

Worksheet 1

Learning Environment & Situational Factors to Consider

1. Specific Context of the Teaching/Learning Situation

There are about 20 students in the first-grade class. The literacy block is 120 minutes long. The block consists of teacher-led instruction and independent learning time, with the teacher leading small-group instruction to address students' individual needs. During rotations, students refer to the rotation chart to see what they need to do. Each rotation lasts up to 15 minutes. During some rotations, students work on Chromebooks, while in others they work with spelling words or read and respond. Students work around the classroom. One of their rotation is the teacher table, where they work with the teacher on their specific needs. The first couple of weeks of school were spent teaching students how to use their QR codes to log in, access different applications, and use them. From time to time, students still need assistance with technology and are taught to ask their peers before reaching out to the teacher.

2. General Context of the Learning Situation

Districts' expectations for first-grade literacy instruction, based on TEKS, are to prioritize building strong word-structure knowledge through phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics, and basic morphology, so students can effectively decode, spell, and communicate across listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. Students should also develop growing oral and written comprehension by applying metacognitive strategies—such as identifying author's purpose, analyzing craft, and recognizing genre features—to increasingly complex texts. Additionally, first graders should strengthen oral and written language skills to communicate clearly, using appropriate conventions and the recursive writing process to consider audience, purpose, craft, and genre as they progress through the year.

3. Nature of the Subject

First-grade literacy is a developmental and skills-based subject focused on building the foundational abilities young learners need to become successful readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers. Its nature is systematic, cumulative, and interconnected—beginning with the foundational structures of language such as phonological awareness, print concepts, phonics, and morphology. These elements support students as they learn to decode, encode, and communicate effectively.

At the same time, literacy in first grade is deeply cognitive and meaning-driven, requiring students to develop comprehension through metacognitive strategies like determining the author's purpose, analyzing craft, and recognizing genre features. As students grow, the subject also becomes expressive, emphasizing the development of oral and written language. Through

the recursive writing process and appropriate conventions, students learn to shape their ideas for different audiences and purposes. Overall, first-grade literacy combines foundational skill-building with higher-level thinking and communication to support holistic language development.

4. Characteristics of the Learners

Students at this elementary school come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. For some students, this is their first-ever school experience, whereas others have been in school since Pre-Kindergarten. There is a wide range of student abilities: at one end, students are learning letter names and sounds, and at the other, they are readers learning to comprehend text. Understanding these influences is essential for educators to create inclusive, relevant, and effective learning environments (Teacher Institute, 2023)

5. Characteristics of the Teacher

The teacher believes that learning is an active, joyful, and meaningful process, grounded in hands-on experiences and student-centered exploration. Influenced by Montessori and Dewey, the teacher values environments where children construct understanding through play, inquiry, and real-world engagement. She sees the subject as an opportunity to spark curiosity and build essential skills, and views students as capable, creative learners who thrive when given choice, collaboration, and purposeful tasks grounded in the COVA principle (Harpunik, 2018). The teacher's understanding of domains 1 and 2 of T-TESS is demonstrated by strong familiarity with developmentally appropriate practices and the ability to scaffold learning through materials, movement, and guided discovery. Teacher's strengths lie in creating fun, engaging lessons, fostering cooperative learning, and designing learning experiences that honor each child's individuality while promoting deep, connected understanding.

Worksheet 2

Questions for Formulating Significant Learning Goals

"By the end of this year, I want and hope that students will develop comprehension through metacognitive strategies like determining author's purpose, analyzing craft, and recognizing genre features, and support their thinking with text evidence."

My Big Harry Audacious Goal (BHAG) for the course is:

Every first-grade student will become an independent, reflective reader who can confidently explain what a text means and how they know it—using metacognitive strategies like identifying the author's purpose, analyzing the author's craft, recognizing genre features, and consistently supporting their thinking with clear, relevant text evidence.

The following goals are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for first grade.

Foundational Knowledge

- Students will understand basic literary concepts, including author, purpose, genre, characters, setting, and main idea. (TEKS 1.10)
- Students will learn key metacognitive strategies (thinking about their thinking) for understanding texts. (TEKS 1.6)
- Students will know how to identify text evidence (words, phrases, pictures) that support their ideas. (TEKS 1.6)

Application Goals

- Students will apply metacognitive strategies while reading by pausing to ask questions, make predictions, and explain their thinking. (TEKS 1.6 and 1.7)
- Students will analyze an author's purpose, craft choices (word choice, repetition, illustrations), and genre features in grade-level texts. (TEKS C)
- Students will support their thinking with text evidence during discussions, reading response activities, and simple written explanations. (TEKS 1.6, 1.7)

Integration Goals

- Students will connect what they read to their own experiences, other texts, and classroom learning. (TEKS 1.6)
- Students will combine multiple strategies—author’s purpose, craft, genre, and evidence—to form deeper, more accurate interpretations of texts. (TEKS 1.8, 1.9, 1.10)
- Students will integrate reading and writing by using evidence-based thinking in both. (TEKS 1.7)

Dimensions Goals

- Students will see themselves as capable readers and thinkers who can clearly explain their ideas. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will learn to listen respectfully and build on others' ideas during collaborative conversations. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will understand the value of evidence-based thinking in solving problems and making decisions. (TEKS 1.7)

Caring Goals

- Students will develop a genuine interest in stories, informational texts, and the process of discovering meaning. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will value thoughtful reading when they feel proud to explain their ideas with evidence. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will care about the author’s craft and begin to appreciate how writers make creative choices. (TEKS 1.10)

“Learning-How-to-Learn” Goals

- make sense, and use strategies to fix them. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will reflect on their thinking—identifying which strategies helped them understand a text. (TEKS 1.7)
- Students will develop independence by selecting tools (graphic organizers, sticky notes, talk moves) that support their reading and thinking. (TEKS 1.7)

3 Column Table

3 Column Table

BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) – Overarching Course Goal

Every first-grade student will become an independent, reflective reader who can confidently explain what a text means and how they know it—using metacognitive strategies like identifying the author’s purpose, analyzing the author’s craft, recognizing genre features, and consistently supporting their thinking with clear, relevant text evidence.

The following goals are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for first grade.

Learning Goals	Learning Activities	Assessment Activities
Identify author’s purpose, craft, and genre features (Foundational Knowledge)	The teacher reads a short text and models highlighting features using anchor charts or manipulatives.	Students complete a quick “Find the Feature” task, sorting sentences or pictures into categories: purpose, craft, genre.
Apply metacognitive strategies and support thinking with text evidence (Application)	Students use sticky notes to mark parts of the text that show the author’s purpose or craft and then discuss in small groups.	Students provide verbal or written explanations: “I think the author’s purpose is ____ because the text says ____.”
Connect purpose, craft, and evidence to deepen comprehension (Integration)	Students create a simple graphic organizer linking purpose → craft → evidence from a story or informational text.	The teacher uses a checklist to evaluate whether students accurately show connections between the three parts.
Understand themselves as capable readers and collaborators (Human Dimension)	Students practice “Turn and Talk” routines using sentence stems such as “I noticed...” “I agree because...”	The teacher observes accountable talk during partner time and provides feedback using a participation rubric.

Develop interest in reading and valuing evidence-based thinking (Caring)	Students choose from a set of engaging texts and share one favorite craft move or text feature during “Book Spotlight.”	Students complete a short reflection: “I liked when the author... because...”
Monitor comprehension and reflect on strategy use (Learning How to Learn)	Students use “Stop & Think” bookmarks to signal confusing or interesting parts during independent reading.	Exit ticket: “One strategy that helped me today was...” OR record a short explanation on a tablet.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

ELA. 1.6 Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to:

- (A) establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts with adult assistance;
- (C) make and correct or confirm predictions using text features, characteristics of genre, and structures with adult assistance;
- (E) make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society with adult assistance;
- (F) make inferences and use evidence to support understanding with adult assistance;
- (I) monitor comprehension and make adjustments such as re-reading, using background knowledge, checking for visual cues, and asking questions when understanding breaks down.

ELA. 1.7 Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe personal connections to a variety of sources;
- (C) use text evidence to support an appropriate response;

(D) retell texts in ways that maintain meaning;

ELA 1.8 Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--literary elements. The student recognizes and analyzes literary elements within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse literary texts. The student is expected to:

(A) discuss topics and determine theme using text evidence with adult assistance;

(B) describe the main character(s) and the reason(s) for their actions;

(C) describe plot elements, including the main events, the problem, and the resolution, for texts read aloud and independently; and

(D) describe the setting.

ELA 1.9 Multiple genres: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--genres. The student recognizes and analyzes genre-specific characteristics, structures, and purposes within and across increasingly complex traditional, contemporary, classical, and diverse texts. The student is expected to:

(A) demonstrate knowledge of distinguishing characteristics of well-known children's literature such as folktales, fables, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes;

(D) recognize characteristics and structures of informational text, including:

(i) the central idea and supporting evidence with adult assistance;

(ii) features and simple graphics to locate or gain information; and

(iii) organizational patterns such as chronological order and description with adult assistance;

(E) recognize characteristics of persuasive text with adult assistance and state what the author is trying to persuade the reader to think or do; and

ELA 1.10 Author's purpose and craft: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses critical inquiry to analyze the authors' choices and how they influence and communicate meaning within a variety of texts. The student analyzes and applies the author's craft purposefully in order to develop his or her own products and performances. The student is expected to:

- (A) discuss the author's purpose for writing text;
- (B) discuss how the use of text structure contributes to the author's purpose;
- (C) discuss with adult assistance the author's use of print and graphic features to achieve specific purposes;
- (D) discuss how the author uses words that help the reader visualize; and

References

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