



Reading Level Guide Parent Handbook

2022-23 Instructional Level Expectations for Reading

Grade	Key	Beginning of Year	End of Term 1	End of Term 2	End of Term 3	End of Term 4
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Kinder.	Meets Expectations			B	C	D
	Approaches Expectations			A	B	C
	Beginning to Learn Expectations			Pre A	A	B or Below

***Kindergarten students are not assessed on reading levels until October to allow students time to transition to being in school.**

1st grade	Meets Expectations	D	E	G	H	J
	Approaches Expectations	C	D	F	G	I
	Beginning to Learn Expectations	B or below	C or below	D or below	F or below	H or below

2nd grade	Meets Expectations	J	K	L	L	M
	Approaches Expectations	I	J	K	K	L
	Beginning to Learn Expectations	H or below	I or below	J or below	J or below	K or below

3rd grade	Meets Expectations	M	N	O	O	P
	Approaches Expectations	L	M	N	N	O
	Beginning to Learn Expectations	K or below	L or below	M or below	M or below	N or below

4th grade	Meets Expectations	P	Q	R	R	S
	Approaches Expectations	O	P	Q	Q	R
	Beginning to Learn Expectations	M or below	M or below	N or below	N or below	O or below

5th grade	Meets Expectations	S	T	U	U	V
	Approaches Expectations	R	S	T	T	U
	Beginning to Learn Expectations	O or below	P or below	Q or below	Q or below	R or below

Parent Tips:

- No matter what level your child is reading, you can:
 - Look at the pictures in a book and discuss them prior to reading
 - Make predictions about the text before, during and after reading
 - Read aloud books to your child
 - Have your child read books to you
 - Talk about what happened in the book

- No matter what level your child is reading at, you can ask or say:
 - How will you figure out what the book is about?
 - What should we do first to get started in the book?
 - When you come to a word that you don't understand, what will you do?
 - When you figure something out, try to remember how you did it so that you can say what worked for you.

- No matter what level your child is reading, you can encourage self-monitoring by asking/saying:
 - How can you check?
 - Try that again. Make sure all of your words match the letters on the page.
 - How can you find out if you're right?
 - How do you know?
 - How else do you know?
 - What do you notice?
 - Try that sentence again.

- No matter what level your child is reading, you can encourage comprehension by:
 - If there is a picture in the book, tell or write what happened BEFORE the picture and then what happened AFTER the picture. Be brief.
 - Find a sentence in the story that has some words in it that you do not understand. Explain that sentence in your own words. Remember, context of a sentence is important.
 - What did the author want you to think about the main character? What things in the story made you think this is what the author wanted you to think? In other words, can you prove why you think as you do about the main character?
 - What was the cause of any one of the happenings in the story? In other words, what made something happen? Was it something someone did, or said, or something that just happened?
 - In nonfiction text, ask your child what the main idea of the text/passage is and to provide supporting details.

The following pages describe each reading level in detail along with how you can support your child at each of these levels.

Pre A Level

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at the Pre A Level

- Identify all lowercase and capital letters
- Identify short vowel and consonant sounds
- Identify the front of the book, back of the book, and the first page
- Identify the text and differentiate it from the picture
- Find the beginning of one line of text and move across the text from left to right
- Locate a letter, word, first letter in a word, last letter in a word and punctuation

Ways to support readers at the Pre A Level

- Find letters in the real world—name them and connect it to the sound (ex. Pointing out the M in McDonalds)
- Label items (ex. Sink, door, cabinet)
- Read alphabet books
- Look at the pictures in a book and discuss them prior to reading
- Read books to your child and point to words as you read
- Talk about what happened in the book
- Ask your child to locate certain parts (ex. A letter, a word, front cover, back cover)Practice rhyming with books, games and songs

Level A/B

Characteristics of a Level A/B book

- A single word, phrase or simple sentence on each page
- Patterned and predictable text
- Larger, easy to read font
- Exaggerated spacing between words
- Pictures are highly supportive of text and most of meaning conveyed through pictures
- One or two familiar words (“sight words”) anchor children to the text
- Consistent placement of the text, preferably top left to right or bottom left to right
- Some books will have 2 lines of text on a page

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level A/B

- Make predictions while looking at the pictures prior to reading
- Use the picture as a source of information
- Use left to right directionality to read 1 or 2 lines of print
- Match spoken words with printed words with one to one matching (child point to words as they read)
- Carry the pattern in a predictable text
- Locate 1 or 2 known words on a page

Ways to support readers at Level A/B

- Practice and secure Pre A skills (letter and sound identification, front cover, back cover, etc.)
- Practice simple sight words (using magnetic letters, flash cards, white board, and/or paper/pencil). Focus on words with 2 or 3 letters that are very common in the Level A books and words with 3 or 4 letters that are common in the Level B books (examples include “here”, “said”, “come” and “look”)
- Have students exchange beginning letters while making words (go, so, no–cat, fat, mat–etc.) Don't forget to teach them to say the word slowly and check it with their finger.
- Exchange final letters while making words (am, at, as–cat, cap, can–etc.)
- Clap syllables in words

Recommended Titles for Level A/B

- *Autumn Leaves* by Gail Saunders-Smith
- *The Berenstain Bears in the House of Mirrors* by Stan & Jan Berenstain
- *Cars* by Gail Saunders-Smith
- *Count and See* by Tana Hoban
- *Do You Want to Be My Friend?* By Eric Carle
- *Growing Colors* by Bruce McMillan
- *Look What I Can Do* by Jose Aruego
- *My Book* by Ron Maris
- *My Class* by Lynn Salem
- *What Do Insects Do?* By Susan Canizares
- *Cat on the Mat* by Brian Wildsmith
- *Chickens* by Peter Bundy

Level C/D

Characteristics of a Level C/D book

- 1 to 3 short, simple sentences on each page
- Existence of slight pattern change at some point in the book
- Consistent placement of text with 1 or 2 minor changes
- Good spacing and larger font
- Support pictures with few details
- A few high frequency words appear throughout the book
- Sentences are more varied, full range of punctuation (commas, periods, exclamation marks, question marks, quotations, etc.)
- Dialogue statements by characters are introduced
- Some simple contractions are introduced
- Word endings appear (words ending in -s and -ing)
- Blends and digraphs appear (bl, st, ch, wh, sh, th, etc.)

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level C/D

- Get the mouth ready for the initial sound of a word
- Use left to right directionality and return to next line for multiple lines of texts
- Locate 1 or 2 known words on a page
- Monitor for meaning, checking to make sure it makes sense and looks right
- Recognize many sight words
- Blend and segment sounds (st-and, c-at, etc.)
- Read smoothly across the page when reading

Ways to support readers at Level C/D

- Practice and secure level A/B skills
- Practice reading and writing sight words at home
- Have your child reread the same text
- Work on word families (--am, -at, -and, etc.)
- Add ending to words they already know (play, plays, playing)

Recommended Titles for Level C/D

- *All Fall Down* (Wildsmith)
- *Baby Says* (Steptoe)
- *Boats* (Saunders-Smith)
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin)
- *Costumes* (Schaefer)
- *The Fox on the Box* (Gregorich)
- *Gregory's Dog* (Stobbs)
- *A Halloween Mask for Monster* (Mueller)
- *I Went Walking* (Williams)
- *Joshua James Likes Trucks* (Petrie)
- *The Little Red House* (Sawicki)
- *My Dream* (Wildsmith)
- *Now We Can Go* (Jonas)

Level E/F

Characteristics of a Level E/F book

- More variation in the placement of text on the page
- Sentences are longer and more complex
- Commas are introduced
- Opening and closing sentences vary
- Moderate to high support from pictures that connect details related to the meaning of the whole text
- Some repetition of phrases, words, or sentences
- Contractions appear more
- 3 syllable words appear more
- Compound words are introduced
- More complex dialogue, including split dialogue
- Word endings are more common (-s, -ed, -ing)

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level E/F

- Readers must look across the whole word
- Children will need to use known words to help with unknown words (ex. Play and day)
- Rereading and self-correction behaviors common
- Reading with some fluency and expression
- Using more than 1 strategy to solve words (sound right, look right, and make sense)
- Recognizing common chunks of words (ee, ay, etc.)
- Reader no longer needs to point to words as they read, unless problem solving a word
- Flexibly use both short and long vowel sounds

Ways to support readers at Level E/F

- Practice and Secure Level C/D skills
- Have the child reread for fluency and expression by paying attention to punctuation
- Ask your child, "Does it make sense, look right and sound right?"
- Practice reading and writing sight words at home
- Practice breaking words into parts (ex. Sh-out-ing, b-ook-s), etc.

Recommended Titles for Level E/F

- *Level Bears in the Night* (Berenstain)
- *Beautiful Bugs* (Fleming)
- *Blue Bug Goes to School* (Twig)
- *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* (Christelow)
- *Foot Book* (Eastman)
- *Footprints in the Snow* (Benjamin)
- *Fur* (Mark)
- *Go, Dog, Go* (Eastman)
- *Henry's Busy Day* (Campbell)
- *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (Shaw)
- *Mrs. Wishy Washy* (Cowley)
- *Mud* (Lewison)

Level G/H/I

Characteristics of a Level G/H/I book

- Pictures provide moderate to low support
- The content may often include a single character or story line throughout the book
- Sentence patterns are longer, varied and more complex
- Greater use of literacy or story language: “Once upon a time” or “Long, long ago” or use of similes (ex. Hard as a rock) and metaphors (“He is the apple of my eye”
- There will be more unfamiliar and often complex vocabulary
- Nonfiction books may contain text features such as glossary, headings, table of contents, etc.
- Multisyllabic words appear

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level G/H/I

- Rereading and self-correction behaviors common
- Reading with fluency and expression
- Can use known word parts or chunks to figure out unknown words
- Monitoring for meaning: checking to make sure what has been read makes sense and sounds right and what looks right
- Use more than 1 strategy to solve words (sound right, look right and makes sense)

Ways to support readers at Level G/H/I

- Practice and secure Level E/F skills
- Have the child reread for fluency and expression by paying attention to punctuation
- Ask your child, “Does it make sense, look right and sound right?”
- Practice reading and writing sight words at home
- Practice breaking words into parts (ex. Sh-out-ing, b-ook-s)
- Read a variety of nonfiction and fiction texts as well as material they encounter in everyday life (ex. Cereal boxes, road signs, grocery lists, etc.)

Recommended Titles for Level G/H/I

- *Albert the Albatross* (Hoff)
- *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman)
- *Because a Little Bug Went Ka-choo* (Stone)
- *Big Dog, Little Dog* (Eastman)
- *Charlie Needs a Cloak* (DePaola)
- *Danny and the Dinosaur* (Hoff)
- *Father Bear Comes Home* (Minarik)
- *George Shrinks* (Joyce)
- *Goodnight Moon* (Brown)
- *Grizzwold* (Hoff)
- *Hattie and the Fox* (Fox)
- *Morris the Moose* (Wiseman)
- *Mrs. Brice’s Mice* (Fox)
- *Old Hat, New Hat* (Berenstain)
- *Ten, Nine, Eight* (Bang)

Level J/K/L/M

Characteristics of a Level J/K/L/M book

- One clear, central problem and solution
- Dialogue between several main characters that the reader needs to carefully track
- Character feelings change over the course of the story, but traits are fairly consistent
- More and more words in these books that aren't used conversationally and many are subject specific
- Cumulative chapters
- Limited picture support
- Greater variety of genres including mystery, fantasy, fairy tales and folktales, myths, legends and biographies
- In Level L and M...
 - Text has more complex themes and characters to follow and develop
 - Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
 - Variety in the layout of the print

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level J/K/L/M

- Readers need to decide which details are important to hold onto while reading
- Reader has to follow what is going on in the text for a longer period of time
- Solve content specific words, using graphics and definitions in the text
- Solve unfamiliar vocabulary and figurative language using context clues
- Use knowledge of a series to make predictions, meaning, and connections
- Use chapter titles to foreshadow content
- Summarize a longer narrative, either orally or in writing
- Bring knowledge from personal experiences to the interpretation of characters and events
- Understand the relationship between the setting and the plot of a story
- Differentiate between what is known and new information
- Notice aspects of a writer's style
- Infer the big ideas or message
- Use prefixes and suffixes to help determine the meaning of words

Ways to support readers at Level J/K/L/M

- Practice and secure Level G/H/I books
- Have the child reread for fluency and expression by paying attention to punctuation
- Ask your child, "Does it make sense, look right and sound right?"
- Practice breaking words into parts (example: mis-understand-ing)
- Read a variety of genres including mystery, fantasy, fairy tales and folktales, myths, legends, and biographies
- When encountering longer words, be sure to have your child look across the whole word

Recommended Titles for Level J/K/L/M

- *Nate the Great* series
- *Freckle Juice* (Blume)

- *Amelia Bedalia* series (Parish)
- *Arthur the Aardvark* series (Brown)
- *Cam Jansen* series (Brown)
- *George and Martha* series (Marshall)
- *Horrible Harry* series (Kline)
- *Jenny Archer* series (Conford)
- *Junie B. Jones* (Park)
- *Look Who's Playing First Base* (Christopher)
- *Magic Treehouse* series (Osbourne)

Level N/O/P/Q

Characteristics of a Level N/O/P/Q book

- Characters encounter multiple problems
- There will be a few subplots
- Characters are conflicted and therefore more complex
- Character traits change from beginning to end
- There are also tricky phrases and passages
- Figurative language is present, but not always imperative to the meaning of the text
- Less picture support than the preceding band
- More complex sentence structure
- New vocabulary in fiction texts largely unexplained
- Complex spelling patterns
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through character behavior
- Use of words in italics, bold or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some words with connotative meaning that are essential to understanding the text

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level N/O/P/Q

- Readers need to decide which details are important to hold onto while reading
- REaders need to be able to change their thinking if later details disprove their thoughts and ideas
- Readers can pay attention to what characters do, say and think to get a full understanding of the character
- Begin to notice new and interesting words and add them to speaking or writing vocabulary
- Respond to plot tension or suspense by reading on to seek resolution
- Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding of characters and events
- Make connections between texts and other texts that have been read or heard
- Demonstrate understanding of characters and how they change across time, using evidence to support statements
- Summarize a text at intervals during the reading of a longer text
- Demonstrate phrased, fluent oral reading
- Justify predictions using evidence
- Infer cause and effect in influencing characters' feelings or underlying motives
- Specify the nature of connections (topic, content, type of story, writer)
- Adjust reading to process texts with difficult and complex layout
- Practice and secure level N/O/P/Q skills
- Talk to your child about what they've read
- Read the same book that they are reading and discuss the book with your child

Ways to support readers at Level N/O/P/Q

- Practice and secure Level J/K/L/M skills
- Talk to your child about what they have read
- Read the same book that your child is reading and discuss the book with them

Recommended Titles for Level N/O/P/Q

- *A to Z Mysteries* (Roy)
- *Amber Brown series* (Danziger)
- *Babysitters' Club series* (Martin)
- *Boxcar Children series* (Warner)
- *Catwings series* (LeGuin)
- *Chocolate Fever* (Smith)
- *Class Clown* (Hurwitz)
- *The Enormous Crocodile* (Dahl)
- *Herbie Jones series* (Kline)
- *Invisible Stanley* (Brown)
- *Julian and Huey series* (Cameron)
- *The Leftovers* (Howard)
- *Pony Pal series* (Betancourt)
- *Ramona series* (Cleary)
- *American Girls series*
- *Anastasia series* (Lowry)
- *Best Enemies* (Leverich)
- *Bunnicula* (Howe)
- *Encyclopedia Brown series* (Dixon)
- *Hardy Boys series* (Dixon)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (Dahl)
- *Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder)
- *Magic School Bus series* (Dahl)
- *Mr. Popper's Penguins* (Atwater)
- *Nancy Drew series* (Keene)
- *The Not-Just-Anybody Family* (Byars)
- *Sarah Morton's Day* (Waters)
- *Stone Fox* (Gardiner)
- *The Dragonling* (Koller)

Level R/S/T

Characteristics of a Level R/S/T book

- Stories are layered with meaning
- Only part of the problem is labeled and discussed; the other parts of the problem have to be extracted
- Problems are too big and too layered for all to be solved
- Character traits are not explicitly stated
- Characters encounter problems and work to respond to those problems, changing and learning in the process
- Characters are varied; good and bad; more than one way as a result of complex internal emotions (which the characters or the narrator does not come right out and say as in the preceding bands)
- Minor characters become important
- Reader has to pay attention to how the minor characters influence and teach the reader about the main character
- There are also tricky chapters (readers need to expect that at times books are hard on purpose)
- Readers are not always going to understand everything occurring. Insead, readers read and say "Huh?" The story will become clearer at the end.
- Setting plays an important role; can be considered a character-setting influences the characters and the plot
- Reader must be willing to learn content
- When reading historical fiction, readers need to extract the timeline of historical events as well as of the protagonists' events, and synthesize the intersection of these 2 timelines
- Setting evolves across a story and is just as important as the characters' evolutions
- Readers realize things about the characters that the characters themselves do not know
- Varied space between lines, with some text having dense print
- Full range of punctuation
- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Complex plots and numerous episodes and time passing
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level R/S/T

- Make a wide range of predictions based on personal experiences, content knowledge and knowledge of similar texts
- Make connections between characters in different texts
- Infer cause and effect in influencing characters' feelings or underlying motives
- Identify significant events and tell how they are related to the problem of the story or the solution

Ways to support readers at Level R/S/T

- Practice and secure level N/O/P/Q skills
- Talk to your child about what they've read
- Read the same book that they are reading and discuss the book with your child

Recommended Titles for Level R/S/T

- *Because of Winn-Dixie* (DiCamillo)
- *The Castle in the Attic* (Winthrop)
- *Cat Walk* (Stolz)
- *The Celery Stalks at Midnight* (Howe)
- *Charlotte's Web* (White)
- *Devil's Bridge* (DeFelice)
- *Dunc and Amos Go to the Dogs* (Paulsen)
- *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson)
- *Hatchet* (Paulsen)
- *The House of Wings* (Byars)
- *How to Eat Fried Worms* (Rockwell)
- *The Island* (Paulsen)
- *Little House on the Prairie* (Wilder)
- *Matilda* (Dahl)
- *Nasty, Stinky Sneakers* (Bunting)
- *Phoebe the Spy* (Griffin)
- *Pioneer Girl: The Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder* (Anderson)
- *Poppy* series (Avi)
- *The Cricket in Times Square* (Selden)

Level U/V/W

Characteristics of a Level U/V/W book

- Multiple plotlines
- Characters continue to become more complex and nuanced
- Characters are increasingly teenagers. CAUTION: If the reader isn't a teenager, it can be hard to empathize with the characters and therefore the student may miss out on significant parts of the story
- The point of view of each character
- Shifts in time—the backstory is increasingly prevalent. Backstory is revealed through the text. Usually not a flashback, but instead a character telling or discovering some background information
- Shifts in voice. Sometimes, there is a new narrator at the start of a new chapter signaling a new plot line unfolding
- Symbolism is important
- Theme is important
- Stories in this band are statements about the world and life as well as the social issues both carry
- Think whether the setting could be a symbol for a theme or issue in the lives of the character
- Think about the changes in the setting
- Variety in print
- Full range of punctuation
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Words with connotative meaning relevant to meaning

Characteristics of the work readers will need to do at Level U/V/W

- Make a wide range of predictions based on personal experiences, content knowledge and knowledge of similar texts
- Infer characters' or objects' thinking process and struggles at key decision points in their lives
- After reading the text, express changes in ideas or perspectives across the reading
- Notice the way writers use regional dialect and discuss how it adds to the authenticity of the text and characters

Ways to support readers at Level U/V/W

- Practice and secure Level R/S/T skills
- Talk to your child about what they have read
- Read the same book that your student is reading and discuss the book with your child

Recommended Titles for Level U/V/W

- *Abel's Island* (Steig)
- *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson)

- *Girl in a Cage* (Yolen)
- *Harriet the Spy* (Fizhugh)
- *Hobby: The Young Merlin Trilogy* (Yolen)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (Dahl)
- *Julie of the Wolves* (George)
- *Mr. Tucket* (Paulsen)
- *Number the Stars* (Lowry)
- *The Pool of Fire* (Christopher)
- *Ragweed* (Avi)
- *Soldier's Heart* (Paulsen)
- *Souder* (Armstrong)
- *The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* (Danziger)
- *The Secret Garden* (Burnett)
- *The Cay* (Taylor)
- *The Secret of Nimh* (O'Brien)