



STAGE 1- Helping your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home with English

This guide can help carers and parents support their Year 1 or Year 2 child at home with the learning area of English.

Home languages

For children learning English as an additional language or dialect, continuing to develop literacy skills in their home language is important for their development of literacy in English. Speaking regularly to your child in your home language, reading to your child from books written in your home language, and modelling writing in your home language, will help them to develop English language skills.

Oral language and communicating

Oral language and communicating focuses on using more advanced speaking and listening skills to clearly communicate with greater detail and socially connect with peers and teachers.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- using and explaining language that describes position such as left/right, near/far, above/below. Play games such as 'Simon Says' or design a map to go on a treasure hunt
- comparing and discussing different aspects of life around you. For example, what is the same or different about the seasons, movies, books, food, clothes, cars or weather
- continuing to support your child to successfully complete 2- and 3-step instructions. For example, make your bed – put on your jacket – turn out the light
- introducing more detailed texts to your child, such as beginning chapter books, so they can focus and listen to you read about one topic over a longer period of time. For example, reading one or 2 chapters per night.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary focuses on developing the knowledge of words, their meaning and how they are used to extend ideas while speaking, listening, reading and writing.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- discussing the meaning of subject-specific words. For example, 'volume' in mathematics, 'habitat' in Science and Technology, and 'artefact' in HSIE (History)
- talking about characters from books you have read together using describing words (adjectives). Describe their appearance, using words such as short, red, spikey and describe their personalities using words such as happy, kind, jealous
- playing opposite word games (antonyms). Give your child a word where they need to reply with the opposite word. For example, you say yes, your child says no. You say high, they say low.

Phonic Knowledge

Phonic knowledge focuses on continuing to use existing knowledge of letter–sound relationships as well as digraphs (2 letters which make 1 sound) and trigraphs (3 letters which make 1 sound).

You can help your Year 1 and Year 2 child at home by:

- finding and discussing words which have common digraphs during reading and writing. These digraphs include *sh, th, ch, ck, ng, ph* and *wr*
- discussing and grouping words using the vowel digraphs *er, ir* and *ur* found in *term, bird* and *fur*
- finding and grouping words which have the same trigraph, such as *air* found in *hair, lair, stair* and *pair*. Other trigraphs include *ear* as in *tear* and *hear*. Also *igh* as in *high* and *sigh* and *tch* as in *catch* and *witch*.

Reading fluency

Reading fluency focuses on developing a reading style that is smooth, which uses an expressive voice. Self-correction is used when meaning or reading flow is interrupted.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- reading a range of literature for rich experiences and providing a wide exposure to words, language and text structures
- showing how to read in a steady manner
- continuing to listen to your child read familiar texts so they can practise an expressive voice with confidence
- practising and performing a short, scripted play with you, your child, and other family members as characters.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension focuses on understanding the meaning of words and sentences within longer and more complex texts, while using background knowledge and personal experiences to increase comprehension.

You can help your Year 1 and Year 2 child at home by:

- giving them opportunities to read to themselves for enjoyment
- encouraging them to ask you questions about the book if they are unsure about word meanings or the storyline
- remembering and talking about your family's experiences about a topic in a book you are reading such as moving house, welcoming a new baby, gardening or looking after a pet
- asking them if their opinions may have changed about a character's actions or personality as the book progresses. Was there a twist in the storyline that surprised them?
- enjoying discussing idioms found in books you read together. Idioms are sayings or expressions that are not to be taken as they are written but have a hidden meaning. Some examples include *It was raining cats and dogs* (it was raining heavily) and *It was like finding a needle in a haystack* (it was hard to find).

Creating written texts

Creating written texts focuses on creating texts that use knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation while using paragraphs to structure sentences and ideas.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- encouraging them to write about recent experiences. Some opportunities for writing could come from events such as birthday parties, school excursions or family holidays
- helping them to edit their own writing if they have concerns about spelling and word choices

- displaying their writing around the house to give them a sense of pride about their work
- helping them post their letters, labelled pictures or texts to family and friends.

Spelling

- *Spelling* focuses on using a range of strategies to spell high-frequency words as well as less familiar words for different writing purposes.
- You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:
 - showing how to use a dictionary to discover the correct spelling of words
 - talking about how prefixes, such as *un-*, *re-*, and *dis-*, change the meaning of base words. For example, *happy/unhappy*, *play/replay* and *agree/disagree*
 - investigating the origin of interesting words as you read and write together. For example, words such as *triangle* come from Greek and Latin origins with *tri* meaning *three*. Other *tri* words include *tricycle* (3 wheels) and *tripod* (3 legs)
 - discussing the use of contractions in texts you are reading together and how they can be used when writing. Examples include *he's* (he is), *they've* (they have), *she'd* (she did) and *I'm* (I am).

Handwriting

Handwriting focuses on using a clear and fluent handwriting style to confidently form all upper-case and lower-case letters in NSW Foundation Style. Keyboard skills are also developed using digital technology and word-processing applications.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- encouraging them to leave a finger space between words as well as placing letters on the line
- helping to reinforce consistent letter height formations for tall letters, such as t, b and k, tail letters, such as g, y and j as well as short letters such as a, c and v
- assisting them to become familiar with a computer keyboard to type familiar words and simple sentences using punctuation such as full stops.

Understand and respond to literature

Understand and respond to literature focuses on the reactions, thoughts, opinions and ideas that are inspired by fiction (imaginative) and nonfiction (informative) books and texts.

You can help your Year 1 or Year 2 child at home by:

- comparing characters in texts and discussing similarities and differences
- discussing different cultures that are represented in literature
- engaging with the same narrative in different ways
- discussing how particular events in texts make you feel and why
- encouraging and supporting your child to participate in the [NSW Premier's Reading Challenge](#) which runs each year from March to September.