



The Lexile Tour Guide



1130L

What is a Lexile?

A Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty that is linked to the RIT score, Northwest Evaluation Association's unit for measuring reading comprehension. This link allows educators to use the student's RIT score to find books, periodicals, and other reading materials that will be appropriately challenging for each student. Lexile scores are available on both the reading class reports and the individual student progress reports.

Students are considered to be at an appropriate level when they can comprehend approximately 75% of the material they read. This ensures students are neither frustrated nor bored, thereby stimulating their

learning processes while rewarding their current reading abilities.

MetaMetrics was the first organization to take readability of text and comprehension of students and put the two together. By expressing these two things on the same scale, teachers and parents are better able to target and personalize reading selections.

Many assessments are currently linked to the Lexile scale, meaning that over 10 million students receive a Lexile measure when they take a reading assessment.

A Lexile measures syntactic complexity—the number of words per sentence. We know that longer sentences are more complex and require

more short-term memory to process. It also measures semantic difficulty—a measure of vocabulary. This is measured by looking at the frequency compared to a body of over 400 million words. This is the largest repository of text in the world and is quickly approaching 500 million words.

The Lexile database currently includes over 30,000 books and over 6 million articles from periodicals that have also been analyzed.



The Lexile Times Newsletter

The Lexile website can be accessed at www.lexile.com. From the homepage click on the "The Lexile Times Newsletter" link. This newsletter is published monthly and contains many excellent articles on NCLB, using Lexiles in the classroom and library setting,

and other information.

Back issues are also accessible from this location. Some key features have been referenced in this document.

You can also access a "Calendar of Events" from the homepage that lists

books that match a theme for the month. Receive both the newsletter and calendar of events monthly by registering for the mailing list.

Northwest Evaluation Association

Special points of interest:

- ☺ Access information at www.lexile.com
- ☺ Lexile your classroom library for easier access
- ☺ Differentiate instruction based on Lexiles
- ☺ Teacher's Toolbox contains many documents ready to print and use

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Searching for Titles

You can search over 30,000 titles (both Spanish and English) on the Lexile website free of charge. The regular search feature allows you to search by title, author, ISBN, subject, or Lexile range. By using the detailed search on the same page, you can also search by a theme, interest, or content area.

To search for a title, click on the “Search Titles” tab from the homepage. Enter any part of the title or other search factor and leave the other fields blank. If you enter additional fields, you narrow your search.

One of the additional fields you can use



to narrow your search is the Developmental Range. This information is supplied by the publisher and is not avail-

able for all titles (only about 1/3 have this designation assigned).

The Lexile Titles Database CD can be purchased at a relatively low cost. The benefit of this is the ability to create individualized pathfinder lists for students based on Lexile range, interest, etc. You can also print labels from this CD for classroom or school libraries.

The “Find-a-Book” service from Follett Software Company allows schools the ability to update MARC records (library database) by adding Lexile measures into your local system.

Analyzing Text

When an NWEA district begins receiving Lexile scores, they are sent a registration form that must be filled out and sent back to NWEA. NWEA then forwards the information to Lexile, who assigns a login and password to the district.

This login and password gives the district the ability to analyze any text that does not already have a Lexile measure. By either scanning the text or entering a portion of it into a text document, it can be submitted and assigned a Lexile measure.

To do this, click on the tab labeled “Analyze”. You will then be prompted to enter your district’s assigned login and password. Follow the directions listed on the page. You will be required to “clean up” any passages you submit for Lexiling.

If you noticed the front cover, we Lexiled this document in this manner and it Lexiled at 1130L. It was easy!

It is important to note that your Lexiled material will not be added to the searchable database.

“Lexiles is more than a tool. It is becoming a very important way of helping students to become more independent readers. I have never seen students read so much...

It is fantastic.”

**Kaye Hollifield
Pumpkin Center Middle School
Lincoln County Schools,
Lincolnton, NC**

Lexiling Your Library—Suggestions and Ideas

These ideas are excerpts from *The Lexile Times Newsletters* from January and February 2002 and were all submitted by school staff.

- Create student passports; students get stamps and credit for reading books listed in their passport.
- Use color-coded dots on the book spines; makes it easy for the younger students who aren't yet capable of using the online catalog.
- Encourage students to select books of interest and appropriate readability.
- Arrange the library in Lexile zones.
- Record the actual Lexile measure on the inside of the front or back cover of the book.
- Put a colored stripe on the spine indicating the book is Lexiled; students can then refer to the inside cover for the actual measure.
- Include the Lexile measure on the spine of the book.
- Maintain a daily 20-minute SSR (sustained silent reading) time at the high school when students are required to read Lexiled or college bound books to meet one of the target areas dealing with reading comprehension.
- Don't pigeonhole students into books ONLY within their Lexile range.

The Teacher's Toolbox—PowerV

Because Lexile doesn't evaluate genre, theme, content, or interest, it is important to review materials before assigning them to students. Even though the Lexile may be appropriate, the content may not be for that student.

Students may be able to read more difficult content if it is an area of interest for the child since they may already be familiar with some of the vocabulary necessary to comprehend the text.

On the opposite side of that, keep in mind that when teaching a new content area, new vocabulary may need to be pre-taught before the students can fully comprehend the text they are

reading.

To assist with this, Lexile has created *PowerV* vocabulary lessons that are available online. PowerV is a systematic and individualized approach to vocabulary development that enables teachers to assist students in grades 2 through 12 to improve their reading comprehension skills.

By utilizing the Lexile Framework, educators and parents can provide vocabulary development keyed to the new words that are unfamiliar to the reader. For more information on *PowerV*, check out the October 2002 edition of *The Lexile Times Newsletter*, available

online at the Lexile website.

To access *PowerV* vocabulary lessons, click on the "Teacher's Toolbox" link from the homepage. Once at the main screen, select "*PowerV*". You then have the option of narrowing your search by selecting a letter of the alphabet. This will bring up the entire list of Lexiled titles that are being worked on for that letter. Although work is underway on building vocabulary lessons for more titles, this is an ongoing process. Titles that do not have the lessons completed yet have a W by them and still include the basic vocabulary list.

The Teacher's Toolbox—Pathfinders

A Pathfinder is a list of titles either based around a certain Lexile range or a certain topic or theme.

NWEA districts are provided with a master set of Pathfinders around Lexile ranges when they first begin receiving Lexile measures on their class reports. Recent updates to these can be accessed on the NWEA website. Theme-based Pathfinders can be accessed within the "Teacher's Toolbox" at www.lexile.com. Simply go to the "Teacher's Toolbox" and click on the link under Instruction labeled "Pathfinders".

They have two lists—the first is by "series" (fiction titles, for example, [The Boxcar Children](#)). This information can assist the reader in deciding which books in the series to read first because they are written at an easier level.

Teachers will find the Subject Pathfinder lists organized by "topic" useful. These lists address the task of differentiating instruction for the wide range of ability levels found within a classroom. For example, "Action Sports" contains books with Lexile measures from

630L to 900L. By using this information, teachers can match students in the class with a book near his or her actual reading level.

Now, all of the students in your class can read supplementary material about the unit they are studying in class, while at the same time reading material that is appropriate for their individual reading levels.



The Teacher's Toolbox—Lexile Calculator

The Lexile Calculator is a tool for examining the comprehension rate between a reader and a text. It can perform the following:

- Calculate the rate at which a student is expected to comprehend a text
- Calculate the reading ability a reader is expected to need in order to comprehend a text at a given level

The Lexile Calculator can help you bet-

ter deliver instruction by knowing in advance

- which students are going to need extra help with a lesson.
- which students will understand the material on their own.
- which students will be able to handle even more advanced lessons on their own.

From the Lexile homepage, click on the link to "The Teacher's Toolbox". Follow the link to the "Utilities" section and

then the "Lexile Calculator" link.

By entering either a Lexile range or comprehension range and the grade level you are teaching, you will be given a list of textbooks that have been Lexiled for that grade level. By knowing this information, you may be able to share resources with other teachers at other grade levels to meet the needs of the students in your classroom.

Currently this is the only way to access Lexiled textbooks on the Lexile website.

Individualizing Instruction with Lexiles

In your classroom, what is the range of students' reading levels from lowest to highest? How do you currently attempt to ensure your students are reading at the appropriate level when you teach a unit? Is every child assigned to read the same materials?

Knowing what you know about Lexiles now should give you some guidance in answering these questions. By using the Lexile resources available to you, meeting students where they are is possible.

In the September 2002 issue of *The Lexile Times Newsletter*, a California teacher, Rick Powels, gives suggestions for how he uses Lexiles in his classroom. (The following ideas are based on Rick's suggestions. See the full article at www.lexile.com for more information.)

One suggestion is if you are teaching a unit in science on electricity, for example, you can search the Lexile online da-

tabase for electricity-related titles. You can also search the EBSCO titles database (www.EBSCO.com) for periodicals that have been Lexiled on that topic. Once you have access to multiple materials, you can 'scaffold' these and assign the students topic-related materials at the appropriate Lexile level in order to increase their fluency.

Another suggestion is to analyze students' writing samples periodically throughout the year in order for students to see their own work Lexiled. This may give you more insight to guide students in how they create their sentence structure or other specific areas of concern.

He also suggests letting any student read any book—not just ones within that student's Lexile range. It is important to check in with students, however, to make sure the student is having suc-

cess with that book. Fluency can be increased by taking home books at a lower Lexile level than they would normally read and have them practice the vocabulary contained in that book.

Access the full article and more suggestions by going to www.lexile.com and clicking on "The Lexile Times Newsletter" link and access the September 2002 issue.

"Teachers welcome a method that consistently matches books with student comprehension levels."

Amy Ely

Literacy Coach

Brush Middle School

Brush County Public Schools, CO

Language Arts and Reading Best Practice Resources

- **Reading and the High School Student: Strategies to Enhance Literacy** by Judith Irvin and Douglas Buehl ISBN 0-205-31961-0 (800-278-3525 - order # 1961L9)
- **University of Connecticut** (<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu>) This site contains a wealth of information around the topic of literacy and may be the most comprehensive on the web. You will find extensive information around comprehension, vocabulary, literary analysis, age-group orientations (multi-age, middle school, etc.), and much, much more, including links to other resources on the web.
- **International Reading Association** (<http://www.reading.org/focus>) The IRA provides reading teachers of all levels with a variety of resources and web links.
- **NCTE -** (<http://www.ncte.org>) The National Council of Teachers of English is a national organization

with state affiliates in all states. They have a number of resources on their website to support teachers of reading, writing, and the language arts.

- **The Learning Street** (<http://www.learningstreet.org/resources/index.asp>) **Achieving General Literacy** (<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>) McREL has produced a list of subject matter terms and phrases for grade-level spans. The terms were drawn from the knowledge and skills contained in each standard and benchmark in the standards database, "Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards & Benchmarks for K-12 Education."
- **General Reading Vocabulary** (<http://www.learningstreet.com/resources/grvpage.asp>) Grade level vocabulary lists organized into semantic clusters (i.e., groups of

related words). Teachers can use this reference to enhance student learning of vocabulary they encounter in reading across content areas.

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