

Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality

Communication, Language, and Early Literacy Development: 3-5 Years

Children develop an understanding of language, beginning with their home language or dialect. 1

a Demonstrate understanding of increasingly complex language, including non-verbal cues. 1A

1a. 3 Years 3.1A

- 1 Participate in conversations by showing attention and acknowledging comments or questions, either spoken or signed. 3.1A.1
- 2 Pick out a book from the bookshelf and bring it to a familiar adult when asked to choose the next story to read. 3.1A.2
- 3 Bring the box of dinosaurs to the carpet when a familiar adult tells them that dinosaurs are one of the choices to play with. 3.1A.3
- 4 Respond yes or no (or nodding/shaking their head) when asked “Do you want to go outside?” 3.1A.4
- 5 Listen as a familiar adult describes an idea or clarifies the meaning of a word. 3.1A.5
- 6 Answers questions or points to objects/people when asked questions such as “Who do you want to play with?” “What colors will you use to color the dinosaur?” “Where is your backpack?” or “What do you want to play with?” 3.1A.6

1a. 4 Years 4.1A

- 1 Listen to a story about a boy in the rain and respond with reasons from the story when asked “Why did the boy in the story have wet shoes?” 4.1A.1
- 2 Answer when asked questions such as “Why do you think your friend is sad?” “What happened to the block tower when you bumped into it?” “Who can you ask for help with that?” or “Where could we look to find the answer to that question?” 4.1A.2
- 3 Listen attentively to a peer or adult when it is that person’s turn to talk during a conversation. 4.1A.3
- 4 Actively listen to short presentations and remember some details. 4.1A.4

1a. 5 Years 5.1A

- 1 Show attention during longer and more complex conversations, either spoken or signed. 5.1A.1
- 2 Show attention during primarily receptive interactions, such as listening to a book being read aloud, by nodding, gesturing, interrupting to ask a related question, etc. 5.1A.2
- 3 Retell or use picture cards to identify the major events in a story they just listened to. 5.1A.3
- 4 Participate in a group conversation by communicating their own perspective when asked, such as by explaining that the classroom hamster likes yogurt treats during a discussion about making sure their pets have what they need to be healthy and happy. 5.1A.4

b Follow increasingly complex directions. 1B

1b. 3 Years 3.1B

- 1 Follow one- or two-step directions that involve familiar experiences or objects, such as “Pick up the ball and roll it to me,” or “Choose a book and come sit down.” 3.1B.1
- 2 Respond to repeated signs, words, and phrases with gestures and body movements. 3.1B.2

1b. 4 Years 4.1B

- 1 Follow multi-step instructions, such as “Put away your markers, choose a book, and come join us on the carpet.” 4.1B.1

1b. 5 Years 5.1B

- 1 Follow increasingly detailed, multi-step instructions, such as “Please put away your markers and put your picture in your cubby, then choose a book and join us on the carpet.” 5.1B.1
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Children use language to express themselves to others, beginning with their home language. 2

a Communicate using increasingly understandable language, including sounds, gestures, signs, words, and language expressed using assistive devices. 2A

2a. 3 Years 3.2A

- 1 Communicate clearly enough to be understood by most people. 3.2A.1
- 2 Still mispronounce some words, especially new, unusual, or complex words, such as “buhsggetti” for spaghetti. 3.2A.2

2a. 4 Years 4.2A

- 1 Mispronounce new and/or unusual words. 4.2A.1
- 2 Begin to use some polite gestures that are commonly used in their family and community, such as bowing to indicate respect, lowering their gaze when speaking to adults, or greeting a friend with a hug. 4.2A.2

2a. 5 Years 5.2A

- 1 Communicate clearly, using increasingly detailed signs, words, phrases, and sentences. 5.2A.1

b Communicate using an expanding vocabulary. 2B

2b. 3 Years 3.2B

- 1 Use an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary to express their needs and describe objects, relationships between objects, emotions, and actions. 3.2B.1
- 2 Use phrases and sentences of 2-3 words. 3.2B.2
- 3 Answer simple questions with words or signs. 3.2B.3

2b. 4 Years 4.2B

- 1 Use phrases and sentences of 4-5 words or signs. 4.2B.1
- 2 Respond to questions with detail. 4.2B.2
- 3 Demonstrate a broad and increasing vocabulary of about 500 words or signs. 4.2B.3
- 4 Use their growing vocabulary to express their needs and describe objects, relationships between objects, emotions, and actions, including an increasing number of details. 4.2B.4
- 5 Use questions to ask for things or gain information. 4.2B.5

2b. 5 Years 5.2B

- 1 Combine 5-8 words or signs together into complete thoughts or sentences. 5.2B.1
- 2 Answer questions with detailed and more abstract signs, words, and ideas. 5.2B.2
- 3 Demonstrate an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary of over 1000 words or signs. 5.2B.3
- 4 Ask specific questions to understand and solve problems. 5.2B.4
- 5 Describe events that happened in the past with many details. 5.2B.5

c Communicate using increasingly complex grammar and sentence structure. 2C

2c. 3 Years 3.2C

- 1 Combine simple words into sentences, using plurals, past tense, subjectverb agreement, and the possessive form (although often incorrectly). For example: “Mommy goed work.” 3.2C.1
- 2 Tell stories about their experiences using past, present, and future tenses and terms interchangeably (e.g., “yesterday we go to the zoo”). 3.2C.2

2c. 4 Years 4.2C

- 1 Use plurals as well as past and future tense verbs correctly when telling stories, most of the time. For example: “We went to the zoo. We saw two tigers and I got popcorn!” 4.2C.1
- 2 Combine words and phrases into increasingly complex sentences. (e.g., “She doesn’t like peas, but I do!”) 4.2C.2
- 3 Use sentence structures reflective of their home languages, such as adding adjectives after nouns (rather than before nouns, as in English). For example: “I have a shirt blue.” 4.2C.3
- 4 Imitate songs and finger plays. 4.2C.4

2c. 5 Years 5.2C

- 1 Tell increasingly detailed stories about their lives. 5.2C.1
 - 2 Combine words and phrases into increasingly complex sentences. For example: “Teisha’s moms came today and read us a story and they took turns doing different voices!” 5.2C.2
 - 3 Use sentence structures that are grammatically complex, most of the time. 5.2C.3
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Children use social and conversational skills, beginning with their home language and cultural values. 3

a Communicate with others for a variety of purposes. 3A

3a. 3 Years 3.3A

- 1 Initiate and respond to communication with others. 3.3A.1
- 2 Begin to hold longer back-and-forth conversations. 3.3A.2

3a. 4 Years 4.3A

- 1 Hold extended back-and-forth conversations by asking questions and making comments related to the topic, sometimes. 4.3A.1
- 2 Tell a story out loud for a familiar adult to write down. 4.3A.2
- 3 Retell a story or describe one of their own experiences in sequence. 4.3A.3

3a. 5 Years 5.3A

- 1 Extend conversations by asking questions and making comments related to the topic. 5.3A.1
- 2 Engage in a wider variety of conversational topics. 5.3A.2
- 3 Return to previous topics of conversation with new information “Remember, I told you about the zoo? This is a picture of the tiger!” 5.3A.3

b Follow the social expectations of their personal cultural context when communicating with others. 3B

3b. 3 Years 3.3B

- 1 With modeling and support, use polite terms such as please, thank you, and excuse me with increasing consistency. 3.3B.1
- 2 Show attention to a person they are having a conversation with. 3.3B.2
- 3 Take turns in conversation by initiating and sustaining a simple back and forth conversation. 3.3B.3
- 4 With modeling and support, begin to apply their understanding of conversational routines, such as turn-taking and maintaining eye contact, to a variety of situations and types of conversations (with a familiar adult, a peer, an unfamiliar adult, at home, etc.). 3.3B.4

3b. 4 Years 4.3B

- 1 Use nonverbal cues during conversations according to their personal cultural context, including physical proximity, maintaining eye contact, asking questions, etc. 4.3B.1
- 2 Adjust their volume and tone depending on the context of their conversation, such as speaking with a friend or an unfamiliar adult, having a conversation in the learning environment or in a public library. 4.3B.2
- 3 Engage in longer, multi-turn conversations. 4.3B.3
- 4 Adjust their language and tone when having a conversation with younger children. 4.3B.4
- 5 With some support and reminders, apply their understanding of conversational routines, such as turn-taking and maintaining eye contact, to a variety of situations and types of conversations (with a familiar adult, a peer, an unfamiliar adult, at home, etc.). 4.3B.5

3b. 5 Years 5.3B

- 1 Stay on topic during peer-to-peer and group conversations. 5.3B.1
 - 2 Engage in peer-to-peer conversations, listening and responding while staying on topic. 5.3B.2
 - 3 Initiate conversations and stay on topic during through multiple turn-taking exchanges. 5.3B.3
 - 4 With support and reminders, apply their understanding of conversational routines, such as turn-taking and maintaining eye contact, to a variety of situations and types of conversations (with a familiar adult, a peer, an unfamiliar adult, at home, etc.) with increasing consistency. 5.3B.4
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**Children construct
meaning from text.** 4

a Demonstrate interest in and care for books, including book handling concepts. 4A

4a. 3 Years 3.4A

- 1 Choose familiar books to “read” to themselves or to a doll or stuffed animal. 3.4A.1
- 2 Hold books with two hands and turn the pages. 3.4A.2

4a. 4 Years 4.4A

- 1 Identify the parts of a book: the front and back covers, top and bottom, and title. 4.4A.1
- 2 Ask about, identify, and distinguish between the roles authors and illustrators play in making a book. 4.4A.2

4a. 5 Years 5.4A

- 1 Turn to the approximate part of the book and then turn pages to find specific parts of a story in the book. 5.4A.1
- 2 Hold books upright and with front cover facing them and turn individual pages to read a story either using the text or the pictures, or a combination of both. 5.4A.2

b Demonstrate an understanding of print concepts. 4B

4b. 3 Years 3.4B

- 1 Expand their environmental print vocabulary with some less familiar signs and logos. 3.4B.1
- 2 Begin to use pictures and logos in environmental print to attempt to decode the text, such as a new label in the learning environment with a picture of a Crayola crayon box to identify the basket of crayons, a picture of a STOP sign to wait at the end of a hallway, or the red and white bullseye image to identify a Target store. 3.4B.2
- 3 Begin to understand that the text on a page is separate or different from the pictures. 3.4B.3
- 4 Join in with adults saying “the end” at the end of a book. 3.4B.4

4b. 4 Years 4.4B

- 1 Begin to run their fingers along the text in a book. 4.4B.1
- 2 Mimic and repeat familiar story routines, such as saying “the end” at the end of a book. 4.4B.2
- 3 Begin to recognize the difference between letters, words, and sentences, such as pointing out the word that starts with a particular letter. 4.4B.3
- 4 Recognize and show interest in the ways people use print, such as reading a story about getting letters in the mail and then asking a familiar adult to send them a letter in the mail or making and “reading” a grocery list during pretend play. 4.4B.4

4b. 5 Years 5.4B

- 1 Track text from left to right, top to bottom, and page to page. 5.4B.1
- 2 Point to individual, sequential words on a page as they read (or attempt to read) each word. 5.4B.2

c Understand that print and pictures communicate ideas that can be read/viewed and understood by others. 4C

4c. 3 Years 3.4C

- 1 Use some language from a story when attempting to retell a story, such as saying “Boom boom!” as they turn pages in Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. 3.4C.1
- 2 With support and prompting, describe what is happening in a picture. 3.4C.2

4c. 4 Years 4.4C

- 1 Finish the ends of repeating phrases or complete a rhyme or sentence while an adult reads a book, such as “He ate through one apple, but he was still....” “Hungry!” 4.4C.1

4c. 5 Years 5.4C

- 1 Point to and talk about words and pictures in a variety of texts. 5.4C.1
- 2 Express their thoughts, experiences, and ideas using a variety of strategies, including gestures and facial expressions, words, signs, pictures, text, numerals, sounds, shapes, models, and photographs. 5.4C.2
- 3 Draw a picture of and write about the elephant they saw at the zoo. 5.4C.3
- 4 Use a device to record video of a gymnastics meet they attended and play it back later when telling others about the experience. 5.4C.4

Children begin to understand that (in alphabetic languages like English) letters and letter sounds represent the sounds of the spoken language. 5

a Recognize letters, the names of letters, and how the letters are shaped, as well as some personally meaningful words. 5A

5a. 3 Years 3.5A

- 1 Identify some frequently appearing letters and numbers. 3.5A.1
- 2 Notice a letter appearing in printed words as being the first letter of their name. 3.5A.2
- 3 Sort and/or match letter shapes, without necessarily being able to name or identify those letters. 3.5A.3

5a. 4 Years 4.5A

- 1 Recognize and identify the letters in their name when they appear in other printed words. 4.5A.1
- 2 Recognize and identify many uppercase and lowercase letters. 4.5A.2
- 3 Recognize the printed form of their own name and other names of familiar people (classmates, family members, etc.). 4.5A.3
- 4 Recognize and identify at least 18 uppercase and 15 lowercase letters by the end of their prekindergarten year. 4.5A.4

5a. 5 Years 5.5A

- 1 Differentiate between uppercase and lowercase letters. 5.5A.1

b Recognize the sounds associated with letters. 5B

5b. 3 Years 3.5B

- 1 Make the sounds associated with many of the letters they recognize. 3.5B.1

5b. 4 Years 4.5B

- 1 Make the letter sound associated with the first letter of a word, with adult prompting. 4.5B.1
- 2 Produce the letter sounds associated with the letters in their own name, with adult support. 4.5B.2

5b. 5 Years 5.5B

- 1 Identify letters based on hearing their associated letter sounds. 5.5B.1
 - 2 Use invented spelling as they sound out new words, with and without adult support. 5.5B.2
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Children will build their awareness of, and ability to work with, the sounds of language. 6

a Notice, manipulate, and play with the sounds of language. 6A

6a. 3 Years 3.6A

- 1 Notice and identify that some words start with the same sound, such as “cat and cow start with kkkkk.” 3.6A.1
- 2 Act out the motions to familiar songs, chants, and fingerplays. 3.6A.2
- 3 Recognize some rhyming words, or words that sound the same, such as zip and clip. 3.6A.3
- 4 Say the last word of a repeating phrase in a familiar chant, song, or story. 3.6A.4

6a. 4 Years 4.6A

- 1 Clap out the words in a song or sentence, with adult support. 4.6A.1
- 2 Recognize words that have matching sounds. 4.6A.2
- 3 Identify rhymes in familiar words, games, stories, songs, and poems. 4.6A.3
- 4 Recognize the difference between similar sounding words, such as blue and glue. 4.6A.4
- 5 Recognize beginning sounds in familiar words. 4.6A.5

6a. 5 Years 5.6A

- 1 Recognize final sounds in familiar words. 5.6A.1
- 2 Create and extend series of rhyming words. 5.6A.2

b Recognize, manipulate, and play with sounds within words. 6B

6b. 3 Years 3.6B

- 1 With adult support, identify when two words rhyme or begin with the same sound. 3.6B.1
- 2 Imitate and show enjoyment for rhymes and alliteration. 3.6B.2

6b. 4 Years 4.6B

- 1 Tell an adult that “here” and “cheer” rhyme but “here” and “there” do not. 4.6B.1
- 2 Identify the parts of compound words, such as book—shelf and race—car. 4.6B.2
- 3 Begin to recognize and identify separate syllables in words, such as in their own name. For example: “A—ri—sa.” 4.6B.3

6b. 5 Years 5.6B

- 1 When asked, identify whether two words start with the same sound. 5.6B.1
- 2 Produce a series of rhyming words. 5.6B.2
- 3 With adult support, clap out the syllables of a word. 5.6B.3
- 4 Identify the beginning and ending sound in words. 5.6B.4

Children will interact with people and materials to increase their understanding of text. 7

a Demonstrate reading-like behaviors with familiar text or print materials. 7A

7a. 3 Years 3.7A

- 1 Use some language from a story when attempting to retell a story, such as saying “Chicka chicka boom!” as they turn pages in Chicka Boom Boom. 3.7A.1

7a. 4 Years 4.7A

- 1 Pretend to read a book to a friend, stuffed animal, or pet. 4.7A.1
- 2 Hold a book right-side up and with the front cover facing them. 4.7A.2
- 3 Follow the pages of a book left to right (if their home language is English). 4.7A.3

7a. 5 Years 5.7A

- 1 Identify the parts of a book (front and back covers, title, author). 5.7A.1
- 2 Follow the text of a story left to right and top to bottom (if their home language is English). 5.7A.2

b Demonstrate an understanding of text. 7B

7b. 3 Years 3.7B

- 1 Ask questions about what is being shown or happening in a particular picture in a book. 3.7B.1
- 2 With support and prompting, describe what is happening in a picture. 3.7B.2
- 3 Answer a simple question about a story, such as “What is the cat wearing?” “Boots!” 3.7B.3
- 4 Remember events from earlier in a story, such as that the narrator of Green Eggs and Ham does not like them in a house or with a mouse. 3.7B.4
- 5 Respond to silly, unrealistic situations in stories by laughing or expressing disbelief, such as when the pigeon begs to drive the bus in Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! 3.7B.5
- 6 Remember what will happen next when a familiar adult is reading a favorite story aloud—for example, that the letters will fall out of the coconut tree at the end of Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. 3.7B.6
- 7 Look at the pictures in a book when asked to describe what’s happening in the story. 3.7B.7
- 8 Begin to understand that the text on a page is separate or different from the pictures. 3.7B.8

7b. 4 Years 4.7B

- 1 Begin to run their fingers along the text in a book. 4.7B.1
- 2 Ask and answer factual questions about a text or story, such as “What was the main character’s name” or “What comes next?” 4.7B.2
- 3 Notice similarities to their own lives when being read a story, such as telling another child that they made a snow angel yesterday when a familiar adult reads about Peter making a snow angel in The Snowy Day. 4.7B.3
- 4 Talk about possible consequences of a character’s actions, such as noticing that the tree is bending in Chicka Chicka Boom Boom and wondering if the letters will fall. 4.7B.4
- 5 Show empathy for the characters in a story, such as worrying about Grover in There’s a Monster at the End of this Book or saying that they are happy when Max comes home to his family at the end of Where the Wild Things Are. 4.7B.5
- 6 Look at the pictures in an unfamiliar book to help them predict what might happen next. 4.7B.6
- 7 Look at a picture and, with support and prompting, make up a story about what is happening. 4.7B.7
- 8 Identify the characters and main events of a story, as well as where the story happens. 4.7B.8

7b. 5 Years 5.7B

- 1 Summarize a story, mentioning several key events or ideas and how they connect the structure of the story. 5.7B.1
 - 2 Ask and answer subjective or abstract questions about a story, such as “How do you think the main character should solve their problem?” or “How is the main character feeling? Why do you think they are feeling that way?” 5.7B.2
 - 3 Use what they know about the characters and events of the story to make predictions about what might come next. 5.7B.3
 - 4 Use flannel board pieces to retell a story. 5.7B.4
 - 5 Identify the characters in a story. 5.7B.5
 - 6 Notice similarities between themselves and the characters in a story, or between their own lives and what is happening in a story, such as saying “I like lima beans too,” when reading A Bad Case of Stripes. 5.7B.6
 - 7 Learn and remember new information from the books they read or have read to them, such as telling others that a platypus uses its nose to dig after reading What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? 5.7B.7
 - 8 Actively participate in a story being read aloud by repeating or filling in sounds, words, or actions throughout the story. 5.7B.8
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Children will demonstrate emerging understanding of writing as a way to communicate. 8

a Develop increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscle groups. 8A

8a. 3 Years 3.8A

- 1 Manipulate objects with hand-eye coordination, such as threading beads with large holes onto thick string. 3.8A.1
- 2 Grasp writing tools with their thumb and fingers (pincer grasp). 3.8A.2
- 3 Draw or scribble to represent something they've seen or to convey a thought. 3.8A.3
- 4 Make repeated marks on paper to represent lines and circles, with these shapes growing clearer with experience over time. 3.8A.4
- 5 Make snips in paper with scissors. 3.8A.5
- 6 Demonstrate limited precision and control in more complex fine motor tasks. 3.8A.6

8a. 4 Years 4.8A

- 1 Use scissors to cut along a line or cut out shapes on paper, with some precision. 4.8A.1
- 2 Draw letter-like forms with increasing accuracy and control. 4.8A.2
- 3 Put together simple puzzles. 4.8A.3
- 4 Begin to use a three-finger grasp (tripod grasp) when holding a pencil, crayon, or other drawing/writing tools. 4.8A.4

8a. 5 Years 5.8A

- 1 Use a dominant hand for using paintbrushes, scissors, crayons, and other tools. 5.8A.1
- 2 Make letters out of playdough. 5.8A.2
- 3 Use a three-finger grasp (tripod grasp) with increasing confidence and ease when holding drawing/writing tools. 5.8A.3
- 4 Coordinate their movements with greater ease for complex tasks, such as buttoning or cutting along a line. 5.8A.4

b With guidance and support, explore a variety of writing tools and materials. 8B

8b. 3 Years 3.8B

- 1 Make shapes out of playdough. 3.8B.1
- 2 Attempt to draw letter shapes on paper with crayons or pencils. 3.8B.2

8b. 4 Years 4.8B

- 1 Draw shapes, lines, and letters with their fingers in fingerpaint. 4.8B.1
- 2 Practice writing letter shapes in sand. 4.8B.2
- 3 Shape letter forms with playdough. 4.8B.3
- 4 Use a variety of writing tools, such as pens, pencils, markers, colored pencils, etc. 4.8B.4
- 5 Practice making letters or words with a tablet or computer. 4.8B.5

8b. 5 Years 5.8B

- 1 Record their thoughts and ideas in a journal, including drawings, scribbles, and invented spelling (or some combination of those). 5.8B.1
- 2 Use a tablet or computer to make words or write “stories.” 5.8B.2

c Develop an understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes. 8C

8c. 3 Years 3.8C

- 1 Ask a familiar adult what they are writing. 3.8C.1
- 2 Explain what their drawings or paintings represent. 3.8C.2
- 3 Draw and scribble to represent a thought or something they've seen. 3.8C.3
- 4 Mimic the writing actions of familiar adults. 3.8C.4

8c. 4 Years 4.8C

- 1 Print the letters in their own name from left to right, such as to "sign in" to the learning environment. 4.8C.1
- 2 Write a shopping list, menu, or party invitation during imaginative play. 4.8C.2
- 3 Use invented spelling, drawings, and letter approximations to write a letter to a friend or family member, sometimes. 4.8C.3
- 4 Explain the intended meaning of their writing and drawings. 4.8C.4
- 5 Write a note or story with drawings, letter approximations, and invented spelling, and then ask a familiar adult to read it. 4.8C.5

8c. 5 Years 5.8C

- 1 Record their thoughts and ideas in a journal, including drawings, scribbles, and invented spelling (or some combination of those). 5.8C.1
- 2 Use a tablet or computer to make words or write "stories." 5.8C.2
- 3 Draw pictures and write words to express their thoughts and ideas. 5.8C.3
- 4 Write text under a picture to describe the picture or tell a story. 5.8C.4
- 5 Use real and invented spelling to write notes and letters to familiar adults, other children, and family members. 5.8C.5

d Show interest in using a variety of forms of early writing to convey meaning and represent sounds and words. 8D

8d. 3 Years 3.8D

- 1 Make repeated marks on paper to represent lines and circles, with these shapes growing clearer with experience over time. 3.8D.1
- 2 Make marks on paper that are meant to represent letters. 3.8D.2

8d. 4 Years 4.8D

- 1 Print the letters in their own name in the correct order, most of the time, such as when “signing in” to the learning environment. 4.8D.1
- 2 Write some letters of the alphabet. 4.8D.2
- 3 Use known letters and letter approximations to represent written words. 4.8D.3
- 4 Express their thoughts and feelings in text, writing letters and letter approximations as well as known words and invented spellings. 4.8D.4
- 5 Begin to modify and add detail to their writing and drawings with prompting and support. 4.8D.5

8d. 5 Years 5.8D

- 1 Write words and stories using known words and invented spelling. 5.8D.1
- 2 Ask a familiar adult how to spell a word. 5.8D.2
- 3 Write their name on drawings, dictation, and other works. 5.8D.3
- 4 Begin to write words/letters representing words with spaces in between. 5.8D.4
- 5 Begin to look over and modify their own writings and drawings. 5.8D.5