

VLP Family Letter Template for PALS 1st Grade – Fall 2023– English

VLP provides this template to divisions and schools to assist with family communication about *PALS*. Division and school leaders are encouraged to send this letter as well as the child's *Student Summary*. If applicable, information regarding the *intervention program* you will provide for the student may be entered into this template.

Dear Family of _____,

PALS 1-3 is a screening tool of young children's literacy development which has been used for over twenty years with first-grade students in Virginia. Results are used to determine individual children's learning goals, plan classroom instruction, and raise awareness of children who need additional support or instruction in early reading and literacy.

Focusing on early detection and early intervention of reading difficulties is a required state-wide policy (Early Intervention Reading Initiative). The *PALS 1-3* screening tool is a way to help schools and teachers meet that mandate.

PALS has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring).

The *Summed Score Benchmark* for fall of 1st grade is 41.

Your child's *Summed Score* is _____.

If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the benchmark, your child is not identified to receive intervention funded through the EIRI initiative. However, your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in those particular areas.

If your child's *Summed Score* is below the benchmark, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been identified by *PALS* for intervention. Identified students are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction.

Divisions and schools determine how intervention is provided. The 2.5 hours per week may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. You may ask your child's teacher for clarification.

Your child's intervention: Describe the child's intervention here. Consider including:

- Days of the Week (e.g., Monday through Friday)
- Time of Day (i.e., 10:00-10:30 am)
- Intervention focus/goals (i.e., phonemic awareness, spelling)
- Mode of intervention (e.g., direct instruction or computer program, individual or small group)
- Name of the person working with student's intervention
- Description of materials (i.e., what will the student use?)
- Description of instruction (i.e., what will the student do?)

On the next few pages, you will find:

- a sample *First Grade Student Summary* for fall to help you understand your own child's report
- a table with more detailed task information
- a *Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia* that answers common questions about *PALS*
- your child's *Student Summary*

Sincerely,

Principal/School Division staffer name/ signature

First Grade Fall 2023 PALS Tasks

	Who	Task Name	Task	Max	Fall Benchmark Information
Level A: Entry-Level	All students	Spelling	use letters to represent sounds	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students spell 16 wordsPartial credit earned for correct target phonics featuresFall benchmark = 10
		Word Lists	read words commonly found in grade-level texts	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All students begin with the <i>Preprimer Word List</i>Fall benchmark (Preprimer) = 10Students may read more lists based on performance
		Letter Sounds	produce letter sounds for uppercase letters	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 21
		Oral Reading in Context	read a passage and, depending on level, answer 6 comprehension questions	8 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Passage selection is based on the highest-level word list on which the student could read 15 or more words correctlyInstructional level = 90-97% accuracy (Primer and higher)Students are timed to determine Words Per Minute (WPM) on Primer or higher passages6 multiple-choice comprehension questions are required for passage levels 4th-8th ; optional for Primer-3rdIf WPM or comprehension scores are too low, an additional passage may be required
Level B: Alphabetics	Students with Level A score below 41	Alphabet Recognition	identify lowercase letters of the alphabet	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 24
		Letter Sounds	produce letter sounds for uppercase letters	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 21Score from Entry-Level tasks used, if task is required
Level C: Phonemic Awareness		Blending	orally blend 2-4 speech sounds to produce words	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 8
		Sound-to-Letter	identify letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 16
1 st Grade Fall Entry- Level Summed Score				90	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fall benchmark = 41<i>Preprimer Word List</i> score + <i>Spelling</i> score + <i>Letter Sounds</i> score only


Sample PALS 1st Grade Student Summary: Fall 2023

The **Preprimer Word List** is required in fall of 1st grade. Additional word lists are required if the student scores 15 or more on a list.

The **Entry Level Summed Score** includes *Total Spelling Score*, *Preprimer Word List*, and *Letter Sounds* in fall of 1st grade.

The **Instructional Oral Reading Level** is calculated based on *Word List* and passage performance.

Level B and C tasks are required if the student's *Entry Level Summed Score* is below 41. Teachers may choose to give the tasks for more information if not required.

STUDENT SUMMARY - FALL 				
This report lists all scores entered for the student. In the Fall and Spring columns, task benchmarks or a Summed Score benchmark is in parentheses following selected task scores. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year ranges are in parentheses following selected task scores. Benchmarks and Mid-Year ranges are only displayed for students who were given the assessment using Standard Administration.				
<div> <div> Studer: Student Example 1 </div> <div> Grade: First Grade </div> </div> <div> <div> Teacher: Michelle B </div> <div> School: Example Elem </div> </div>				
PALS SECTION	PALS TASK	FALL SCORES	FALL MAX	
SPELLING, WORD LISTS AND LETTER SOUNDS	Total Spelling Score	16 (10)	44	
	Preprimer Word List	8 (10)	20	
	Primer Word List		20	
	First Grade Word List		20	
	Second Grade Word List		20	
	Third Grade Word List		20	
	Fourth Grade Word List		20	
	Fifth Grade Word List		20	
	Sixth Grade Word List		20	
	Seventh Grade Word List		20	
	Eighth Grade Word List		20	
	Letter Sounds	16 (21)	28	
	ENTRY LEVEL SUMMED SCORE	40 (41)	90	
ORAL READING IN CONTEXT	Readiness	93%	100%	
	INSTRUCTIONAL ORAL READING LEVEL	R	-	
LEVEL B	Alphabet Recognition	26 (24)	28	
	Letter Sounds	16 (21)	28	
LEVEL C	Blending	10 (8)	20	
	Sound-to-Letter	12 (16)	40	
SPELLING FEATURES	Beginning Sounds	4	4	
	Ending Sounds	4	4	
	Beg/End Sounds	-	4	
	Digraphs	2	4	
	Blends	1	4	
	Short Vowels (CVC)	1	4	
	Nasals	1	4	
	CVCe		4	
	Long Vowels		4	
	R- and L- Influenced		4	
	Ambiguous Vowels		4	
	Syllable Juncture		4	
	Affixes		4	
	Derivations		4	
<div> <div> ID: Identified by PALS for 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week </div> <div> END OF REPORT </div> </div>				

An **RA** symbol indicates one or more tasks was administered remotely. If the **RA** is red, the score is also below the *Summed Score benchmark*, and the student must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

An **ID** symbol indicates that the student either: 1) scored below the *Entry Level Summed Score Benchmark* of 41, or 2) remains **ID'd** from the previous screening window if assessed remotely. A student with the **ID** designation must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

The numbers in parentheses represent **task benchmarks**. A score below a task benchmark indicates that targeted instruction is critical. The number in the gray column indicates the **maximum** score for that task.

Spelling is not marked only as correct or incorrect. Students also receive credit for spelling/ phonics features used correctly.

Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia

What is literacy?

Literacy means that someone can read and write. The goal of reading is to be able to understand (comprehend) what one reads. Children need to be able to:

1. *decode* –blend sounds together to read words
2. *encode* – spell words
3. *understand and use language*

As children's skills improve in these three areas, they develop *fluency* and *comprehension*.

What is a screener?

A literacy *screener* (also known as a *test* or *assessment*) is designed to identify children at high risk for reading problems. If students are identified as needing additional support, they receive *intervention* (i.e., extra instruction) to help the student make progress. Early intervention is critical because research tells us that risk for reading difficulties can be detected as early as kindergarten. Additionally, *PALS* task scores allow teachers to target instruction to meet student needs.

What is *PALS*?



PALS is the Virginia Department of Education sponsored literacy screener that is designed to give a snapshot of critical literacy skills at a single moment in time. Rather than focus on all parts of literacy, *PALS* focuses on *decoding* and *encoding*. *PALS* does **not** offer a comprehensive picture of your child's literacy skills.

What do *PALS* scores mean?

PALS has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. If a child's *Summed Score* is below the *Summed Score Benchmark*, the student is eligible to receive state dollars for intervention. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring). There is not a *Summed Score Benchmark* at Mid-Year. Mid-Year screening allows teachers to monitor students' individual task scores in between the Fall and Spring assessment periods.

If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the Fall or Spring benchmark, your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in these particular areas.

If your child's *Summed Score* is below the Fall or Spring benchmark, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been *Identified below the Summed Score Benchmark* by *PALS*.

Students who have  and/or  by their name have a Fall or Spring *Summed Score* below the benchmark and are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction. Divisions and schools may decide what intervention looks like and how to communicate the plan to families. The 2.5 hours may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. *You may ask your child's school about EIRI intervention provided for your child.* The Virginia Literacy Partnerships Office provides a letter template that divisions and schools can use to give you additional information about your child's *PALS* scores.

What are spelling features?

Students spell a list of words as part of the screener. A student may get the entire word correct and/or parts of the word correct. Knowledge of the parts, or phonics features, is critical in encoding (spelling) and decoding (reading). By analyzing students' spelling, the teacher can determine what phonics features to teach and what features are already known. These features progress from easier to harder.

Features	Examples (words are not from assessment)
Beginning Sounds	<u>b</u> at, <u>m</u> an
Ending Sounds	ba <u>t</u> , ma <u>n</u>
Beg/End Sounds	<u>b</u> at, <u>m</u> an (must have both)
Digraphs	<u>sh</u> op, ba <u>th</u>
Blends	<u>tr</u> ap, fa <u>st</u> , <u>cl</u> am
Short Vowels (CVC)	da <u>d</u> , pi <u>t</u>
Nasals	bu <u>m</u> p, ju <u>n</u> k
CVCe (silent e)	ba <u>k</u> e, di <u>m</u> e
Long Vowels	lea <u>p</u> , bo <u>a</u> t
R- and L- Influenced	gi <u>r</u> l, he <u>l</u> p
Ambiguous Vowels	po <u>u</u> t, fo <u>i</u> l
Syllable Juncture	clo <u>s</u> ing, race <u>d</u>
Affixes	<u>mis</u> judge, quick <u>ly</u>
Derivations	align, per <u>mission</u>