



Sample 4th grade FASTalk Messages

Guidebooks AMERICAN REVOLUTION

FASTalk helps teachers send automated text messages to parents related to classroom learning each week to help parents support learning at home.

FOCUS AREA

MONDAY

WEDNESDAY

FRIDAY

SECTION 1:

Lessons 1-2

Building Vocabulary

Your child is starting a unit on the American Revolution. They'll learn new vocab, conduct research, debate sides, write an essay & more!

Define the word LIBERTY with your child. Ask: what does it look like to have liberty or freedom? What liberties or freedoms are most important to you? Why?

Helping at home makes a difference at school! Did your child talk about LIBERTY this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 2:

Lessons 3-6

Explaining what you have read

Get in the habit of asking your child about what they are reading at school. What texts have you enjoyed reading in the last 2 weeks?

Asking questions helps build key comprehension skills! Ask: Why did you enjoy those texts? What happened? What did you learn that surprised you?

What text did you and your child talk about this week?

SECTION 3:

Lessons 7-12

Supporting opinions with reasons

Help your child practice using reasons to support their opinions. Ask: How many minutes of recess should kids have per day? Why?

Keep asking questions and prompt your child to add facts and details to their reasons. Ask: Why do you think that? How do you know?

You're helping build key skills at home! Did your child back up an opinion with reasons? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 4:

Lessons 13-15

Conducting research

Your child is learning how to research a topic. Talk about one of your (or your child's) prized possessions. Ask: how can we find out more about it?

Together, conduct research on the prized possession. Where did it come from? How old is it? What is it made of?

I value your feedback! Please let me know if you tried this week's activity. Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 5:

Lessons 16-22

Writing & editing

Play this writing game: Both you and your child write 2-3 detailed sentences about a place. Read your clues aloud & guess the place.

Now, check the spelling and punctuation together as your child reads. Hearing themselves read helps with proofreading.

Help me learn more about your child. How was this week's activity? Reply: 1: fun 2: not fun 3: didn't try it yet

SECTION 6:

Lessons 23-25

Debating & understanding sides

Debate helps students build critical thinking, speaking and listening skills. To help at home, discuss pros and cons of an issue.

Talk about the pros and cons of year-long school. Model productive ways to share different perspectives: "I see it differently because..."

Did your child practice considering both sides of an issue? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 10:

Lessons 32-36

Scholarly conversation

Your child is prepping for a debate about the American Revolution. Let them be the "teacher" & ask them to teach you something they learned.

Putting what they learned in their own words helps your child retain new info. Respond by paraphrasing: "I hear you saying that..."

What did your child teach you this week? I'd love to hear!

SECTION 11:

Lessons 37-40

Writing & editing

4th graders are writing opinion essays to show they understand the Revolutionary War conflict. Ask your child to share their hard work!

The critical writing skills your child is developing - drafting, revising, & editing - will help them succeed in elem school and beyond!

Thank you for your help at home. You're helping your child become a strong writer!



Sample 4th grade FASTalk Messages

Guidebooks PUSHING UP THE SKY

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MONDAY

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FRIDAY

SECTION 1:
Lessons 1-4
Intro to folktales

We're starting a unit about folktales, stories that are passed down through generations by storytellers, and that often include a lesson.

With your child's help, try to think of some folktales (myths, legends, fairy tales, fables) that you know. What do they have in common?

I appreciate hearing your thoughts. Did you and your child talk about folktales this week?
Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 2-3:
Lessons 5-12
Setting

We're discussing the settings (the when and where) of the folktales we read. When reading at home, ask: Where does the story happen? When?

Ask your child to think of 2 books or movies that they like. Ask: Are the settings different in the two stories? How can you tell?

Let me know if you were able to talk about setting with your child this week. Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 4:
Lessons 13-18
Vocabulary:
CULTURE

Talk to your child about the word CULTURE, which can include language, values and beliefs, food, arts, homes. What else defines a CULTURE?

Brainstorm with your child about their own CULTURE. Ask them to write down a list that describes it. Maybe it's a mix of 2 or more CULTURES!

Did you build your child's understanding of the word CULTURE this week? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 5:
Lessons 19-23
Fluent reading

Storytellers must read FLUENTLY to engage their listeners. Ask your child what FLUENT reading means (good pace, use expression, accurate).

FLUENT readers sound natural when they read, pausing at punctuation marks like commas or periods. Look for this when your child reads aloud.

Did this week's messages help you understand what reading fluently means? Reply:
1) Yes
2) No

SECTION 6:
Lessons 24-27
Cultural
importance of
folktales

We've read folktales from African, American, Native American, Japanese, & Hebrew cultures. The stories help preserve cultural traditions.

Ask your child: If you were to write a folktale to preserve our cultural traditions, what would it be about? Who would the characters be?

It's really helpful to hear your feedback. Were you able to get to this week's activity? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 7:
Lessons 28-32
Planning an essay

Students will write essays that compare and contrast 2 of the folktales we read. Ask which folktales your child plans to write about.

Before writing an essay, students do a lot of planning. It helps to talk about what they'll write. Encourage them to discuss it with you.

Did your child tell you about their folktale essay this week?
Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 8-9:
Lessons 33-37
Character change

When characters change in a story, it helps us understand the theme. 4th graders can point to details in text that show character changes.

Ask your child to imagine they are the character in a story about 4th grade. How has their character changed since the year started?

Did you get a chance to talk about character change with your child this week? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 10:
Lessons 38-41
Folktales dramas

Students are writing plays based on the folktales we read and will present them in class. Ask your child which character(s) they will play.

Encourage your child to act out some of their folktale drama for you. It's great practice for their presentation, and entertaining for you!

Did you get to see any of your child's folktale drama this week?
Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet



Sample 4th grade FASTalk Messages

Guidebooks WHIPPING BOY

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FOCUS AREA

MONDAY

WEDNESDAY

FRIDAY

SECTION 1:

Lessons 1-5

Building vocabulary

Your child is starting a unit on the The Whipping Boy. They'll learn about the Middle Ages, character development, book themes, & more!

Help at home by practicing new vocab. Talk about the word ALLEGIANCE. Ask: what does it mean to have allegiance or loyalty to a king?

I value your feedback. Did you and your child discuss ALLEGIANCE this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 2:

Lessons 6-11

Conducting research

Your child is gathering sources and developing questions to research the Middle Ages. Ask your child to share something interesting they learned!

Ask questions comparing the Middle Ages to life today. What would be better back then? What would you miss most about modern life?

Thanks for your help at home! Did you and your child talk about the Middle Ages this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 3:

Lessons 12-14

Figurative language

Metaphors like "life is a rollercoaster" are everywhere. Can your child spot them in a favorite song or story?

Create a metaphor with your child. Choose something you see around the house and compare it something else.

Was your child able to find and create a metaphor this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 4:

Lessons 15-20

Character analysis

We're exploring characters' thoughts, actions, words, & feelings in class. Help at home by discussing book & movie characters together.

Ask: what character traits would you use to describe this character? Why? Ask for evidence like what the character has done, said, or felt.

Helping at home makes a difference at school! Please let me know if you tried this week's activity. Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 5:

Lessons 21-24

Summarizing

4th graders learn to write a summary of a story. Summaries don't just retell all events- they highlight only the most important events.

Help your child practice at home by asking them to summarize a book, show, or their day. Can they highlight the top 2-3 main events?

Did your child practice summarizing at home this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 6:

Lessons 25-29

Exploring emotions

To explore characters' feelings, we're reading dialogue and expressing characters' emotions with our voices in class. Practice at home!

This week, play a guessing game: Can your child guess how you're feeling based on the tone of your voice? Take turns guessing!

I'd love your feedback! Did you and your child play our emotion guessing game this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 7:

Lessons 30-32

Character development

We're exploring ways that characters & relationships have changed in The Whipping Boy. Ask your child to share examples of these changes.

Connect books & real life. Share a time when your relationship with someone changed for the better. Ask your child to share an example too.

Strong readers make connections between what they read & their lives. Did you try this week's activity? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet

SECTION 8-9:

Lessons 33-38

Writing & editing

We're discussing key themes from the novel and completing a writing task in class. Students will edit & publish their writing!

As they edit, students are reading their drafts aloud to help notice errors. Offer to listen to your child read their writing aloud.

Thanks for supporting your child's reading and writing skills! Did your child share their writing this week? Reply: 1: yes 2: not yet



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Guidebooks HURRICANES

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FOCUS AREA

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SECTION 1:

Lessons 1-4
Feelings about hurricanes

We're starting a unit about hurricanes. Has your family experienced a hurricane? Ask your child: What are your memories of hurricanes?

Memories of hurricanes can stir up a lot of emotions. Talk about the hurricanes you've experienced and the feelings they bring up for you.

I love hearing your feedback about these messages. Did you get a chance to talk about hurricanes this week? Reply:
1) Yes 2) Not yet

SECTION 2:

Lessons 5-9
Important details

Some details are more important than others in a story. After reading, ask your child to look back and point out the most important details.

Keep asking questions about details. What makes some details more important? How do the details help us understand the events of the story?

Talking about what they read helps your child become a stronger reader. Were you able to do the activity this week? Reply:
1) Yes 2) Not yet

SECTION 3:

Lessons 10-11
Oral histories

4th graders are listening to oral histories (personal stories told aloud) from hurricane survivors. Ask your child about what they've heard.

Ask your child why oral histories are important. How do oral histories help us understand what people go through during a hurricane?

When your child teaches you something, it shows they understand it! Did they explain oral histories? Reply:
1) Yes 2) Not yet

SECTION 4:

Lessons 12-16
Using context clues

Ask your 4th grader how they can figure out the meaning of a word they don't know when they're reading (without using a dictionary).

Readers can use "context clues" to figure out the meaning of words. They look at the text around the unknown word to work out its meaning.

Did your child describe using context clues when reading? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 5:

Lessons 17-20
Point of view

We're learning about points of view in stories: 1st person (narrator tells their own story) vs 3rd person (narrator tells others' stories).

Ask: Use the 1st person to tell me something about your day. ("I went to school."). Now tell me in the 3rd person. ("Sam went to school.")

Your support at home is so valuable! Did you have a chance to do the activity this week? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 6:

Lessons 21-25
Historical fiction

We're reading HISTORICAL FICTION, which are made-up stories based on real events. Ask: How is it different than reading a history book?

Ask your child: What books have you read that are HISTORICAL FICTION? What about movies? What did you learn about history from them?

Did you find time to talk about HISTORICAL FICTION with your 4th grader this week? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet

SECTION 7-8:

Lessons 26-34
Narrative writing

4th graders will write their own historical fiction about a hurricane. Ask about your child's main character. What do they feel and learn?

Ask your child to tell you about their plot. What is the problem that the characters face and how do they solve it? What happens in the end?

Talking about their story will help your child with the writing process. Did you ask about their hurricane story? Reply:
1) Yes 2) Not yet

SECTION 9:

Lessons 35-41
Research project

Students are working on group research projects about hurricanes. Ask which hurricane their group is studying and how they'll research it.

Ask to hear 3 important facts about the hurricane that the group researched. It will help your child prepare for the class presentation.

Did your child tell you about the hurricane they researched? Reply:
1) Yes
2) Not yet