

Book Levels

Please note that each level incorporates the features of the preceding level and builds upon it.

LEVELS A-B

- There is a single idea or storyline.
- Pictures and text are interdependent to carry the story.
- Topics are familiar to children's experiences.
- Texts use natural oral-language structures.
- Print and layout are consistent and easy to follow.
- Print is separate from pictures.
- Texts use the full range of punctuation.
- Spacing is sufficient to easily demonstrate boundaries.
- Words are repeated throughout the story.
- Pages contain one to four lines of print, with Level A having fewer and Level B having more.

EXAMPLES:

LEVEL A

Underwater by Rebel Williams
I Like to Find Things by Gavin Bishop
Dogs by Amy Levin
Painting by Joy Cowley
Moms & Dads by Beverly Randell, Jenny Giles and Annette Smith

LEVEL B

Hats Around the World by Liza Charlesworth
Making Mountains by Margaret Ballinger and Rachel Gossett
For Breakfast by Patricia T. Cousin, Claudette C. Mitchell and Gracie R. Porter
Here I Am by Judy Nayer
Sally's New Shoes by Annette Smith

LEVEL C

- Page contains two to five lines each
- Story is carried more by the print than the pictures, but pictures remain important.
- Print may carry across a two-page layout in columns.
- Sentences are longer.
- More words are used

EXAMPLES:

At the Store by Patricia T. Cousin, Claudette C.

Mitchell and Gracie R. Porter
One for You and One for Me by Wendy Blaxland
In the City by Susan Pasternac
Bo and Peter by Betsy Franco
Fishing by Annette Smith

LEVEL D

- Stories still simple but storyline is more complex.
- Pictures are still important but story is increasingly based on the print.
- Pages contain up to six lines of print per page.
- Sentences are longer.
- Texts use more words, including those with inflected endings.

EXAMPLES

The Ball Game by David Packard
Hide and Seek by Roberta Brown and Sue Carey
Where We Live by Brenda Parkes
The Farm Concert by Joy Cowley
Lizard Loses Its Tail by Beverly Randell

LEVEL E

- Pages contain up to eight lines of print.
- Placement of text on page may begin to vary.
- Pictures contain several ideas and the text carries the story.
- Problem solving is needed to connect text and pictures.
- Words require a greater degree of word analysis skills.
- Concepts in the story may be less familiar to children.
- Longer stories have more words.

EXAMPLES:

The Rain and the Sun by Allan Trussell-Cullen
Which Hat Today? By Margaret Ballinger and Rachel Gossett
The Red Rose by Joy Cowley
My Dad's Truck by Meredith Costain
Tortillas by Maragrita Gonzelez-Jensen

LEVEL F

- Print is smaller.
- Literary language is mixed with oral-language patterns.
- Frequently used words are expanded in the stories.
- Stories have a distinct beginning, middle and end.

- Use of dialogue increases.
- Word-analysis skills are increasingly needed at this level.

EXAMPLES:

My Very Hungry Pet by Debbie Swan
The Best Thing About Food by Fay Robinson
The Jigaree by Joy Cowley
Late for Soccer by Jeremy Giles
Tabby in the Tree by Beverly Randell

LEVELS G & H

- Ideas and vocabulary are more challenging.
- Content is increasingly distant from children's experiences.
- Stories contain repeated language patterns in multiple episodes.
- Stories are longer with more pages per book than in previous levels.
- Repetition within episodes becomes less in level H books.

EXAMPLES:

LEVEL G

Knobby Knuckles, Knobby Knees by Jill Carter and Judy Ling

How Have I Grown? By Mary Reid
Balcony Garden by Rebecca Weber
Grandpa's Lemonade by Helen Upson
William's Skateboard by Dale Golder

LEVEL H

Mom's Secret by Meredith Costain
I Was Walking Down the Road by Sarah Barchas
Digging to China by Katherine Goldsby
Robert and the Rocket by Leesa Waldron
George Shrinks by William Noyce

LEVEL I

- Texts are of greater variety, including information texts.
- Story structure is more complex, with more episodes and with themes less related to experiences of children.
- Point of view is introduced.
- Texts increase in length, and there are more than eight sentences per page.
- Texts include large numbers of unfamiliar words requiring word analysis skills.

EXAMPLES:

Dancin' Down by Evangeline Nicholas
The Friendly Crocodile by Monica Hiris
Swimming Lessons by Amy Algie
Big Bad Rex by Betty Erickson
The Witch's Haircut by Mavis Wyvill

LEVEL J

- Variety of genre increases.
- Books are 30 to 60 pages in length.
- Chapter books start at this level.
- Longer books have easier text to sustain interest.
- Shorter books have more difficult text, requiring greater word analysis and interpretative abilities.
- Character development is enhanced in these texts.

EXAMPLES:

Stone Soup by Ann McGovern
Dolphins by Marion Rego
There's an Alligator Under My Bed by Mercer Mayer
King Midas and the Golden Touch by Allan Trussell-Cullen
Children of Sierra Leone by Arma Christiana
Henry and Mudge series of books by Cynthia Rylant
Mr. Putter & Tabby series of books by Cynthia Rylant
Poppleton series of books by Cynthia Rylant
Young Cam Jansen series of books by David A. Adler
 Many of the books by Pat Hutchins

LEVEL K

- Easy chapter books have a picture on each or every other page
- Text is relatively easy in these books, helping children sustain the reading of longer books.
- Literary picture books at this level have about 15 lines per page.
- Oral reading is now moving toward more silent reading.

EXAMPLES:

Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express by Elenor Coerr
Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie by Peter and Connie Roop
More Tales of Oliver Pig by Jean V. Leeuwen
Nate the Great Goes Undercover by Marjorie W. Sharmat
Arthur series of books by Lillian Hoban
Clifford series of books by Norman Birdwell
Commander Toad series of books by Jane Yolen
Frog and Toad series books by Arnold Lobel (Little Readers)
 Many of the books by Betsy Byars
Lionel series of books by Stephen Krensky

* Leveled book descriptions and book title list adapted from *Guided Reading* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (Heinemann, 1996) and from *Your Classroom Library* by D. Ray Reutzel and Parker C. Fawson (Scholastic, 2002)

LEVEL L

- Picture books are longer and more complex.
- Chapter books involve more complex plots that span longer periods of time.
- Texts represent full range of genres.
- Most chapter books are 70 to 80 pages long.
- Print size is varied and often smaller.

EXAMPLES:

Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King by Jean Marzollo

Katy and the Big Snow by Virginia L. Burton

Amelia Bedelia series books by Peggy Parish

Cam Jansen series books by David A. Adler

George and Martha series books by James Marshall

Horrible Harry series books by Suzy Kline

Pee Wee Scouts series books by Judy Delton

Pinky and Rex series books by James Howe

Triplet Trouble series books by Debbie Dadey & Marcia Thornton Jones

LEVEL M

- Chapter books are longer with fewer pictures.
- Themes and topics vary widely and are more complex.
- Print size is smaller with more lines and words per page.
- Ancillary information materials may be included, such as maps, glossaries, vignettes, biographies and time lines.

EXAMPLES:

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch

Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett

Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express by Margaret K. Wetterer

Blue Ribbon Blues by Jerry Spinelli

Ghost Town Treasure by Clyde Robert Bulla

Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots and other *Bailey*

School Kids books by Debbie Dady and Marcia Thornton Jones

Arthur books by Marc Brown

Magic Treehouse books by Mary Pope Osborne

Polk Street School series books by Patricia Reilly Giff

Junie B. Jones series books by Barbara Park

The Littles series of books by John Peterson

Marvin Redpost series books by Louis Sachar

Russell Sprouts series books by Johann Hurwitz

Sophie series books by Dick King-Smith

LEVEL N

- Books are 100 pages or more.
- Chapters are 15 to 20 pages in length.
- More emphasis is placed on reading informational texts.
- Texts still have one plot and episodic structures.
- Books require a cultural or historical context for interpretation.

EXAMPLES:

Rumpelstiltskin by Paul O. Zelinsky

Lion Dance by Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low

The Most Wonderful Doll in the World by Phyllis McGinley

We'll Never Forget You, Roberto Clemente by Trudie Engel

Max Malone Makes a Million by Charlotte Herman

Squanto: Friend of the Pilgrims by Clyde Robert Bulla

Adam Joshua Capers series books by Janice Lee Smith

Amber Brown series books by Paula Danzinger

The Zack Files series of books

Many of the books by Ann Cameron (*The Stories Julian Tells*, etc.)

LEVEL O

- Texts have multiple characters with interwoven plots, flashbacks, or other complex styles.
- Longer books have up to 200 pages and include realistic fiction, biographies, science fiction, and folk and fairy tales.
- Illustrations are primarily black and white but are used infrequently.
- Many new multisyllable words are used.

EXAMPLES:

Gladly Here I Come by Joy Cowley

The Mouse and the Motorcycle by Beverly Cleary

The Bad Dad List by Anna Kenna

The Sock Gobbler and Other Stories by Barbara Berge

E Is for Elisa by Johanna Hurwitz

Henry and Ribsy by Beverly Cleary

Ramona Forever by Beverly Cleary

Baby-Sitters Club Mystery series of books by Ann M. Martin

Boxcar Children series books by Gertrude Chandler Warner

Henry Huggins series books by Beverly Cleary

Pony Pals series books by Jeanne Betancourt

LEVEL P

- Figurative language is used but explained by the writer
- Texts are longer and more complex, with greater variety of types and genre.
- Texts are largely distanced from the children's personal experiences, requiring greater ability to understand historical contexts and interpret new meanings from the text.

EXAMPLES:

The T. F. Letter by Karen Ray

A Taste of Blackberries by Doris B. George

The Private Notebook of Katie Roberts by Sonja Lamut

Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World by Mildren P. Walter

The Forgotten Door by Alexander Key

Encyclopedia Brown series books by Donald J. Sobol

Magic School Bus series by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner

Time Warp Trio series books by Jon Scieszka

Wayside School series books by Louis Sachar

LEVEL Q

- These books have very few illustrations.
- Books employ more complex sentences and vocabulary than previous levels.
- Plots are complex, offering sophisticated humor and interesting ideas.
- Characterization is shown through the use of dialogue and perspective.
- Books are quite long, requiring sustained interest and reading over many days.
- Books may focus on mature themes associated with problems in society.

EXAMPLES:

Run Away From Home by Patricia C. McKissack

The Great Brain Does It Again by John D. Fitzgerald

Sara Crewe by Frances H. Burnett

The Story of George Washington Carver by Eva Moore

Bunnicula by James Howe

James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl

Anastasia series books by Lois Lowry

Many books in the *American Girls* collection of books

Dragon Quest series of books by Jackie French Koller

Help! I'm Trapped.... series books by Todd Strasser
Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, *Superfudge*, and
Several other books by Judy Blume

LEVEL R

- Books represent a range of times in history.
- Vocabulary requires understanding of connotative meanings.
- Fiction books may use simile and metaphor.
- Nonfiction books focus on biographies and autobiographies.
- Books may deal with mature themes such as war, family problems, and death.

EXAMPLES:

Fourth Grade Rats by Jerry Spinelli

Souder by William Armstrong

The Best, Worst School Year Ever by Barbara Robinson

The Story of Thomas Alva Edison: The Wizard of Menlo Park by Margaret Davidson

Caddie Woodlawn by Carol Ryrie Brink

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

Shiloh by Phyllis R. Naylor

Strider by Beverly Cleary

Spider Boy by Ralph Fletcher

Zeely by Virginia Hamilton

Many of the books by Gary Paulsen

LEVEL S

- Books reflect a wide variety of topics and cultures.
- Many works of historical fiction are included at this level.
- Texts present experiences that are distant from the student's background.
- Texts offer opportunities to make inter-textual connections among other previously read texts and historical events.

EXAMPLES:

There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom by Louis Sachar

Little House on the Prairie by Laura I. Wilder

The Borrowers by Mary Norton

The Cybil War by Betsy Byars

Flying Solo by Ralph Fletcher

Journey to Jo'burg by Beverly Naidoo

Matilda by Roald Dahl

The Star Fisher by Laurence Yep

Taking Sides by Gary Soto

A Taste of Blackberries by Doris Buchanan Smith

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LEVEL T

- Texts use many multisyllable words.
- Texts use a variety of structures and genres.
- Fantasy, historical fiction, informational, biographies, and realistic fiction are all part of this level.
- Common themes at this level include growing up, courage, hardship, and prejudice.
- Texts deal with different cultural and racial groups.

EXAMPLES:

The Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis

Old Yeller by Fred Gipson

The Red Pony by John Steinbeck

Danny, Champion of the World by Roald Dahl

My Hiroshima by Junko Morimoto

Baby by Patricia MacLachlan

Blubber by Judy Blume

Bridge to Teribithia by Katherine Patterson

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis

Joey Pigza books by Jack Gantos

Sammy Keyes series books by Wendelin Van Draanen

Sing Down the Moon by Scott O'Dell

Tracker by Gary Paulsen

LEVEL U

- Texts present information with specific technical structures, such as charts, graphs, and tables.
- Narrative texts are complex, with plots and subplots.
- Characters are multidimensional and complex.
- Themes are more abstract and writers use symbolism.
- Creative formats are used, such as short stories all about the same character.

EXAMPLES:

The View From Saturday by E. L. Konigsburg

The Long Winter by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt

Onion John by Joseph Krumgold

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

Baseball in April and other stories by Gary Soto

The BFG by Roald Dahl

The Cat Ate My Gymsuit by Paula Danziger

Loser by Jerry Spinelli

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

The Summer of the Swans by Betsy Byars

Wringer by Jerry Spinelli

The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

LEVEL V

- Biographies at this level include significant coverage of historical fact, harsh themes, and difficult periods of history.
- Fiction includes science fiction.
- Texts require readers to think critically.
- Size of print is smaller, and texts may have 200 to 300 pages with many more words per page.

EXAMPLES:

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling

Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIHM by Robert C. O'Brien

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

Series of Unfortunate Events series books by Lemony Snicket

Bloomability by Sharon Creech

Crash by Jerry Spinelli

Holes by Louis Sachar

Jip: His Story by Katherine Paterson

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff

Ruby Holler by Sharon Creech

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

The Thief Lord by Cornelia Funke

Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements

Watchers series books by Peter Lerangis

LEVEL W

- Texts require an awareness of social and political issues.
- Fantasy and science fiction introduce heroic characters, moral questions, and contests between good and evil.
- Informational books have increasingly complex technical information.
- Biographies have many details prompting readers to make inferences about characters' motivations.

EXAMPLES:

I Am a Star: Child if the Holocaust by Inge Auerbacher

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norman Juster

Stowaway by Karen Hesse

After the Dancing Days by Margaret I. Rostkowski

Coraline by Neil Gaiman

Dragonwings by Laurence Yep
Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick
Harry Potter (books 3, 4 & 5) in the series by J.K. Rowling
Hoot by Carl Hiaasen
Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli
Missing May by Cynthia Rylant
Slam! by Walter Dean Myers

LEVEL X

- Science fiction includes technical information as well as high fantasy.
- Readers must go beyond the literal level to construct meaning.
- Sophistication of vocabulary, language, and topic continues to increase.

LEVEL Y

- Books present subtle themes and complex plots.
- Texts include irony and satire.
- Works include heroic figures and heroic journeys.
- Texts must be analyzed for underlying messages and for traditional plot elements.

LEVEL Z

- Informational books deal with controversial social concepts and political issues.
- Readers learn new strategies for finding technical information.
- Narratives provide graphic details of violence and hardship.
- Texts provide a great deal of highly technical information.

EXAMPLES OF X, Y and Z

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls
Memories of Anne Frank by Alison L. Gold
The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
Novio Boy by Gary Soto
Call It Courage by Armstrong Sperry
Carry On, Mr. Bowditch by Jean Lee Latham
Sacajawea by Joseph Bruchac
The Giver by Lois Lowry
My Brother Sam is Dead by James and Christopher Collier
White Fang by Jack London
A Day No Pigs Would Die by Sylvia Peck
The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien
Adventures of Huck Finn by Mark Twain
Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

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