



Help Kids to P.I.C.K. the Right Books

Choosing the best book can be easy when kids have a little bit of support.

By Amy Mascott Jul 29, 2013

The secret to helping kids learn how to choose the right book is simple.

It's all about teaching them one word that they can keep in their back pocket any time they're in the library or school media center. It's one word they can lean on when they're in the class book corner or at the book fair.

All they need to remember is P.I.C.K.

P.I.C.K. stands for Purpose, Interest, Comprehension, and Know the Words.

P = Purpose: We need to have kids consider their *purpose* for reading. Why are they looking for a book in the first place? Is it totally a free choice, or is there some other reason for reading it?

In order to determine *purpose*, consider asking:

- Are they reading for pleasure?
- Are they trying to learn something?
- Is the book going to be read silently or out loud?
- Who is their audience?

Most often, purpose for reading can be found with a quick answer.

I = Interest. When choosing a book, it should be something of *interest*. With the many millions of books on shelves today, there's bound to be something out there for everyone. And emphasizing the interest *connections* is super-important as well. If the child is interested in cars, then don't stop at fictional stories about cars; consider books about racetracks, car construction, history of racing, racecar drivers, or car design. If it's magic that intrigues your daughter, then emphasize books about magic shows, magic tricks, and magicians; look for books that involve fantasy,

science, and invention.

Even if children have a short amount of time to choose books, they can determine *interest* by:

- Looking at the front cover
- Flipping through the pages to glance at photos or illustrations
- Reading the back cover
- Reading the chapter titles

C = Comprehend. Is the book something that the child can *comprehend*? Can he or she understand what's read? Is it a book that is appropriate for his or her level or abilities?

Children are more aware of their reading "level" than we may think, so though we don't want to lean entirely on it, it's okay to remind kids that if they're choosing a book to read independently, and they read at a Level E (for example) that they should not choose a book from the Level M basket. Also, it's important to teach kids that if the book isn't labeled with a level, they can quickly assess if it's an appropriate book for them by opening the book and choosing a page – the book is appropriate for them if they are able to understand what they read.

Children can determine *comprehension* asking themselves:

- Did I understand what I just read?
- Do I remember what I read?
- Was I able to read most of the words?

This brings us to our final letter: K.

K = Know the Words. Readers should be able to decode -- or read -- and understand the majority of the words on the page. The key is to remembering the "Five Finger Rule."

The "Five Finger Rule" outlines a general idea of how many words a reader should be able to read on each page.

- 0-1 unknown words = book is too easy
- 2-3 unknown words = book is just right
- 4-5 unknown words = book is too difficult

Knowing P.I.C.K. is empowering for kids. They want to know how to choose books that fit for them -- books that are enjoyable, fun, and exciting. It's all about giving our kids the tools they need to be strong, confident readers. Choosing the best book is the starting point.

How do you help your kids choose "best fit" books? We'd love to hear it! Share your thoughts on the [Scholastic Parents Facebook page](#), or find Amy on Twitter, [@teachmama](#), and let's continue the conversation! You can also easily shop all books at [The Scholastic Store](#).

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Popular Books Kids Love



HARDCOVER BOOK

Dog Man #7: For Whom the Ball Rolls

GRADES
2 - 5

The Supa Buddies have been working hard to help Dog Man overcome his bad habits. But when his obsessions turn to fears, Dog Man finds himself the target of an all-new supervillain! Meanwhile, Petey the...

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BOXED SET

Harry Potter Paperback Boxed Set # 1-7

GRADES
3 - 11

Now for the first time ever, J.K. Rowling's seven bestselling Harry Potter books are available in a stunning paperback boxed set! The Harry Potter series has been hailed as "one for the ages" by Stephen...

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K - 2

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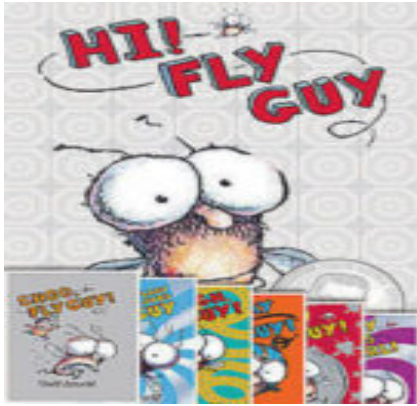
GRADES
2 - 3

A fun-filled chapter book pack that mixes school, monsters, and common kid problems with hilarious results. This pack includes: Black Lagoon Adventures Chapter Book #1: The Class Trip from the Black

LagoonBlack...

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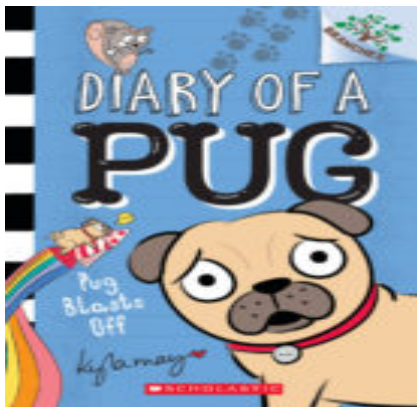
HARDCOVER BOOK COLLECTION

Fly Guy Pack (Books 1-14)GRADES
K - 1

This pack includes: Fly Guy #1: Hi! Fly Guy Fly Guy #2: Super Fly Guy Fly Guy #3: Shoo, Fly Guy! Fly Guy #4: There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy Fly Guy #5: Fly High, Fly Guy! Fly Guy #6: Hooray for...

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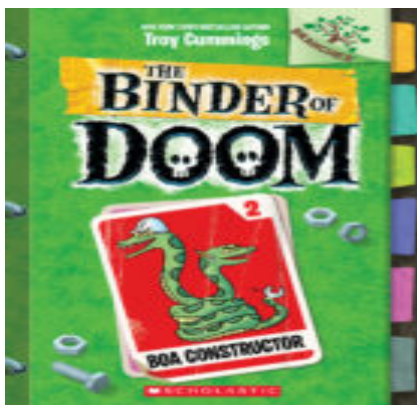


PAPERBACK BOOK

Diary of a Pug #1: Pug Blasts OffGRADES
K - 2

Baron von Bubbles, a.k.a "Bub," is the self-proclaimed cutest pug on the planet! Things he loves: fashion, peanut butter, and his human, Bella. Things he does NOT love: Nutz the squirrel, baths, and the...

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The Binder of Doom #2: Boa Constructor

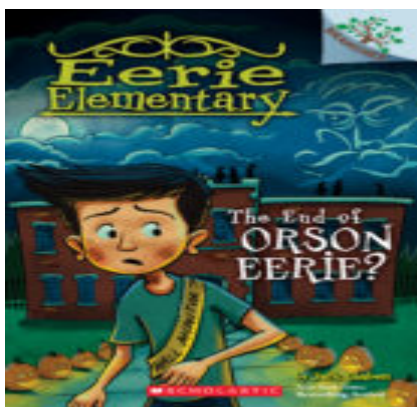
GRADES
1 - 3

In this second book of the series, construction equipment and machine parts are going missing all over Stermont! Then an entire playground disappears! Could a monster be to blame? The Super Secret Monster...

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PAPERBACK BOOK

Eerie Elementary #10: The End of Orson Eerie?

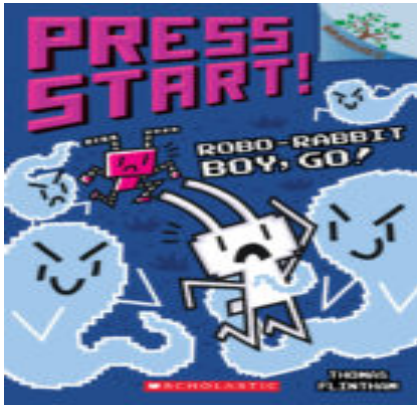
GRADES
1 - 3

Eerie Elementary is hosting a haunted house for the town's Eerie Day celebration! But mad scientist Orson Eerie has his own plans for this creepy holiday. Pumpkins attack and Sam gets trapped in a hayride...

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PAPERBACK BOOK

Press Start! #7: Robo-Rabbit Boy, Go!

GRADES
K - 2

Uh-oh, Super Rabbit Boy is in big trouble. He's been kidnapped by Queen Spooky and her ghost troop! Without Super Rabbit Boy, Animal Town is scared. So meanie King Viking creates Robo-Rabbit Boy to help...

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PAPERBACK BOOK COLLECTION

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GRADES
1 - 3

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