

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/her experience										

Characteristics of Text

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 children 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										

Characteristics of Text

Level E books are generally longer than books at previous levels, either with more pages or more lines of text on a page. Some have sentences that carry over several pages and have a full range of punctuation. The text structure is generally more complex: stories have more or longer episodes, and informational books have more difficult ideas and concepts. However, in texts with more difficult concepts, there are usually repeating language patterns that offer some support. There are more multi-syllable and compound words at this level.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names									
Tracks print with eyes, except at points of difficulty										
Uses language syntax and meaning to read fluently, with phrasing										
Demonstrates awareness of punctuation by pausing, phrasing, and reading with inflection										
Rereads to self-monitor or self-correct phrasing and expression										
Recognizes many words quickly and automatically										
Figures out some longer words by taking them apart										
Relates texts to others previously read										
Reads for meaning but checks with the visual aspects of print (letters, sounds, words)										
Rereads to search for meaning and accuracy										
Remembers details and uses them to clarify meaning										
Demonstrates understanding by talking about text after reading										

Characteristics of Text

In general, texts at level F are longer and have more story episodes than at previous levels. There are also shorter texts with some unusual language patterns. Books have some concepts unfamiliar to students and some are even abstract, requiring reflection. Illustrations continue to support reading, but closer attention to print is required. Language patterns are more characteristic of written language than of spoken language. Some level F books have smaller print and more words and lines of text. There are many more new words and a greater variety of high-frequency words. A full range of punctuation is used to enhance meaning.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Tracks print with eyes, using finger only at points of difficulty									
Demonstrates awareness of punctuation by pausing, phrasing, and reading with inflection									
Uses syntax of written language to figure out new words and their meaning									
Uses sound-letter relationships, word parts, and other visual information to figure out new words									
Uses known words to figure out new words									
Uses multiple sources of information to search and self-correct									
Figures out longer words while reading for meaning									
Rereads to figure out words, self-correct, or improve phrasing and expression									
Rereads to search for meaning									
Recognizes most words quickly and automatically									
Moves quickly through the text									
Reads fluently, with phrasing									
Talks about ideas in the text and relates them to his/her experiences and to other texts									

Characteristics of Text

Most books at level G are not repetitive. These books include a variety of patterns. Knowledge of punctuation is important in understanding what each sentence means and how it should be read aloud. Vocabulary is more challenging, with a greater range of words and more difficult words, including some that are technical and require content knowledge. Concepts and ideas may be less familiar than at previous levels. Level G books have a greater variety of styles of print and text layout, requiring close attention to print and flexibility on the part of the reader.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names									
Reads fluently and rapidly, with appropriate phrasing										
Follows print with eyes, occasionally using finger at points of difficulty										
Notices and uses punctuation to assist smooth reading										
Recognizes most words quickly and automatically										
Uses sound-letter relationships, known words, and word parts to figure out new words										
Uses meaning, visual information, and language syntax to figure out words										
Rereads to figure out words, self-correct, or improve phrasing and expression										
Rereads to search for meaning										
Remembers details to support the accumulation of meaning throughout the text										
Uses illustrations for information but does not rely on them to make predictions										

Characteristics of Text

Level H books are similar in difficulty to level G, but level H has a wider variety, including books with poetic or literary language. Sentences vary in length and difficulty, and some complex sentences carry over several pages. Students will need to be familiar with the syntactic patterns that occur. Books have fewer repeating events and language patterns, requiring more control of aspects of print. The vocabulary is expanded and includes words that are less frequently used in oral language. The size of print varies greatly.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Reads fluently and rapidly, with appropriate phrasing									
Follows the text with eyes, using finger only at points of particular difficulty									
Notices and uses punctuation to assist smooth reading									
Recognizes most words rapidly									
Uses sound-letter relationships, known words, and word parts to figure out new words									
Uses meaning, visual information, and language syntax to solve problems									
Rereads phrases to figure out words, self-correct, or improve phrasing and expression									
Rereads to search for meaning									
Remembers details to support meaning accumulated through the text									
Uses illustrations for information but does not rely on them to make predictions									
Searches for meaning while reading, stopping to think or talk about ideas									

Level I

Behaviours to Notice and Support (by Level)

Characteristics of Text

In general, the books at level I are longer and more complex than at levels G and H. The size of print is smaller, and there are many more lines of print on the page. Books have longer sentences and paragraphs. There are more multi-syllabic words, requiring complex word-solving skills. This level offers a greater variety of texts, including some that are informational, with technical language. Events in the text are more developed. Illustrations enhance the story but provide little support for understanding meaning.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Actively figures out new words using a range of strategies									
Follows the print with eyes									
Reads fluently, slowing down to figure out new words and then resuming speed									
Begins to silently read some of the text									
In oral reading, rereads some words or phrases to self-correct or improve expression									
Rereads to search for meaning									
Flexibly uses meaning, language syntax, and visual information to figure out new words and to monitor reading									
Self-corrects errors that cause loss of meaning									
Rereads when necessary to self-correct, but not as a habit									
Demonstrates understanding of the story and characters									
Goes beyond the text in discussions and interpretations									
Sustains problem solving and development of meaning through a longer text read over two or three days									

Level J

Behaviours to Notice and Support (by Level)

Characteristics of Text

Although it supports essentially the same reading behaviours, level J offers more difficult and varied books than level I. It includes informational books with new concepts and beginning chapter books with complex narratives and memorable characters. The amount of print varies; some level J books have full pages of text with few illustrations. Generally, illustrations enhance the text but offer little support for understanding text meaning or figuring out new words. The difficulty of the language also varies. There are some books with easy and familiar language, and others with literary language or other challenges. Texts have many high-frequency words but may also have unfamiliar and/or technical words.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names								
Uses multiple sources of information to process text smoothly									
Uses multiple strategies to figure out new words while focusing on meaning									
Analyzes words from left to right, using knowledge of sound-letter relationships									
Uses known words and word parts to figure out new words									
Reads fluently, slowing down to figure out new words and then resuming speed									
Flexibly uses meaning, language syntax, and visual information to monitor reading									
Self-corrects errors that cause loss of meaning									
Rereads when necessary to self-correct, but not as a habit									
Rereads to search for meaning									
Demonstrates understanding of the story and characters									
Goes beyond the text in discussions and interpretations									
Sustains problem solving and development of meaning through a longer text read over several days									
Silently reads sections of text									
Makes inferences, predicts, and analyzes character and plot									

Characteristics of Text

The level K collection includes longer chapter books with memorable characters, shorter informational books with technical language and new concepts, and literary texts with illustrations that enhance meaning. Stories have multiple episodes related to a single plot. Some stories have to do with times, places, and characters outside students' experience. Readers will need to use a variety of strategies to figure out new writing styles. At this level, most reading will be silent, although you should invite students to read aloud for assessment purposes and for emphasis or enjoyment in group sessions. It will take more than one sitting for students to read some of the longer chapter books.

Behaviours to Notice and Support	Students' Names									
Integrates multiple sources of information while reading with fluency										
When reading orally, reads rapidly with phrasing, slowing down to problem-solve and then resuming speed										
Reads silently much of the time										
Demonstrates understanding of the text after silent reading										
Makes inferences, predicts, and analyzes character and plot										
Flexibly uses multiple word-solving strategies while focusing on meaning										
Goes beyond the text in understanding of problems and characters										
Demonstrates facility in interpreting the text										
Sustains attention to meaning and interpretation of a longer text read over several days										