

Understanding Levels of Texts

Level	
A (Corresponds to 2 on Parent Portal)	Level A books are the very easiest texts for beginning readers. They have sentences (rather than single words or phrases) because knowledge of language structure is a powerful source of information for young children as they begin to read. Level A books have predictable language patterns and very easy high frequency words that are used over and over within a text. They have one line of print. Print is presented in a very plain, clear font that is as large as possible without distorting the readers view of the line of text. There are clear spaces between words (usually two to three spaces rather than one).
B (Corresponds to 3 on Parent Portal)	Level B books are very similar to A except that they add the challenge of two lines of text. Like Level A, texts focus on a single idea or have a simple story line. There is a direct correspondence between the text and the pictures, and children can easily relate the topics to their personal experience. Content words are supported by pictures and there are usually repeating language patterns. The language, while not exactly duplicating oral language, includes naturally occurring syntactic structures. Print is regular, clear, and easy to see and there is a full range of simple punctuation, including period, question mark, exclamation mark, and some commas. There is ample space between words so that children can point and read.
C (Corresponds to 4 on Parent Portal)	Books at level C have simple story lines and topics that are familiar to children. They tend to be longer than level B books but still have only a few (two to six) lines of text on a page. At this level more of the story is carried by the text, but pictures are still very important in supporting meaning and there is a direct correspondence between text and pictures. Pictures appear on both left and right pages but are still clearly separated from text. Print may appear at a variety of places on the page. Sentence structure is very simple. Oral language structures are used and often repeated, and phrasing is often supported by print placement. There is a full range of punctuation, with quotation marks included. Patterns and repetition are used in some books; others support prediction through natural language and meaning. There is more variation in language patterns, requiring children to attend closely to print at some points. Sentences are a little longer but the syntax is simple and easy to control; there are more words than in level B texts. There are many easily decodable words as well as many easy high frequency words, with a few multisyllable words.
D (Corresponds to 5 on Parent Portal)	Stories are slightly more complex, but still very easy for children to understand. Concepts are familiar within children's experience. The illustrations are supportive, but more attention to the print is required. Most texts have clear print; spacing is obvious. Most texts range from two to six lines of print per page and have more words than the previous levels. Sentences are generally a little longer than level C, but are not complex. There is a full range of punctuation; words encountered in previous texts are used many times. The vocabulary contains more inflectional endings - <i>ing</i> , <i>ed</i> , <i>s</i> - so that children have an opportunity to notice the variations in word structure.
E (Corresponds to 6 on Parent Portal)	The amount of text is gradually increasing; most stories have three to eight lines of text per page and text placement varies. Stories are more complex. Repeating patterns appear less frequently; when they are used, they vary within the text. The ideas in stories are more subtle and may require a greater degree of interpretation. Illustrations strongly support the story...the text carries the storyline. Problem solving is needed to figure out new words and to relate the illustrations and text. The reading vocabulary requires skill in word analysis; words are longer and have inflectional endings. Texts at level E build on and extend children's vocabulary of frequently used words. Taking words apart will help children problem-solve. A full variety of punctuation is evident. Some concepts may be less familiar to children. Texts may look easy (having only one line or few words) but the ideas require more control of aspects of print.
F (Corresponds to 7 on Parent Portal)	Texts are slightly longer than level E; the print is necessarily somewhat smaller. There are usually between three and eight lines of text per page. Pictures continue to support reading although the text carries more of the meaning. Literary language is mixed with typical oral language structures, but the syntax of the text largely reflects patterns peculiar to written language. The variety of

	frequently used words continues to expand. Story lines include more episodes (actions or events), which follow one another chronologically, and some characters are more fully developed. The text has a distinct beginning, middle, and end. Dialogue has appeared at earlier levels, but at this level there is greater variety in the way it is signaled and presented. Punctuation supports phrasing and meaning. There are many more opportunities for word analysis.
G (Corresponds to 8 on Parent Portal)	Books at level G contain more challenging ideas and vocabulary. Most books still have between three and eight lines of text per page, but the sentences are longer. As at level F, literary language, structures, and concepts are integrated with natural language. A greater range of content extends children’s experiences. The reading vocabulary continues to expand; new vocabulary is introduced. Stories have more events; occasionally repetition is built into the episodic structure to support reading.
H (Corresponds to 9 on Parent Portal)	Level H is very similar to G, but the language and vocabulary are even more complex, the stories are longer and more literary, and there is less repetition in the episodic structure. Readers will meet dialogue in many texts. Characters are straightforwardly drawn and easy to understand, but have greater dimension than at previous levels.
I (Corresponds to 10 on Parent Portal)	At level I there are a variety of texts in several genres. Story structure is more complex; episodes are elaborated in more detail and themes are varied and sophisticated. Illustrations provide low to moderate support, extend the texts, and assist children in interpretation. Readers are asked to understand different points of view. Texts offer many opportunities to discuss new ideas. Texts are generally longer than the previous level, with more sentences per page. Specialized, unusual, and challenging vocabulary is evident. Texts include a large number of words that by now will be familiar to most children: problem solving will be needed only for unfamiliar words. Characters are memorable. There are many possibilities for comparison with other texts, those previously read, and those children have heard read aloud.
J (Corresponds to 11 on Parent Portal)	Books at level J include a variety of short informational texts on familiar topics, as well as easy narratives. The longer narratives have short chapters that may or may not have titles. Characters are usually well presented but don’t show a great deal of change or development, since plots are relatively simple and texts are not long. Only one or two characters are generally featured. Most texts contain dialogue, which is usually assigned to the speaker by signal words like <i>said</i> , <i>cried</i> , and <i>answered</i> . Print is in a larger font, with clear spaces between words and lines. There are illustrations on most pages. Sentences usually return to the left margin to start. Informational texts focus on topics that are familiar to second graders. Some books offer a large amount of print with easy words and language; others offer challenges in that they present new information or use literary language. Texts have many frequently encountered words. Technical words are explained within the text, and there are clear illustrations to help the reader.
K (Corresponds to 12 on Parent Portal)	At level K chapter books are simple but are slightly longer, presenting more text to read. Chapters are short; most pages have illustrations, but they are less important to students’ understanding of the meaning of the text. As with level J, stories have multiple episodes relating to a single plot, but there will be more to remember. Texts feature only one or two characters, and there is little development. There is generally dialogue, sometimes unassigned (without identifying words like <i>said</i>). In most level K text, the layout is still very friendly to the reader with clear spaces between lines. The print is in a large, clear font, and there are clear spaces between words and between lines. Illustrations include interesting artwork that enhances meaning. Some stories are based on concepts that are distant in space and time, and readers will be using the text as a way to expand their understanding of cultures beyond their experiences. Readers will encounter greater variety in writing styles. Informational texts are like level J in that they use some technical language that is clearly explained within the text. They also include supportive illustrations. Topics tend to be concrete - animals, plants, and other phenomena that will be familiar to students. Generally, informational texts are shorter but difficult, because different concepts are presented on each page or in each section.
L (Corresponds to 13 on Parent Portal)	Chapter books at level L are longer with more sophisticated plots. Characters are likely to develop and change in the response to the events in the story; one or two characters are featured. Vocabulary includes more multisyllabic words that present challenges in

Parent Portal)	<p>terms of new labels for familiar concepts. These longer texts have many easy and harder frequently encountered words. There are illustrations on most pages, but there are some whole pages of print. A major change at level L is that the layout is more difficult. For most texts, sentences end in the middle of lines and continue from one line to the next. The font is generally smaller, and there is more print on the next page. Informational books present some new concepts that students can connect with their own background knowledge; the number of new concepts is limited, but as in level K, even shorter informational texts are difficult because a different concept is presented on each page or in each section. Simple biographies, told in temporal sequence, tell the stories of past times.</p>
<p>M (Corresponds to 15 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Books at level M have many whole pages of print without illustrations. Illustrations are usually black-and-white drawings or photographs and are scattered throughout the text; they extend the meaning and enhance enjoyment. Chapters are longer. Most texts have a great deal of text in smaller print with narrower word spacing. Vocabulary is greatly expanded, including many multisyllable words and technical words. Topics of informational texts are widely varied, from subjects that are familiar to students to new topics they are expected to study and learn. Sections of informational texts may provide different information but there is elaboration to help the reader. Most technical terms are explained and illustrated within the text. Real biographies, structured as simple narratives, require readers to think about historical concepts.</p>
<p>N (Corresponds to 16 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Books at level N include longer texts organized in a variety of ways. Topics of informational texts and settings for narrative texts go well beyond readers' personal experience. Chapter books present memorable characters that are well developed and change over time. They also offer an opportunity to feel empathy for characters and to experience suspense. Characters are revealed through what they say, think, and do, as well as through what others say about them. Informational texts require much more content knowledge. There are many technical words, but these are usually explained within the text. Biographies are longer and focus on subjects that are less well known to students. They are expected to learn about these subjects through reading.</p>
<p>O (Corresponds to 17 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Chapter books at level O present a range of challenges. These books have multiple characters who are revealed through what they say, think, and do or through what others say about them. Characters encounter everyday experiences; some must deal with serious problems such as war or death. This level includes a wide variety of genres, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, science fiction, humor, and traditional literature. Most chapter books have between fifty and two hundred pages. Texts have only a few illustrations, and they are usually black-and-white drawings or photographs. Informational texts have a wide range of graphics. Technical words are usually illustrated or defined with the texts. Readers' tools such as table of contents and section headings indicate the categories of content. Many details are presented relative to major topics. Vocabulary is sophisticated and varied. There are many multisyllable words. Frequently encountered words, both easy and more difficult, are used; most words will be within readers' decoding control. Readers are expected to form new meanings for known words. Highly complex sentences require a full range of punctuation, which is important to accessing the meaning of the text.</p>
<p>P (Corresponds to 18 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Technical language is evident. Fiction texts include novels with longer chapters. Characters are concerned with issues related to growing up, family relationships and problems of preadolescence. In comparison to previous levels, in general, level P texts are longer, have more complex ideas and language, and use a more sophisticated vocabulary. They include more detailed descriptions of setting. More interpretation is required to understand themes at several levels. Many texts are long (over 100 pages), requiring readers to sustain interest and attention over several days. At this level, length becomes less important than the structural complexity, theme sophistication and necessary background experience.</p>
<p>Q (Corresponds to 19 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>A change at level Q is that most narrative text will have very few illustrations. The cover illustrations contribute to readers' anticipation, but just about all understanding comes from print. Illustrations in informational books at the level carry a great deal of meaning and require interpretation. Chapter books at level Q employ a complex sentence structure and more difficult vocabulary. Themes require interpretation; characters are memorable and develop over time. Children's literature selections offer sophisticated</p>

	humor, complex plots, and interesting ideas that will be a good foundation for group discussion. In addition, illustrations and their relationships to the text can be analyzed. All texts contain difficult words, some from languages other than English, for readers to solve. Thoughts and perspectives of characters are revealed in a variety of ways—through dialogue and from the viewpoint of other characters. Books are generally quite long, requiring the reader to sustain interest and meaning over many days. Some books have more mature themes, focusing on problems of society as they affect children.
R (Corresponds to 20 on Parent Portal)	Books in Level R, both fiction and nonfiction, represent a range of topics and settings. Fiction texts have settings that are distant from students' own lives. In general, these texts extend the skills needed for level Q over a wider variety of texts. Some longer books may require a great deal of sustained interest. Vocabulary is sophisticated, requiring understanding of connotative meanings and will challenge the reader. Literary devices such as simile and metaphor require background knowledge, as do some of the technical aspects of texts. Informational books such as biography and autobiography extend readers' understanding and take them to places distinct in time and space. Books at this level may deal with mature themes like family problems, war, and death. Readers are required to connect concepts and themes with political or historical events or environmental information.
S (Corresponds to 21 on Parent Portal)	Texts at level S present complex ideas and information that will be a good foundation for group discussions. They reflect a wide variety of topics and cultures. At this level, words present many shadings of meaning that readers must construct from their interpretations of the text. Sentences and paragraphs are complex, requiring rapid and fluent reading with attention to the meaning and automatic assimilation of punctuation. Many works of historical fiction are included in this level of the gradient; students at this age tend to find historical events interesting. There are also many more biographies. Texts present settings that are far distant from students' own experiences. Literary selections offer opportunities for readers to make connections with previously read texts as well as with historical events. This category includes chapter books in many genres. Picture books present complex ideas and information that will be a good foundation for group discussions.
T (Corresponds to 22 on Parent Portal)	Selections at level T include a variety of genres and text structures. Chapter books are long, with few illustrations, and they require a reader to recognize character development as well as symbolism. All sections contain many sophisticated, multisyllable words that readers will need to analyze in terms of both literal and connotative meaning. The range of books at level T incorporates fantasy, historical fiction, informational books, biographies, and realistic fiction. Readers need to know more about political and historical events and about problems of different cultural and racial groups. Themes include growing up, courage, survival, hardship, and prejudice.
U (Corresponds to 24 on Parent Portal)	Informational texts at level U cover a wide range of topics and present specific technical information. As with earlier levels, illustrations require interpretation and connection to text. Narrative texts are complex; there are plots and subplots. Texts typically have several different themes and many characters. Characters, too, are complex, with multiple dimensions to their personalities. Writers use symbolism, and themes are more abstract. Creative formats are also used (for example, short stories connected by common characters).
V (Corresponds to 25 on Parent Portal)	Biographies at this level go beyond simple narratives to provide a significant amount of historical information. Many biographies are not "fictionalized" for easier reading; they focus on harsh themes and difficult periods of history. Other longer biographies are told in narrative style but present complex themes. Fiction includes science fiction that presents sophisticated ideas and concepts. In many of the works of realistic or historical fiction, the writer is conveying a significant message beyond the specifics. Texts require readers to think critically. Full appreciation of texts requires noticing aspects of the writer's craft. Most long texts have print in a small font; texts may be 200 to 300 pages but contain many more words than texts with larger print.
W (Corresponds to 26 on Parent Portal)	Texts at level W have themes that explore the human condition, with the same kinds of challenges mentioned at earlier levels. Fiction and nonfiction texts presents characters who suffer hardship and learn from it. The writing is sophisticated, with complex

	<p>sentences, literary language, and symbolism. Texts vary in length; print is generally small. Comprehending texts at this level requires awareness of social and political issues; through these texts, readers come to understand social problems at deeper levels. Fantasy and science fiction introduce heroic characters, more questions, and contests between good and evil. Informational texts may present complex graphic information and require a wide range of content knowledge. Readers must understand all the basic nonfiction organizational structures. Narrative biographies include many details and prompt readers to make inferences about what motivated the subject's achievements.</p>
<p>X (Corresponds to 27 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Books at level X include science fiction that incorporates technical knowledge as well as high fantasy depicting quests and the struggle between good and evil. Readers are required to go beyond the literal meaning of the text to construct implied meaning by a writer's use of symbolism. There is a continuing increase in the sophistication of vocabulary, language, and topic.</p>
<p>Y (Corresponds to 28 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Books categorized as level Y present subtle themes and complex plots. As with earlier levels, they include a whole range of social problems as themes, but more explicit details (for example, about death or prejudice) are provided. Texts also include irony and satire, literary devices that require readers to think beyond the literal meaning of the text. Books at Level Y include many more complex works of fantasy that depict hero figures and heroic journeys. Readers are required to discern underlying lessons and may also analyze texts for traditional elements.</p>
<p>Z (Corresponds to 29 on Parent Portal)</p>	<p>Informational books deal with controversial social concepts and political issues and include detailed historical accounts of periods that are less well known generally as well as events and people that are controversial. They also provide a great deal of technical information; readers learn new ways of finding technical information and encounter complex examples of the basic organizational structures for informational texts. Fiction texts explore a wide range of mature themes relative to the human condition. High fantasy presents heroic quests, symbolism, and complex characters. Some texts provide graphic details of hardship and violence.</p>