

Readers at **Level A:**

At level A, readers are just beginning to learn how print works and to construct the *alphabetic principle* (understand that there are relationships between sounds and letters). They are learning to look (aided by the finger) left to right across words and across one line of print. They are learning to search for and use information from pictures and to use simple language structures to help them learn about print. They differentiate print from pictures and begin to notice the distinctive features of letters, attaching names to them. They are learning to read one line sentences with simple words and on familiar topics. They are learning how to match one spoken word with one word in print. As they read, they begin to learn some easy, high frequency words, to notice and use visual signposts of some words, and to notice mismatches. They use what they know (for example, a sound and related letter) to begin to self-monitor reading. Reading and re-reading these very simple texts will help them gain gradual control of ways to look at and work with print.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Some simple factual texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction

Forms

- Picture books

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Very simple narratives with stories carried by pictures

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar, easy content (family, play, pets, school)
- All concepts supported by picture information

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Very familiar themes and ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Mostly nameless, flat characters
- Repeating language patterns (simple three to six words on each page)
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Short, predictable sentences that are close to oral language
- Simple sentences (no embedded phrases or clauses)
- Subject preceding verb in most sentences
- Simple sentences (subject and predicate)

VOCABULARY

- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Word meanings illustrated by pictures

I can kick.



WORDS

- Mostly one-syllable words with very easy and predictable letter-sound relationships
- Some simple plurals
- Repeated use of a few easy high-frequency words
- Some words with *-s* and *-ing*
- Many words with easy, predictable letter-sound relationships (decodable)
- Words with easy spelling patterns

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Illustrations that match print very closely
- Clear illustrations that fully support meaning
- Illustrations that support each page of text
- Very simple illustrations with no distracting detail
- Consistent layout of illustrations and print

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- One line of text on each page
- Very short, usually eight pages of print and illustrations

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines

- Print in large plain font
- Print clearly separated from pictures
- Consistent placement of print (layout)

Punctuation

- Period only punctuation in most texts

Readers at **Level B:**

At level B, readers are learning how print works, particularly developing the concepts of left-to-right directionality across words and across lines of print. They are firming up voice-print match while reading texts with two or more lines of print. Readers may recognize repeating language patterns in texts that have very simple stories and focus on a single idea, as well as learn more about the distinctive features of letters and the connections between sounds and letters. It is very important that they begin to self-monitor their reading and attempt to self-correct as they notice the mismatches and check one source of information against another. They are beginning to notice and use visual signposts and are expanding their core of simple high-frequency words.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Some simple factual texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction

Forms

- Picture books

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Simple narratives with stories carried by pictures

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar, easy content (family, play, pets, school)
- All concepts supported by picture information

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Very familiar themes and ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Mostly nameless, flat characters
- Repeating language patterns (simple three to seven words in a sentence)
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Short, predictable sentences that are close to oral language
- Mostly simple sentences (no embedded phrases or clauses)
- Subject preceding verb in most sentences
- Simple sentences (subject and predicate often with phrases at the end)

VOCABULARY

- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Word meanings illustrated by pictures

My little dog likes
to run with me.

6



WORDS

- Mostly one-syllable words with very easy and predictable letter-sound relationships
- Some simple plurals
- Repeated use of a few easy high-frequency words
- Some words with -s and -ing
- Many words with easy, predictable letter-sound relationships (decodable)
- Words with easy spelling patterns

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Illustrations that match print very closely
- Clear illustrations that fully support meaning
- Illustrations that support each page of text
- Very simple illustrations with little distracting detail
- Consistent layout of illustrations and print

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Very short, usually eight pages of print and illustrations
- Two or more lines of text on each page

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Sentences turn over one or more lines

- Print clearly separated from pictures
- Consistent placement of print and illustrations (layout)
- Line breaks match ends of phrases and sentences

Punctuation

- Period only punctuation in most texts

Readers at **Level C:**

At level C, readers encounter simple stories and familiar topics in texts that usually have two to six lines of print on each page. They smoothly and automatically move left to right across words and across lines of print, sweeping back to the left margin for each new line and reading print on both left and right pages. Reading is becoming smooth, allowing for some expression, and the eyes are taking over the process of matching the spoken word to the printed word. Readers are moving away from needing to point and are showing phrased reading. Readers are noticing quotation marks and reflecting dialogue with the voice. They are developing a larger core of high-frequency words that they recognize quickly and easily. At this level, readers are consistently monitoring their reading and cross-checking one source of information against another. Overt self-correction reveals readers' growing control of the ability to process print.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Some simple factual texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction

Forms

- Picture books

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Simple narratives with several episodes (usually similar or repetitive)

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar, easy content (family, play, pets, school)
- All concepts supported by pictures

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Familiar themes and ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing one-dimensional characters
- Repeating natural language patterns
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- Simple dialogue (assigned by *said* in most texts)
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Simple, predictable sentence structure but varied patterns
- Sentences that are questions
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Subject preceding verb in most sentences
- Simple sentences (subject and predicate)

VOCABULARY

- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Word meanings illustrated by pictures
- Some variation in words used to assign dialogue (mostly *said*)

She was sleeping
on the rug.
I said,
“Wake up, Socks!”

8



9

WORDS

- Mostly one or two-syllable words
- Simple plurals
- Some simple contractions and possessives (words with apostrophes)
- Greater range of easy high-frequency words
- Some words with *-s* and *-ing*
- Many words with easy, predictable letter-sound relationships (decodable)
- Some words used in different language structures (*said Mom*; *Mom said*)
- Words with easy spelling patterns

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Illustrations that match print very closely
- More meaning carried in the text and less with picture support
- Illustrations on every page or every other page
- Very simple illustrations with little distracting detail
- Consistent layout of illustrations and print

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Very short, usually eight pages of print
- Two to five lines of text on each page

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Some words in bold or larger font for emphasis
- Sentences turn over one or more lines

- Print clearly separated from pictures
- Consistent placement of print (layout)
- Line breaks match ends of phrases and sentences

Punctuation

- Ellipses in some texts to create expectation
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, and question marks in most texts

Readers at **Level D:**

At level D, readers follow simple stories of fiction and fantasy and easy informational texts. They can track print with their eyes (not pointing) over two to six lines per page and process texts with more varied language patterns (and those patterns that exist are more complex). They notice and use a range of punctuation and read dialogue, reflecting the meaning through phrasing. Readers can solve many regular easy two-syllable words, usually those with inflectional endings (-ing) and simple compound words. Voice-print match is smooth and automatic, and pointing is rarely needed (only at difficulty). The core of known high-frequency words is expanding. Readers consistently monitor their reading and cross-check one source of information with another.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Some simple factual texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- A few very simple retellings of traditional tales

Forms

- Picture books

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Simple narratives with several episodes (usually similar or repetitive)

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar, easy content (family, play, pets, school)
- Most concepts supported by pictures

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Familiar themes and ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- More complex repeating language patterns
- Greater variety of language structures
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- Simple dialogue and some split dialogue
- Simple dialogue assigned to speaker
- Variety in assignment to speaker (other than *said*)
- Simple sequence of events (often repeated)
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some longer sentences (some with more than six words)
- Some sentences that are questions
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- A few sentences beginning with phrases
- Mostly simple sentences (subject and predicate)
- Language structures of text not repetitious

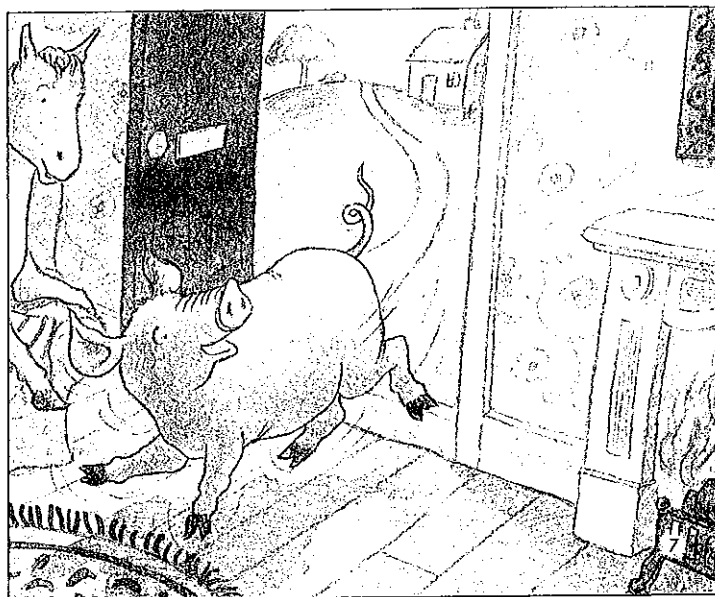
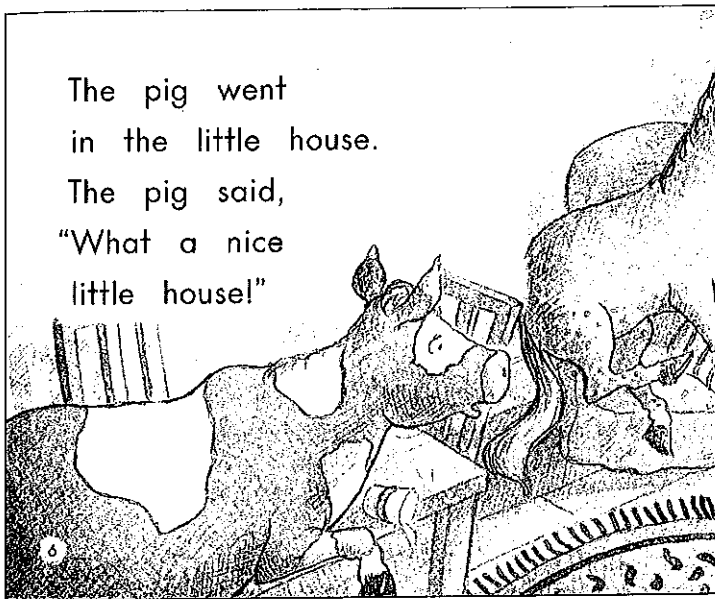
VOCABULARY

- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Word meanings illustrated by pictures
- Variation in words used to assign dialogue
- Greater range of vocabulary and multi-syllable words
- Large numbers of high-frequency words
- Complex word solving required to understand meaning

WORDS

- Mostly one- to two-syllable words
- Simple plurals
- Many high-frequency words
- Some words with -s and -ing
- Some words with inflectional endings (-ing)
- Many words with easy, predictable letter-sound relationships (decodable)
- Some words used multiple times in different language structures (*said Mom; Mom said*)
- Mostly simple spelling patterns

The pig went
in the little house.
The pig said,
“What a nice
little house!”



ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Highly supportive illustrations that generally match the text
- Illustrations on every page or every other page
- More details in the illustrations

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Very short, usually eight pages of print
- Mostly two to six lines of print per page (but variable)

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Some words in bold or larger font for emphasis
- Some sentences that turn over one or more lines
- Sentences beginning on the left in most texts
- Print clearly separated from pictures
- Line breaks match ends of phrases and sentences

Punctuation

- Ellipses in some texts to create expectation
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, and question marks

Readers at **Level E:**

At level E, readers encounter texts that usually have three to eight lines of print per page. They are flexible enough to process texts with varied placement of print and a full range of punctuation. Texts have more subtle ideas and complex stories and require more attention to understand, but other processes are becoming automatic for readers. They take apart longer words with inflectional endings and read some sentences that carry over two to three lines or even across two pages. Readers are relying much more on the print as they encounter texts with less supportive pictures. Left-to-right directionality and voice-print match are automatic and effortless and oral reading demonstrates fluency and phrasing with appropriate stress on words. They read without pointing, bringing in the finger only occasionally at point of difficulty. They recognize a large number of high-frequency words and easily solve words with regular letter-sound relationships as well as a few irregular words.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- A variety of informational texts on easy topics
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Some very simple retellings of traditional tales

Forms

- Picture books
- Simple plays

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative texts with clear beginning, series of events, and ending

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Most concepts supported by pictures

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes related to typical experiences of children
- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Concrete, easy-to-understand ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- More literary stories and language
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- Both simple and split dialogue, speaker usually assigned
- Some longer stretches of dialogue
- Simple sequence of events (often repeated)
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

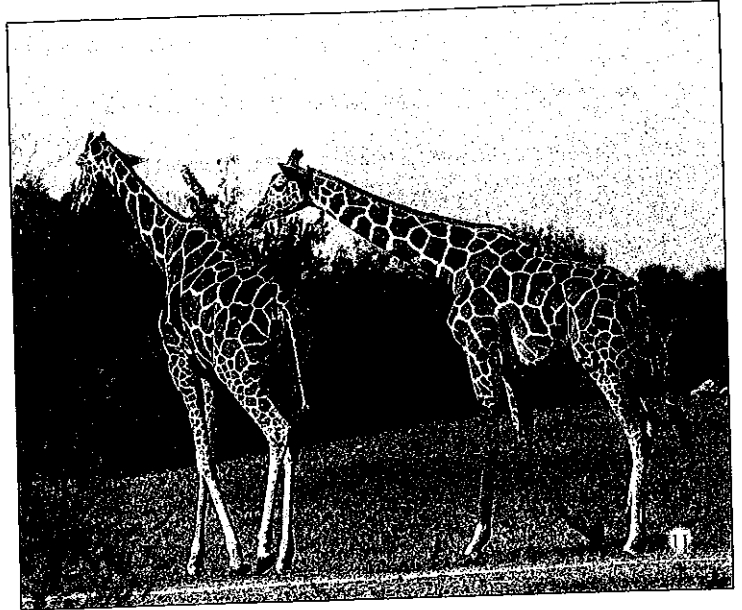
- Some longer sentences (some with more than ten words)
- Some sentences that are questions
- Some complex sentences with variety in order of clauses
- Some sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Some sentences with verb preceding subject
- Use of commas to set words apart (addressee in dialogue, qualifiers, etc.)
- Simple sentences (subject and predicate)
- Language structures of text not repetitious

VOCABULARY

- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Word meanings illustrated by pictures
- Variation in use of words to assign dialogue in some texts (*said, cried, shouted*)
- Greater range of vocabulary and multi-syllable words
- Large numbers of high-frequency words
- Complex word solving required to understand meaning

You can see giraffes
at the zoo.
Giraffes are tall animals.
They can eat leaves from the
tops of trees.

10



WORDS

- Mostly one- to two-syllable words
- Some three-syllable words
- Simple plurals and possessives
- Many high-frequency words
- Some words with inflectional endings (-ing)
- Mostly words with easy predictable letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns (decodable)
- Some words used multiple times in different language structures (*said Mom; Mom said*)
- Variety of easy spelling patterns
- Easy contractions

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Highly supportive illustrations that generally match the text
- Illustrations on every page or every other page
- More details in the Illustrations

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Short, eight to sixteen pages of print
- Most texts two to eight lines per page

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Some words in bold or larger font for emphasis
- Some sentences turn over one line
- Sentences beginning on the left in most texts

- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Print in most texts clearly separated from pictures
- Line breaks match ends of phrases and sentences
- Some limited variation in print placement

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, and ellipses

Readers at **Level F:**

At level F, readers are beginning to build knowledge of the characteristics of different genres of texts. They can read stretches of both simple and split dialogue. They quickly and automatically recognize a large number of high-frequency words and use letter-sound information to take apart simple, regular words as well as some multisyllable words while reading. They recognize and use inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives. They can also process and understand syntax that largely reflects patterns particular to written language, stories that have multiple episodes. In fiction, they are beginning to meet characters that are more developed, as well as some literary language. In informational texts, they are learning more new facts about topics. They read without pointing and with appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and word stress.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- A variety of informational texts on easy topics
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Some very simple retellings of traditional tales

Forms

- Picture books
- Simple plays

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative texts with clear beginning, series of events, and ending

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea or one simple topic
- Underlying text structure (description, comparison and contrast)
- Present one simple category of information
- Some texts with sequential information

CONTENT

- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Concepts accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes related to typical experiences of children
- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Concrete, easy-to-understand ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- More literary stories and language
- Texts with familiar settings close to children's experience
- Both simple and split dialogue, speaker usually assigned
- Some longer stretches of dialogue
- Simple sequence of events (often repeated)
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some long sentences (more than ten words) with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses
- Some sentences that are questions in simple sentences and in dialogue
- Some complex sentences with variety in order of clauses
- Sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Use of commas to set words apart (addressee in dialogue, qualifiers, etc.)
- Some compound sentences conjoined by *and*
- Language structures of text not repetitious

VOCABULARY

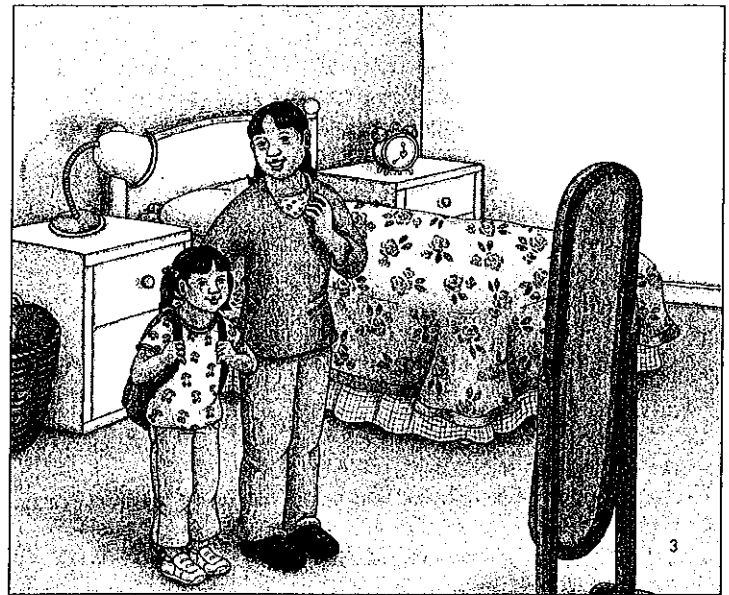
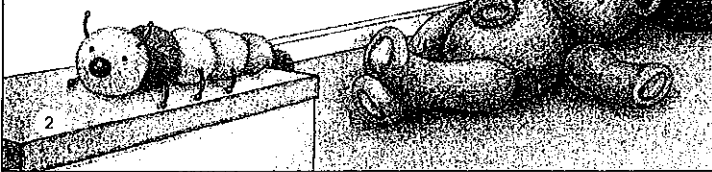
- Most vocabulary words familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Variation in use of words to assign dialogue in some texts (*said, cried, shouted*)
- Greater range of vocabulary and multi-syllable words
- Large numbers of high-frequency words
- Complex word solving required to understand meaning

WORDS

- Mostly one- to two-syllable words
- Some three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Many high-frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Mostly words with easy predictable letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns (decodable)
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some words used multiple times in different language structures (*said Mom; Mom said*)
- Variety of easy spelling patterns
- Easy contractions

"I am ready for school,"
said Anna.
She had a new red backpack
and new shoes.

"We have one more thing to
do," said her mom. "You may
need to get some glasses."



ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Highly supportive illustrations that generally match the text
- Illustrations that support the text but do not carry all important aspects of meaning
- Illustrations on every page or every other page in most texts
- More details in the illustrations

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Short, eight to sixteen pages of print
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Some words in bold or larger font for emphasis

- Some sentences turn over one line
- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Longer sentences starting on left margin
- Some short sentences, starting middle of a line
- Print in most texts clearly separated from pictures
- Many texts with layout supporting phrasing
- Some limited variation in print placement

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, and ellipses

Readers at **Level G:**

At level G, readers encounter a wider range of texts and continue to internalize knowledge of different genres. They are still reading texts with three to eight lines of print per page, but print size is slightly smaller and there are more words on a page. With early reading behaviors completely under control and quick and automatic recognition of a large number of high-frequency words, they have attention to give to slightly more complex story lines and ideas. They are able to use a range of word-solving strategies (letter-sound information, making connections between words, and using word parts) as they go while attending to meaning. They read texts with some content-specific words, but most texts have only a few challenging vocabulary words. In their oral reading they demonstrate (without pointing) appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and word stress.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- A variety of informational texts on easy topics
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (mostly folktales)

Forms

- Picture books
- Simple plays

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative texts with straightforward structure (beginning, series of episodes, ending) but more episodes included

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea/topic or series of related ideas/topics
- Include underlying text structures (description, comparison and contrast)
- Largely focused on one category of information
- Some longer texts with repeating longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers

CONTENT

- Accessible content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Concepts accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes related to typical experiences of children
- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Concrete, easy-to-understand ideas

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- More literary stories and language
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Variety in presentation of dialogue (simple with pronouns, split, direct, with some longer stretches of dialogue)
- Simple sequence of events (often repeated)
- A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some long sentences (more than ten words) with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses
- Some sentences that are questions in simple sentences and in dialogue
- Sentences with clauses and embedded phrases, some introductory
- Some complex sentences with variety in order of clauses, phrases, subject, verb, and object
- Language structures of text not repetitious

VOCABULARY

- Most vocabulary words familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language
- Some content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Variation in use of words to assign dialogue in some texts (*said*, *cried*, *shouted*)
- Greater range of vocabulary and multi-syllable words
- Large numbers of high-frequency words
- Complex word solving required to understand meaning

"I can't go to sleep,"
said Nick.
"Will you open the door?"
he asked.

Nick's mom opened the door.
Light came into the room.



12



"Good night, Nick," his mom said.

13

WORDS

- Mostly one- to two-syllable words
- Some three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Many high-frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some words used multiple times in different language structures (*said Mom; Mom said*)
- Wide variety of easy spelling patterns
- Easy contractions

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Illustrations that support and extend meaning but do not carry all of the important information in the print
- Illustrations on every page or every other page in most texts
- Complex illustrations depicting multiple ideas

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Short, eight to sixteen pages of print
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Some texts in smaller font size
- Some words in bold or larger font for emphasis
- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Longer sentences starting on left margin
- Some short sentences, starting middle of a line
- Print in most texts clearly separated from pictures

- Many texts with layout supporting phrasing
- Some limited variation in print placement

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, and ellipses

Readers at **Level H:**

At level H, readers encounter challenges similar to Level G; but the language and vocabulary are even more complex, the stories longer and more literary, and there is less repetition in the episodic structure. They process a great deal of dialogue and reflect it through appropriate word stress and phrasing in oral reading. Readers will find that plots and characters are more elaborate but are still simple and straightforward. They solve a large number of multisyllable words (many words with inflectional endings), plurals, contractions, and possessives. Readers automatically read a large number of high-frequency words in order to meet the demands for more in-depth thinking and also to solve words with complex spelling patterns. In order to achieve efficient and smooth processing, readers will begin to read more new texts silently. In oral reading, they demonstrate (without pointing) appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and word stress.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Informational texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (mostly folktales)

Forms

- Picture books
- Simple plays

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative texts organized in predictable ways (beginning, series of repeated episodes, ending)
- Narratives with more episodes and less repetition

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea/topic or series of related ideas/topics
- Include underlying structures clearly (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution)
- Largely focused on one category of information
- Some longer texts with repeating longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers

CONTENT

- Accessible content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Concepts accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Greater variety in themes (going beyond everyday events)

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- Some stretches of descriptive language
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Almost all dialogue assigned to speaker
- Full variety in presentation of dialogue (simple, simple using pronouns, split, direct)
- Use of dialogue for drama
- Multiple episodes taking place across time
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some long sentences (more than ten words) with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses
- Some sentences that are questions in simple sentences and in dialogue
- Some complex sentences with variety in order of clauses, phrases, subject, verb, and object
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Language structures of text not repetitious

VOCABULARY

- Most vocabulary words known by children through oral language or reading
- Some content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety in words used to assign dialogue to speaker
- Greater range of vocabulary and multi-syllable words
- Large numbers of high-frequency words
- Complex word solving required to understand meaning

This truck picks up trash.
The trash goes in the back
of the truck.
The truck crushes the trash
to make it smaller.
Then the truck
carries the trash away.

6

WORDS

- Mostly one- to two-syllable words
- Some three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Wide range of high-frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are generally easy to take apart or decode
- Some easy compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

- **General**
 - Complex illustrations depicting multiple ideas
 - Illustrations on every page or every other page in most texts
- **Fiction**
 - Some texts with only minimal illustrations
 - Illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, set mood but are not necessary for understanding
- **Nonfiction**
 - One kind of graphic on a page with simple graphics (illustrations with labels)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

- **Length**
 - Short, eight to sixteen pages of print
 - Most texts three to eight lines of print per page
 - A few easy chapter books with more pages
- **Print and Layout**
 - Ample space between words and lines
 - Italics indicating unspeakable thoughts
 - Some texts in smaller font size
 - Words in bold and italics that are important to meaning and stress
 - Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages

Punctuation

- Longer sentences starting on left margin
- Some short sentences, starting in the middle of a line
- Print in most texts clearly separated from pictures
- Many texts with layout supporting phrasing
- Some limited variation in print placement
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses in some texts



Readers at Level I:

At level I, readers will be processing texts that are mostly short (eight to sixteen pages), as well as some easy illustrated chapter books (forty to sixty pages) that require them to sustain attention and memory over time. They will meet some long sentences of more than ten words that contain prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses. They will also encounter compound sentences. They can effectively process complex sentences when required by a text. In addition to automatically recognizing a large number of words, they are using word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and many words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives. They read many texts silently, following the text with their eyes and without pointing. In oral reading, they reflect appropriate rate, word stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (mostly folktales)

Forms

- Picture books
- Simple plays

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narratives with multiple episodes and little repetition of similar episodes
- Narratives with more elaborated episodes
- Some very short chapter books with the same characters across chapters

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea/topic or series of related ideas/topics
- Underlying structures used and presented clearly (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution)
- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Some longer texts that repeat longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers

CONTENT

- Familiar content and some new content that typically children would not know
- Concepts accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Some ideas that are new to most children
- Themes accessible given typical experiences of children
- A few abstract ideas which are highly supported by text and illustrations

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging one-dimensional characters
- More elaborated description of character attributes
- Language characteristic of traditional literature in some texts
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Variety of dialogue (between more than two characters in many texts)
- Multiple episodes taking place across time
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy

- Most texts told from a single point of view with some texts showing more than one

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

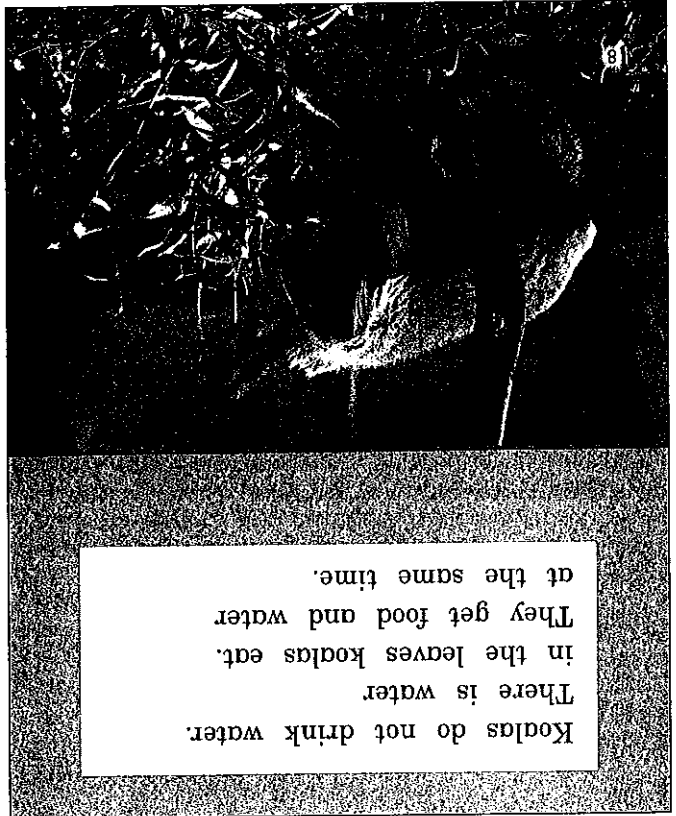
- Some long sentences (more than ten words) with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and clauses
- Many sentences with embedded clauses and phrases
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Use of commas to set words apart (addressee in dialogue, qualifiers, etc.)
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in series, divided by commas
- Many compound sentences

VOCABULARY

- Most vocabulary words known by children through oral language or reading
- Some content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue (*said, cried, shouted, thought, whispered*) and adjectives describing the dialogue (*quietly, loudly*)

WORDS

- Many two- to three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Wide range of high-frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are generally easy to take apart or decode
- Some easy compound words



Koalas do not drink water.
There is water
in the leaves koalas eat.
They get food and water
at the same time.



This is a baby koala.
A young koala is called a joey,
just like a baby kangaroo.
When a joey is born,
it has no hair.

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Two or more kinds of graphics on a page
- Some illustrations complex with many ideas

Fiction

- Some texts with no illustrations, black and white minimal illustrations, or symbolic illustrations
- Some texts requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only
- Illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, set mood but are not necessary for understanding

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Short, eight to sixteen pages of print
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page
- Some easy illustrated chapter books of fifty to sixty pages

Print and Layout

- Ample space between words and lines
- Print in large plain font
- Italics indicating unspoken thought
- Some texts in smaller font size
- Words in bold and italics that are important to meaning and stress
- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Longer sentences starting on left margin
- Some short sentences, starting middle of a line
- Print in most texts clearly separated from pictures
- Some limited variation in print placement

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses
- Some informational texts with a table of contents
- Some informational texts with a simple glossary

Tools

- Some informational texts with a table of contents
- Some informational texts with a simple glossary

Readers at Level J:

At level J, readers process a variety of texts, including short informational texts on familiar topics, short fiction texts, and longer illustrated narratives that have short chapters. They adjust their reading strategies to process not only realistic fiction and informational texts but to read very simple biographies. In fiction, characters generally do not change since the plots are relatively simple and texts are not long. Readers process an increased number of longer and more complex sentences (those with more than ten words containing prepositional phrases, adjectives, clauses, and many compound sentences). Readers are able to automatically recognize a large number of words, and can quickly apply word-solving strategies to multisyllable words with inflectional endings, suffixes, and prefixes. They can read a wide range of plurals, contractions, and possessives. In oral reading, they reflect appropriate rate, word stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing (recognizing and using a range of punctuation). They read silently in independent reading and while reading individually in guided reading

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (mostly folktales)
- Some simple biographies on familiar subjects

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Some series books
- Some graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narratives with little repetition of similar episodes
- Narratives with more elaborated episodes
- Some beginning chapter books with short chapters
- Chapters connected by character
- Chapters usually connected to a longer plot

Nonfiction

- Focused on a single idea/topic or series of related ideas/topics
- Underlying structures used and presented clearly (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution)
- Texts organized into a few simple categories of information
- Some longer texts with repeating longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers

CONTENT

- Familiar content and some new content that typically children would not know
- New content accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Some ideas new to most children
- Themes accessible given typical experiences of children
- A few abstract ideas that are highly supported by text and illustrations
- Some texts (graphic novels) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Amusing or engaging characters, some of which have more than one dimension
- Elaborated description of character traits
- Language characteristic of traditional literature in some texts
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Variety of dialogue (may be between more than two characters in many texts)
- Multiple episodes taking place across time
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Most texts told from a single point of view, with some having several points of view

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Many longer (more than ten words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)
- Many sentences with embedded clauses and phrases
- Occasional use of parenthetical material embedded in sentences

- Sentences with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in a series, divided by commas
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Many compound sentences

VOCABULARY

- Most vocabulary words known by children through oral language or reading
- Content words illustrated with pictures or other graphics
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced that are explained and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue (*said, cried, shouted, thought, whispered*) and adjectives describing the dialogue (*quietly, loudly*)

WORDS

- Many two- to three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Wide range of high-frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Many words with complex letter-sound relationships
- Some complex spelling patterns

Therapy Dogs

Sometimes people can not stay at home because they are not well. They must stay in a hospital or in a nursing home. They miss their homes and families.

People feel better when they pet a dog.



- Multisyllable words that are generally easy to take apart or decode
- Some easy compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Two or more kinds of graphics on a page
- Some illustrations complex with many ideas

Fiction

- Many texts with minimal illustrations and some with none
- Some complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text

- Illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, set mood but are not necessary for understanding

Nonfiction

- More than one kind of graphic on a page
- Many simple graphics (illustrations with labels)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Chapter books (most approximately forty to seventy-five pages)
- Many lines of print on a page (approximately three to twelve lines)

- Shorter (most approximately twenty-four to thirty-six pages of print) texts on single topics (usually nonfiction)

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Italics indicating unspoken thought
- Some texts in smaller font size
- Words in bold and italics that are important to meaning and stress
- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Longer sentences starting on left margin in most texts
- Some sentences, starting middle of a line

- Print in most illustrated texts clearly separated from pictures
- Variety in layout, reflecting different genres

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses

Tools

- Some texts with a table of contents
- Some texts with a simple glossary
- Chapter titles in some books
- Some texts with headings in bold to show sections

Readers at **Level K:**

At level K, readers process a wider range of genres (realistic fiction, animal fantasy, traditional literature, some simple biographies, and more informational texts). They read many illustrated chapter books (including some series books). Most fiction texts have multiple episodes related to a single plot but the demand on the reader's memory is higher than previous levels. They read about characters that change very little but are at the same time more complex; texts have multiple characters. Readers process a great deal of dialogue, some of it unassigned, and are challenged to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and space and reflect diverse cultures. Readers solve many content-specific words and some technical words in informational texts. They automatically recognize a large number of words and quickly apply word-solving strategies to multisyllable words with inflectional endings, and to words with suffixes and prefixes. They can read a wide range of plurals, contractions, and possessives. They read silently in independent reading, but when reading orally they demonstrate all aspects of fluent reading.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple animal fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (mostly folktales)
- Some simple biographies on familiar subjects

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Some graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narratives with many episodes
- Some beginning chapter books with short chapters
- Chapters connected by character or broad theme
- Chapters usually connected to a longer plot
- Simple, straightforward plots

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)

- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Variety in organization and topic
- Some longer texts with sections presenting different information
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Familiar content and some new content that typically children would not know
- New content requiring prior knowledge to understand in some informational texts
- Some texts with plots and situations outside typical experience
- Some texts with settings outside children's typical experience
- New content accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Some ideas new to most children
- Themes accessible given typical experiences of children
- A few abstract ideas, supported by the text but with less illustration support
- Texts with universal themes illustrating important human issues and attributes (friendship, courage)

- Some texts (graphic novels) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Some complex and memorable characters
- Some figurative language (metaphor, simile)
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Most texts told from a single point of view
- May have more than one point of view within one text

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Variety in sentence length and complexity
- Longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)

- Many complex sentences with embedded phrases and clauses
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning

VOCABULARY

- Content words illustrated with pictures or other graphics
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning

WORDS

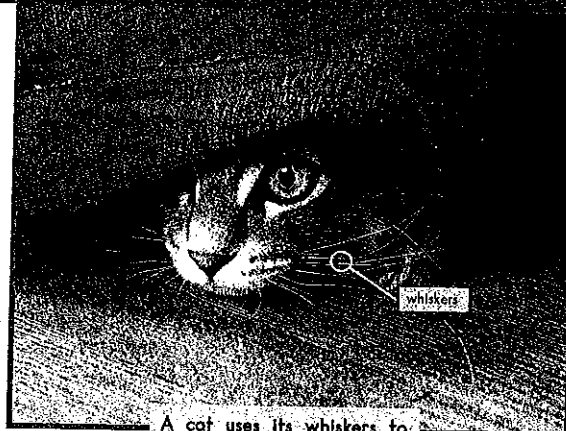
- Many two- to three-syllable words
- Plurals, contractions, and possessives
- A wide range of high frequency words
- Many words with inflectional endings
- Many words with complex letter-sound relationships
- Some complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Some easy compound words

Touch

If your eyes are closed, how can you tell the difference between a soft chick and rough sandpaper? You use your sense of touch.



6



A cat uses its whiskers to feel what is around it.

You use your skin to touch. Cats do, too. But cats also use their whiskers! The touch of the whiskers helps cats know whether they can fit through small openings.

7

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- Two or more kinds of graphics on a page
- Some long stretches of text with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

- Some texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- Some texts with illustrations that are essential to interpretation
- Some illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, set mood but are not necessary for understanding

Nonfiction

- More than one kind of graphic on a page

- Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- In most texts, graphics that are clearly explained (simple diagrams, illustrations with labels, maps, charts)
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Many lines of print on a page (three to fifteen lines; more for fiction)

- Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Print and font size vary with some longer texts in small fonts
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Sentences carrying over two to three lines and some over two pages
- Print and illustrations integrated in many texts

- Variety in layout, reflecting different genres
- Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with many sentences starting on the left

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses in most texts

Tools

- Readers' tools (table of contents, captions, a few headings, glossary, chapter titles, bold print, author's notes)

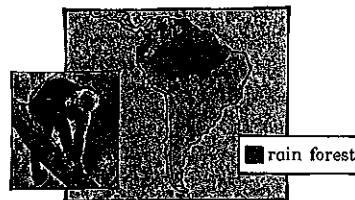
Hang On, Baby Monkey

by Donna Latham

Newborn

Deep in the rain forest, a baby monkey is born. His mother is part of a family group called a troop. Monkeys in the troop work together to stay alive.

Monkeys from the troop come close to look at the new baby.



Monkeys make their home in the huge Amazon rain forest in South America.

1

WORDS

- Wide variety of high frequency words
- Many two- to three-syllable words
- Some words with more than three syllables
- Words with suffixes and prefixes
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Some long stretches of text (usually a page or two) with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

- Many texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- Some complex and artistic illustrations that communicate

meaning to match or extend the text

- Some texts with illustrations that are essential to interpretation
- Some illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, and set mood but are not necessary for understanding
- Much of setting, action, and characters shown in pictures (graphic texts)

Nonfiction

- More than one kind of graphic on a page
- Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Graphics that are clearly explained in most texts
- A variety of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs)
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, maps, charts, call-outs, illustrations with labels and legends)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)
- Shorter texts (most approximately twenty-four to forty-eight pages of print) on single topics (usually nonfiction)
- Many lines of print on a page (five to twenty-four lines; more for fiction)

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Print and font size varying with some longer texts in small fonts
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Some sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in many texts
- Variety in layout reflecting different genres

- Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with many sentences starting on the left
- Bubbles, strips or print, and other print/picture combinations in graphic texts
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

Punctuation

- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses in most texts

Tools

- A variety of readers' tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends

Readers at **Level L:**

At level L, readers process easy chapter books including some series books, with more sophisticated plots and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational and fiction books. They adjust their reading to process a range of genres (realistic fiction, simple fantasy, informational texts, traditional literature, and biography, as well as some special types of texts, for example, shorter series books, very simple mysteries, and graphic texts). They understand that chapters have multiple episodes related to a single plot. They learn some new content through reading and are required to bring more prior knowledge to the process; but the content is usually accessible through the text and illustrations. At this level, readers are beginning to recognize themes across texts (friendship, courage), and they understand some abstract ideas. They see multiple perspectives of characters as revealed through description, what they say, think, or do, and what others say about them. They process complex sentences with embedded clauses and figurative language. They recognize and/or flexibly solve a large number of words, including plurals, contractions, possessives, many multisyllable words, many content-specific words, and some technical words. They read silently in independent reading; in oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (folktales, fables)
- Biography, mostly on well-known subjects
- Simple mysteries
- Some graphic novels
- Simple hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Simple, straightforward plots
- Some embedded genres such as directions or letters

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Some longer texts with sections presenting different information
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- New content requiring prior knowledge to understand
- Some texts with plots, settings, and situations outside typical experience
- Some technical content that is challenging and not typically known
- New content accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Some ideas that are new to most children
- Themes accessible given typical experiences of children

- Texts with universal themes illustrating important human issues and attributes (friendship, courage, challenges)
- Some texts (graphic novels) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Some complex and memorable characters
- Multiple characters to understand and follow development
- Various ways of showing characters' attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others' perspectives)
- Figurative language and descriptive language
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots with numerous episodes, building toward problem resolution
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors and dialogue

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Variety in sentence length and complexity
- Longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Assigned and unassigned dialogue

VOCABULARY

- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning
- New vocabulary in fiction texts (largely unexplained)
- Words with multiple meanings

Readers at **Level M:**

At level M, readers know the characteristics of a range of genres (realistic fiction, simple fantasy, informational texts, traditional literature, and biography). Some fiction texts are chapter books and readers are becoming interested in special forms, such as longer series books and mysteries. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and show some change over time. They read shorter nonfiction texts, mostly on single topics, and are able to identify and use underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect). They can process sentences that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives. Word solving is smooth and automatic in both silent and oral reading and can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words. They read silently and independently. In oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (folktales, fables, legends, tall tales)
- Biography, mostly on well-known subjects
- Simple mysteries
- Hybrid texts combining more than one genre

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Simple, straightforward plots
- Much of setting, actions, and characters provided in pictures in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal

sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)

- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Some technical content that is challenging and not typically known
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Most ideas supported by the text but with less illustration support
- Texts with universal themes illustrating important human issues and attributes (friendship, courage)
- Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Some texts (graphic texts) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only
- Some texts with moral lessons

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Some complex and memorable characters
- Various ways of showing characters' attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others' perspectives)
- Multiple characters to understand and notice how they develop and change over time
- Figurative and descriptive language
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Various perspectives revealed through dialogue
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots with numerous episodes, building toward problem resolution
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)

- Variety in sentence length, with some long and complex sentences
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

VOCABULARY

- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- New vocabulary in fiction texts largely unexplained

WORDS

- Many two- to three-syllable words
- Some words with more than three syllables
- Words with suffixes
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words

Saving Up

by Kitty Colton

I really, really wanted to get a dog.
But Mom said I wasn't responsible
enough to take care of a pet.

"I'm very responsible!" I said.

"Hmm. Okay, Mr. Responsible. I
hate to disagree with you, Danny.
But how many times did I tell you to
clean your room this week?" asked
Mom.

"Well, cleaning my room is totally
boring! Taking care of a dog would
be totally fun!"

Mom said, "Dogs are a lot of
work!" She said I'd have to prove I

1

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Some long stretches of text with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations, minimal black and white illustrations, or symbolic illustrations
- Some highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text
- Black and white illustrations in most texts

Nonfiction

- More than one kind of graphic on a page
- Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Variety of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends, illustrations with labels, maps, charts)
- In most texts, graphics that are clearly explained
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

- Short texts
- Some chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Print and font size varying with some longer texts in small fonts
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page

- Print and illustrations integrated in many texts
- Captions under pictures that provide important information
- Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with some sentences starting on the left
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation, including dashes and ellipses

Tools

- A variety of readers' tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends

Readers at Level N:

At level N, readers will process the full range of genres, short fiction stories, chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries and series books. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have more elaborate plots with many episodes and multiple characters who develop and change over time. Some nonfiction texts provide information in categories on several related topics, and readers can identify and use underlying structures (description, compare and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect). They continue to read silently at a good rate and automatically use a wide range of word-solving strategies while focusing on meaning. In oral reading, they will continue to read with phrasing, fluency, and appropriate word stress in a way that reflects meaning and recognizes punctuation. Readers will slow down to problem solve or search for information and then resume normal pace; there is little overt problem solving. They can process sentences that are complex, with prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives. They can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words. Length of text is no longer a critical factor as students are beginning to read texts that vary greatly. Word solving is smooth and automatic in both silent and oral reading.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature
- Biography, mostly on well-known subjects
- Historical fiction
- Simple mysteries
- Hybrid texts with embedded genres such as directions, letters, or recipes

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes

Nonfiction

- Texts organized into categories and subcategories

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopics of a larger content area or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Content requiring prior knowledge to understand in many informational texts
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations and other graphics in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on perspectives from diverse cultures and bring cultural knowledge to understanding

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- A few abstract ideas, supported by the text but with less illustration support

- Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some texts (graphic texts) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters to understand
- Characters and perspectives revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Memorable characters who change and develop over time
- Factors related to character change explicit and obvious
- Descriptive and figurative language that are important to understanding the plot
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots with numerous episodes, building toward problem resolution

- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Variety in sentence length, with some longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

VOCABULARY

- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- New vocabulary in fiction texts largely unexplained
- Some words used figuratively

Dogs at Work

by Misha Kees

Who is your best friend? A best friend can be a classmate, a neighbor, or even a relative. But for some people, their best friend walks on four legs, is covered with fur, and takes them anywhere they need to go. It's a dog! But it's not just any dog—their best friend is a guide dog.



This dog guides its owner through a grocery store.

1

- Some words with connotative meanings that are essential to understanding the text
- Some longer descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs)
- Words that represent abstract ideas

WORDS

- Many words with three or more syllables
- Words with suffixes and prefixes
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Some multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words
- Some words divided (hyphenated) across lines

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Some long stretches of text with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- Black and white illustrations in most texts
- Some highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text (mood, symbolism)
- Much of setting, action, and characters provided in pictures in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text

- Variety of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends, illustrations with labels, charts)
- Graphics that are clearly explained in most texts
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Print and font size varying with some longer texts in small fonts
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page

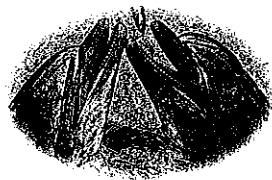
- Print and illustrations integrated in many texts
- Captions under pictures that provide important information
- Variety in layout, reflecting different genres
- Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with sentences starting on the left
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)
- Information shown in a variety of picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation, including dashes and ellipses

Tools

- A variety of readers' tools: table of contents, captions, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends, author's notes



Plenty of Pets

by Stephanie Herbek

Mr. Lee's commanding voice brought the classroom to attention. "Listen up! I need someone to care for Scooter this weekend. Any volunteers?"

All around the classroom, students who hoped to be picked to bring home the adorable, fuzzy hamster shot their hands up high. Instead, Nate put his chin in his hand and sighed. Although Nate loved animals, he was allergic to everything furry, fluffy, or feathery.

1

WORDS

- Many words with three or more syllables
- Words with suffixes and prefixes
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Some multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words
- Words divided (hyphenated) across lines and across pages

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Some long stretches of text with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- Much of setting, action, and characters provided in pictures in graphic texts
- In illustrated texts, highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text (mood, symbolism)
- Most illustrations are black and white

Nonfiction

- Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- In most texts, graphics that are clearly explained (simple diagrams, illustrations with labels, maps, charts)
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

- Variety of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends, charts, photographs with legends)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Ample space between lines
- Varying print and font size with some longer texts in small fonts
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in many texts
- Captions under pictures that provide important information

- Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with sentences starting on the left
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)
- Information shown in a variety of picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation, including dashes and ellipses

Tools

- A variety of reader's tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends, author's notes, simple index, captions
- A variety of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs

Readers at Level 0:

At level 0, readers can identify the characteristics of a full range of genres. They read both chapter books and shorter fiction and informational texts. Also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, and short stories. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and multiple characters who develop and change over time. They may also encounter hybrid texts that combine more than one genre in a coherent whole. Some nonfiction texts provide information in categories on several related topics, and readers can identify and use underlying structures (description, compare and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect). They can process sentences that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives. They solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Word solving is smooth and automatic in both silent and oral reading. They can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words. Length is no longer a critical factor as texts vary widely. They read silently with little overt problem-solving; in oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (folktales, fables, legends, tall tales)
- Biography, mostly on well-known subjects
- Simple mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Moral lessons close to the end of a story
- Some texts with parallel plots
- Some texts with circular plots

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Prior knowledge needed to understand content in many informational texts
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on perspectives from diverse cultures and bring cultural knowledge to understanding

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories
- Some texts with deeper meaning—still familiar to most readers

- Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (e.g., war, the environment)

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters to understand
- Characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Factors related to character change explicit and obvious
- Descriptive and figurative language that are important to understanding the plot
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots with numerous episodes, building toward problem resolution
- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy

- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Many longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)
- Variety in sentence length, with some long and complex sentences
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

VOCABULARY

- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- New vocabulary in fiction texts largely unexplained
- Some words used figuratively
- Some words with connotative meanings that are essential to understanding the text
- Words that stand for abstract ideas

Readers at Level P:

At level P, readers can identify the characteristics of a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects and hybrid texts that blend more than one genre in a coherent whole. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, or short stories. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and multiple characters who develop and change over time. Readers are able to understand abstract and mature themes and take on diverse perspectives and issues related to race, language, culture. Some nonfiction texts provide information in categories on several related topics, many of which are well beyond readers' typical experience. Readers can identify and use underlying structures (description, compare and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect). They can process sentences that are complex and contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives. They solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Word solving is smooth and automatic in both silent and oral reading. They can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words. They read silently; in oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing with little overt problem solving.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (folktales, fables, legends, tall tales)
- Biography, many on well-known subjects
- Simple mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Moral lesson close to end of a story
- Texts with parallel plots
- Texts with circular plots

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Some texts with deeper meaning—still familiar to most readers

- Ideas and themes requiring taking a perspective not familiar to the reader
- A few texts with abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (e.g., war, the environment)
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters to understand
- Characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors
- Descriptive language providing details important to understanding the plot
- Extensive use of figurative language that is important to understanding the plot

- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Suspense built through events of the plot
- Some more complex fantasy elements

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than fifteen words) complex sentence structures
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary

Animal Instincts

by D. M. Longo

Introduction

When you were a baby, you learned how to walk. Later, you learned to read and do many other things. But some things you didn't need to learn. When you were an infant, for example, no one had to teach you how to cry when you were hungry. You were born knowing how to do that. A baby's cry is one example of an instinct—a behavior that is built-in, not learned. Different animals are born with different instincts.

Dogs and Cats

Dogs and cats have many instinctual behaviors. Some of their actions might

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that depend on readers' tools (such as glossaries)
- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context
- Some words with connotative meanings that are essential to understanding the text
- Some words used figuratively (metaphor, simile, idiom)
- Words with multiple meanings
- Words that stand for abstract ideas

WORDS

- Words with suffixes and prefixes
- Some words with simple prefixes
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many complex multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page

Fiction

- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- In illustrated texts, highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text (mood, symbolism)
- Most illustrations are black and white

Nonfiction

- Full range of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that are complex and not fully explained
- Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

- Variety of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends)
- Some texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Captions under pictures that provide important information

- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Much of setting, action, and characters provided in pictures in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences

Tools

- Full range of reader's tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends, author's notes, index, call-outs, references
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, call-outs, graphs

Readers at Level Q:

At level Q, readers automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects and hybrid texts that blend more than one genre in a coherent whole. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, and short stories. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and many complex characters who develop and change over time. As readers, they understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space. They can process sentences that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives, and they solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Most reading is silent, but fluency and phrasing in oral reading are well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills. They read and understand texts in a variety of layouts as well as fonts and print characteristics and consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- More complex fantasy
- Science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (all forms)
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Moral lessons close to the end of a story

- Texts with parallel plots
- Texts with circular plots

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Fiction—settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts

- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences (through reading)
- A few texts with abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (e.g., war, the environment)
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Explicit and obvious reasons for character change
- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Descriptive language providing details important to understanding the plot

- Extensive use of figurative language that is important to understanding the plot
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' typical experiences
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Suspense built through the events of the plot
- Some more complex fantasy elements
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer and more complex sentence structures (some with more than fifteen words)
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material

- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossaries
- Many new vocabulary words that depend on readers' tools (such as glossaries)
- Many new vocabulary words for readers to derive meaning from context
- Many words used figuratively (use of common idioms, metaphor, simile)
- Words with connotative meanings essential to understanding the text
- Words with multiple meanings
- Words that stand for abstract ideas
- Words connotations signaled by pictures in graphic texts

WORDS

- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Many plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Full range of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that are complex and not fully explained
- Variety of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends)
- Some texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Some sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Captions under pictures that provide important information

Tools

- Full range of reader's tools: table of contents, glossary, headings, guide, titles, labels, legends, subheadings, sidebars, index, callouts, references, hyperlinks
- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences

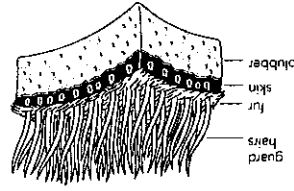
Punctuation

- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, callouts)
- More difficult layout in informational text
- Some fiction texts, with denser format
- Information shown in a variety of picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Surviving the Cold

How do polar bears survive all that cold? Polar bears are very well adapted to life in the frozen Arctic. A polar bear's entire body, even the bottoms of its feet, is covered in fur. The fur protects it from the cold. The top layer of fur is called guard hair. Guard hair sticks together when it's wet. The wet hair is a barrier that protects polar bears from the cold water.

Below the guard hairs is a downy undercoat of fur that gives polar bears another layer of warmth. Underneath their fur, polar bears have black skin. The black



Amazing fact: Beneath its fur, a polar bear has black skin. The dark color absorbs the heat of the sun.

Readers at Level R:

At level R, readers automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects, more complex fantasy, and hybrid texts that blend more than one genre in a coherent whole. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts. Also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, short stories, diaries, and logs. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and many complex characters who develop and change over time. As readers, they understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space. They can process sentences (some with more than fifteen words) that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives, and they solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Most reading is silent, but fluency and phrasing in oral reading are well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills. They read and understand texts in a variety of layouts as well as fonts and print characteristics and consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- More complex fantasy
- Science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (all forms)
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes

- Moral lessons close to the end of a story
- Texts with parallel plots
- Texts with circular plots
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Fiction—settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)

- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences (through reading)
- A few texts with abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (e.g., war, the environment)
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Figurative language that is important to understanding the plot
- Long stretches of descriptive language that is important to understanding setting and characters
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Some more complex fantasy elements
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Many longer (some with more than fifteen words) complex sentence structures
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

VOCABULARY

- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words with connotative meanings essential to understanding the text
- Many words used figuratively (metaphor, simile, idiom)

WORDS

- Many words with three or more syllables

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Some words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Some plurals, contractions, and compound words
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Illustrations
- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- In illustrated texts, highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text (mood, symbolism)

Fiction

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)

Print and Layout

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

- Black and white illustrations in fiction texts
- Much of setting, action, and characters provided in pictures in graphic texts
- Some texts with graphics that are complex and not fully explained
- Full range of graphics (diagrams, labels, cutaways, maps, scales with legends) providing information that extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

Nonfiction

- Some sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Captions under pictures that provide important information
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, callouts)
- More difficult layout in informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Information shown in a variety of picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Full range of reader's tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, captions, subheadings, sidebars, legends, author's notes, index, callouts, references, hyperlinks
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Tools

Jill boiled upright in bed, feeling dazed. Jill nodded slowly, "I'm okay," she said in an unconvincing voice. "What time is it?" "Time to get ready to deliver your speech for class president," her mother said, smiling. As the memory of her dream came flooding back, Jill felt a fresh wave of panic. "Mom, I don't know if I can do it. The thought of standing in front of all those people makes me feel sick!" Jill's mother sat down next to her and smiled. "You know, Jill, sometimes I have to give speeches at big meetings." Jill's mother was a heart surgeon, an expert in her field. "I used to feel as frightened as you are now." Jill asked, "How did you get over your fears?"

Readers at **Level S:**

At level S, readers automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects, more complex fantasy, and hybrid texts that blend more than one genre in a coherent whole. They read both chapter books and shorter informational texts; also, they read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, short stories, diaries, and logs. Fiction narratives are straightforward but have elaborate plots and many complex characters who develop and change over time. As readers, they understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space. They can process sentences (some with more than fifteen words) that are complex, contain prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives, and they solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading are well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills. They read and understand texts in a variety of layouts as well as fonts and print characteristics and consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- More complex fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (all forms)
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts
- Moral lessons close to the end of a story
- Texts with parallel plots
- Texts with circular plots

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot

- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots
- Some complex plots with multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Fiction—settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures

- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to preadolescents

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences (through reading)
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (e.g., war, the environment)
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Long stretches of descriptive language that is important to

understanding setting and characters

- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Some more complex fantasy elements
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than fifteen words) complex sentence structures
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

Could Be Worse

by Sharon Fehr

Everyone has heard of that old joke about how everything goes wrong for some guy. First he oversleeps; then, hustling out the door, he rubs his toe badly. He hobbles to his car only to realize that his car keys are still lying inside the house somewhere. So he stands there, locked out, with his toe throbbing mercilessly, knowing he'll be late for that important job interview. Still, he tries to be philosophical.

"It could be worse," he says. "At least it's not raining."

So here's the punch line: it starts to pour. I know how that guy felt. It was cold when I woke up. I turned over and banged my knee on the side of the battered van that was now Home Sweet Home to Dad and me. Rain clattered on the metal roof overhead. Dad hopped into the back, handed me two warm hard-boiled eggs, and shed his wet jacket.

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meanings from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words with connotative meanings essential to understanding the text
- Many words used figuratively (use of common idioms, metaphor, simile)
- Many highly technical words, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- Words with multiple meanings
- Words that stand for abstract ideas

WORDS

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable words, including proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combination in graphic texts

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page

Fiction

- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- In illustrated texts, highly complex and artistic illustrations that extend the text (mood, symbolism)
- Black and white illustrations in most fiction texts
- Graphic texts that require inference from pictures to understand setting, characters, and plot

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Captions under pictures that provide important information

Nonfiction

- Full range of graphics providing information that extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that are complex and not fully explained
- Some texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of reader's tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends, author's notes, index, call-outs, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Readers at **Level T:**

At level T, readers will process the full range of genres, and texts will be longer with many lines of print on each page, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over a long period of time (as much as a week or two). They use genre features to support comprehension. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and an increased use of symbolism. Readers understand perspectives different from their own, and understand settings and people far distance in time or space. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving strategies. They search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Informational texts
- Fantasy
- Science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots
- Some complex plots with multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book

- Texts with a variety of plot structures (parallel, circular)

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories and subcategories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Fiction—settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to preadolescents

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes focusing on the problems of preadolescents
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Some themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (e.g., racism)
- Many texts focusing on human problems (war, hardship, or economic issues)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Memorable characters, with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Long stretches of descriptive language that is important to understanding setting and characters
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred

- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Some more complex fantasy elements, some showing conflict between good and evil
- Some obvious symbolism
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than twenty words) complex sentence structures
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Many complex sentences including dialogue and many embedded phrases and clauses
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, or interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words with connotative meanings essential to understanding the text

Types of Howls

There are several types of wolf howls, each with its own particular purpose. The most common howl is a loud, deep call that can be heard up to ten miles away, depending on the weather. The purpose of this type of howl is to unite the pack. The wolves within a pack are usually related, and the average-sized pack is

Characteristics About Wolves	
Average Length (from nose to tail tip)	females: 4½–6 ft. males: 5–6½ ft.
Average Height (to the shoulder)	26–32 inches
Average Weight	females: 60–80 lbs. males: 70–110 lbs.
Weight at Birth	1 lb.
Fur Color	grey, sometimes also black or white
Food	deer, moose, elk, bison, beaver

eight to fifteen wolves. Sometimes, while hunting, one or more pack members may become separated from the rest of the group. A chorus of wolves may howl to help the lost wolves get back to the family. ■

Reasons for Howls

It's common for wolves to howl before setting out to hunt for food. The purpose of this howl may be to excite pack members and help them bond. It's as if they are a team preparing to compete. But once the hunt starts, the wolves

2

- Many words used figuratively (metaphor, simile, idiom)
- Many highly technical words, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations

WORDS

- Many words with a large number of syllables
- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode

- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

- A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page

Fiction

- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- In illustrated texts, highly complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text (mood, symbolism)
- Black and white illustrations in some fiction texts

Nonfiction

- Full range of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that are complex and not fully explained

- Some texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Captions under pictures that provide important information
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures

- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)
- More difficult layout in informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Information shown in a variety of picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, sidebars, headings and subheadings, call-outs, captions, pronunciation guides, index, references)
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Readers at **Level U:**

At level U, readers will process the full range of genres, and texts will be longer, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading. They automatically adjust the different genres and use genre characteristics to support comprehension. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and an increased use of symbolism. Readers understand perspectives different from their own, and understand settings and people far distance in time or space. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart long multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving strategies. They search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Fantasy
- Science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students' own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots
- Some complex plots with multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Texts with a variety of structures (parallel, circular)

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subcategories of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Fiction—settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Most of content carried by the print rather than pictures
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to preadolescents

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes focusing on the problems of preadolescents
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

- Many themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (e.g., racism, war)
- Many texts focusing on human problems (war, hardship, or economic issues)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Texts requiring inference to understand characters and why they change
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot and character development
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Fantasy and science fiction showing struggle of good and evil
- Some obvious symbolism
- Some literary devices (for example, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)

- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors

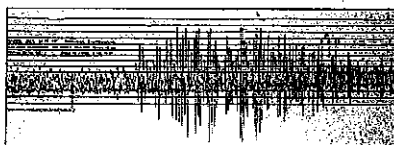
SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than twenty words) complex sentence structures
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Many complex sentences including dialogue and many embedded phrases and clauses
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in a series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, or interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words with connotative meanings essential to understanding the text
- Many words used figuratively (common idioms, metaphor, simile)
- Many highly technical words that require background knowledge and are not defined in the text
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English
- Words with multiple meanings

Scientists describe the seismograph's measurements with numbers. Since the 1930s, they have used a system called the Richter (RIK-ter) scale. If an earthquake measures below 3.0 on the Richter, people usually can't feel it. Earthquakes over 5.0 on the scale can cause damage, while a measurement of 7.0 is evidence of a major earthquake.



A pen attached to a seismograph draws an image that shows the magnitude of an earthquake.

What Causes Earthquakes?

How and why do all these earthquakes occur? Earth has many different layers. Its outermost layer is called the crust and is made up of huge sections called tectonic plates. Below the crust is another layer, called the mantle, which is made up of softer rock. When tectonic plates push against each other, a huge amount of force or pressure builds up. ■

Eventually, the force causes the plates to shift on top of the mantle in different ways: they can push toward each other, pull away from each other, or simply slide past each other. These movements are

2

- Words that represent abstract concepts
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
- Black and white illustrations in some texts
- Long series of word and picture combinations in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- Full range of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
- Some texts with graphics that are dense and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation
- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Large variation among print styles, font size, and color
- Many texts with very small font
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format

- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Wide variety of layouts and picture-print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Readers at Level V:

At level V, readers will process the full range of genres, and texts will be longer, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading. They automatically adjust strategic actions to skillfully use genre. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and an increased use of symbolism. In addition, readers will encounter some abstract special forms of literature, such as satire. Readers understand perspectives different from their own, and understand settings and people far distance in time or space. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. In addition, readers can be very expressive when they present poetry or readers theater. Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers' tools, such as glossaries. They can take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving strategies. They search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Fantasy
- Science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students' culture
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts
- Satire

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots

- Texts with a variety of structures (parallel, circular)
- Some complex plots with multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts with multiple topics, categories, and subcategories
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to preadolescents and adolescents

- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes focusing on the problems of preadolescents and adolescents
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Some themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (e.g., racism, war)
- Many texts focusing human problems (hardship, or racism)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Interpretation of characters essential to understanding the theme
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time, requiring inference to understand how and why they change
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters

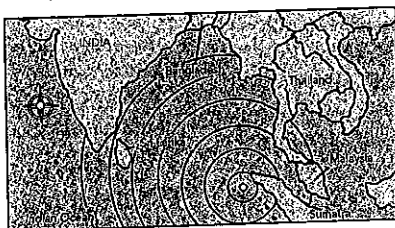
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change (often unsignaled)
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Full range of literary devices (flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, figurative language)
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through behavior

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than twenty words) complex sentence structures
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Many complex sentences including dialogue and many embedded phrases and clauses
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

With no food or water, Ari clung to a piece of wood for five days. When he spotted an abandoned fishing raft, Ari mustered what little strength he had left and climbed on. Once on the raft, he discovered a few bottles of fresh water. Later, he spotted some coconuts drifting in the ocean, snatched them up, and, because he had no tools, cracked them open with his teeth! Miraculously, Ari was able to survive for two more weeks on nothing but coconuts and water. As each day passed, Ari began to doubt that he would survive.

He could see many ships sailing along the horizon, but none of them could see him. Finally, a ship caught sight of Ari, rescued him, and delivered him home safely. He was dehydrated but lucky to be alive. ■



A massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean caused the great tsunami of 2004.

What Happened

Ari's amazing story began on December 26, 2004, when an earthquake off the coast of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean

2

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Many highly technical words that require background knowledge and are not defined in the text
- Regional or historical dialects
- Some non-English words
- Words with multiple meanings
- Many words that represent abstract ideas
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with three or more syllables
- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable words and proper nouns that are difficult to decode

- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words
- Archaic words or words from languages other than English that do not follow conventional pronunciation patterns

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
- Black and white illustrations in some fiction texts
- Action, setting, and characters carried through picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation
- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Large variation among print styles, color, and font size
- Many texts with very small font
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page

- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Readers at Level W:

At level W, readers will process the full range of genres, and texts will be longer, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading. They automatically adjust strategic actions to skillfully use genre. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and require readers to identify classical motifs such as “the quest.” Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be previously known to readers and may not be admirable. Readers will encounter mature themes that expand their knowledge of social issues. In addition, readers will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary devices, such as irony. Themes are multidimensional and may be understood on several levels. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. In addition, students are able to read aloud with expressiveness after practice (for example, readers theater). Readers are challenged by heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers’ tools, such as glossaries. They search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge. Many texts require knowledge of historical events and may contain language that is archaic or from regional dialects or languages other than English.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- High fantasy and science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students’ own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts
- Satire

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Photo essays
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Unusual text organizations (e.g., flashbacks)

- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots and some multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Texts with a variety of structures (parallel and circular)

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subcategories of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history and current world events
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (culture)
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography

- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Many texts with complex themes focusing on human problems (war, hardship, racism, social class barriers)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents (family issues, growing up, sexuality)
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Character interpretation essential to understand the theme

- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters who represent the symbolic struggle of good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Some texts with archaic language, included for authenticity
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Many texts with settings distant in time and space from students’ experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change (often unsigned)
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as “the quest”)
- Use of symbolism
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by Kim Carson
for Mr. Bukowski's English Class
September 2005

September 2005

If I'd had a choice, I would have picked going camping for our vacation, but Dad suggested volunteering in Thailand with a group from our church to help with disaster relief. More than 8,000 people died there in the 2004 tsunami. Countless others lost their homes and possessions. The devastation was unimaginable.

I didn't want to go, but I really had no other option. We were going to Thailand. We were each allowed only one small bag, so I packed lightly. Of course I wore the heart-shaped locket that's always around my neck. My great-grandmother had given me the locket. It was the only thing she'd been able to save when her family's *peasant* in Italy was destroyed in an earthquake. She was just a girl at the time.

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Longer (some with more than twenty words) complex sentence structures
- Many complex sentences including dialogue and many embedded phrases and clauses, as well as parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Many technical words requiring background knowledge or use of glossary or dictionary
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English

- Some archaic words
- Words with multiple meanings
- Words used in satirical ways
- Many words that represent abstract concepts
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with three or more syllables
- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to word parts
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English

- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings

Nonfiction

- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation
- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning

- Large variation among print styles, color, and font size
- Many texts with very small font
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Some text layouts in columns
- Long series of complex picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)
- Full range of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs, timelines

Readers at **Level X:**

At levels X, Y, and Z, readers are able to process and understand a wide range of texts, including all genres. Although many texts are long and have complex sentences and paragraphs as well as many multisyllable words, they vary greatly because readers are expected to understand and respond to mature themes such as sexuality, abuse, poverty, and war. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and require readers to identify classical motifs such as “the quest” and to identify moral issues. Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be previously known to readers and may not be admirable, requiring critical thinking on the part of readers. In addition, readers will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary language to convey irony. They may even encounter parody, allegory or monologue. Themes and characters are multidimensional, may be understood on several levels, and are developed in complex ways. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. Readers are challenged by a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers’ tools, such as glossaries. Texts include archaic language or regional dialect. Readers search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge. They have developed knowledge of content, including scientific information and historical events and apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading fiction and nonfiction texts.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- High fantasy and science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students’ own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts
- Satire, parody, allegory
- Monologue

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Photo essays
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Unusual text organizations (e.g., flashbacks)
- Elaborate plots and subplots
- Some complex plots with multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book

Nonfiction

- Multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways
- Texts with multiple topics and categories within them
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history or current world events
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

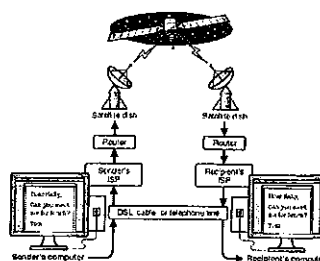
THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Many texts with complex themes focusing on human problems (war, hardship, social class and race barriers)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers

- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Character interpretation necessary for comprehending theme
- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters representing the struggle of good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Many texts with archaic language to create authenticity
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Many texts with settings distant in time and space



Billions of e-mail messages are exchanged every day.

For several decades, the Internet was viewed as unappealing in appearance and impractical for use by the general public; then, however, computer scientists began integrating leading technological developments like URLs (Uniform Resource Locators) and hypertext. By 1990, it was possible for the Internet to display not only words but also a whole range of multimedia. By the mid-nineties, inventions like Web browsers and search engines had turned the Web into an easy-to-use and exciting feature of the whole Internet experience. A visually uninspiring tool before the World Wide Web came into use, the Internet came alive with color, graphics, live pictures, as well as audio and video streaming. Users have "virtually" at their fingertips, virtually every kind of information they might want to seek. Public consumption has exploded, and this dynamic tool continues to evolve.

3

- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Some switching from setting to setting, including time change (often unsignaled)
- Many literary complex narratives
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as "the quest")
- Full range of literary devices (flashback, symbolism, figurative language)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Some very long sentences (some with more than thirty words)
- Sentences with parenthetical material
- Many complex sentences (dialogue, embedded phrases and clauses, parenthetical material)
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries

- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Many technical words requiring background knowledge or use of glossary or dictionary
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some non-English words
- Many archaic words
- A variety of words that stand for big ideas and abstract concepts
- Words used in a satirical way that change the surface meaning
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with affixes
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to word parts
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
- Long series of varied picture and print combinations

Nonfiction

- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)
- Some texts with graphics that are dense and challenging
- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print

- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Many texts with very small font
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Some text layouts in columns

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)

Readers at **Level Y:**

At levels X, Y, and Z, readers are able to process and understand a wide range of texts, including all genres. Although many texts are long and have complex sentences and paragraphs as well as many multisyllable words, they vary greatly because readers are expected to understand and respond to mature themes such as sexuality, abuse, poverty, and war. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and require readers to identify classical motifs such as “the quest” and to identify moral issues. Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be previously known to readers and may not be admirable, requiring critical thinking on the part of readers. In addition, readers will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary language to convey irony. They may encounter parody, allegory, or monologue. Themes and characters are multidimensional, may be understood on several levels, and are developed in complex ways. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. Readers are challenged by a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers’ tools, such as glossaries. Texts include archaic language or regional dialect. Readers search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge. They have developed knowledge of content, including scientific information and historical events and apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading fiction and nonfiction texts.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Informational texts
- High fantasy and science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students’ own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts
- Satire
- Parody
- Allegory
- Monologue

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Photo essays
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Unusual text organizations (e.g., flashback, flashforward, time lapses)
- Texts with unusual structures for presenting information (combination of different genres)
- Many texts with the complex structure of adult-level reading
- Plots, with multiple story lines
- Collections of short stories with interrelated themes, plots across the book

Nonfiction

- Multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history or current world events
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Many texts with complex themes focusing on human problems (war, hardship, race and class barriers)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and

reveal insights into the human condition

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Character interpretation necessary for comprehending theme
- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters representing the struggle of good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Many texts with archaic language to create authenticity
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Many texts with settings distant in time and space from students’ experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred

The International Space Station

by Misha Kees

Space-Age Laboratory

Imagine an enormous laboratory as long as a football field and weighing almost one million pounds. Now imagine this gigantic laboratory floating in space. Scientists and others from all over the world would be able to live there—for months, or maybe even years, at a time—before returning to Earth. Because environmental conditions in space are very different from those we experience on Earth, scientists could perform many critical experiments while living in this space laboratory that they can not carry out on this planet.

It may sound like science fiction, but an international space station is already well underway to becoming a reality. The International Space Station, or ISS, is a giant research facility now being assembled in orbit about 250 miles above Earth. It is not the first space station in existence, but upon

its completion will be by far the largest and most complex object ever constructed in space.

Scientists are considering adaptations that would need to be made in order to conduct long-term experimentation in space. At the same time, they have to examine the potential impact on humans, both physically and psychologically, of living



The ISS in orbit

1

- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change (often unsigned)
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as "the quest")
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Many very long sentences (some with more than thirty words)
- Many complex sentences (dialogue, embedded phrases and clauses, parenthetical material)
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Complex sentences with compound sentences joined by semicolons or colons
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use tools (glossaries or dictionaries)
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations

- Many technical words requiring background knowledge or use of glossary or dictionary
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English
- Many archaic words
- A variety of words that stand for big ideas and abstract concepts
- Words used in a satirical way that change the surface meaning
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
- Wide variety of layouts of pictures and print in graphic texts
- Long series of graphics in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)
- Some texts with graphics that are dense and challenging
- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning

- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Many texts with very small font
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Some text layouts in columns

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)

Readers at **Level Z:**

At levels X, Y, and Z, readers are able to process and understand a wide range of texts, including all genres. Although many texts are long and have complex sentences and paragraphs as well as many multisyllable words, they vary greatly because readers are expected to understand and respond to mature themes such as sexuality, abuse, poverty, and war. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and require readers to identify classical motifs such as “the quest” and to identify moral issues. Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be previously known to readers and may not be admirable, requiring critical thinking on the part of readers. In addition, readers will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary language to convey irony. Additional challenges may include parody, allegory, or monologue. Themes and characters are multidimensional, may be understood on several levels, and are developed in complex ways. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. Readers are challenged by a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers’ tools, such as glossaries. Texts include archaic language or regional dialect. Readers search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge. They have developed knowledge of content, including scientific information and historical events and apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading fiction and nonfiction texts.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level**GENRE/FORMS****Genre**

- Informational texts
- High fantasy and science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students’ own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Hybrid texts
- Satire
- Parody
- Allegory
- Monologue

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Photo essays
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE**Fiction**

- Unusual text organizations (e.g., flashback, flashforward, shifts in time, embedded diverse stories)
- Texts with unusual structures for presenting information (combination of different genres)
- Many texts with the complex structure of adult-level reading
- Plots with multiple story lines
- Collections of short stories with interrelated themes or plots

Nonfiction

- Multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history
- Content supported or extended by illustrations in most informational texts or current world events
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Many texts with complex themes focusing on human problems (war, hardship, race and class barriers)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents

- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition
- Texts that explicitly present mature issues such as sexuality, murder, abuse, nuclear war

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Character interpretation and why they change
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Understanding of multiple characters necessary for comprehending theme
- Texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters representing the symbolic struggle of good and evil



Surviving the Blitz

by Luka Bernion

What was it like to experience London's infamous Blitz? I can tell you in one word: terrifying.

Blitz is short for *blitzkrieg*—the German words for lightning (*blitz*) and war (*krieg*). The Blitz was our British newspapers' term for the German bombing that barraged London in 1940 and 1941 during World War II, a war that had begun about a year earlier when France and Britain declared war on Germany. Although World War II ended more than sixty years ago, still the bombs of the Blitz scream toward me and explode into terrifying nightmares.

- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Many texts with archaic language to create authenticity
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Many texts with settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change (often unsigaled)
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as "the quest")
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Many very long sentences (some with more than thirty words)
- Many complex sentences including dialogue, many embedded phrases and clauses, and parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas

- Complex sentences with compound sentences joined by semicolons or colons
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY

- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use tools (glossaries or dictionaries)
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Many technical words requiring background knowledge or use of glossary or dictionary
- Many archaic words
- Words that represent abstract concepts and ideas
- Words used in a satirical way that change the surface meaning
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode

- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fiction

- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
- Wide variety of layout and pictures in graphic texts

Nonfiction

- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)
- Some texts with graphics that are dense and challenging
- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Print and Layout

- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print

- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Variety in print and background color
- Large variation among print styles and font size (related to genre)
- Many texts with very small font
- Many sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Some text layouts in columns

Punctuation

- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools

- Full range of readers' tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)