

Vertical Progressions in the Primary Grades

In the South Carolina English Language Arts College and Career Ready Standards, learning has been intentionally designed to build from one grade level to the next. The ELA indicators have been vertically aligned so that students develop skills over time, increasing difficulty, application, and independence.

In the primary grades, though many literacy skills appear similarly across kindergarten, first, and second grades, expectations change across grade levels based on what is considered developmentally appropriate and demonstrates proficiency.

Some common progressions that can be observed in primary grades are:

- **Listening → Reading**
Students begin by demonstrating understanding through listening and shared experiences, then progress to applying those skills while reading independently.
- **Oral Response → Written Response**
Students initially express their understanding through speaking and discussion and gradually move toward writing about their thinking.
- **Supported → Independent Application**
Skills introduced with teacher guidance and support in kindergarten become more independent and flexible in first and second grade.

Here is a more detailed example of what this could look like in kindergarten, first, and second grades:

- **Kindergarten:** Students often demonstrate understanding through listening, discussion, and teacher support.
- **Grade 1:** Students begin applying skills with increasing independence and may reference text to support their thinking.
- **Grade 2:** Students expand their responses, apply skills across texts, and demonstrate greater independence and depth of understanding.

Just as a musician masters playing an instrument by first learning the basics and fundamentals then moves to more complex concepts; these progressions reflect intentional design within the standards, with each grade level building on the previous one, strengthening and extending student learning along the way.