them. We should praise and support them as they work for this achievement.

If your child's first language is not English, becoming an excellent reader and writer of English is likely to require more time and effort than for native English speakers. Encourage your child to complete her homework assignments on time and praise her for her accomplishments. In addition, consider the following recommendations to support your child's success in language development:

- Find out what services are available at your school for English learners, such as after-school programs, bilingual programs, cross-age tutoring programs, family literacy programs, provision of multicultural books and other library services, summer and intersession services, or tutoring.
- Ask if there is an English Learner Advisory Committee at your school or district. Find out what assistance the committee provides.
- Find out what services are available at your school (such as outreach workers, parent liaisons or translators) to assist the parents of English learners.
- Become a partner with your child's teachers by talking with them often, ensuring that your child attends school regularly, and making certain that your child completes homework on time.
- Help your child maintain proficiency in his own language so that he will enjoy the many advantages of knowing two languages.

## **C. Kindergarten Through Grade Three**

As children progress from kindergarten through grade three, there are many things that can be done at home to reinforce and extend their language skills. Try some of the following activities with your child. You do not need special training or expensive materials. Just include these activities in the things you already do

together every day. Make these activities part of the warm, positive relationship you are continuing to build with your child. If you have concerns about your child's development in reading and language development, talk to his teacher.

### ***Kindergarten and Grade One***

#### **Talk often with your child to build listening and speaking skills.**

- Talk with your child often to build listening, speaking, and vocabulary skills—as you eat together, shop for groceries, walk to school, or wait for a bus.
- Ask questions that will encourage her to talk, and not just give yes or no responses.
- Have your child use his imagination to make up and tell you stories. Ask questions that will encourage him to expand the stories.
- Listen to your child's questions patiently and answer them just as patiently.
- Pay attention to how much television your child is watching. Limit TV time; set aside "no TV" time each day and use that time to talk or read together.
- Tell stories about your childhood.

#### **Show your child how books and print work.**

- Have your child point out such things as front and back covers of the book and the title as you read with him.
- Have him show you where you should start reading on a page.
- Help your child make connections between print and pictures as you read.

#### **Focus your child's attention on the sounds of spoken language.**

- Sing or say nursery rhymes and songs.
- Play word games (for example, "How many words can you say that rhyme with *feet*? With *say*?").
- Identify, when riding in the car, how many things you can see that start with a certain letter (for example, street, sign, sky, stripe, store).
- Read a story or poem and ask your child to listen for words that begin with the same sound (such as /b/ in boy). Have her say the words. Then have her say another word that begins with that sound.
- Stop and say a simple word as you read. Have your child say the sounds in the word, write the letters for the sounds, and then read what he wrote (for example, "The dog is big. Can you say the sounds in big? Now can you write the letters for the sounds? Good. Now read the word to me.").

#### **Have your child identify and name the letters of the alphabet.**

- Point out letters and have your child name them.
- Make an alphabet book with your child. Have him draw pictures or cut pictures from magazines or use old photos of persons, places, animals, toys, or other objects that begin with the various letters of the alphabet.

**Support and reinforce what your child is learning in school about the relationship between letters and sounds.**

- Point out labels, boxes, newspapers, magazines, and signs that display words with letter-sound relationships.
- Listen to your child read words and books from school. Be patient and listen as your child practices. Let your child know you are proud of what she is learning.
- Play word games. On cards, write words that contain the letter-sound relationships he is learning at school. Take turns choosing a card and blending the sounds to make the word. Then use the word in a sentence.

**Encourage your child to spell and write.**

- Encourage your child when he is writing to spell words by using what he knows about sounds and letters.
- Encourage your child to write notes, e-mails, and letters to family members and friends.
- Point out words that have similar spellings, such as *hop* and *pop* as you are reading with your child. Ask her to write similar words (for example, *top*, *mop*, and *cop*).
- Encourage your child to write often (for example, letters and thank-you notes, simple stories, and grocery lists).

**Help your child build vocabulary, knowledge of the world, and comprehension.**

- Pause occasionally as you read aloud to ask about the meaning of the book.
- Help make connections between a child's life and what's happening in the book. Explain new ideas and words to her.
- Encourage your child to ask questions about the book. Ask him to tell in his own words what the book was about.

***Second and Third Grade***

**Use reading opportunities to help your child develop fluency.**

- Listen to your child read books that she has brought home from school. Be patient as your child practices reading. Let her know that you are proud of her reading.
- Ask children who are not very fluent readers (that is, they read slowly and make lots of mistakes) to reread a few sentences or a paragraph a few times, offer help when needed, and praise their successes.

**Find opportunities for your child to spell and write.**

- Encourage your child to write often (for example, letters and thank-you notes to relatives and friends, simple stories, diary or family journal entries, e-mails, and items for the grocery list).
- Help your child learn the correct spelling of words.

**Find opportunities to help your child develop vocabulary, knowledge of the world, and comprehension.**

- Talk about new words that your child has read or heard. Ask him to make up sentences with the new words or use the words in other situations.
- Help your child use the dictionary or thesaurus to check on the meanings of new words she reads or hears.
- Help your child become aware of prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Point them out in books you are reading together or in print materials around the house. Ask him to think of other words related to the words you are discussing. (For example, "Can you think of any other words that have the word *move* in them?" Some possible answers are *moveable*, *movement*, *moving*, and *moved*.)
- Show your child how to use context—the sentences, words, and pictures around an unfamiliar word—to figure out the word's meaning.
- Stop occasionally as you read a book with your child to talk to her about the meaning of the book. Help her relate the experiences or events in the book to experiences or events in her life or to other books you have read together.
- Encourage your child to ask questions. Ask her to tell in her own words what the book was about. If you see a movie or TV show together, talk about it afterward.

**D. Grades Four Through Eight**

As children progress from grades four through grade eight, there are many things parents can do at home to reinforce and extend their language skills. Continue to strengthen communication with your child by spending quality time together and reinforcing positive behavior. Be sure to set up an atmosphere conducive to learning by establishing a place for completing homework that has good lighting and supplies; making sure the house is quiet during study time; and reviewing your child's homework when needed. And, of course, be involved in your child's education by attending parent/teacher conferences and contacting your child's teacher(s) when questions or concerns arise.

In addition, consider the following ideas when creating an environment at home for increasing student learning in the language arts:

**Create opportunities to support your child in reading.**

- Encourage your child to read aloud to you.

- Read to and with your child regularly.
- Visit the library and/or bookstore with your child on a regular basis.
- Ask your child interesting questions after reading a story and talk about the characters, events, and ideas.
- Encourage your child to ask *you* questions about what was read.
- Encourage your child to read nonfiction, informational materials on many topics, and apply the knowledge acquired in interesting ways.
- Share newspaper articles with your child and discuss the events. Have your child share information about books, magazines, and newspaper articles.
- Help your child gain access to reference materials (for example, a dictionary, an atlas, encyclopedias).
- Schedule a family reading time in which everyone is reading.
- Provide age and reading-level appropriate materials, using the local library or local bookstore.
- Set an example by reading and by sharing what you are reading with your child.
- Have your child read every night for 30 minutes.
- Have your child read and follow directions for games and recipes.

**Create opportunities to support your child in writing, listening, and speaking.**

- Encourage your child to keep a diary and/or a vacation journal.
- Have your child create shopping lists.
- Encourage your child to engage in creative writing, including writing poems, plays, short stories, and songs.
- Encourage your child to write thank-you notes, letters and e-mail messages.
- Have your child use a computer for writing, using various fonts, margins, spell-checker, editing procedures, and graphics.
- Support your child in editing his own work.
- Play word games with your child.
- Use good English when you speak and encourage your child to use good English.
- Talk to your child about daily events.
- Have your child explain how to do different things, such as making cookies or building a model.
- Have your child sing a song or tell a story into a tape recorder and listen to the recording.
- Have your child create and put on a play alone or with friends.
- Establish a time for family communication (for example, at dinner time).
- Encourage your child to provide interesting oral summaries of movies or television programs.
- Have family discussions about things you read.
- Encourage your child to listen to the opinions of others.
- Have your child listen to and explain the lyrics of a selection of music.

## E. Grades Nine Through Twelve

As children progress from grade nine through grade twelve, there are many things parents can do at home to help them succeed. While demands on your child's time will increase, maintain communication with him, continue to spend quality time together, and encourage him to become involved in community service. Be supportive by showing interest, praising her efforts, reinforcing positive behavior, and providing help and resources. Be involved in your teenager's school community by attending parent/teacher conferences, contacting your child teachers when questions arise, and attending school functions. In addition, consider the following suggestions for helping your child succeed in high school and for supporting your teenager's learning in the language arts:

- Create an atmosphere conducive to learning by helping your student schedule regular, quiet time for reading, studying, and completing homework on time.
- Talk to your child about higher education and career possibilities, encourage him to take courses that will support his goals, and develop positive relationships with teachers.
- Find out what is required of students for high school graduation in your district, including required courses, senior projects, and exit exams.
- Note that for high school graduation and for college admission, your child should take at least four years of English.
- Encourage your child to consider honors and advanced placement (AP) classes.
- Encourage your child to take courses that will allow him to be challenged.
- Suggest that your child take the *PSAT* each fall as practice for the *SAT*.
- Encourage your child to read avidly and widely, to pay attention to new words, and to consciously work on developing vocabulary.
- Ask your child's teachers for reading strategies and study techniques that might help him succeed in all of his reading course work across the curriculum.
- Provide comfortable reading-level and age-appropriate materials, using a local library or bookstore, if your student is a struggling reader.
- Encourage your youngster to write letters and send e-mail messages to friends.
- Have your youngster use a computer for writing, using the spell-checker and editing procedures.
- Use the Internet with your child when possible to find information about family interests, student hobbies, or topics being studied in school.
- Subscribe to magazines of interest to your teen or borrow them from the library.
- Use good English when you speak. Encourage your child to use good English and use new vocabulary words that he is learning.
- Discuss books, movies, high-quality television shows, and other topics to stimulate your teen's thinking and curiosity.

- Encourage your child to listen to the opinions of others and ask for her opinions.
- Discuss issues expressed in the media with your family.
- Read magazines, newspapers, and editorials on current events and discuss the point of view of the author and others.

Readers are referred to the last section of this handbook, “Examples of English–Language Arts Resources for Parents and Students,” which offers some suggestions for worthwhile literature for kindergarten through grade twelve, along with reference materials for adults who want to learn more about English–language arts.

### **III. Standards and Frameworks: What They Are and What Role They Play**

State law requires the California State Board of Education to establish policies for each major subject area taught in public schools. Typically, the State Board sets forth these policies in the form of *content standards* and *curriculum frameworks*. Because these two terms figure prominently in discussions about public school curriculum—and because they are fundamental in determining what students should learn and what teachers should teach—a brief explanation is provided here.

Content standards are written expectations for what all students at a given grade level should know and be able to do. California’s expectations are high—comparable to the standards of countries with high levels of student achievement. Content standards define the skills and knowledge that students need in order to be literate, educated citizens and to enter a college or university. They also provide the basis for statewide tests that students must take at certain grade levels. School district and school administrators, classroom teachers, universities that prepare teachers, and publishers of textbooks and other instructional materials pay close attention to the content standards in their work.

A curriculum framework describes the content of the course for each grade level, kindergarten through the grade twelve, and offers suggestions to teachers on *how* to teach the curriculum. A framework is a kind of blueprint for implementing the content standards adopted by the State Board. Many teachers and

administrators use a framework as a guide to help them coordinate what they will teach. Local school boards sometimes base their own curriculum decisions on the frameworks. A framework also is designed to inform textbook publishers about the kinds of instructional materials needed in schools.

The State Board's content standards and frameworks outline a rich program of studies for all children in the state. The English–language arts standards are based on the premise that all students are capable of learning. In addition, the standards ensure that students at the same grade level learn similar skills and content regardless of which public school they attend in California.

An overview of the English–language arts curriculum appears in the next section of this handbook. You can read both the *English–Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* and the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools* (which, for ease in reference, includes the standards as well) in their entirety online: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf>

Hard copies of both publications are available for purchase from CDE Press. For price and ordering information, e-mail CDE Press at [sales@cde.ca.gov](mailto:sales@cde.ca.gov) or call (800) 995-4099.

## **IV. An Overview of the English–Language Arts Curriculum**

The information presented in this section is only a summary of California's English–Language Arts curriculum, intended to provide parents with a general idea of the kinds of things their children will be expected to learn. Parents who wish to read the *English–Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools* in their entirety may do so online: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf>.

In the curriculum presented in the *English–Language Arts Content Standards*, students are expected to have many opportunities to read, write, listen, and speak at every grade level. Through literature (both fiction and nonfiction), students will be transported to many different times and places where they will encounter fascinating characters and events. As listeners and readers, they will respond to the personalities and actions of characters in books, and they will be encouraged to ask: Why did this character do that? What happened as a result? What lessons can be learned? As readers of informational texts (for example, biographies, newspaper articles, encyclopedias), students will be challenged to understand, discuss, and write about many interesting and important topics.

The English–language arts curriculum is comprehensive and is divided into four broad skill areas:

- Reading
- Writing
- Oral and Written English Language Conventions
- Listening and Speaking

All of these skill areas are related in this curriculum; none is developed separately. For example, beginning reading offers writing opportunities, and early writing activities aid reading and stimulate language and spelling development.

These major strands are a constant at each grade level. They expand in complexity from grade to grade, and the tasks become increasingly more demanding and elaborate. In addition, skills, concepts, and topics of study are introduced at specified grade levels and are often spiraled— repeating with increasing complexity. For example, in grade two students are taught how to write informal or friendly letters; in grade three, formal letters; and in grade eight, letters of inquiry for purposes of employment.

One of the goals for primary grades is that each student will leave grade three able to read independently and enthusiastically. Research has found that decoding, or the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to identify words, is fundamental to learning to read. The primary means by which students encounter new words is through independent reading. Therefore, in addition to classroom learning, the habit of independent reading should be instilled and encouraged by teachers and parents from the very beginning if students are to attain that goal. By grade four students should read one-half million words a year in addition to their regular school reading, and children begin making progress toward that goal in kindergarten through grade three.

From the earliest stages children acquire knowledge about the world from their reading and from opportunities to discuss and write about what they are learning. From the earliest stages writing and oral language are taught systematically. Starting in grade one students are given opportunities to write and present

stories and descriptions orally. New types of reading, writing, and presentations are introduced at every grade level. In grades two and three letter-writing is introduced, for example. By grade five all students are expected to write stories, reports, and persuasive essays of at least 500 to 700 words; and they are expected to present orally their stories, reports, and responses to literature. As students grow in their mastery of the types of writing, they study and apply written and oral English language conventions.

A major focus within the *English–Language Arts Content Standards* in grades four through eight is ensuring that students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. A priority is placed on ensuring that students are able to read aloud all kinds of text with expression. To do so, students must continue to decode and comprehend increasingly complex words and text structures. Vocabulary knowledge, which typically doubles during grades four through eight, is primarily a direct result of how much a student reads independently. By grade eight students should read one million words annually on their own. They write and present narratives, research reports, persuasive compositions, and responses to literature. They also learn to write technical documents (for example, an explanation of how to operate a tool) and documents related to career development (such as a job application).

In grades four through eight, students move from learning to read, which occurs in the early grades, to reading to learn. Emphasis on subject-matter reading impacts students as they study history–social science, science, mathematics, and other content areas. Accordingly, the *Framework* emphasizes the importance of helping students acquire academic language so that they can comprehend and write about academic subject matter. Academic language refers to the language of literacy and books, tests, and formal writing. Teachers and parents can help students develop the knowledge of academic language by reading aloud to them, engaging them in discussions, creating opportunities for them to read and write, and promoting programs of reading and writing across the curriculum. Developing academic language is especially critical to the success of students learning to speak English.

In high school the *English–Language Arts Content Standards* should be covered in English classes and possibly other course offerings. By grade twelve students are expected to read independently two million words per year, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature (both fiction and nonfiction), magazines, newspapers, and online information. Comprehension standards require that students demonstrate more sophisticated strategies as they elaborate on what they read.

Writing and oral presentations also become more complex in grades nine through twelve. Students are expected to produce compositions of at least 1,500 words, refining their command of the writing process and of writing conventions. By grade twelve students create narratives, responses to literature, reflective compositions, historical investigations, job applications and resumes, and

multimedia presentations.

Standards for grades nine through twelve also require students to read research critically as well as write and deliver research-based presentations; use technology as a tool for creating finished products; evaluate the media; and use the language arts for the purpose of work and careers.

## V. Planning for Your Child's Success: Help with Making Decisions

### A. High School Graduation Requirements

In California three years of English are mandated for graduation from high school, and four years are required for entrance into the University of California and California State University systems. Additional options may be appropriate for your child's needs: English as a second language, honors and advanced placement classes, and programs for students with special needs, for example. The following table shows minimum requirements for high school graduation mandated by the state. School districts may have additional requirements.

<b>High School Subject Area</b>	<b>State Mandated Requirements* (EC51225.3)(2000)</b>
English	3 years
Mathematics	2 years (beginning 2003-4; must include Algebra I)
Social Science	3 years; one year of U.S. history and geography; one year of world history, culture, and geography; 1 semester American government; 1 semester of economics
Science	2 years; includes biological and physical sciences
Foreign Language	1 year <u>or</u> 1 year visual and performing arts
Visual and Performing Arts	1 year <u>or</u> 1 year foreign language
Physical Education	2 years
Electives	
<b>Total Years (Units)</b>	13 years

\*Beginning with the class of 2006, all students must pass the *California High School Exit*

*Examination* prior to graduation, in addition to meeting course requirements.

## **B. State Achievement Testing**

The California Legislature mandates statewide testing (the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program, or STAR) of certain subject areas at specified grade levels. The purpose is to determine student achievement by county, school district, school, and individual student. All STAR assessments are aligned with California's content standards. For English–language arts, STAR is given annually in the spring to students in grades two through eleven. Additional tests that assess written composition are administered in grades four and seven. For more information about California's testing program, see the California Department of Education's Web site <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/>

Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, students will be required to take the *California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)* in grade ten. Students who do not pass the test the first time will have the opportunity to take it again in both grades eleven and twelve. The purpose of the *CAHSEE* is to improve student achievement in high school and to help ensure that students who graduate from high school can demonstrate competency in the state content standards.

There are two parts to the *CAHSEE*: English–language arts and mathematics. The English–language arts portion of *CAHSEE* is designed to test students' grasp of the state content standards through grade ten. In reading are included vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and analysis of information and literary texts. In writing are included writing strategies, applications, and the conventions of English (for example, grammar, spelling, and punctuation).

More information about the *California High School Exit Exam*, including sample questions, is available from your local high school. The California Department of Education offers additional information on the Internet at <http://www/cde/ca/gov/ta/tg/hs/>

## **C. University and College Admission Requirements**

The following table summarizes general admission requirements for the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. Additional information is available from high school counselors or your university campus of interest. Students should confer with counselors to make sure that elective courses will count toward college entrance requirements.

<b>High School Subject Area</b>	<b>University of California Requirements a-g<sup>1</sup> (2003)</b>	<b>California State University Requirements a-g<sup>1</sup> (2003)</b>
English	4 years	4 years
Mathematics	3 years, including algebra, geometry, and intermediate algebra. 4 years recommended	3 years, including algebra, geometry, and intermediate algebra
Social Science	2 years: 1 year of U.S. history or one semester of civics or American government and one year of world history, culture, and geography	2 years: 1 year of U.S. history and government and one year of other academic social science
Science	2 years with lab required; 3 recommended	2 years with lab
Foreign Language	2 years in same language required, 3 recommended	2 years in same language
Visual and Performing Arts	1 year chosen from the following: dance, drama/theater, music, or visual art	1 year <sup>1</sup>
Physical Education		
Electives	1 year <sup>1</sup>	1 year <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total Years (Units)</b>	15 (7 in the past 2 years)	15 years

<sup>1</sup> UC and CSU have aligned freshman course requirements by subject area as of Fall 2003. For specific courses applicable to each university system, check admissions at [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu). The university approved a-g courses by high school can be viewed at [www.ucop.edu/doorways/list](http://www.ucop.edu/doorways/list)

## **VI. Examples of English–Language Arts Resources for Parents and Students**

### **Literature**

The California Department of Education’s publication titled, *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, lists over 2,700 works of literature that are suitable for a child’s independent reading or for a parent and child to enjoy together. The list covers a broad range of subjects and includes works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Many of the books are available through school and public libraries or through bookstores. Parents are welcome to browse this extensive bibliography, which may be accessed online: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/>

Hard copies of *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (item number 001553) are available for purchase from CDE Press. For price and ordering information, interested parents can e-mail CDE Press at [sales@cde.ca.gov](mailto:sales@cde.ca.gov) or call (800) 995-4099.

The sample titles provided below illustrate the quality of literature to be found in *Recommended Literature*:

### ***Kindergarten Through Grade Three***

*All the Places to Love*, Patricia MacLachlan  
*America the Beautiful*, Katharine Lee Bates  
*Angel Child, Dragon Child*, Michele Maria Surat

*Another Important Book*, Margaret Wise Brown  
*Bark*, George, Jules Feiffer  
*Big Mama's*, Donald Crews  
*The Butterfly House*, Eve Bunting  
*Chato's Kitchen*, Gary Soto  
*Chrysanthemum*, Kevin Henkes  
*Click, Clack, Moo, Cows That Type*, Doreen Cronin  
*Dancin' in the Kitchen*, Frank P. Christian and Wendy Gelsenleiter  
*Draw Me a Star*, Eric Carle  
*George and Martha*, James Marshall  
*Gorilla*, Anthony Browne  
*Grandfather's Journey*, Allen Say  
*Hooway for Wodney Wat*, Helen Lester  
*Horton Hatches the Egg*, Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel)  
*I Have a Dream*, Martin Luther King, Jr.  
*Leo, the Late Bloomer*, Robert Kraus  
*The Little House*, Virginia Burton  
*Mama and Papa Have a Store*, Amelia Lau Carling  
*Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney  
*No Mirrors in My Nana's House*, Isaye Barnwell  
*No! David*, David Shannon  
*The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant*, Jean deBrunhoff  
*Tasty Baby Belly Buttons*, Judy Sierra  
*Tikki Tikki Tembo*, Arlene Mosel  
*What! Cried Granny: An Almost Bedtime Story*, Kate Lum  
*Whistle for Willie*, Ezra Jack Keats  
*Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*, Mem Fox

### **Grades Four Through Eight**

*The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*, Karen Cushman  
*Because of Winn Dixie*, Kate DiCamillo  
*Bookworm's Feast: A Potluck of Poems*, The J. Patrick Lewis  
*A Boy Called Slow: The True Story of Sitting Bull*, Joseph Bruchac  
*The Cay*, Theodore Taylor  
*The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, Francisco Jimenez  
*Dandelion Wine*, Ray Bradbury  
*Dragonwings*, Lawrence Yep  
*Ella Enchanted*, Gail Carson Levine  
*The Friendship*, Mildred Taylor  
*Frindle*, Andrew Clements  
*From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, E. L. Konigsburg  
*Habibi*, Naomi Shihab Nye  
*Honus and Me*, Dan Gutman  
*The Ink Drinker*, Eric Sanvoisin  
*Jip: His Story*, Katherine Paterson  
*Just So Stories*, Rudyard Kipling

*Kit's Wilderness*, David Almond  
*Long Way to Chicago*, Richard Peck  
*Morning Girl*, Michael Dorris  
*The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, Beverly Cleary  
*The Music of the Dolphins*, Karen Hesse  
*Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry  
*Poppy*, Avi  
*Seedfolks*, Paul Fleischman  
*Tuck Everlasting*, Natalie Babbitt  
*The Van Gogh Café*, Cynthia Rylant  
*Walk Two Moons*, Sharon Creech  
*Whipping Boy*, Sid Fleischman  
*Wringer*, Jerry Spinelli

### **Grades Nine Through Twelve**

*China Trade*, S. J. Rozan  
*Cold Mountain*, Charles Frazier  
*Crimes of the Heart*, Beth Henley  
*Ellen Foster*, Kaye Gibbons  
*Girl in Hyacinth Blue*, Susan Vreeland  
*Grand Avenue*, Greg Sarris  
*Holes*, Louis Sachar  
*Homeless Bird*, Gloria Whelan  
*Hope Was Here*, Joan Bauer  
*House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros  
*How Reading Changed My Life*, Anna Quindlen  
*Jubilee*, Margaret Walker  
*The King Must Die*, Mary Renault  
*A Little Too Much is Enough*, Kathleen Tyau  
*Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, Art Spiegelman  
*Miracle's Boys*, Jacqueline Woodson  
*Monster*, Walter Dean Myers  
*Navajo: Visions and Voices Across the Mesa*, Shonto Begay  
*Out of the Dust*, Karen Hesse  
*Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*, Victor Martinez  
*The Pearl*, John Steinbeck  
*Rain of Gold*, Victor Villasenor  
*The Right Stuff*, Tom Wolfe  
*Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe  
*Spoon River Anthology*, Edgar Lee Masters  
*Stuck in Neutral*, Terry Trueman  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee  
*Warriors Don't Cry*, Melba Patillo Beals  
*Whirligig*, Paul Fleischman

### **Resources for Families and Caregivers**

Paulu, Nancy. *Helping Your Child With Homework*. Washington D. C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1997.

*PEP – Parents Empowering Parents* (Binder and CD). The California State PTA Parent Education Manual. Purchasing information may be found online at [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org) or by calling the California State PTA office at (213) 620-1100.

*Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read*. Washington, D.C.: The National Institute for Literacy, 2001. For additional copies of this brochure, contact the National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, PO Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; 1-800-228-8813; FAX 301-470-1244. Email [edpubborders@edpubs.org](mailto:edpubborders@edpubs.org). or download the document at: [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov).

To obtain the full copy of *Teaching Children to Read*, the 2000 report of the National Reading Panel, which serves as the basis for the information in this brochure, visit [www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org).

*Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. Washington, D.C: The National Institute for Literacy, 2001. For additional copies of this brochure, contact the National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, PO Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; 1-800-228-8813; FAX 301-470-1244. E-mail [edpubborders@edpubs.org](mailto:edpubborders@edpubs.org) or download the document at: [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov).

Vopat, James. *More Than Bake Sales, The Resource Guide for Family Involvement in Education*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998.

### **Federal Offices or Federally Funded Clearinghouses Providing Information on Literacy and Learning**

U.S. Department of Education (ED) <http://www.nclb.gov/parents/index.html> *No Child Left Behind* (2001) is the latest federal school reform measure for K–12 public schools— placing greater emphasis on reading than ever before.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Toll Free: 1-800-LET-ERIC <http://www.eric.ed.gov/resources/parent/parent.html>

ERIC is a national education information system. The ERIC parent brochures include “How Can I Encourage My Young Child to Read?”

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) University of Michigan School of Education Phone: 734-647-6940 <http://www.ciera.org>

Even Start Family Literacy Program Toll Free: 1-800-USA-LEARN <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP/programs.html#prog3>

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) Toll Free: 1-800-228-8813

<http://www.nifl.gov>

Visit this Web site to obtain free copies of current publications on literacy and links to many other literacy organizations. You will also find the NIFL directory, which provides free referrals for potential students and volunteers to literacy programs in their area. To access this directory, go to [www.literacydirectory.org](http://www.literacydirectory.org), where you can enter your zip code and select options for the kind of help you need.

Early Head Start/Head Start Program Phone: 202-205-8572

For information about California's Head Start and Early Head Start, contact the California Head Start State Collaboration Office, Attention: Michael Zito, California Department of Education, 560 J Street, Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95814; telephone (916-323-9727); e-mail: [mzito@cde.ca.gov](mailto:mzito@cde.ca.gov).

### **Resources If Your Child Has a Learning Disability or Reading Problem**

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education

Toll Free: 1-800-328-0272

<http://www.ericec.org/>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Clearinghouse

Toll Free: 1-800-370-2943

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/publications.htm>

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

P.O. Box 1492

Washington, DC 20013-1492

Toll Free: 1-800-695-0285

<http://www.nichcy.org>

### **References Used in Compiling This Handbook**

Armbruster, Bonnie B., Fran Lehr, and Jean Osborn. *A Child Becomes a Reader*. Portsmouth, N.H.: RMC Research Corporation, 2002.

DeBruin-Parecki, Andrea; Kathryn Perkinson; and Lance Ferderer. *Helping Your Child Become a Reader*. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Education, 1999. Reprinted by California Department of Education, 2000.

*English–Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1998.

*English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve.* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1999.

*First Class, Guidelines for Early Primary Education.* 1999. Sacramento: California Department of Education.

*Parent Handbooks, Content Standards for California Schools.* Adapted and Prepared by the Tehama County Superintendent of Schools, Red Bluff, California, 2002 (11 brochures—three-year-olds through eighth grade)

Perkinson, Kathryn, *Helping Your Child Use the Library.* Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1996.

*Prekindergarten Learning Development Guidelines.* Prepared by Health and Education Communication Consultants. Sacramento: California, 2000.

*Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve.* Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1999. [www.cde.ca.gov/cfir/rla](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cfir/rla).

## **VII. For More Information from the California Department of Education**

For general information regarding content standards and frameworks or the process for the state adoption of instructional materials, please contact Thomas Adams, Director, Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division, (916) 319-0881.

For information regarding English–Language Arts curriculum and instruction, including resource materials listed in this handbook, please contact the Reading/Language Arts Leadership Office, (916) 323-6269.

For information regarding statewide testing, please contact the Standards and Assessment Division, (916) 319-0350.

For information regarding parent, family, and community involvement, please contact the Title I Policy and Partnerships Office, (916) 319-0854.