



# Sample 3rd grade FASTalk Messages

## Guidebooks **STORIES JULIAN TELLS**

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 1-4  
Getting to know  
characters

Our new unit helps kids learn about themselves and others through stories. We'll start by exploring the characters' feelings and traits.

Characters' feelings may change while their traits stay the same. Can your child describe their feelings & traits, & tell the difference?

Thanks for helping at home - it makes a big difference at school! Did you discuss feelings and traits this week? Reply:  
1: yes 2: not yet

**SECTION 2:**  
Lessons 5-8  
Power of story  
images

Images can provide important clues about a story that aren't included in the words. Look at details in pictures when reading together.

Talk about the images you see to build literacy skills. What key info do images on billboards, street signs, and magazines provide?

Did you and your child discuss the power of images this week? Please let me know! Reply:  
1: yes  
2: not yet

**SECTION 3:**  
Lessons 9-13  
Presenting  
research

Students are learning how to conduct research & share what they learned with their class. Help your child research their interests at home.

Find online videos, look up facts, or check out a new book on a topic of interest. Ask your child to share what they have learned.

I value your feedback. Did your child share their research this week? Reply:  
1: yes  
2: not yet

**SECTION 4-5:**  
Lessons 14-19  
Multiple meanings

Knowing multiple meanings of words helps readers understand text correctly. For example: lie, tire, safe, cap. Look for examples together.

Try to point out as many words as you can! Turn it into a game: who can come up with the most words with multiple meanings in 2 minutes?

Did you talk about words with multiple meanings this week? Reply:  
1: yes  
2: not yet

**SECTION 6-7:**  
Lessons 20-25  
Supporting  
opinions with  
reasons

Help your child practice using reasons to support their opinions. Ask: would you rather travel on an airplane or boat? Why?

Keep prompting your child to share their reasons for their opinions. For example, why do they like a certain book or sport?

I'm curious, did your child back up their opinions with reasons this week? I'd love to know. Reply:  
1: yes 2: not yet

**SECTION 8-9:**  
Lessons 26-30  
Understanding  
new text

3rd graders should understand the ideas, vocab, & characters when reading something new. To help, read with your child and ask q's.

Ask q's like: What does this word mean? How do you think the character feels? Reading together helps with comprehension & vocabulary.

Did you read together and ask questions this week? Please let me know. Reply:  
1: yes  
2: not yet

**SECTION 10:**  
Lessons 31-34  
Encouraging  
writing

Your child is working on a final writing project. To help, keep pencils & paper available & encourage their writing at home.

Encourage your child to practice writing at home by showing them some of things you write (ex: a list, a text, or email). Explain how daily writing is valuable to you.

Did you encourage writing this week? Please let me know, by replying:  
1: yes  
2: not yet

**SECTION 11:**  
Lessons 35-42  
Sharing &  
feedback on  
writing

Ask your child about the narrative story they are writing. They are working hard to describe characters & tell key events.

If they're comfortable sharing, read their story and share what you liked best. You're helping them prepare for feedback sessions with peers.

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



# Sample 4th grade FASTalk Messages

## Guidebooks PUSHING UP THE SKY

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### FOCUS AREA

### MONDAY

### WEDNESDAY

### 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 5th grade FASTalk Messages

## Guidebooks MAKING OF A SCIENTIST

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### FOCUS AREA

### MONDAY

### WEDNESDAY

### FRIDAY

**SECTION 1:**  
Lessons 1-5  
Intro to scientific theories

5th graders are starting a unit about scientific theories. Ask: What is a theory? (Set of ideas that explain how something works.)

We'll be looking at how scientific theories have changed over time. Ask: Why would scientists change their mind about how something works?

It's great to hear your feedback. Did you have a discussion about scientific theories this week? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 2:**  
Lessons 6-11  
Summarizing informational text

Students learned to write a summary of an informational article. They find the main idea, then write details from the text that support it.

Try this at home: Give your child an article that you think they'll like. Have them underline key details and then tell you the summary.

Did you try the activity this week? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 3:**  
Lessons 12-19  
Book clubs

Students meet in book clubs to discuss what they've read. We want all students to share their ideas. Ask your child about their book club!

In book club, each person has a job. For example the Word Wizard focuses on vocab. Ask your child about the other jobs. Do they prefer one?

It's great to get your child talking about classroom activities at home. Did you ask about book clubs this week? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 4:**  
Lessons 20-24  
Venn diagrams for comparing

In class we've learned how to make a VENN DIAGRAM, a graphic way of comparing two things. Ask your child to explain a VENN DIAGRAM to you.

Ask your child to draw a VENN DIAGRAM comparing 2 things (2 sports, 2 movies, etc.). Hint: 1st step is to draw 2 intersecting circles.

When your child teaches you something, it helps solidify their learning. Did they make a VENN DIAGRAM? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet 3) Didn't try yet

**SECTION 5-6:**  
Lessons 25-30  
Theme

We've been reading a book called The Templeton Twins Have an Idea. Ask your child about it. Is it fiction? Who are the main characters?

The theme of a story is the lesson or message that a reader takes from it. Ask: What is the theme of The Templeton Twins. How do you know?

Did you hear about The Templeton Twins from your child? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 7:**  
Lessons 31-34  
Writing explanatory essays

In class, we're writing essays about "The Making of a Scientist." Ask your child what they're writing about. What is their topic sentence?

Ask: What's the job of the topic sentence in an essay's intro? (State the main idea of the essay.) What about in the conclusion? (Same.)

Talking about writing helps students think through their ideas. Did you ask your child about their essay this week? Reply: 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 8:**  
Lessons 35-36  
Inference

INFERENCE is an important skill for scientists as well as readers. To INFER is to make an educated guess, based on facts and observations.

Use the word INFER this week. Say: Look outside, can you infer what you should wear? or What do you infer about the character's feelings?

We talked a lot about INFERENCE during this unit. Thanks for backing it up at home! Did you use the word INFER this week? 1) Yes 2) Not yet

**SECTION 9:**  
Lessons 37-40  
Revisions to essays

In revising an essay, students first check their topic sentences and supporting details. They'll edit for spelling and punctuation later.

During revisions, students read each other's essays. Ask your child why they think we do this peer edit process. Do they think it's helpful?

Did you find out what your child thinks about peer revisions? Reply: 1) Helpful 2) Not helpful 3) Didn't ask yet