

Primary English Curriculum Framework



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Primary English Curriculum Framework

This curriculum framework document is based on the primary National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy that have been implemented in England, but has been designed specifically for teachers and students in the international context.

This detailed framework should facilitate the development of courses that are stimulating both for the students and for the teachers. The knowledge and skills developed should ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary schooling, particularly for those who will be progressing to the Cambridge Checkpoint scheme and then on to Cambridge qualifications such as GCE O Level or IGCSE.

The English Curriculum Framework is organised into six stages (1 to 6): each stage reflects the teaching targets for a year group in the primary phase. The framework covers the first year of primary teaching, when students are approximately 5 years old (stage 1), to the final year of primary, when students are approximately 11 years old (stage 6). However, in different educational contexts, it may be appropriate to introduce this framework at slightly different ages.

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) produces the Cambridge International Primary Achievement Test in English for the end of primary teaching. The test is moderated in Cambridge and statements of achievement are issued to students.

Cambridge Primary Progression Tests are available for Stages 3 – 6 to help schools monitor student progress. The tests are not pass/fail and do not lead to a qualification; instead they provide a benchmark for schools calibrated against an international cohort. They are designed to provide information for teachers, students and parents about the progress being made and the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups.

The curriculum framework is divided into four strands as shown below.

- Usage
 - Phonics, spelling and vocabulary
 - Grammar and punctuation
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening

Stage 1: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Hear, read and write initial letter sounds
- Use knowledge of sounds to read and write consonant–vowel–consonant words
- Know the names of letters of the alphabet and alphabetic order
- Begin to use the terms 'consonant' and 'vowel' in talking about letter sounds
- Use rhyme and relate this to spelling patterns
- Recognise common word endings such as 's', 'ed' and 'ing'
- Identify separate sounds (phonemes) within words, which may be represented by more than one letter
- Practise blending phonemes for reading, and segmenting phonemes for spelling

- Recognise and use the digraphs 'th', 'ch', 'sh'
- Identify initial and final consonant clusters (e.g. bl, cr, nd, st)
- Begin to learn common spellings of long vowel phonemes (e.g. 'ee', 'ai' 'oo')
- Extend vocabulary from reading

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Notice how punctuation (e.g. full stop, question mark, speech marks) helps to mark out meaning
- Identify sentences in a text
- Know that a capital letter is used for 'I', for names and for the start of a sentence
- Know that the end of a sentence is marked with a full stop

Stage 1: Reading

Pupils should:

- Read familiar and simple stories and poems, and relate words said and read
- Read a range of common words on sight
- Use knowledge of letter sounds to read simple consonant–vowel–consonant words, and to attempt other words
- Use all the information available to make sense of what is read
- Re-tell stories, with appropriate use of story language
- Learn and recite simple poems
- Join in and extend rhymes and refrains, playing with language patterns

- Read simple books independently
- Enjoy a range of books, discussing preferences
- Identify and discuss characters and dialogue
- Recognise story elements (e.g. beginning, middle and end)
- Anticipate what happens next in a story
- Read labels, lists and captions to find information
- Use alphabetic order of initial letters (e.g. to locate names and words for spelling)
- Know the parts of a book (e.g. title page, contents)
- Read and talk about own writing
- Take note of full stops in reading aloud

Stage 1: Writing

Pupils should:

- Develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip
- Form letters correctly
- Spell familiar common words accurately, drawing on sight vocabulary
- Use knowledge of sounds to write simple regular words, and to attempt other words
- Compose and write a simple sentence, with a capital letter and a full stop
- Write labels, captions, lists, questions and instructions for a purpose
- Make simple storybooks and information texts, with sentences to caption pictures
- Write a sequence of sentences retelling a familiar story or recounting an experience
- Locate information and record answers to questions (e.g. as lists, charts)

Stage 1: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Speak clearly and choose words carefully
- Converse with friends, teachers and other adults
- Contribute to discussion within a group
- Take turns in speaking
- Speak confidently to a group to share an experience
- Answer questions and explain further when asked
- Listen to others and respond appropriately
- Listen carefully to questions and instructions
- Tell stories, recite, read aloud

Stage 2: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Apply knowledge of phonemes effectively in reading and spelling
- Identify syllables and split familiar compound words into parts
- Learn the different spellings of long vowel phonemes
- Secure the spelling of high frequency words and common irregular words
- Spell words with common prefixes and suffixes (e.g. un, dis, ful, ly)
- Build and use collections of interesting and significant words
- Discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words encountered in reading

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Use knowledge of grammar in deciphering words and sentences
- Extend the use of a range of words and phrases to link sentences
- Write in clear sentences using full stops and capital letters
- Develop awareness of other punctuation, including speech marks
- Use verbs with increasing accuracy and use the past tense for narration
- Re-read own writing for sense and accuracy
- Use a variety of simple organisational devices (e.g. headings, captions)
- Read and respond to question words (e.g. what, where, when, who, why)
- Use question marks

Stage 2: Reading

Pupils should:

- Extend the range of common words recognised on sight
- Apply knowledge of phonemes and word parts in tackling unfamiliar words
- Use context and sentence structure to help establish meaning
- Understand time and sequence in story narratives
- Identify and describe story settings and characters
- Predict story endings
- Read poems and comment on words and sounds, rhyme and rhythm
- Make simple inferences from the words on the page (e.g. about feelings)
- Read and follow simple instructions (e.g. in a recipe)

- Locate words by initial letter in simple dictionaries, glossaries and indexes
- Find answers to questions by reading a section of text
- Find factual information from different formats (e.g. charts, labelled diagrams)
- Scan a page to find where information is located
- Read simple fiction and non-fiction books independently

Stage 2: Writing

Pupils should:

- Form letters correctly and consistently
- Practise handwriting patterns and the joining of letters
- Spell accurately the common words that can be read on sight
- Apply knowledge of phonemes and spelling patterns in writing independently
- Choose interesting words and phrases (e.g. in describing people and places)
- Find alternatives to and/then in developing a narrative and connecting ideas
- Use the language of time (e.g. suddenly, after that)
- Use the structures of familiar poems and stories in developing own writing
- Structure a story with a beginning, middle and end
- Develop stories with a setting, characters and a sequence of events
- Begin to use dialogue in stories
- Write simple evaluations of books read

- Write a list of instructions
- Recount events and experiences
- Make simple notes from a section of non-fiction text (e.g. listing key words)
- Record factual information, using simple non-fiction texts as a model

Stage 2: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Show confidence in speaking to a group
- Articulate clearly so that others can hear
- Show awareness of the listener by including relevant details
- Attempt to express ideas precisely, using a growing vocabulary
- Begin to be aware of the use of more formal vocabulary and tone of voice
- Explain plans and ideas, extending them in the light of discussion
- Listen carefully and respond appropriately, asking questions of others

Stage 3: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Use effective strategies to tackle unfamiliar words
- Use analogy in working out the likely spelling of words
- Practise new spellings and write them correctly in own work
- Identify mis-spelt words in own writing and keep individual spelling lists
- Use independent spelling strategies (e.g. sounding out, visual skills)
- Use a dictionary to find the spelling and meaning of words
- Extend knowledge and use of spelling patterns (e.g. vowel phonemes, double consonants, silent letters, common prefixes and suffixes)
- Use and spell compound words
- Explore words that have the same spelling but different meanings (e.g. form, wave [homonyms])

- Organise words or information alphabetically using first two letters
- Explore vocabulary for introducing and concluding dialogue (e.g. said, asked)
- Generate synonyms for high frequency words (e.g. big, little, good)
- Consider how the choice of words can heighten meaning
- Infer the meaning of unknown words from the context

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Take account of the full range of punctuation in reading aloud
- Collect example of nouns, verbs and adjectives, and use the terms appropriately
- Understand that verbs are necessary for meaning in a sentence
- Develop consistency in the use of tenses
- Identify pronouns and understand their function in a sentence

- Ensure grammatical agreement of pronouns and verbs in using standard English
- Understand pluralisation and use the terms 'singular' and 'plural'
- Maintain accurate use of capital letters and full stops in demarcating sentences
- Use question marks, exclamation marks, and commas in lists
- Learn the basic conventions of speech punctuation and use speech marks
- Use the apostrophe to mark omission in shortened words (e.g. can't, don't)
- Use a widening range of connectives to link ideas in writing

Stage 3: Reading

Pupils should:

- Read a range of story, poetry and information books
- Sustain the reading of books with chapters
- Note how text is organised in paragraphs and chapters
- Read playscripts and dialogue, with awareness of different voices
- Identify different types of stories and typical story themes
- Read and comment on different books by the same author
- Read aloud with expression to engage the listener
- Practise reading and reciting poems
- Consider words that make an impact (e.g. adjectives and powerful verbs)
- Begin to infer meanings beyond the literal (e.g. about motives and character)
- Identify the main points or gist of what has been read
- Understand and use the terms 'fact', 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'
- Scan a passage to find specific information and answer questions
- Work out what a book is about from skimming its main features

- Locate information in non-fiction texts using contents page and index
- Consider ways that information is set out (e.g. lists, charts, bullet points)
- Read and follow instructions to carry out an activity
- Locate books by classification and find information using IT sources

Stage 3: Writing

Pupils should:

- Ensure consistency in the size and proportion of letters and the spacing of words
- Practise joining letters in handwriting
- Build up handwriting speed, fluency and legibility
- Plan main points as a structure for story writing
- Develop descriptions of settings in stories
- Write portraits of characters
- Use reading as a model for writing dialogue
- Begin to organise writing in paragraphs in extended stories
- Write first-person accounts and descriptions based on observation
- Write simple playscripts, based on reading

- Write and perform poems, attending to the sound of words
- Choose and compare words to strengthen the impact of writing
- Write book reviews summarising what the book is about
- Make a record of information drawn from a text (e.g. by filling a chart)
- Write letters, notes and messages
- Use IT to write, edit and present work

Stage 3: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Speak clearly and confidently in a range of contexts
- Practise to improve performance when reading aloud
- Adapt tone of voice and use of vocabulary for different audiences
- Take turns in discussion, building on what others have said
- Listen and respond appropriately to other views and opinions
- Listen and remember a sequence of instructions

Stage 4: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Apply phonic/spelling, graphic, grammatical and contextual knowledge in reading unfamiliar words
- Make use of known spellings and spelling patterns in all writing
- Identify syllabic patterns in multi-syllabic words
- Match spelling to meaning when words sound the same (e.g. to/two/too, right/write [homophones])
- Spell words with common letter strings but different pronunciations (e.g. tough, through, trough, plough)
- Extend earlier work on prefixes and suffixes
- Collect and classify words with common roots (e.g. invent, prevent)
- Build words from other words with similar meanings (e.g. medical, medicine)
- Investigate spelling patterns; generate and test rules that govern them
- Check and correct spellings and identify words that need to be learned

- Use all the letters in sequence for alphabetical ordering
- Seek alternatives for overused words and expressions
- Use more powerful verbs (e.g. 'rushed' instead of 'went')
- Explore degrees of intensity in adjectives (e.g. cold, tepid, warm, hot)
- Recognise meaning in figurative language

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Re-read own writing to check punctuation and grammatical sense
- Investigate past, present and future tenses of verbs
- Identify adverbs and their impact on meaning
- Practise using commas to mark out the meaning within sentences
- Learn the use of the apostrophe to show possession (e.g. girl's, girls')
- Use connectives to structure an argument (e.g. if, although)
- Identify all the punctuation marks and respond to them when reading
- Investigate the grammar of different sentences: statements, questions and orders

Stage 4: Reading

Pupils should:

- Extend the range of reading
- Read further stories or poems by a favourite writer, and compare them
- Explore the different processes of reading silently and reading aloud
- Investigate how settings and characters are built up from details
- Understand the main stages in a story from introduction to resolution
- Explore narrative order and the focus on significant events
- Understand how expressive and descriptive language creates mood
- Explore the impact of imagery and figurative language in poetry and prose
- Explore implicit as well as explicit meanings within the text
- Read and perform play scripts, exploring how scenes are built up
- Compare and contrast poems and investigate poetic features
- Identify different types of non-fiction text and their features
- Read newspaper reports and consider how they engage the reader

- Distinguish between 'fact' and 'opinion' in reading and other media
- Understand how points are ordered to make a coherent argument
- Investigate how persuasive writing is used to convince a reader
- Note key words and phrases to identify the main points in a passage
- Understand how paragraphs and chapters are used to organise ideas

Stage 4: Writing

Pupils should:

- Use joined-up handwriting in all writing
- Explore different ways of planning stories, and write longer stories from plans
- Explore alternative openings and endings for stories
- Write character profiles, using detail to capture the reader's imagination
- Write newspaper-style reports, instructions and non-chronological reports
- Collect and present information from non-fiction texts
- Present an explanation or a point of view in ordered points (e.g. in a letter)
- Use paragraphs in writing to organise and sequence ideas
- Explore the layout and presentation of writing, to fit its purpose
- Make short notes from a text and use these to aid writing
- Summarise a sentence or a paragraph in a limited number of words

Stage 4: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Vary the use of vocabulary and level of detail according to purpose
- Listen carefully in discussion, contributing relevant comments and questions
- Understand the gist of an account or the significant points
- Begin to develop ideas thoughtfully, and convey opinions
- Evaluate what is heard and give reasons for agreement or disagreement
- Deal politely with opposing points of view
- Adapt the pace and loudness of speaking when performing or reading aloud



Stage 5: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Use effective strategies for learning new spellings and mis-spelt words
- Use known spellings to work out the spelling of related words
- Investigate spelling patterns for pluralisation (e.g. s, es, y/ies, f/ves)
- Recognise common letter strings in words pronounced differently
- Investigate the meaning and spelling of common prefixes (e.g. auto, bi, trans)
- Identify word roots and derivations to support spelling (e.g. sign, signal, signature)
- Spell and make correct use of possessive pronouns (e.g. their, theirs, my, mine)
- Identify unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words (e.g. carpet, interest)
- Learn spelling rules for words ending in 'e' and 'y' (e.g. take/taking, try/tries)

- Investigate ways of creating opposites (e.g. 'un', 'im') and comparatives (e.g. 'er', 'est')
- Investigate patterns in the use of single and double consonants (e.g. full/ful)
- Extend understanding of the use of adverbs to qualify verbs (e.g. in dialogue)
- Use dictionaries efficiently and carry out IT spell checks
- Collect synonyms and opposites and investigate shades of meaning
- Investigate the origin and appropriate use of idiomatic phrases
- Discuss metaphorical expressions and figures of speech
- Use a thesaurus to extend vocabulary and the choice of words
- Identify unfamiliar words, explore definitions and use new words in context

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Understand conventions of standard English (e.g. agreement of verbs)
- Use pronouns making clear to what or to whom they refer
- Identify prepositions and use the term
- Understand the difference between direct and reported speech
- Learn how dialogue is set out and punctuated
- Use the comma to embed clauses within sentences
- Place full stops correctly at the end of complex sentences
- Investigate clauses within sentences and how they are connected
- Explore ways of combining simple sentences and re-ordering clauses
- Practise proof-reading and editing writing for clarity and correctness

Stage 5: Reading

Pupils should:

- Read widely and explore the features of different fiction genres
- Read and identify characteristics of myths, legends and fables
- Analyse openings and compare the structure of different stories
- Identify the point of view from which a story is told
- Consider how characters are presented, and their different perspectives
- Read poems by significant poets and compare style, forms and themes
- Read narrative poems and perform poems in a variety of ways
- Interpret imagery, adding to understanding beyond the literal
- Read and evaluate non-fiction texts for purpose, style, clarity and organisation
- Note the use of persuasive devices, words and phrases in print and other media
- Look for information in non-fiction texts to build on what is already known
- Locate information confidently and efficiently from different sources
- Skim-read to gain overall sense of a text and scan for specific information
- Develop note-making to extract key points and to group and link ideas
- Explore the features of texts which recount events and experiences (e.g. diaries)
- Understand the use of impersonal style in explanatory texts
- Compare writing that informs and persuades

Stage 5: Writing

Pupils should:

- Review, revise and edit writing in order to improve it, using IT as appropriate
- Write new scenes or characters into a story, or write from another viewpoint
- Write own versions of legends, myths and fables, using structures from reading
- Choose words and phrases carefully to convey feeling and atmosphere
- Use figurative language to evoke imaginative response
- Write a playscript, including production notes to guide performance
- Make notes for different purposes, using simple abbreviations
- Understand the use of notes in writing 'in your own words'

- Map out writing to plan structure (e.g. paragraphs, sections, chapters)
- Record ideas, reflections and predictions about books (e.g. in a reading log)
- Write non-chronological reports and explanations
- Evaluate own and others' writing
- Draft and write letters for real purposes
- Write a commentary on an issue, setting out and justifying a personal view

Stage 5: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Talk confidently and listen purposefully in a range of contexts
- Describe events and convey opinions with increasing clarity
- Shape and organise ideas clearly when speaking
- Recall and discuss important features of a talk
- Ask questions to develop ideas and extend understanding
- Develop confidence in performing (e.g. in a play scene)
- Report back to a group, using notes to present findings about a topic studied
- Prepare and present an argument to persuade others to a point of view



Stage 6: Usage

Phonics, Spelling and Vocabulary

Pupils should:

- Continue to learn words, apply patterns and pursue accuracy in spelling
- Further investigate spelling rules and exceptions
- Investigate meanings and spellings of connectives
- Develop knowledge of word roots, prefixes and suffixes to support spelling
- Explore word origins and derivations, and the use of words from other languages
- Explore definitions and shades of meaning, and use new words in context
- Understand changes over time in words and expressions and their use
- Explore proverbs, sayings and figurative expressions

Grammar and Punctuation

Pupils should:

- Revise different word classes
- Revise language conventions and grammatical features of different types of text
- Explore active and passive verbs within sentences
- Investigate the use of conditionals (e.g. to express possibilities)
- Distinguish the main clause and other clauses in a complex sentence
- Develop grammatical control of complex sentences, manipulating them for effect
- Use punctuation effectively to mark out the meaning in complex sentences
- Secure accuracy in using apostrophes and commas, and punctuating speech
- Identify uses of the colon, semi-colon, parenthetic commas, dashes and brackets
- Understand the conventions of standard English usage in different forms of writing

Stage 6: Reading

Pupils should:

- Develop familiarity with the work of established authors and poets
- Discuss and express preferences in terms of language, style and themes
- Look for implicit as well as explicit meanings, and make plausible inferences
- Articulate personal responses to reading, with close reference to the text
- Analyse the success of writing in evoking particular moods (e.g. suspense)
- Take account of viewpoint in a novel, and distinguish author and narrator
- Understand aspects of narrative structure such as the handling of time
- Explore how poets manipulate and play with words and their sounds
- Read and interpret poems in which meanings are implied or multi-layered
- Compare and evaluate the print and film versions of a novel or play

- Distinguish between fact and opinion in a range of texts and other media
- Explore autobiography and biography, and first and third person narration
- Analyse how paragraphs and chapters are structured and linked
- Compare the language, style and impact of a range of non-fiction writing
- Recognise key characteristics of non-chronological report writing
- Identify features of balanced written arguments

Stage 6: Writing

Pupils should:

- Use different genres as models for writing
- Plan plot, characters and structure effectively in writing an extended story
- Develop skills of writing biography, and autobiography in role
- Use the styles and conventions of journalism to write reports on events
- Write non-chronological reports linked to work in other subjects
- Summarise a passage, chapter or text in a given number of words
- Argue a case in writing, developing points logically and convincingly
- Write a balanced report of a controversial issue
- Select appropriate non-fiction style and form to suit specific purposes
- Use paragraphs, sequencing and linking them appropriately, in fiction and non-fiction writing
- Use IT effectively to prepare and present writing for publication

Stage 6: Speaking and Listening

Pupils should:

- Vary vocabulary, expression and tone of voice to engage the listener
- Pay close attention in discussion to what others say
- Extend and follow up ideas, asking and answering questions thoughtfully
- Help to move group discussion forward (e.g. by clarifying, summarising)
- Speak confidently in formal and informal contexts
- Prepare, practise and improve a spoken presentation or performance
- Use spoken language well to persuade, instruct or make a case (e.g. in a debate)
- Reflect on variations in speech, and appropriate use of standard English

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