



ELA Skills Brush-Up with Kids Academy: Transitioning from Kindergarten to Grade 1

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Transitioning from kindergarten to 1st grade is a big step, especially in English Language Arts (ELA). It's the point where children start seeing themselves as readers and writers. I've learned from my experience in the classroom that summer can either reinforce a love of literacy or cause key skills to fade. Recreating a school day at home is not necessary however, a little practice mixed with fun goes a long way.



Below are the skills I perceive to be the most important ELA skills to review from kindergarten and a few foundational 1st grade skills you can start exploring. Each skill is paired with engaging Kids Academy resources and fun off-screen ideas that will make learning feel natural and playful.

REVIEWING KINDERGARTEN ELA SKILLS

1. Letter Sound Recognition

What it is: Knowing the sounds each letter makes.

Why it matters: This skill is the foundation for phonics. It's what helps children decode new words when reading. In 1st grade, they'll use this skill to sound out longer and more complex words. They start to move from isolated sounds to blending sounds. They are also expected to do this quickly and automatically. I have worked with many students who knew their letter sounds but had not practiced blending. The difference in reading progress mid year from those who had a strong sound base was huge.

Useful Activities:

- Video: [Letter Sound Video](#)



Watch on [YouTube](#)

- Worksheet: [Letter Sound Worksheets](#)

Letter Sounds

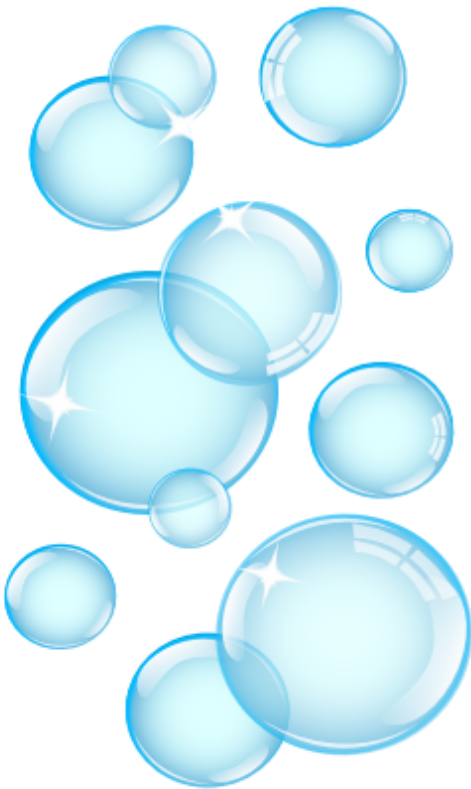
Circle the word that starts with the same sound as the image.



cup

fan

dog



car

bone

flower



• Quiz: Initial Long Vowels

123456

X

 What letter sound does each word **begin** with? Drag the correct letter to each picture.











Confirm

a
e
i
o
u

- Additional practice: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/lessons/foundational-reading/letter-sound-relationships/>

Off-Screen Fun: Try a game of "I Spy" using letter sounds: "I spy something that starts with the B sound. You could also go on a sound scavenger hunt. Have your child identify a letter and its sounds, and then go find objects around the house that start with the same letter and sound.

2. Rhyming Words and Word Families

What it is: Recognizing and making rhyming words (e.g. cat, hat, mat).

Why it matters: Rhyming builds phonological awareness and is tied to spelling and word recognition. It also teaches children to listen for sound patterns which will later help them decode and spell families of words. In 1st grade, this foundation supports reading fluency and word decoding. In my classroom, kids who could rhyme were always quicker

to spot patterns in word families and spelling games. I think it made spelling feel more like a puzzle or challenge rather than a chore to them.

Useful Activities:

- Video: [Hickory Dickory Dock](#)

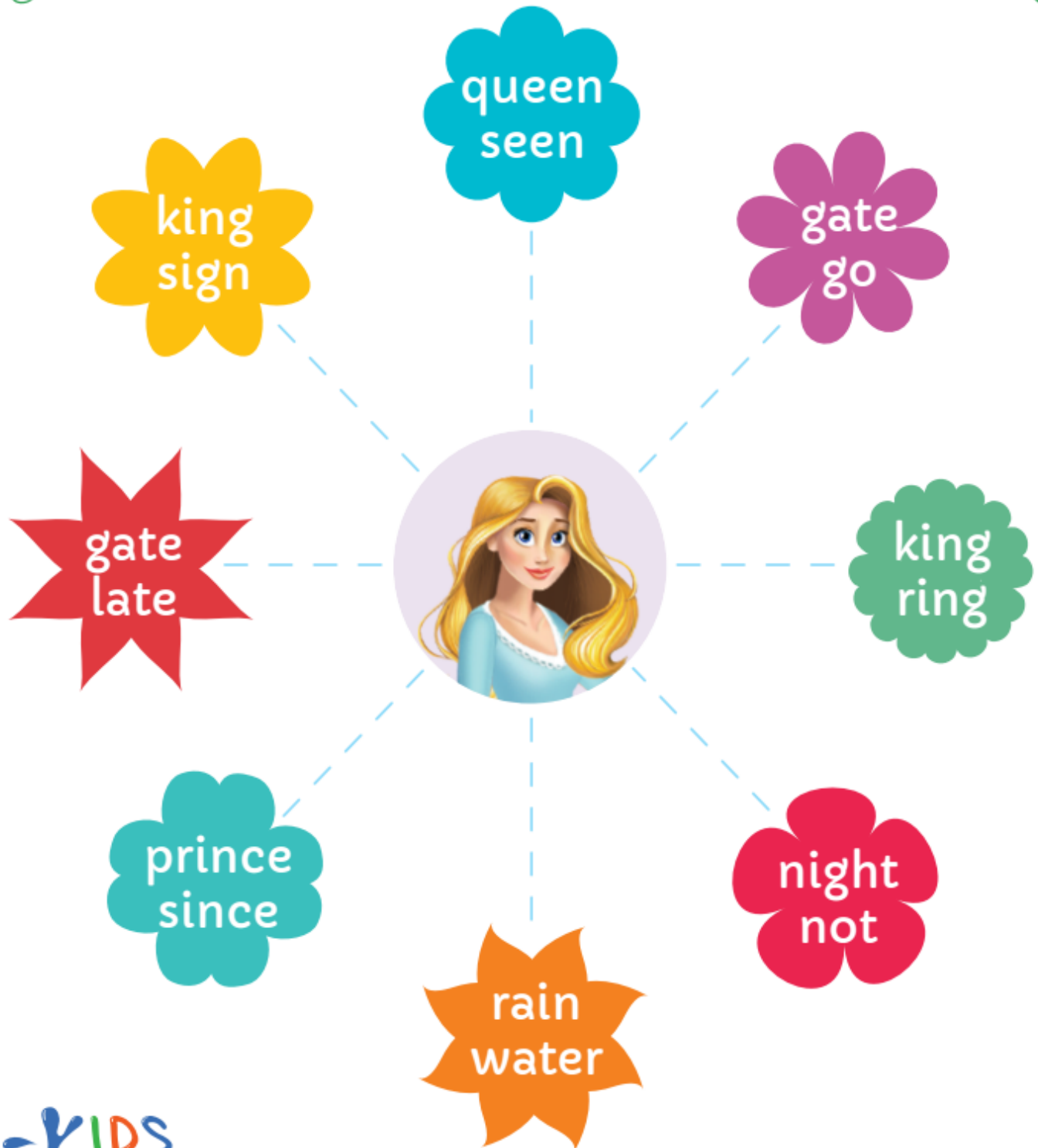


Watch on [YouTube](#)

- Worksheet: [Rhyming Flowers](#)

Rhyming Flowers

Help the Princess pick flowers.
Draw lines to the ones with rhyming words.



- Lesson: **Rhyming Words**



- Additional practice: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/lessons/foundational-reading/syllables-and-rhyming/>

Off-Screen Fun: Have a rhyme battle, say a word and go back and forth until someone runs out of rhymes. Or create a rhyme box. Place small toys or picture cards in a box that rhymes. We made these all the time in the classroom.

3. Story Listening and Retelling

What it is: Listening to and discussing stories.

Why it matters: This skill builds comprehension, vocabulary, and sequencing skills. These are core reading skills. In 1st grade, children need to retell stories with detail and answer comprehension questions like "What was the story mostly about" or "Why did the character feel sad?" While this may seem like a common sense skill, this is one of the skills I have seen as the number one struggle in upper elementary. Children can read and decode words but are not comprehending the story at all. I used to play a game called "Retell Relay" after any story we read together. I could instantly tell the students that had practiced retelling early on as they always had a better memory and could dine the main idea faster even in longer texts.

Useful Activities:

- Lesson: Retell Familiar Stories

**Kindergarten
ENGLISH**

START CLASSROOM

Subjects

2/3 Well done! Add more activities or press "Start Classroom" to get your Classroom code.

6:00 min

1st

3:00 min

2nd

3:00 min

3rd

0:00

Worksheet

Worksheet

+

- Worksheet: [Hickory Dickory Dock Sequencing](#)

Hickory, Dickory, Dock



Read the poem and circle all of the animals that went up the clock.

Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse went up the clock.
The clock struck one,
The mouse went down.
Hickory, dickory, dock.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The monkey went up the clock,
The clock struck four,
The monkey went down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The bear went up the clock,
The clock struck two,
The bear went down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The pig went up the clock,
The clock struck five,
The monkey went down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The parrot went up the clock,
The clock struck three,
The parrot went down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

Hickory, Dickory, Dock,
The elephant went up the clock,
The clock struck six,
The elephant went down.
Hickory, Dickory, Dock.



1234**5**





Choose the house that the Big Bad Wolf can't blow down in the story **The Three Little Pigs**.





Confirm

- Additional practice: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/lessons/kindergarten/foundational-reading/literature/>

Off-Screen Fun: After a bedtime story, ask your child to act out their favorite part or tell it in their own words. You can even switch up the ending together.

4. Writing Letters and Simple Words

What it is: Forming letters and writing CVC (consonant vowel consonant) words.

Why it matters: Sets the foundation for writing sentences in 1st grade. Kids who are comfortable writing letters can focus more on expressing ideas than just forming words. In first grade they begin to write opinions and little stories. This can be harder to do if they are still struggling with letter formation or spelling simple words.

I have often had students that had trouble writing their letters legibly. When we focused more on building stamina and letter confidence, their whole attitudes toward writing changed.

Useful Activities:

- Video: [Uppercase Letters](#)



Watch on [YouTube](#)

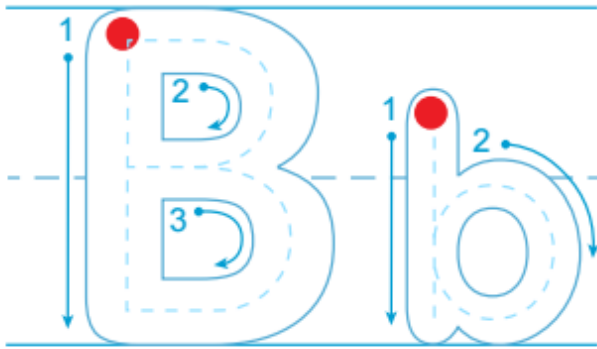
- Worksheet: [Trace Letters Worksheets](#)

Alphabet: Letters B and F

Trace the letters **Bb** and **Ff**.

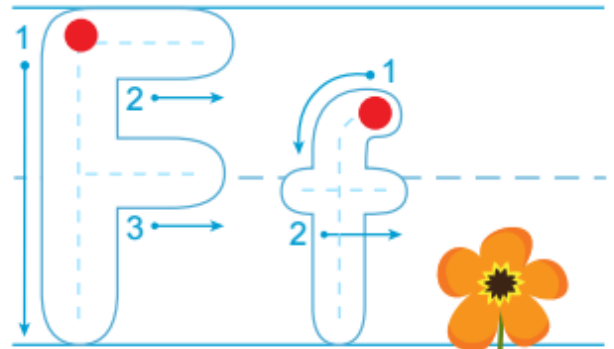
Draw a line from the bee to the pictures that have the **B** sound.
Draw a line from the flower to the pictures that have the **F** sound.

Bb



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Ff



Get more worksheets at www.kidsacademy.mobi

- Additional practice: once your child is confident with tracing individual letters, it's time to provide them with word tracing activities which you can find in this worksheet collection: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/printable-worksheets/kindergarten/writing/tracing-words/>

Off-Screen Fun: Have your child write letters and simple words with sidewalk chalk, sand, or finger paint. Or check out this [letter formation video](#). The more practice the better.

PREVIEWING 1ST GRADE ELA SKILLS

5. Sight Words

What it is: Recognizing high frequency words like "the," "is," and "and." These are words they will see often.

Why it matters: Sight words appear often and aren't always easy to sound out. They typically hold a sentence together. In 1st grade children will need to recognize them instantly to stay focused on meaning rather than decoding every word. Recognizing them quickly boosts reading fluency and confidence. There is no limit on how many sight words a child can master before 1st grade. I often have parents ask "How many sight words should they know by the time they leave Kindergarten?" My answer to that is the more the better. More exposure to words will help students soar through beginner reads and gain more confidence when reading alone.

Useful Activities:

- Lesson: [High Frequency Words](#)

Estimated classroom
time: 9 min

Chapter: High
Frequency Words

Unit: Foundational
Reading Skills

Click on any activity below to start learning.

1st

🕒 3:00 min

2nd

🕒 3:00 min

3rd

🕒 3:00 min

Tracing Sight Words: Cat



Trace the word "cat".



Cat Printable Sight
Words Worksheet

Worksheet

Tracing Sight Words: Dog



Trace the word "dog".



Dog Worksheet Sight
Words Worksheet

Worksheet

Tracing Sight Words: Fish



Trace the word "fish".



Fish Printable Sight
Words Worksheet

Worksheet

- Worksheet: [At the Beach Sight Words](#)

Position Words: at the Beach



Circle the correct position words to complete the sentences.



The ball is ...
the towel.

on **in**

The seashell is ...
the bucket and the towel.

behind **between**

The sand castle is ...
the bucket.

under **behind**

The kite is ...
the clouds.

on **above**

• Quiz: [Identifying Sight Words](#)

1234**5**

X

 Drag and drop the sight words to the pictures they match.










sun

fox

pen

Confirm

- Additional practice: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/lessons/english-language-arts/high-frequency-words/>

Off-Screen Fun: Write sight words on post it notes or flash cards. Then grab some bean bags or anything you can safely toss. Read the words off as the bean bag lands on them We played many different variations of this game in the classroom. You can also get letter magnets and spell out sight words together off the fridge!

6. Writing Simple Sentences

[What it is: Putting together short sentences using known words.](#)

Why it matters: Helps children organize thoughts and begin to understand grammar and punctuation. Children can really start to find their voice in writing early on. Writing simple sentences is one of the first steps toward independent writing. In 1st grade this becomes a daily routine. I have seen so many students truly light up when they write a

full sentence on their own. Those early writers that practice simple sentences over the summer always come back ready to take on bigger writing task with confidence.

Useful Activities:

- Worksheet: [Finish the Sentence](#)

What Do You See?

Circle the missing word to match the picture.



1. I ____ cake.

bake

eat

hit

yell



2. I ____ the tree.


cut


see

climb


kick


- Video: [Building Simple Sentences](#)




Build a Sentence! 

Draw a line through the circles to rearrange the jumbled words and make a complete sentence. In each section, start at the red circle.

Section 1: The (red circle) kitten (blue circle) drinks (blue circle) milk. (blue circle) 

Section 2: I (red circle) have (blue circle) a (blue circle) dog. (blue circle) bike. (blue circle) 

Section 3: The (red circle) dog (blue circle) runs (blue circle) home. (blue circle) 

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Watch on [YouTube](#)

- Additional practice: <https://www.kidsacademy.mobi/lessons/english-language-arts/forming-sentences/>

Off-Screen Fun: Cut up simple sentences into word strips and let your child rearrange them to create silly or serious versions. I used to call this activity “Sentence Scramble” in my classroom. My students were always laughing and learning at the same time and it was a sneaky way to teach word order and punctuation.

TIPS TO MAKE SUMMER ELA FUN

- Mix it in: Add 10–15 minutes of literacy practice into your daily routine. Remember to make it fun. This is a time to ADD in practice not make the whole summer about school work.
- Use their interests: If they love animals, read animal books or write silly animal stories. Matching the practice with things they are interested in will make learning more fun.
- Celebrate all attempts: Whether they sound out one word or write a full sentence, give lots of praise. They are working on skills for the future and it can be hard. Any type of reward will be helpful.

EXPLORE MORE

Explore full categories for more literacy practice:

- [Phonics](#)
- [Reading Comprehension](#)
- [Writing and Sentence Building](#)

Filling your summer with fun literacy practice prepares your child for the year ahead but also helps them see reading and writing as fun. The kids I saw return in the fall with strong literacy habits had more confidence, more curiosity, and were ready to transition to the next grade level.

