

Introduction

Purpose

Children's Literature, Grades K-3, is a recommended resource to complement the following curriculum documents that describe the prescribed curriculum for English language arts:

- *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* (1996)
- *English Language Arts Primary: A Curriculum Guide* (1999)
- *Early Beginnings! Kindergarten Curriculum Guide* (1997)
- *Spelling in Context: Directions for Teaching and Learning (A Guide for Primary Teachers)*
- *Video (Part I - Spell It Out: The Place of Spelling in the Writing Process and Part II - Spell it Out: The Place of Spelling in the Primary Classroom)*

Children's Literature, Grades K-3 provides more than 150 annotations and approximately 500 related readings to other children's literature. The annotations are organized under the following categories:

- Alphabet Books
- Concept Books
- Wordless Picture Books
- Predictable Books
- Number Books
- Narratives
- Traditional Tales
- Transitional Novels
- Informational Books
- Poetry

Lists of professional literature and web sites are included to support teachers as they develop effective literacy programs for their students. The titles of children's literature authorized by the Department of Education to enrich the Mathematics, Language Arts and Religious Education curricula are also provided.

English Language Arts Primary: A Curriculum Guide makes clear that reading in all genres of literature, as well as exposure to information and media text, is essential to the development of a flexible, fluent reader.

Children's Literature, Grades K-3 is designed to assist primary teachers, administrators and teacher librarians in acquiring quality literature collections within individual classrooms and school resource centres. The annotated books and related readings will help teachers integrate children's literature across the primary curriculum.

Children's Literature and the Grades K–3 Curriculum

“Children’s literature plays a central role in the English Language Arts curriculum in the primary grades. Students benefit from being surrounded by a wide variety of literature and from the opportunity to choose their own texts from this variety. The use of literature in the curriculum motivates young readers and encourages them to see themselves as readers.

The primary value of reading literature is the aesthetic experience itself - the satisfaction of the lived-through experience, the sense of pleasure in the medium of language, the complex interaction of emotion and intellect as the reader responds to the images, ideas and interpretations evoked by the text.

Wide reading of literature also provides exemplary models for students’ writing as they internalise the structures and conventions of particular genres, get ideas for themes and topics, and notice interesting techniques they can try out in their writing. Reading literature helps students to develop a sense of the importance of craft and awareness of audience in their own writing.” (*English Language Arts Primary: A Curriculum Guide*, p. 239).

Primary children are expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts. As well, they are expected to respond personally and critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre” (*English Language Arts Primary: A Curriculum Guide*, p. 24).

By the end of Grade 3, children are expected to

- select, independently and with teacher assistance, texts appropriate to their interests and learning needs
- read widely and experience a variety of children’s literature
- use pictorial, typographical, and organizational features of written text to determine content, locate topics, and obtain information
- use and integrate, with support, the various cueing systems (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic) and a range of strategies to construct meaning
- describe their own reading and viewing processes and strategies
- answer, with assistance, their own questions and those of others by seeking information from a variety of texts
 - identify their own personal and learning needs for information
 - generate their own questions as a guide for research
 - use a range of print and non-print materials to meet their needs
 - use basic reference materials and a database or electronic search
 - reflect on their own research process
- make personal connections to texts and describe, share, and discuss their reactions and emotions
- express and explain opinions about texts and types of texts, and the work of authors and illustrators, demonstrating an increasing awareness of the reasons for their opinions

- question information presented in print and visual texts
 - use a personal knowledge base as a frame of reference
- identify some different types of print and media texts
 - recognize some of their language conventions and text characteristics
 - recognize that these conventions and characteristics help them understand what they read and view
- respond critically to texts
 - formulate questions as well as understandings
 - identify the point of view in a text and demonstrate awareness of whose voices/positions are and are not being expressed
 - discuss the text from the perspectives of their own realities and experiences
 - identify instances of prejudice, bias, and stereotyping

Extending children's literary experiences through a range of literature will help to ensure the acquisition of these curriculum outcomes. Children will learn to develop control over written language and will enjoy using it. Authentic and relevant experiences with children's literature will provide opportunities for stimulating and consolidating learning across the curriculum.

Criteria for Selecting Children's Literature

The titles listed in this document include a wide variety of children's literature that will appeal to students' interests, needs and abilities. Careful consideration has been given to the selection criteria as set forth on page 54 of *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum* (1996). The selections will

- provide motivating and challenging experiences suitable for the learner's age, ability and social maturity
- elicit personal, thoughtful critical responses
- represent a range of styles and literary structures
- have literary merit
- use language effectively and responsibly, and use language that is essential to the integrity of the work
- offer a variety of experiences and values which reflect the diversity of learners' interests, needs and competencies
- broaden students' understanding of social, historical, geographical and cultural diversity
- develop sensitivity to and an understanding that reflects individual differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, class and political/social values

The titles recommended in this document reflect the standards established for enhancing students' literary experiences. However, it must be acknowledged that there is a vast body of literature not included in this document that is of high quality and value and should also be considered by teachers as they select material for use in the classroom. Teachers are proficient at making choices based on the needs of their students and on the uniqueness of their teaching environments and situations.

