

The Core Knowledge Language Arts Program

K-2

Listening & Learning Strand

# General Overview

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# General Overview: Listening & Learning Strand

## **About the Listening and Learning Strand**

The Core Knowledge Language Arts Listening and Learning Strand is designed to help students build the background knowledge and vocabulary critical to listening and reading comprehension. The decoding skills needed for future independent reading are taught separately in the Core Knowledge Language Arts Skills Strand. The two strands complement each other, building the requisite decoding and comprehension skills that comprise fluent, mature reading. The teaching of the two strands, however, need not be correlated, i.e., teachers may provide instruction and practice in a given unit of the Skills Strand as needed, while moving on to new topics and anthologies in the Listening and Learning Strand.

The *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology* books are the central component of the Listening and Learning Strand. Each anthology contains the read-alouds you will share with your students, as well as guidelines for introductions and discussions. Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 each have twelve anthologies which cover specific fiction and nonfiction topics. These topics are centered around domains of knowledge that are based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. A suggested order of instruction is provided for the twelve anthologies at each grade level.

There are two factors that helped to influence this sequencing of domains from one grade level to the next and also within a particular grade level:

1. We considered prerequisite knowledge that would be helpful for students to know prior to a specific domain. For example, it makes sense for students to learn about kings and queens prior to learning about Columbus and the Pilgrims within Kindergarten. It also makes sense for students to learn about the five senses in Kindergarten prior to being introduced to human body systems in Grade 1. It makes sense to learn about ancient Greek civilizations prior to hearing Greek myths

within Grade 2. It also makes sense to learn about Columbus and the Pilgrims in Kindergarten before learning about the birth of our nation in Grade 1 and then the Civil War in Grade 2.

2. We considered the increasing maturity of students as the year progresses, and accordingly placed less intensive domains earlier in the year at each grade level. While we strongly recommend that the anthologies be introduced in the Core Knowledge Language Arts Listening and Learning Recommended Sequence of Domains, you may sequence the presentation of topics to suit your purposes and the needs of your class.

Each anthology should be used with these supplementary components:

- *Tell It Again! Media Disk* or the *Tell It Again! Flip Book* (for some domains only)
- *Tell It Again! Image Cards*
- *Tell It Again! Workbook*
- *Tell It Again! Posters* (for some domains only)
- *Tell It Again! Music Disk* (for some domains only)

The twelve anthologies and supplementary materials for Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 will provide you and your students with a whole year of listening and learning experiences.

## **What Students Have Already Learned in Core Knowledge Language Arts**

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Students who participate in the Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 Listening and Learning Strand of the Core Knowledge Language Arts Program will build general oral and written language skills, in addition to the background knowledge and vocabulary critical to listening and reading comprehension in later years.

In the introduction of each domain after Kindergarten, the content objectives from prior grades that are particularly relevant to the new material are listed. This background knowledge will greatly enhance your students' understanding of the read-alouds they are about to enjoy. Teachers can use this listing of prior knowledge

taught to anchor new content for students who have been in the Core Knowledge Language Arts program in prior years. Teachers can also use this listing as a means for informal pre-assessment to aid students who may not have been in the Core Knowledge Language Arts Program previously and who lack the background knowledge needed for the new domain of knowledge.

## ***Instructional Objectives***

The *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthologies* address both Core Content Objectives and Language Arts Objectives. The Language Arts Objectives and Core Content Objectives covered in each domain are listed in the introduction to the domain.

### **Core Content Objectives**

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The Core Content Objectives are unique to the Core Knowledge Language Arts Program. These objectives explicitly identify the background knowledge or “cultural literacy” students will learn in the course of listening to the read-alouds and participating in the related exercises throughout the anthology.

### **Language Arts Objectives**

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The Language Arts Objectives identify more general language goals—analogueous to those that may be included in your state standards—including goals for both oral and written language. These kinds of objectives are most effectively targeted when they are anchored to the content in the context of a domain of knowledge. One of the most significant differences between the language arts objectives targeted in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and those targeted in Grade 2 is the increasing emphasis in Grade 2 on developing writing skills within the context of the Listening and Learning activities. In Kindergarten, nearly all the language arts goals require only an oral language response from students. You will notice that, in Grades 1 and 2, students are typically asked to respond “either orally or in writing.” Make no mistake—the development of oral language skills in Grade 2 is still critically important. In fact, existing oral language competency serves as the underpinning for students’ written-language competency in the future.

It is worth mentioning that the responsibility for explicitly teaching students how to write falls within the Skills Strand lessons. The Skills Strand lessons include handwriting, spelling, the use of capital letters and end punctuation, as well as the actual process of writing (such as organizing one's thoughts into complete and coherent sentences). For this reason, you will not find specific writing skills objectives in the Listening and Learning Language Arts objectives, nor are there strategies for explicitly teaching writing skills in the Listening and Learning lessons. As you complete Listening and Learning lessons and activities that involve writing, you should, however, always be aware of and reinforce those writing skills that your students have already learned in the Skills Strand. For example, if you notice spelling errors related to the basic code or advanced code spellings that students have already been taught in the Skills Strand, it is certainly appropriate to encourage students to proofread their work and make use of the specific code knowledge they have already learned (referring, for example, to the Phoneme Posters that are posted in your classroom). If students have already learned about the use of periods, question marks, and exclamation marks in the Skills Strand, it is likewise appropriate to encourage students to proofread their work to ensure they have used appropriate end punctuation.

## ***Core Vocabulary***

One of the primary goals of the Listening and Learning Strand is to expose students to rich, content-related vocabulary. The read-alouds and associated instructional materials within a given domain have been crafted to provide repeated listening experiences with selected vocabulary words. By reading a fiction or nonfiction selection out loud, you allow students to experience written language without the burden of decoding, granting them access to content they might not be able to read and understand by themselves. They are then freer to focus their mental energy on the words and ideas presented in the text, and can eventually be better prepared to tackle rich, printed content on their own.

Through repeated exposure to words in each domain, students will

gain a greater understanding of many different words. This implicit learning of vocabulary words will occur as students listen to and participate in read-alouds and instructional exercises throughout the entire domain; this is the most efficient and effective way to build a broad, rich vocabulary base.

In addition, three to five vocabulary words are selected per lesson and highlighted in a more explicit way. These Core Vocabulary words are bolded and explained within the context of the read-aloud. One Core Vocabulary word per lesson has also been selected for closer study.

The Core Vocabulary covered in each domain is listed at the beginning of the specific *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology* in the introduction to the domain. When a trade book is used as the read-aloud, the page references for where the words appear are included.

## **Lesson Structure**

### **Lesson Overview**

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Each lesson is introduced by an overview that summarizes the instructional objectives and key vocabulary addressed in the lesson. An “At-a-Glance” chart summarizes the specific exercises included in the lesson and the length of time required for each. Materials needed other than the *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology* and *Flip Book* or *Media Disk* are also listed in the chart.

### **Length of Lesson**

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The *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology* for each domain contains several daily lessons. Each lesson is composed of two distinct parts, so that the lesson may be divided into smaller chunks of time and presented at different intervals during the day.

In Kindergarten, each entire lesson will require a total of 50 minutes; in Grades 1 and 2, each entire lesson will require a total of 60 minutes. In each lesson, a single read-aloud is the focus of the entire lesson. During the first part of the lesson (part A), designed to be taught in 35 minutes for Kindergarten and 40 minutes for Grades 1 and 2, students will listen to and briefly

discuss the read-aloud. During the second part of the lesson (part B), designed to be presented at another time during the day for 15 minutes in Kindergarten and 20 minutes in Grades 1 and 2, students will extend their understanding of the read-aloud.

## Pausing Points

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Pausing Points are included within each domain where it makes sense to pause and spend one to two days reviewing, reinforcing, or extending the material taught thus far.

A teacher may have students do any combination of the suggested activities and in any order. Activities may be done with the whole class or with a small group of students who would benefit from the particular activity.

Both the decision to pause and the length of the pause are optional and should be determined by each individual teacher based on the particular class's performance.

## Lesson Components

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### ***Introducing the Read-Aloud (10 minutes)***

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The “Introducing the Read-Aloud” section of each lesson includes the material you need to provide students with a framework for listening and understanding the read-aloud they are about to hear. For each read-aloud, one or more specific exercises is described that may guide you in introducing background information, presenting vocabulary, or asking students what they already know about a topic. Sometimes, content taught in earlier read-alouds may be reviewed in this part of the lesson. Often, students are asked to make a personal connection to something in the read-aloud they are about to hear. Every “Introducing the Read-Aloud” section concludes with establishing a specific purpose for listening to the read-aloud that is directly linked to one or more of the objectives for the lesson.

### ***Presenting the Read-Aloud (10 or 15 minutes)***

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In the “Presenting the Read-Aloud” section, the actual text of the read-aloud is given (with the exception of those lessons which use a trade book for the read-aloud itself). The expectation is that you

will read this aloud to students, following the printed text word for word.

We have also included several different prompts to assist you in making the read-aloud more effective:

- Thumbnail Illustrations placed in the margin adjacent to the read-aloud text provide you with guidance as to when to show the associated *Flip Book* or *Media Disk* image as you read aloud.
- Guided Listening Supports are included in the margin. These prompts signal that you should pause in reading the actual text of the read-aloud to provide quick clarification or ask questions, as indicated, to ensure that students understand critical details and information as the read-aloud is presented. These interruptions to the read-aloud are intended to be very rapid so as not to interfere with the flow of the read-aloud and the students' overall understanding.
- Bolding of Core Vocabulary words within the read-aloud text signals that these words merit a pause within the read-aloud to provide a brief explanation. You will find three to five Core Vocabulary words per read-aloud. While each read-aloud has been carefully designed to include rich vocabulary throughout, these bolded words are key to understanding a part of the read-aloud. Other challenging vocabulary beyond the Core Vocabulary may be discussed during subsequent readings of the same read-aloud, for example, during Student Choice, as explained below.

In some cases, we have used an actual trade book as the read-aloud instead of writing a read-aloud in the anthology. In those cases, we have included page references as well as the end of the applicable sentence from the trade book in bold as the cue for when to use the Guided Listening Support prompts. In these cases, we especially recommend that you spend a few minutes preparing in advance prior to the presentation of the read-aloud.

## ***Discussing the Read-Aloud (15 minutes)***

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### ***Comprehension Questions (10 minutes)***

The “Discussing the Read-Aloud” section always begins with a series of questions designed to ensure that students understand the read-aloud. The comprehension questions are directly related to and address the objectives of each specific lesson.

These questions tap literal understanding of the read-aloud and recall of pertinent details, as well as require students to make inferences about what they have heard. If students have difficulty responding to any of these questions, you should reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images.

The discussion of these questions is an opportunity for you to once again make use of the rich vocabulary of the read-aloud. If students give one-word responses or fail to incorporate the rich vocabulary in their own responses, you should expand the student’s response, using richer and more complex vocabulary. It is highly recommended that you encourage students to answer in complete sentences by asking them to restate the question in their responses.

In Kindergarten, the last question in each “Discussing the Read-Aloud” section is a *Think Pair Share*. With *Think Pair Share*, you will ask a question and then instruct students to think about and discuss their answer with a partner. In Grades 1 and 2, the last question in each “Discussing the Read-Aloud” section alternates between a *Think Pair Share* strategy and a *Question Pair Share* strategy. With *Question Pair Share*, you will have students think of a *who*, *what*, *where*, or *when* question to ask their neighbor as a way of encouraging students to both formulate and answer appropriate questions. Both strategies provide an opportunity for all students to be engaged with and talking about the read-aloud. As time permits, you then will ask pairs of students to share their thoughts and questions with the entire class.

### ***Word Work (5 minutes)***

In the Word Work exercise, explicit, direct instruction is provided to quickly and systematically review one of the Core Vocabulary

words. The procedures in this section were developed using the research and methodology described by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, and Linda Kucan in their seminal work on explicit vocabulary instruction, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction* (Guilford Press, 2002).

### ***Extensions (15 or 20 minutes)***

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Generally, this section of the lesson describes one or more specific exercises designed to again provide additional opportunities for teachers to use, and for students to hear and use, the rich background knowledge and language of the specific read-aloud that students have heard earlier in the day. Given the increasing focus on developing student writing skills in Grade 2, you will often find that extension activities at that grade level incorporate opportunities for writing. We have provided a tiered approach to writing by suggesting several different activities that require greater or lesser writing competency on the students' part. You may select the specific writing activity that best matches your students' current writing skill level and/or you may choose to select different activities within an extension for individual students as a means of differentiating instruction.

Occasionally, you will note that a Student Choice activity is recommended. In this case, the students are given a chance to select a previous read-aloud to have a second reading. Let the students discuss which read-aloud they would like to hear again and ask them to give reasons for their choices. Then have them vote with a show of hands. Reread the story that gets the most votes. If the vote is a tie, you may cast the deciding vote or flip a coin.

Another option that may be presented in the Extensions section is a Domain-Related Trade Book activity where you will choose and read a trade book that is related to the topic of an anthology. A list of recommended titles is included in the introduction of each domain, or you may select another title of your choice.

In at least one of the Extension activities of most domains, students will also be introduced to a specific Core Knowledge saying or proverb. Proverbs are short, traditional sayings that have

been passed along orally from generation to generation. These sayings usually express general truths based on experiences and observations of everyday life. While some proverbs do have literal meanings—that is, they mean exactly what they say—many proverbs have a richer meaning beyond the literal level. It is important to help your students understand the difference between the literal meanings of the words and their implied or figurative meanings.

### ***Instructional Masters and Parent Take-Home Letters***

Blackline Instructional Masters and Parent Take-Home Letters are included in the *Tell It Again! Workbook*. A reference copy and answer key (when appropriate) is included in the appendix of the anthology.

The Instructional Masters are designed to provide additional practice and/or assessment opportunities. The Parent Letters are designed to keep parents abreast of what their children are learning during the Listening and Learning Strand, as well as provide suggestions for activities that parents might enjoy with their children at home that reinforce what they are learning in school.

### ***Image Cards***

Image Cards are another component that may be used to reinforce and/or deepen students' understanding of the information covered in the domain. Each domain has a set of Image Cards that are used as a part of some of the Extension activities, like sorting and sequencing. The lessons in which the Image Cards are used are listed in the introduction of each specific domain.

### ***Posters***

Posters are another component of some domains that may be used to reinforce and/or deepen students' understanding of the information covered in those domains. The lessons in which the posters are used are listed in the introduction of each specific domain.

### **Music Disk**

A music disk is another component of some domains that may be used to reinforce and/or deepen students' understanding of the information covered in those domains. The lessons in which the Music Disk is used are listed in the introduction of each specific domain.



Figure 1: Tens icon

### **Assessment: The Tens**

The Core Knowledge Language Arts Program uses a unique system of assessment, called the Tens. In the Tens system of assessment, all scores are converted to numbers between 0 and 10. A 10 indicates excellent performance and a 0 indicates very poor performance.

Tens scores are recorded on a simple grid, called a *Tens Recording Chart*, where the students' names are listed in the horizontal rows and the various activities are listed in the vertical columns. (A blank *Tens Recording Chart* is provided as part of the program materials and can be copied as needed.)

# Tens Conversion Chart

		Number Correct																																		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
Number of Questions	1	0	10																																	
	2	0	5	10																																
	3	0	3	7	10																															
	4	0	3	5	8	10																														
	5	0	2	4	6	8	10																													
	6	0	2	3	5	7	8	10																												
	7	0	1	3	4	6	7	9	10																											
	8	0	1	3	4	5	6	8	9	10																										
	9	0	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10																									
	10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10																								
	11	0	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	9	10																							
	12	0	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10																						
	13	0	1	2	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	8	8	9	10																					
	14	0	1	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	9	10																				
	15	0	1	1	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	9	9	10																			
	16	0	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	10																		
	17	0	1	1	2	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	10																	
	18	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10																
	19	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10															
	20	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10														
	21	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10													
	22	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10												
	23	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10											
	24	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10										
	25	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10									
	26	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	10	10								
	27	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10								
	28	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	10						
	29	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	10					
	30	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	10			

Once a number of Tens scores have been recorded, it is very easy to get a sense of who is doing well and who is not because all of the scores are comparable. By simply running your eye along the row where a particular student's scores are recorded, you can form a reliable estimate as to how the student is doing. If Susie's scores are 8, 9, 10, 7, 9, 10, you can feel confident she is learning the words and concepts taught in the read-alouds. If Bobby's scores are 2, 3, 5, 1, 3, 2, you can be pretty sure he is struggling.

Assessment opportunities are marked throughout each *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology* with a Tens icon (Figure 1). Whenever you see this icon, it means you have an opportunity to record a Tens score. (The lessons in which the assessments are used are also listed in the introduction of each specific domain.)

There are two kinds of Tens scores: observational Tens scores and data-driven Tens scores. A data-driven Tens score is based on the number of correct answers on an exercise or Instructional Master. To record this kind of Tens score, use the following *Tens Conversion Chart* to convert a raw score into a Tens score. This chart is also included in the introduction of each domain.

Simply find the number of correct answers the student produced along the top of the chart and the number of total questions on the worksheet or activity along the left side. Then find the cell where the column and the row converge. This indicates the Tens score. By using the *Tens Conversion Chart*, you can easily convert any raw score, from 0 to 30, into a Tens score.

### ***Domain Assessment***

A domain content assessment is included at the end of each domain to evaluate students' understanding and retention of the domain's central concepts and vocabulary.