

Characteristics of Text

The easiest books are included in levels A and B. We suggest that students begin using level-A books for Guided Reading after they have listened to many stories and participated in Shared Reading. They should have some familiarity with print and understand that you read print from left to right. Students do not need to know all the letters of the alphabet and their sounds before reading level-A books.

Level A includes some picture books without words, some with simple labels or captions, and some with up to five or six words often on one line. In general, these books have clear, easy-to-read print with generous space between words. These simple formats enable young readers to focus on print and reading from left to right, while gradually increasing their control over more words. Many of the books have high-frequency words and repeating language patterns. Print is presented in a variety of ways, which helps students become flexible readers from the start. In general, the books focus on topics that are familiar to most students. Because the books with more complex topics usually have few words, you should provide more of an introduction and teacher-student interaction to support understanding.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names									
Understands familiar concepts in stories and illustrations										
Differentiates print from pictures										
Holds the book and turns pages from left to right										
Reads words from left to right										
Begins to match word-by-word, pointing with one finger under words										
Locates both known and new words										
Remembers and uses language patterns										
Relates the book to his or her experience										

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Level-B books generally have simple storylines or a single idea. The print is easy to read with adequate space between words so that students can point to words as they read. Books at this level generally have one or two lines of print on a page, somewhat longer sentences than level A, and a variety of punctuation. There is direct correspondence between the text and illustrations, and repeating language patterns support the reader. Topics are generally familiar to most students. If more complex concepts are involved, the reading of the book will require teacher-child interaction to support understanding.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Demonstrates control of left-to-right movement and return sweep									
Begins to control word-by-word matching across two lines of text, pointing with one finger									
Notices and interprets detail in pictures									
Talks about ideas in the text									
Remembers and uses language patterns in text									
Uses knowledge of high-frequency words to check on reading									
Uses word-by-word matching to check on reading									
Notices mismatches in meaning or language									
Uses visual information, such as the first letter of the word, to read known and new words									
Pays close attention to print									
Notices features of letters and words									
Begins to self-monitor, noticing mismatches in meaning or language									
Rereads to confirm or figure out new words									

Characteristics of Text

Level-C books have simple storylines and topics that are familiar to most students. Some may offer a new viewpoint on a familiar topic. Level-C books generally have more words and lines of print than books at earlier levels. Print is clear and easy to read with adequate space between words. Most sentences are simple, but some have more complex structures, offering readers a challenge. While level-C books include some repeating language patterns, these are more complex and there is a shift to more varied patterns. Language patterns are more likely to change from page to page, so students cannot rely on them to make predictions and must pay closer attention to print. Level-C books include many high-frequency words, as well as easy-to-solve words.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Demonstrates control of left-to-right directionality and word-by-word matching across several lines of print									
Begins to track print with eyes									
Rereads to solve problems, such as figuring out new words									
Demonstrates awareness of punctuation by pausing and using some phrasing									
Uses illustration details to help figure out words									
Remembers and uses language patterns in text									
Rereads to confirm or figure out new words									
Solves some new words independently									
Controls directionality and word-by-word matching with eyes, using finger at points of difficulty									
Uses visual information to predict, check, and confirm reading									
Recognizes known words quickly and uses them to figure out the meaning of new words									
Searches for understanding while reading									

Characteristics of Text

Stories at level D are slightly more complex than at previous levels. Generally, level-D books have topics that are familiar to most students, but also include some abstract or unfamiliar ideas. Text layout is still easy to follow with both large and small print. Sentences are a little longer than at level C. Some are carried over to the next page or several pages and use a full range of punctuation. There are more compound words, multi-syllable words, and words with a variety of inflectional endings. Illustrations are still supportive but less so than at the previous level, requiring the reader to pay more attention to print.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Remembers language patterns and repeating events over longer stretches of text									
Self-corrects, using visual information									
Controls directionality and word-by-word matching with eyes, using finger only at points of difficulty									
Searches for understanding while reading									
Remembers details from the text and illustrations									
Pays close attention to words and their structural features (e.g., endings)									
Reads fluently, with phrasing									
Rereads to confirm or figure out new words									
Solves new words using knowledge of sound-letter relationships and word parts									