



2026 Bear Essential

*Celebrating Over
45 Years in the
classroom!*

WORK SHEETS

Using Bear Essential with your Kindergartner, First-or Second-Grader

Bear Essential News is more than just informational text—it's locally written news and features for families and classrooms. In fact, several of the stories each month are written by our Young Reporters. This literacy award-winning free newspaper provides kid-friendly, thought-provoking stories and activities that can be utilized to help teach younger students reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Reading

- Have students take turns searching the text (not including the headline) of a News Highlights story for a capital letter, and see if they can figure out why it is capitalized. Does it begin a new sentence? Is it the beginning of a first, last or middle name? Or maybe it's the name of a place or street?
- Read a news article or short feature to the class and ask your students to identify the "who, what, where, when, why and how" of the story. Project the article on a screen or Smart Board to identify and underline where the answers are found. Perfect for small or whole-class learning.
- Then have students retell or summarize what the story is about.
- Using the Get the Scoop! page, know and identify the parts of a news story (headline, byline, lead, body or text, photo/illustration).

Writing

- Instruct students on letter-writing conventions like proper use of commas in the greeting and closing, and have students write a letter to Boomer, the mascot of Bear Essential News. Mail letters to Bear Essential News • 2525 E. Broadway Blvd. #102 • Tucson, AZ 85716. You can use a single large envelope. Then students can watch for the mascot's answers in "Letters to Boomer."
- Read a news article or short feature to the class and have students write to their classmates what they liked about the story, including their favorite details and what else they'd like to learn about the topic.
- Use digital tools to produce and publish a Letter to Boomer (any grade) or a Young Reporter story (second-graders may submit stories to the paper after the winter break).

Listening and speaking

- Have students participate in conversations about interesting topics raised by stories in the paper. What else would they like to know and why? What surprised them about the story? Who would they have interviewed to cover the story? Is there a different type of media that could have been used to make the story better or more impactful to young people? How?
- Have students create drawings or other visual displays of Bear Essential front covers that use art of a recent event (like a food drive or holiday performance at your school) or something in the news lately. Remember, Boomer Bear is almost always part of the front cover art! Have students present their front covers to you or the classmates, explaining what they created. You can cut out the nameplate on the front cover and the bottom info bar of the paper for the kid-created covers!

