

PALS Family Letter Template for 1st Grade -Mid Year 2024– 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 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 as well as Fall/Spring. There is not a *Summed Score Benchmark* at Mid-Year. However, assessment at Mid-Year allows teachers to monitor students' individual-task scores in between the Fall and Spring assessment periods.

If your child's Fall *Summed Score* met or exceeded the benchmark, your child was 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 Fall *Summed Score* was below the benchmark, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and was 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. If your child was identified for intervention in the fall, intervention will continue throughout the school year.

On the next few pages, you will find:

- a sample *First-Grade Student Summary* for Mid-Year 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](#)

Sample PALS 1st Grade Student Summary: Mid-Year 2024

STUDENT SUMMARY - MID-YEAR



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. Entry Level Summed Scores are not displayed at Mid-Year. Benchmarks and Mid-Year ranges are only displayed for students who were given the assessment using Standard Administration.

Student: **Sample Student MidYear** Grade: **First Grade**
Teacher: **Michelle B** School: **Example Elem**

PALS SECTION	PALS TASK	FALL SCORES (ID)	MID-YEAR SCORES (ID)	MID-YEAR MAX
SPELLING, WORD LISTS AND LETTER SOUNDS	Total Spelling Score	16 (10)	20 (24-52)	52
	Preprimer Word List	8 (10)	17 (19-20)	20
	Primer Word List		11 (15-20)	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)	24	26
	ENTRY LEVEL SUMMED SCORE	40 (41)	-	-
ORAL READING IN CONTEXT	Readiness Accuracy	93%		100%
	Preprimer B Accuracy		94%	100%
	INSTRUCTIONAL ORAL READING LEVEL	R	ppB	-
LEVEL B	Alphabet Recognition	26 (24)		26
	Letter Sounds	16 (21)	24	26
LEVEL C	Blending	10 (8)		20
	Sound-to-Letter	12 (16)		40
SPELLING FEATURES	Beginning Sounds	4	4	4
	Ending Sounds	4	4	4
	Beg/End Sounds	-	-	4
	Digraphs	2	3	4
	Blends	1	3	4
	Short Vowels (CVC)	1	3	4
	Nasals	1	1	4
	CVCe			4
	Long Vowels			4
	R- and L- Influenced			4
	Ambiguous Vowels			4
	Syllable Juncture			4
	Affixes			4
	Derivations			4

(ID) : Identified by PALS for 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week

END OF REPORT

The **Preprimer Word List** is recommended in Mid-Year of 1st grade. Additional word lists are administered if the student scores 15 or more on a list.

An **Entry-Level Summed Score** is not calculated at Mid-Year

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

Level B and C tasks are administered if the **Spelling** and **Preprimer Word List** scores total less than 41. Teachers may also choose to give the tasks for more information.

The **RA** symbol indicates one or more tasks was administered remotely.

An **ID** symbol indicates that the student either:
1) scored below the **Entry Level Summed Score Benchmark** of 41 in the Fall, or 2) remains **ID** from the previous screening window if assessed remotely in the Fall. 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 ranges**. A score below a task range 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.

First Grade Mid-Year 2024 PALS Tasks

Optional Screening Window (VDOE)

	Who	Task Name	Task	Max	Mid-Year Range Information
Level A: Entry-Level	All students	Spelling	use letters to represent sounds	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students spell 20 wordsPartial credit earned for correct target phonics featuresMid-Year range = 24-52
		Word Lists	read words commonly found in grade-level texts	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Preprimer Word List</i> (19-20)<i>Primer Word List</i> (15-20)Students may read more lists based on performance
		Letter Sounds	produce letter sounds for uppercase letters	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Mid-Year range (mastery= 26)
		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">No Mid-Year range (mastery= 26)
		Letter Sounds	produce letter sounds for uppercase letters	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Mid-Year range (mastery= 26)Score 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">No Mid-Year range (Spring benchmark = 12)
		Sound-to-Letter	identify letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Mid-Year range (Spring benchmark = 28)
Entry- Level Summed Score				---	No Summed Score generated at Mid-Year

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 *PALS 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> a <u>t</u> , <u>m</u> a <u>n</u> (must have both)
Digraphs	<u>sh</u> op, ba <u>th</u>
Blends	<u>tr</u> ap, fa <u>st</u> , cl <u>a</u> m
Short Vowels (CVC)	da <u>d</u> , pi <u>t</u>
Nasals	bu <u>mp</u> , ju <u>nk</u>
CVCe	ba <u>ke</u> , di <u>me</u>
Long Vowels	lea <u>p</u> , bo <u>a</u> t
R- and L- Influenced	gi <u>rl</u> , he <u>lp</u>
Ambiguous Vowels	po <u>u</u> t, fo <u>i</u> l
Syllable Juncture	clo <u>s</u> ing, rac <u>e</u> d
Affixes	mi <u>s</u> judge, quic <u>kly</u>
Derivations	ali <u>gn</u> , permi <u>ssion</u>