



Parents' Guide to the NSW Primary Syllabuses

Helping parents to understand their child's progress through primary school



Introduction

As the parent of a primary school student you will want to know what your child is learning so you can help them along at home. You and your child's teachers will be the most important influence on your son or daughter's education.

This Guide is provided to help you follow your child's early learning and to help you talk with teachers about day-to-day classroom activities and your child's progress.

What will my child learn at school?

The Board of Studies NSW sets the learning requirements for each stage of primary school. The four stages are:

Kindergarten	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4	Years 5 and 6
EARLY STAGE 1	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3

The Board's syllabuses state what must be taught in these six key learning areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Human Society and its Environment (HSIE)
- Creative Arts
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE).

In this Guide you will find some examples of the kinds of things your child can learn in each year of primary school.

The examples are based on the Board's *Foundation Statements*, which your child's teacher will use to prepare classroom activities and report on progress.

A number of teachers, parents, principals and Board curriculum experts have contributed to this Guide and many common class activities are included here. However, your child's school may offer different activities and in a different order.

There are many ways for teachers to organise lessons effectively and individual lessons may cover topics from more than one subject. Page 12 provides more information on integrated units.

Talk to your child's teacher about what they expect to cover in class and how you can help your child at home.

How much time will be spent on each subject?

The Board's syllabus requirements can be taught in 80 percent of a typical 9 am to 3 pm five-day school week. The remaining 20 percent of the school week is left free for additional activities at the school's discretion. For example, many schools use this time for languages, additional school sport, concert rehearsals, religious education and special projects.

English and Mathematics make up about 50 percent of the school week – this is equivalent to at least 12 hours each week. The other subjects are spread across the remaining time (see pie chart below). The 6-10% of time noted below represents between 1.5 and 2.5 hours per week.

Additional activities -English 25-35% up to 20% Creative Arts 6-10% Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) **Mathematics** 6-10% 20% Science and Technology Personal Development, 6-10% Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) 6-10%

The use of computers is included in every stage of every subject.



English

In English, students learn to read, write, talk and listen. They learn about English language and literature, how language varies according to context and how to communicate to a range of audiences for different purposes. They learn to read for information and for pleasure. They learn about poetry, novels and plays. They gain a sound grasp of language structures, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

COMPARING

As solemn as a judge As sound as a bell As redias a lobster As strong as an ox As fresh as a daisy

In Kindergarten

- listen to and follow simple instructions involving one step
- give short talks and express ideas, eg tell news, describe a favourite toy or pet
- begin developing reading and comprehension skills, eg recognise simple sight words, recognise most sounds of the alphabet, use illustrations and picture clues to make predictions about stories when reading
- write simple words using letters and sounds to help spell-out known words, eg 'd - o - g'
- write simple sentences, eg 'I made a cake'
- begin to use word processing software to write simple sentences
- recognise grammatical patterns such as action verb and nouns in a group, eg when the teacher reads to class from a 'big book'

Some Year 1 examples

- listen to and follow a short procedure, eg carry out instructions for a simple task
- communicate simple information, eg give directions to the library, provide a brief retelling of a familiar story
- develop an increasing range of reading and comprehension skills on familiar topics, eg sound out unknown words or break them down into syllables, respond to punctuation when reading aloud, express opinions about characters in stories
- produce simple written pieces on familiar topics, eg short recounts of personal experience, descriptions of family members
- spell known sight words, eg 'said', 'was', 'some', 'have'

Some Year 2 examples

- listen attentively and share ideas or give information in group and class discussions, eg about familiar events or topics such as birthdays or sport
- begin to read about less familiar topics
- make inferences and predictions when reading stories to develop comprehension
- use most common punctuation marks in writing, eg full stops, capital letters, spaces between words
- use word processing software to produce simple writing, eg stories, invitations, recipes
- use reading cues to understand written texts, eg matching letters to sounds (phonics) and breaking words into syllables



Some Year 3 examples

- communicate for a range of purposes and audiences, eg conduct brief interviews to obtain information, give instructions for making a piece of craft
- use a wider range of reading strategies to confirm predictions and locate information, eg skim read using headings, sub-headings, key words, layout and graphics
- self-correct a broader range of punctuation in own writing, eg question marks, commas, apostrophes for contractions, quotation marks for written speech
- begin to produce different forms of electronic publishing, eg slide shows, multimedia
- spell familiar words using knowledge of common letter patterns and sound sequences, eg high, thigh, thought, bought

Some Year 4 examples

- employ various speaking skills to give confident oral presentations, eg gesture, facial expression, pause, emphasis, volume, clarity
- begin reading about more challenging topics, eg biography of a famous person, an historical event
- develop a wider range of responses to reading, eg identify writer's viewpoint, describe and compare different interpretations, identify stereotypes and symbolic meanings
- produce more complex pieces of writing, eg an explanation of how a specialised machine works or what causes a specific natural process
- use a variety of skills to produce well-structured writing, eg drafting, revising and proofreading

Some Year 5 examples

- communicate effectively for an increasing range of purposes, eg to entertain, inform and influence audiences
- read, recognise and respond to themes and issues within texts, and justify interpretations by referring to own knowledge and experience
- write well-structured sentences, using a variety of more complex grammatical features, eg linking an independent (main) clause and a dependent (subordinate) clause by using a conjunction indicating time, place, manner, reason, condition etc as in 'When the bell rang, Kim went home.'
- use known word meanings and base words when spelling unknown words, eg <u>heal</u>, <u>heal</u>thy; <u>sign</u>, <u>sign</u>ature

Some Year 6 examples

- read and respond to a range of more complex literary and factual texts, eg extended novels, abstract poems, technical books and websites, historical works
- publish own writing dealing with more complex topics, ideas and issues, eg sustained arguments/discussions about contemporary social issues supported by evidence
- communicate using a range of media, eg video, multimedia, print, audio
- use several comprehension strategies for finding information in texts, eg skimming for gist, scanning for specific information, using an index, using a glossary

Mathematics

Mathematics develops students' thinking, understanding, competence and confidence with numbers, shapes and measurement. Students learn to add, subtract, divide and multiply whole numbers, fractions and decimals. They learn to measure time and calculate with money. They learn geometry, algebra and how to work with data and graphs.



In Kindergarten

- count aloud to 30 and recognise numbers from 1 to 20
- manipulate objects such as counters to help add and subtract numbers
- recognise the value of currency, eg 20 cent piece, five dollar note
- count backwards from a given number in the range 0 to 20
- name the days of the week and seasons
- tell the time to the hour, eg four o'clock
- identify and name simple shapes, eg circles, squares
- use positional terms, eg between, under, right, left
- recognise that halves are equal parts

Some Year 1 examples

- state the place value of digits in two-digit numbers, eg 'in the number 32, the 3 represents 30 or 3 tens'
- begin to model multiplication using concrete objects, eg 3 x 2 is the same as 3 groups of 2 or as an array with 3 rows of 2
- describe halves and quarters found in everyday life, eg quarters of an orange, half a glass of water
- begin to use metres and centimetres to estimate and measure length and distance, eg 'My book is 30 cm long', 'My desk is more than a metre wide'
- count forwards and backwards by two, fives and tens
- use the terms 'add', 'plus', 'equals', 'is equal to', 'take away', 'minus' and 'the difference between'

Some Year 2 examples

- read clocks on the half-hour
- count, read and write numbers up to 999
- begin to model division using concrete objects, eg 6 ÷ 3 is the same as sharing 6 objects into 3 equal groups
- record area by describing the number and type of units, eg the area of this surface is 20 tiles
- use a calendar to identify dates, months, seasons and birthdays
- begin to understand and draw graphs and diagrams of data, eg using simple picture graphs and column graphs
- recognise and explain numbers such as odds and evens, numbers ending with five and zero



Some Year 3 examples

- develop mental strategies to multiply a two-digit number by a one-digit number, eg using known facts, multiplying the tens and then the ones, repeatedly doubling when multiplying by an even number
 - count, read, write and order numbers up to 9999
 - identify, represent and compare fractions involving halves, quarters, and eighths
- interpret decimal notation for tenths and hundredths, eg 0.1 is the same as $\frac{1}{10}$
- identify and measure the length, breadth, height and perimeter of objects in metres, centimetres and millimetres
- record area in square centimetres and square metres, eg 5 cm², 6 m²
- recall multiplication facts ('times tables') up to 10 x 10
- organise data to create and interpret tables and graphs

Some Year 4 examples

- read and record time in one-minute intervals
- record numbers up to four digits using expanded notation, eg 5429 = 5000 + 400 + 20 + 9
- develop mental strategies to divide by a one-digit number, eg ' $63 \div 9 = 7$ because l know 7 x 9 = 63'
- determine factors for a given number, eg 'factors of 12 are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12'
- add and subtract decimals with the same number of decimal places (up to 2 decimal places), eg 0.10 + 0.33 = 0.43
- relate common percentages to a fraction or decimal, eg '25% means 25 out of 100 or 0.25'
- manipulate, compare and describe features of 2-D shapes, eg pentagons, octagons, parallelograms
- record volume and capacity using litres, millilitres and cubic centimetres, eg 5 L, 6 mL, 27 cm³
- use coordinates and compass points to describe position and to give and follow directions, eg 'the lion cage is at B3', 'the treasure is north-east of the cave'

Some Year 5 examples

- read, write, and order numbers of any size
- identify and classify angles, eg right, acute, obtuse, reflex, straight, revolution
- multiply three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers using the written extended form (long multiplication)
- identify prime numbers, eg 13 has only two factors (1 and 13) and therefore is prime
- find equivalent fractions using diagrams and number lines, eg $\frac{3}{4} = \frac{6}{8}$
- add and subtract simple fractions, $eg \frac{5}{6} + \frac{3}{6} = \frac{8}{6} \text{ or } 1\frac{2}{6}$, $\frac{2}{3} + \frac{1}{6} = \frac{4}{6} + \frac{1}{6} = \frac{5}{6}$
- record lengths and distances using decimal notation to 3 decimal places, eg 2.753 km

Some Year 6 examples

- use 24-hour time and am/pm notation
- calculate simple fractions and percentages of an amount, eg $\frac{1}{5}$ of 30 = 6, 10% of \$200 = $\frac{1}{10}$ of \$200 = \$20
- = multiply simple fractions by whole numbers , eg 3 x $\frac{2}{5} = \frac{6}{5}$
- record remainders as fractions or decimals, eg $25 \div 4 = 6\frac{1}{4}$ or 6.25
- identify and construct 3-D objects on the basis of their properties, eg rectangular prisms, triangular pyramids
- record volume and capacity using decimal notation to 3 decimal places, eg 1.275 L
- interpret and draw a wider range of graphs using a scale, eg line graphs, divided bar graphs
- complete simple sentences by calculating missing values, eg $270 \div x = 9$

Science and Technology

Science and Technology develops students' skills in thinking, investigating and problemsolving. It gives them knowledge and skills in scientific investigation, design and applied technology.

This subject builds on the curiosity children have about their natural and built environments.



In Kindergarten

- design and make simple plans to show things such as their = talk about their environment, including features such as house and toys
- show how things move by push and pull actions
- talk about the different needs and wants of animals and sort models or pictures according to needs and wants

Some Year 1 and Year 2 examples

- observe patterns and suggest possible explanations, eg observing, recording and classifying vehicles passing the school, and creating a class graph
- observe and record the changes in a living thing such as a deciduous tree over a season or the growth of seeds to sprouts

Some Year 3 and Year 4 examples

- observe and report on a local environment, eg a park, beach or wetland
- design and make models using sticks, timber, cardboard, bark, glue and fabric. Models might include an early settler's hut, an underwater world or a space world

Some Year 5 and Year 6 examples

- use simulation software on the computer, eg to create a model city
- study different rock types and crystals using technology
- research the cause and effect of natural disasters, eg an earthquake or cyclone
- learn about energy and energy transfer, eg ice to liquid and liquid to steam

- clouds, weather and day and night
- talk about how they can look after their environment
- talk about different forms of energy and identify its use in daily life
- explore magnets and their properties
- talk about how living things depend on their environment
- observe animal life, eg ants, silkworms

- describe how plants and animals rely on each other in a 'mini environment', eg a park, the playground or a lake area
- research and record phases of the moon over time and propose explanations as to why it changes

- evaluate proposed building designs for items such as a bridge or a house for the future
- use a water-testing device to test water quality in a local waterway and study the water cycle
- learn how an electrical circuit works
- learn how gears work for machines, eg bicycles and clocks

There are many different ways for teachers to organise lessons effectively. Talk to your child's teacher about what they expect to cover in class and how you can help your child at home.

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HSIE

In Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) students learn about history, geography, civics and citizenship.

They investigate their personal and community identity, and gain an understanding of their nation and its place in the world. They learn to participate effectively in maintaining and improving the quality of their society and environment.

In Kindergarten

- tell stories about family heritage and use language such as 'time', 'change' and 'place'
- talk about how families are similar and different, and how the needs of individuals are met in a family
- get involved in class discussions about special events and cultural celebrations, eg Anzac Day

Some Year 1 and Year 2 examples

- talk about the lives of people in their family and community, past and present
- talk about customs, practices, symbols, languages and traditions of their family and other people they know who belong to different groups and families
- recognise Aboriginal people as the first Australians

Some Year 3 and Year 4 examples

- learn that Australian history spans thousands of years
- talk about and identify different roles and responsibilities within the school and community
- investigate the various ways to care for the local environment and what they can do at home and school to help protect the environment

Some Year 5 and Year 6 examples

- learn about colonial exploration and the impact of the discovery of gold
- use maps and globes to locate global and Australian regions, eg Asia-Pacific region, Riverina region
- explain how laws are developed and changed through Australian's government structure, eg responsibilities of local, state and federal governments



- talk about the different roles and responsibilities in the classroom, school and home
- do things that show care for their home, classroom, school and/or environment
- listen to Dreaming stories
- talk about their home's features and location
- learn about their local community and how it has changed over time
- use maps and globes to locate places and countries
- show an understanding of the relationship between environments and people and what they can do to help protect their environment
- investigate the local area to identify important people in history
- describe similarities and differences between communities in Australia, Asia and other places in the world, including religions, languages and cultures
- learn about early Australian explorers, eg Bass and Flinders
- learn about what it means to be Australian
- investigate an environmental issue of local, national and global significance and examine its impact on people and their world
- describe the electoral process, including an understanding of the democratic processes

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Creative Arts

Creative Arts gives students experiences in the visual arts, music, drama and dance. They have opportunities to explore their creativity in each of these areas.

They learn to appreciate the meanings and values that each artform offers. They perform and express themselves through the visual arts, music, drama and dance.

In Kindergarten

- make th experier sponges
 make sir playdou
- make their own pieces of art about real and imagined experiences using materials such as paints, watercolours, sponges, crayons, brushes and sticks
 - make simple 3-D constructions with boxes and use playdough or clay to create models

Some Year 1 and Year 2 examples

- sing songs, play and move to music using their voices, percussion instruments
- move to music in a variety of ways, such as imagining they are a machine or a butterfly
- dramatise a story, eg Possum Magic

 create sculptures and 3-D models using a variety of techniques such as carving, cutting, modelling clay, and simple print techniques such as screen printing

perform dance and drama with movement and expression

sing, play and move to music, and experiment with sound

instruments

copy the beat of music using clapping, tapping or percussion

 talk about how music can represent different things – a circus, or sunshine as in 'Morning' from Peer Gynt by Grieg, for example

Some Year 3 and Year 4 examples

- focus more on detail of artwork subject matter, such as facial expressions, body angles
- sing and move to the beat of music, identify structure and changes in pitch, tempo and beat
- develop dance performances using known dance movements and improvised moves to create a sequence
- play music using percussion instruments such as drums, triangles or maracas, as well as clapping, tapping of hands and feet
- follow percussion charts to create a group musical performance
- role-play characters from plays, working in groups as well as individual roles

Some Year 5 and Year 6 examples

- improvise with photographs and other artwork to create their own piece of art
- move to music and perform in singing and dance combinations
- take on roles and situations adapted from their imagination and from literature, including poetry
- talk about different types of music and discuss what they like and don't like, and why
- take on roles to demonstrate feelings such as empathy, excitement, sadness and joy, as well as different status such as a king or a servant in a play

There are many different ways for teachers to organise lessons effectively. Talk to your child's teacher about what they expect to cover in class and how you can help your child at home.



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PDHPE

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes students need to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives. Students learn about the importance of good food and regular exercise.

They learn how bodies grow and change over time. They learn skills to play individual and team sports, and the values of sportsmanship and teamwork.

In Kindergarten

- become aware of safe and unsafe places and situations, eg near roads or water
- identify people who can help, and describe actions such as 'no, go, tell' that might be taken in unsafe situations
- label different parts of the body and name their functions, eg ears are for hearing

Some Year 1 and Year 2 examples

- identify medicines and describe how they are safely used and stored
- learn and practise fundamental movement skills including hop, skip, kick, overarm throw
- identify the qualities of positive relationships, eg cooperation and caring for others

Some Year 3 and Year 4 examples

- become aware of the influences on healthy choices, eg television advertising and unhealthy eating
- practise fundamental movement skills in different physical activities, eg playing with a racquet or bat
- learn the rules and play a range of team sports in class and school teams

Some Year 5 and Year 6 examples

- explain the benefits of personal lifestyle choices, eg eating healthy food, participating in physical activity
- value differences in others and develop an understanding of discrimination
- demonstrate teamwork, tactics and precision when performing in a range of physical activities



- identify how people care for each other
- participate in regular physical activity through creative play and minor games
- learn and practise fundamental movement skills such as hopping and jumping
- recognise choices that keep them healthy and safe, eg sun protection, eating habits, participation in physical activity
- link movement skills together in simple sequences, eg jumphop-run
- display cooperation with others, eg taking turns
- realise the harm that can be caused by drugs, tobacco and alcohol
- identify the body changes that occur throughout life
- participate in a range of physical activities and learn how they contribute to a healthy and active lifestyle
- explain the importance of communication in relationships and positive ways to deal with conflict
- recognise the effects their decisions can have on the health and safety of others

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 consider their physical activity levels and participate in physical activities that enhance health

EARI

IAGE

What is an 'integrated unit' of work?

Your child's teacher may refer to 'integrated units' as part of their class program.

'Integration' means that material from more than one syllabus is being taught in a single unit of work. For example, designing, making, writing and illustrating a short book of stories could involve parts of the English syllabus, the Science and Technology syllabus and the Creative Arts syllabus.

Teachers sometimes combine syllabus areas around a single theme – such as Antarctica, Democracy or Explorers – as it allows students to learn about the topic in a variety of ways. Teachers have found this approach can deepen students' understanding and enjoyment of what they are learning.

Integration is not undertaken in a classroom at all times during the day. Teachers plan meaningful links across the syllabuses to meet the learning needs of their students.

EXAMPLE – Culture and Environment in Bali is an integrated unit

Bali is often taught as part of an integrated unit in years 5 or 6 (Stage 3). The HSIE content of *'examining how cultures change through interactions with other cultures and their environment*' is often the starting point for the class.

Here are **some** examples:

HSIE: research Balinese

culture including

traditional dress and

environment, food, geography, history

costumes, art, beliefs,

Mathematics: select appropriate technology to gather data, measure, graph using scale, 2D and 3D shapes

Science and Technology: investigate environmental, cultural and safety factors to design and make a Balinese village

English: learn how to write reports, summarise information gathered during research about Bali

Creative Arts: design a passport for travel, design a mask or puppet, listen to traditional Balinese music and a Gamelan orchestra, learn about traditional dance

PDHPE: develop team skills, problem solving in design and making, learn traditional games of Balinese children and compare them to Australian games and activities, host a 'Balinese banquet'

The Assessment Resource Centre (ARC)

The Assessment Resource Centre (or ARC) helps teachers to assess and report student achievement across Kindergarten to Year 12. The ARC has been developed by the Board of Studies for teachers to use when grading students, although parents and students will also find it useful.

Work samples

The ARC website provides samples of student work that have been assessed against the common grade scale. This can help you to see what is expected at the **end** of each stage for each learning area.

These work samples are used by teachers across NSW so there can be a consistent assessment of student achievement. This means that the grading will be the same for student work produced in any school in NSW.

To see the ARC website, go to http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/



Some questions answered

How do I find out what my child should learn each year?

Your child's teacher is the best person to talk to about each year's program for your son or daughter's class.

In English and Mathematics your child will learn specific topics each year. In these two subjects there are certain 'building blocks' that must be learned before your child moves to the next level of understanding. The other subjects are more flexible and topics can be taught at any point within the two-year stage.

For more information, you can read the Board's *Foundation Statements* or the full syllabus for each subject. Check back page for website addresses.

How will my child's achievements be graded?

The Board of Studies provides a 'common grade scale' as a guide for teachers to prepare student reports. You can see the grade scale and graded samples of student work here: http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

The A to E (or equivalent) grading scale lets teachers report student achievement according to clear and consistent standards. Teachers make professional judgements as to which grade best matches the standard their students have achieved.

In summary: A is the grade for extensive knowledge and understanding, B is for thorough, C is for sound, D is for basic and E is for elementary.

Where can I get more information?

Your child's teacher can help with more information. You can also find the Board of Studies' syllabus documents, the Board's *Foundation Statements*, and additional resources which teachers use at **http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au** and **http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au**

The Board of Studies provides a range of resources for parents of children from Kindergarten to Year 6. Please visit **eBOS Shop Online** at the Board of Studies website or call the Customer Services Unit on (02) 9367 8178 for more information.

What is the Australian curriculum?

NSW has joined with the Australian Government and all other states and territories to develop an Australian curriculum.

NSW schools will continue to use the existing NSW K-12 syllabuses for 2011.

Further information about the Australian curriculum can be found on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website and the NSW Board of Studies website.

Community languages

The Guide is available in a number of community languages. Please go to **www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/parents** for more information.

Some words and phrases explained

Foundation Statements: The Board of Studies' *Foundation Statements* help primary teachers summarise *what must be taught* in each syllabus. You can read the Statements for each primary subject on the Board's website.

Key Learning Areas or 'KLAs': These are the mandatory subject areas taught in all NSW schools. There are six KLAs in primary school and eight KLAs in secondary school.

In secondary school, Science and Technology become separate subject areas: Science is one subject area; Technology and Applied Studies is another. Languages Other Than English (LOTE) is also introduced as a mandatory subject area.

You can find out more about the KLAs on the Board's website.

Syllabus: A syllabus is a detailed description of each of the subjects that teachers should cover at each stage of schooling. 'Syllabus' and 'curriculum' are often used to describe the same thing, although curriculum can also be a more general term to describe everything taught in schools.

What is the Board of Studies?

The Board of Studies NSW was established in 1990 to serve government and non-government schools in the development of school education from Kindergarten to Year 12. The Board develops quality curriculum for all schools, awards the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate and registers and accredits non-government schools.

Can I provide feedback?

The Board of Studies is interested in your feedback on this Guide. Please email your comments to information@bos.nsw.edu.au or fax to (02) 9367 8035.

Here are some useful websites

Board of Studies home page

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

K–6 Education Resources (including Syllabuses, *Foundation Statements* and Parents page) http://k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Board of Studies Shop Online https://bosho.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/links/shoponline.html

The Assessment Resource Centre (ARC) http://arc.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Aboriginal education http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

NSW Department of Education and Training www.det.nsw.edu.au

NSW Catholic Education Commission www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

NSW Association Independent Schools www.aisnsw.edu.au

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) www.acara.edu.au