

Grade 3 Literacy Activities for At Home



Oral Language

Oral Language is sometimes called spoken language. It includes speaking and listening and is the way people communicate with each other. In third grade, readers can effectively participate in discussions and ask and answer questions with detail. They can share the main idea of information that is read or heard. Third graders can present information that is organized and uses complete sentences. They are capable of using media to support their presentations.

Practice Activities

- Conversation Starters: Engage in conversation with the child to build their oral language skills. Conversation starters can serve as ice-breakers to initiate a meaningful conversation and build confidence to converse with others. Follow up by asking who, what, when, why, where, and how questions. [Conversation Starters](#) (optional)
- New Experiences: Give your child opportunities to participate in new experiences. Visit (in person or virtually) museums, historical sites, theaters or discover new hobbies and interests together. Ask questions and discuss your experiences together to build vocabulary and speaking skills.
- Current Events: Talk about current events together. Discuss with the child so they understand what is happening and how it connects to their lives, other events they may have seen or read about, and other parts of their community.
- Role Model Verbal Skills: Become aware of how you speak. Do you only give one word answers? Do you explain how you feel in ways that are clear? Make your thinking “visible;” model how you make decisions (e.g., “I knew it was going to be really hot today because it felt so warm early in the morning. By the time the sun is directly above us, it’ll be scorching. This is why I parked under a tree. I didn’t want the inside of our car to get that hot, so I parked in the shade and I’ll leave the windows cracked to let cooler air flow in.”).
- Convince Me: Provide opportunities for the child to persuade you the next time the child is trying to convince you to buy something, go somewhere, etc. Ask them to create a presentation (e.g., speaking, writing, or using online tools) to share their side of the story or opinion. This will give children practice thinking about the most important points and an opportunity to work on their presentation skills.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- CROWD Strategy: Use the CROWD (complete, recall, open-ended, wh- questions, and distance) strategy to ask different types of questions and begin conversation about the book, passage, or article. Access printable materials here: [Trifold 1](#), [Trifold 2](#), [Trifold 3](#).
- Grocery Shop Talk: Use this recourse to engage in conversation while shopping. Use words the child may not hear in other environments (e.g., deli, loaf of bread, 1/2 pound), and ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer (e.g., Why should we look in the carton before we decide to buy the eggs?). If desired, write your grocery list on the printed paper, fold the paper in half, and refer to the questions as you shop. [Grocery Shop Talk](#)
- Conversation Cards: Use conversation cards any time or place to increase a child’s use and understanding of oral language. Suggestions include at the dinner table, while waiting in a store or restaurant, and during bedtime routines. Use follow up questions to increase the number of turns taken in a conversation. [Conversation Cards](#)

Phonics

Phonics refers to the ability to learn the individual sounds in spoken language and map those sounds to specific written letters in the English language. Students who have strong phonics skills are able to connect individual sounds with letters and use those sounds to read words. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)) In 3rd grade, readers will be able to read multisyllabic and irregularly spelled words. They will know the 6 syllable types and be able to apply them when they are breaking words down. Third graders can apply word analysis skills to read grade appropriate words, including using the meaning from common Greek and Latin roots and affixes.

Practice Activities

- Looking for the Smaller Words: Help look for smaller words the child knows when they come to a word that is unfamiliar. This can help the child decode the unfamiliar word. For example, if the child comes to the word “exclaimed”, help them cover the “ex” and “ed” revealing only “claim”. Next, cover “claim” and work to decipher the other parts. Once they know each part, put the word back together and read.
- Change the Meaning with Prefixes and Suffixes (Affixes): Notice when you or the child comes to a word with a prefix or suffix and pause to discuss it. Isolate the word and break it down into the base word and prefix or suffix (e.g., nonfiction is “non” and “fiction”). Talk about the meaning of the base word and the prefix or suffix (e.g., “non” means not and “fiction” means invented or imagined). Talk about how the meaning of the word changes when combined (e.g., nonfiction means not imagined). Think of other words that have the same suffix or prefix and guide your child to look for patterns in spelling and meaning. Access a list of common prefixes and suffixes [here](#).
- Making New Words: Use small pieces of paper or index cards to jot down a collection of base words (words in their simplest form) and common prefixes and suffixes. Take turns selecting a base word and then a prefix or suffix to create a new word. See how many different combinations you each can make. Discuss the meaning of each new word as they are made. Optional printable materials can be found [here](#).
- Sharing Our Writing: Consider connecting the child with a relative or pen-pal as a meaningful opportunity to practice their writing skills. This could be through email or hand-written letters. Encourage the child to add descriptive words throughout and to incorporate new vocabulary they have been learning.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Spell and Sort with Vowel Digraphs: Use this sorting activity to identify vowel digraphs. Access printable materials [here](#): [Spell and Sort \(ai, ay, ea, ee, oa, ow, and ui\)](#), [Spell and Sort \(ea, oa, ai, ay, oo\)](#).
- Syllable Share: Play this game to make multiple words with the same syllable. [Syllable Share](#)
- Map a Word: Describe that each box represents each sound (not letter) in a word. Have the child say each sound in a word and then write each sound in one box. Watch [Map a Word](#). [Map a Word](#)
- Silent Letters: Show the child a word with a silent letter (e.g., comb) and explain the b is silent because we do not hear its sound. Read more words and have the child sort the words according to whether or not there is a silent letter. Watch [Silent Letters](#). [Silent Letters](#)
- Syllable Scoops: Have the child segment and sort words according to how many syllables there are. When applicable, discuss root words, prefixes, and suffixes. [Syllable Scoops](#)
- Word Spinner: Combine two word parts to make new words. Then, determine if the word is a real word or a nonsense word. Spinners can be made by placing the point of a pencil in a paperclip if brads are unavailable. Another option is to cut each of the sounds individually and use as cards. [Word Spinner](#)

Online Activities

- [Rough Riders](#): This game has players track down diamond thieves while practicing digraphs, vowel sounds, compound words, and syllables.
- [Vowel Team Sentence Sort](#): This activity allows children to sort sentences by the vowel teams included in the sentences.
- [Spin and Read](#): Practice reading words with the following spelling patterns: ew, ue.
- [Multisyllabic Words](#): This game provides practice matching open and closed syllables to build a new word with game cards. [A second game](#) allows children to match open and closed syllables as well. A quick [overview of syllable types](#) can be found here.
- [Grammar Police](#): This game provides practice with compound words and affixes while policing the highways.
- [Grammar Gladiator](#): This game provides practice with articles, verbs, homophones, and punctuation while unleashing fireballs.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to knowledge of the meanings of individual words being read. Vocabulary knowledge is important to a student's ability to read and comprehend what is read. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)) In 3rd grade, readers are able to determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases, distinguish shades of meaning among related words, and use vocabulary about time and space relationships.

Practice Activities

Model Rich Vocabulary: Use more sophisticated and descriptive language instead of trying to simplify your language so the child will always understand (e.g., Instead of: "Wow! You're working hard!" Try: "Wow! You are persevering through a really challenging task!"). If you think that your child may not understand, stop and take time to discuss the less familiar words.

Introducing New Words: Assist the child in learning the new word by following these steps:

- Provide a child-friendly definition of the word.
- Give a child-friendly example that connects to their prior knowledge or daily life.
- Ask your child to give their own example.
- Keep new words active by using them at home or in the car during conversation.

My Dictionary: Help the child keep track of new/unfamiliar words and their meanings by helping the child create their own dictionary or word catcher. The child can write the words, draw pictures to illustrate the word or definition, and write sentences using the words.

Homemade Headlines: Cut out the headlines from a newspaper (old or new). From each headline, cut out one word. Have the child read the headline and include new words to create their own silly titles or stories. If your child has specific vocabulary they are learning at school, use those words as a word bank to complete the activity.

Family Vocabulary Project: Create a decorative jar or container to initiate a vocabulary building family project. Family members can write down new vocabulary words they read or hear and include the definition on the back. The vocabulary words are shared, discussed, and added to the jar. Family members can include the new words in their

everyday writing and speaking. You may even choose to make a “word of the day” or “word of the week” to help focus the family on using one or two of the newly learned words.

Practice Activities (with Printables)

- What a Word: Use the included passage and word bank to complete the story. [What a Word](#)
- Extreme Words: Explore the relationships between descriptive words. Talk about the provided words and their meaning to determine the order (e.g., giggle, chuckle, whimper, cry). [Extreme Words](#)
- Synonym-Antonym Connections: Use the cards included to help the child identify synonyms and antonyms. Synonyms have similar meaning and antonyms have opposite meanings. [Synonym-Antonym Connections](#)
- Homograph Hitch: Match words that sound the same but have different meanings with the cards provided. [Homograph Hitch](#)
- Oh My Word!: Have the child write simple explanations, sentences, and synonyms of words in this activity. [Oh My Word!](#)

Online Activities

- [Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle](#): This game has children apply vocabulary as they complete a crossword puzzle by matching a definition and word from a given list.
- [Magnet Sentences](#): This game has children pick a word that doesn't make sense in a word and use a word that gives meaning to the sentence in its place.
- [Vocab Vik](#): This game has children match words to a given vocabulary word.
- [ANTonyms](#): This game has children find the matching ants to form antonym pairs.
- [Word Shark](#): This game has children practice parts of speech (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) by having sharks gobble up smaller fish with the correct part of speech.

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read accurately with reasonable speed and expression while understanding what is read. In kindergarten, children are observing and listening to adults read aloud and model fluent reading.

Practice Activities

- Choral Reading: Practice reading the same text aloud chorally (together and in unison) with the child.
- Echo Reading: Model expression while reading to the child. Then, have the child read the same sentence or phrase fluently. Watch [Echo Reading](#).
- Let's Get Cooking: Select a recipe to make together. Request that the child reads the directions for each of you as you complete each step of the recipe. Take notice if the child misses a word, correct, and have the child re-read the sentence.
- Challenging Word Challenge: Read together. As the child misses a word, write it down on a piece of paper. After you are finished reading, review each of the missed words and help the child figure them out by breaking them down, looking for the smaller word, and/or sounding out. Use the words in a variety of games such as: trying to beat a time limit to read all words quickly, making duplicates and playing memory, or finding words that have things in common such as “ends in ing”. Repetition with the unknown words can help your child more readily recognize them in the future.
- Model Reading Fluency: Use the following tips for Reading With Expression:

- Read expressively: talk the way the story's characters would talk; make sound effects and funny faces; and vary the pitch of your voice throughout the story to make it more interesting.
- Expressively reread when you notice words like “shouted”, “cried” or “laughed”.
- Expressively reread when you notice the punctuation such as ! and ?.
- Enjoy the time reading together! Do not rush.
- [mCLASS Home Connect](#): Access Accurate and Fluent Reading activities to practice reading at home or on the go here.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Chunky Passages: Practice reading text in meaningful chunks, then reread it fluently without separation. [Chunky Passages](#)
- Fast Phrases: Stack cards with printed phrases face down. With a phrases correct per minute sheet, record how many phrases are read correctly with a goal to increase speed and accuracy. [Fast Phrases](#)
- Reading for Understanding: Use the information on the provided bookmark to learn about strategies to increase fluency during read aloud, including alternated reading and reading together. Watch [Reading for Understanding](#). [Reading for Understanding](#)
- Reader's Theater: Assign parts of reader theater's scripts to family members and friends or have the child read each character's lines with expression. [Reader's Theater](#)

Online Activities

- [Models of Fluent Reading](#): This resource provides opportunities to see illustrations and listen to books read fluently.
- [Echo Reading](#): This resource provides books to practice echo reading with your child to build fluency. Each book has a speaker symbol at the bottom of the page. Push the speaker for the child to hear the page read aloud. Then, have the child echo the reading to practice reading with expression as if they were talking to someone.
- [Say What](#): This game provides a space for children to create their own silly stories, blindly choosing from nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Read the story created and reread to increase fluency

Comprehension

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand what one reads. It is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#))

Practice Activities

- Before, During, and After: Engage before reading a book to the child by making a prediction about the book, reading the blurb on the back, or connecting the topic of the book to something familiar to the child. During reading, make personal connections, predict what will happen next, or discuss characters and/or emotions. After reading, talk about your favorite parts of the story and your opinions. [Before, During, and After](#) (optional)
- Check-ins: Stop every few pages to “check-in” while the child is reading or as you are reading together. This is one way to know if the child is understanding what is being read or heard. Use open-ended questions to gauge their understanding (e.g., “What are your thoughts about this part of the story?”, “How do you know?”, “What do you think might happen next?”). You can vary how frequently you check-in based on how well your child is understanding the text. For more challenging texts, check-in more frequently.
- Graphic Organizers: Create a visual with the child as texts are read and discussed. Watch [Graphic Organizers](#).

- Five Finger Retell: Retell a story with the child, having each finger represent a story element. Your thumb is the characters, pointer finger is the setting (where the story took place), middle finger is the beginning, ring finger is the middle events, and pinkie is the solution ending. After the child retells, ask them their favorite part of the story.
- Exploring Poetry: Read short, simple poems together. Discuss what they are about and the feelings they convey. Create your own poems together and share. Providing notebooks, journals, or stapled paper allows children to keep a collection of their writings to reread and share with others.
- Family Book Club: Encourage different family members to pick the book. Discuss the main ideas, plots, characters, and personal opinions about the book together. This is a great way to enjoy quality family time while experiencing the joy of reading together.
- Dear Character: Ask the child to write a letter to the main character in the text. Have the child write about their favorite part of the book and include questions they have after reading.
- [mCLASS Home Connect](#): Access Comprehension activities to practice reading at home or on the go.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Incredible Inferences: Play this Bingo-like game with the child by covering the situation described on the card drawn. This activity supports children as they practice the skill of inference. Inferencing can be a challenge for young readers and is often needed to determine the moral or lesson of a story. [Incredible Inferences](#)
- Story Element Sort: Using the cards provided, sort the cards by story. Then, match the descriptor to the appropriate story element. [Story Element Sort](#)
- Just the Facts: Support the child as they read informational text. Look for facts about the topic. Children are expected to refer to the text to support what they have read about the topic. [Just the Facts](#)
- Story Question Cube: Use a dice-like cube with questions on each side to review elements of a recently read story. Roll the cube and answer/discuss the question on top. [Story Question Cube](#)
- Character Characteristics: Describe a character in a story by answering questions to complete a graphic organizer. Extend this activity by completing the graphic organizer for two characters and then comparing the characteristics. [Character Characteristics](#)
- Persuade, Entertain, and Inform Sort: Read short passages with the child and sort them by the author's purpose. [Persuade, Entertain, and Inform Sort](#)

Online Activities

- [Question Cube](#): This game provides a short story to read. Click the question cube and answer the question based on the story.
- [Detective's Notebook](#): The game is designed to get students thinking about what they are reading and answering questions that require inferencing.
- [Train Game](#): This game supports children in developing synthesis skills by asking them to group and order words to form sentences.
- [Main Idea Millionaire](#): This game has players find the sentence that does not fit with the main idea of the paragraph.
- [Sir Readalot](#): This game has players smash boxes to find a key that will unlock the treasure box while practicing skills around fact and opinion, drawing conclusions, context clues, and syllables.
- [Author's Purpose](#): This game provides practice identifying the author's purpose after reading a brief passage. Is it to entertain, inform, or persuade?