

The Polar Express and Georgia Performance Standards

Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express* School Experience supports curricula in all grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Through interaction, asking questions, answering leading questions relevant to thematic principles, and interacting with both performers and peers, students have opportunity to reinforce and demonstrate learned skills and use them in a context that is both educational and fun, while also reflects "real-world" applications that they will experience later in life. Based on relevant student interaction, several of the following standards have great opportunity to be addressed through this experience:

Kindergarten

ELAKLSV1 The student uses oral and visual skills to communicate. The student

- a. Listens and speaks appropriately with peers and adults.
- e. Describes people, places, things, locations, and actions.
- f. Increases vocabulary to reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge.
- g. Communicates effectively when relating experiences and retelling stories heard.
- h. Uses complete sentences when speaking.

ELAKR1 The student demonstrates knowledge of concepts of print. The student

- a. Recognizes that print and pictures (signs and labels, newspapers, and informational books) can inform, entertain, and persuade.

ELAKR5 The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively. The student

- a. Listens to a variety of texts and uses new vocabulary in oral language.
- b. Discusses the meaning of words and understands that some words have multiple meanings.

ELAKR6 The student gains meaning from orally presented text. The student

- a. Listens to and reads a variety of literary (e.g., short stories, poems) and informational texts and materials to gain knowledge and for pleasure.
- b. Makes predictions from pictures and titles.
- c. Asks and answers questions about essential narrative elements (e.g., beginning-middle-end, setting, characters, problems, events, resolution) of a read-aloud text.
- e. Retells familiar events and stories to include beginning, middle, and end.
- g. Connects life experiences to read-aloud text.
- h. Retells important facts in the student's own words.

First Grade

ELA1LSV1 The student uses oral and visual strategies to communicate. The student

- b. Recalls information presented orally.
- c. Responds appropriately to orally presented questions.
- d. Increases vocabulary to reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge.
- e. Communicates effectively when relating experiences and retelling stories read, heard, or viewed.

ELA1R5 The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively. The student

- a. Reads and listens to a variety of texts and uses new words in oral and written language.

ELA1R6 The student uses a variety of strategies to understand and gain meaning from grade-level text. The student

- a. Reads and listens to a variety of texts for information and pleasure.
- b. Makes predictions using prior knowledge.
- c. Asks and answers questions about essential narrative elements (e.g., beginning middle- end, setting, characters, problems, events, resolution) of a read-aloud or independently read text.
- d. Retells stories read independently or with a partner.
- f. Makes connections between texts and/or personal experiences.
- g. Identifies the main idea and supporting details of informational text read or heard.
- i. Recognizes cause-and-effect relationships in text.
- l. Recognizes plot, setting, and character within texts, and compares and contrasts these elements among texts.

Second Grade

ELA2LSV1 The student uses oral and visual strategies to communicate. The student

- a. Interprets information presented and seeks clarification when needed.
- e. Increases vocabulary to reflect a growing range of interests and knowledge.

ELA2R3 The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively. The student

- b. Recognizes grade appropriate words with multiple meanings.
- d. Determines the meaning of unknown words on the basis of context.

ELA2R4 The student uses a variety of strategies to gain meaning from grade-level text. The student

- b. Makes predictions from text content.
- c. Generates questions before, during and after reading.
- d. Recalls explicit facts and infers implicit facts.
- e. Summarizes text content.
- g. Interprets information from illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs, and graphic organizers.
- h. Makes connections between texts and/or personal experiences.
- i. Identifies and infers main idea and supporting details.
- k. Identifies and infers cause-and-effect relationships.
- l. Recognizes plot, setting, and character within text, and compares and contrasts these elements among texts.
- o. Recognizes the author's purpose.

Third Grade

ELA3C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student

- e. Speaks and writes in complete and coherent sentences.
- f. Identifies and uses increasingly complex sentence structure.
- h. Demonstrates knowledge of when to use formal or informal language exchanges (e.g., slang, colloquialisms, idioms).
- i. When appropriate, determines the meaning of a word based on how it is used in an orally presented sentence.

ELA3LSV1 The student uses oral and visual strategies to communicate. The student

- a. Adapts oral language to fit the situation by following the rules of conversation with peers and adults.
- b. Recalls, interprets, and summarizes information presented orally.
- c. Uses oral language for different purposes: to inform, persuade, or entertain.
- d. Listens to and views a variety of media to acquire information.

ELA3R2 The student acquires and uses grade-level words to communicate effectively. The student

- a. Reads literary and informational texts and incorporates new words into oral and written language.
- b. Uses grade-appropriate words with multiple meanings.
- d. Identifies the meaning of common idioms and figurative phrases and incorporates them into oral and written language.
- f. Determines the meaning of unknown words on the basis of context.

ELA3R3 The student uses a variety of strategies to gain meaning from grade-level text. The student

- c. Generates questions to improve comprehension.
- e. Recognizes plot, setting, and character within text, and compares and contrasts these elements between texts.
- f. Makes judgments and inferences about setting, characters, and events and supports them with evidence from the text.
- g. Summarizes text content.
- h. Interprets information from illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs, and graphic organizers.
- i. Makes connections between texts and/or personal experiences.
- l. Identifies and infers cause-and-effect relationships and draws conclusions.
- m. Recalls explicit facts and infers implicit facts.
- p. Recognizes the author's purpose.
- q. Formulates and defends an opinion about a text.

Fourth Grade

ELA4LSV1 The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student

- a. Initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics.
- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Uses language cues to indicate different levels of certainty or hypothesizing (e.g., "What if. . ."; "Very likely. . ."; "I'm unsure whether. . .").

- f. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- h. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- i. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- j. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- k. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- l. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so; asks classmates for similar expansions.

ELA4R1 The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

Critical Component: For literary texts, the student identifies the characteristics of various genres and produces evidence of reading that:

- a. Relates theme in works of fiction to personal experience.
- b. Identifies and analyzes the elements of plot, character, and setting in stories read, written, viewed, or performed.
- c. Identifies the speaker of a poem or story.
- d. Identifies sensory details and figurative language.
- f. Makes judgments and inferences about setting, characters, and events and supports them with elaborating and convincing evidence from the text.
- h. Identifies themes and lessons in folktales, tall tales, and fables.

Fifth Grade

ELA5LSV1 The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student

- a. Initiates new topics in addition to responding to adult-initiated topics.
- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Uses language cues to indicate different levels of certainty or hypothesizing (e.g., “What if. . .”; “Very likely. . .”; “I’m unsure whether. . .”).
- e. Confirms understanding by paraphrasing the adult’s directions or suggestions.
- f. Displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.
- h. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- i. Responds appropriately to comments and questions.
- j. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- k. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- l. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so; asks classmates for similar expansions.

ELA5LSV2 The student listens to and views various forms of text and media in order to gather and share information, persuade others, and express and understand ideas.

Critical Component: When delivering or responding to presentations, the student:

- a. Shapes information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to the interests and background knowledge of audience members.
- c. Engages the audience with appropriate verbal cues and eye contact.
- d. Projects a sense of individuality and personality in selecting and organizing content and in delivery.
- e. Shapes content and organization according to criteria for importance and impact rather than according to availability of information in resource materials.

ELA5R1 The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.

Critical Component: For literary texts, the student identifies the characteristics of various genres and produces evidence of a reading that:

- a. Identifies and analyzes the elements of setting, characterization, and conflict in plot.
- b. Identifies and analyzes the structural elements particular to dramatic literature (e.g., scenes, acts, cast of characters, stage directions) in the plays read, viewed, written, and performed.
- c. Identifies and analyzes the similarities and differences between a narrative text and its film or play version.
- f. Identifies and analyzes the author’s use of dialogue and description.
- g. Applies knowledge of the concept that theme refers to the message either implied or stated, that the author wants us to derive from a selection.
- i. Makes judgments and inferences about setting, characters, and events and supports them with elaborating and convincing evidence from the text.