

*Coraline* by Neil Gaiman  
*Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep  
*Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick  
*Harry Potter* (books 3, 4 & 5) in the series by J.K. Rowling  
*Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen  
*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli  
*Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant  
*Slam!* by Walter Dean Myers

### **LEVEL X**

- Science fiction includes technical information as well as high fantasy.
- Readers must go beyond the literal level to construct meaning.
- Sophistication of vocabulary, language, and topic continues to increase.

### **LEVEL Y**

- Books present subtle themes and complex plots.
- Texts include irony and satire.
- Works include heroic figures and heroic journeys.
- Texts must be analyzed for underlying messages and for traditional plot elements.

### **LEVEL Z**

- Informational books deal with controversial social concepts and political issues.
- Readers learn new strategies for finding technical information.
- Narratives provide graphic details of violence and hardship.
- Texts provide a great deal of highly technical information.

### **EXAMPLES OF X, Y and Z**

*Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls  
*Memories of Anne Frank* by Alison L. Gold  
*The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank  
*Novio Boy* by Gary Soto  
*Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry  
*Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* by Jean Lee Latham  
*Sacajawea* by Joseph Bruchac  
*The Giver* by Lois Lowry  
*My Brother Sam is Dead* by James and Christopher Collier  
*White Fang* by Jack London  
*A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Sylvia Peck  
*The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien

*Adventures of Huck Finn* by Mark Twain  
*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

\* Leveled book descriptions and book title list adapted from *Guided Reading* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (Heinemann, 1996) and from *Your Classroom Library* by D. Ray Reutzel and Parker C. Fawson (Scholastic, 2002)

## LEVEL T

- Texts use many multisyllable words.
- Texts use a variety of structures and genres.
- Fantasy, historical fiction, informational, biographies, and realistic fiction are all part of this level.
- Common themes at this level include growing up, courage, hardship, and prejudice.
- Texts deal with different cultural and racial groups.

### EXAMPLES:

*The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis

*Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson

*The Red Pony* by John Steinbeck

*Danny, Champion of the World* by Roald Dahl

*My Hiroshima* by Junko Morimoto

*Baby* by Patricia MacLachlan

*Blubber* by Judy Blume

*Bridge to Teribithia* by Katherine Patterson

*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis

*Joey Pigza* books by Jack Gantos

*Sammy Keyes* series books by Wendelin Van Draanen

*Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell

*Tracker* by Gary Paulsen

## LEVEL U

- Texts present information with specific technical structures, such as charts, graphs, and tables.
- Narrative texts are complex, with plots and subplots.
- Characters are multidimensional and complex.
- Themes are more abstract and writers use symbolism.
- Creative formats are used, such as short stories all about the same character.

### EXAMPLES:

*The View From Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg

*The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

*Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George

*Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt

*Onion John* by Joseph Krungold

*Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry

*Baseball in April and other stories* by Gary Soto

*The BFG* by Roald Dahl

*The Cat Ate My Gymsuit* by Paula Danziger

*Loser* by Jerry Spinelli

*My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George

*The Summer of the Swans* by Betsy Byars

*Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963* by

Christopher Paul Curtis

## LEVEL V

- Biographies at this level include significant coverage of historical fact, harsh themes, and difficult periods of history.
- Fiction includes science fiction.
- Texts require readers to think critically.
- Size of print is smaller, and texts may have 200 to 300 pages with many more words per page.

### EXAMPLES:

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling

*Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery

*Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIHM* by Robert C. O'Brien

*Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell

*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

*Series of Unfortunate Events* series books by Lemony Snicket

*Bloomability* by Sharon Creech

*Crash* by Jerry Spinelli

*Holes* by Louis Sachar

*Jip: His Story* by Katherine Paterson

*Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff

*Ruby Holler* by Sharon Creech

*Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli

*The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke

*Things Not Seen* by Andrew Clements

*Watchers* series books by Peter Lerangis

## LEVEL W

- Texts require an awareness of social and political issues.
- Fantasy and science fiction introduce heroic characters, moral questions, and contests between good and evil.
- Informational books have increasingly complex technical information.
- Biographies have many details prompting readers to make inferences about characters' motivations.

### EXAMPLES:

*I Am a Star: Child of the Holocaust* by Inge Auerbacher

*The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norman Juster

*Stowaway* by Karen Hesse

*After the Dancing Days* by Margaret I. Rostkowski

### LEVEL P

- Figurative language is used but explained by the writer
- Texts are longer and more complex, with greater variety of types and genre.
- Texts are largely distanced from the children's personal experiences, requiring greater ability to understand historical contexts and interpret new meanings from the text.

#### EXAMPLES:

*The T. F. Letter* by Karen Ray

*A Taste of Blackberries* by Doris B. George

*The Private Notebook of Katie Roberts* by Sonja Lamut

*Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World* by Mildren P. Walter

*The Forgotten Door* by Alexander Key

*Encyclopedia Brown* series books by Donald J. Sobol

*Magic School Bus* series by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen

*Stone Fox* by John Reynolds Gardiner

*Time Warp Trio* series books by Jon Scieszka

*Wayside School* series books by Louis Sachar

### LEVEL Q

- These books have very few illustrations.
- Books employ more complex sentences and vocabulary than previous levels.
- Plots are complex, offering sophisticated humor and interesting ideas.
- Characterization is shown through the use of dialogue and perspective.
- Books are quite long, requiring sustained interest and reading over many days.
- Books may focus on mature themes associated with problems in society.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Run Away From Home* by Patricia C. McKissack

*The Great Brain Does It Again* by John D. Fitzgerald

*Sara Crewe* by Frances H. Burnett

*The Story of George Washington Carver* by Eva Moore

*Bunnicula* by James Howe

*James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl

*Anastasia* series books by Lois Lowry

Many books in the *American Girls* collection of books

*Dragon Quest* series of books by Jackie French Koller

*Help! I'm Trapped....* series books by Todd Strasser  
*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Superfudge*, and  
Several other books by Judy Blume

### LEVEL R

- Books represent a range of times in history.
- Vocabulary requires understanding of connotative meanings.
- Fiction books may use simile and metaphor.
- Nonfiction books focus on biographies and autobiographies.
- Books may deal with mature themes such as war, family problems, and death.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Fourth Grade Rats* by Jerry Spinelli

*Sounder* by William Armstrong

*The Best, Worst School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson

*The Story of Thomas Alva Edison: The Wizard of Menlo Park* by Margaret Davidson

*Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink

*Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

*Shiloh* by Phyllis R. Naylor

*Strider* by Beverly Cleary

*Spider Boy* by Ralph Fletcher

*Zeely* by Virginia Hamilton

Many of the books by Gary Paulsen

### LEVEL S

- Books reflect a wide variety of topics and cultures.
- Many works of historical fiction are included at this level.
- Texts present experiences that are distant from the student's background.
- Texts offer opportunities to make inter-textual connections among other previously read texts and historical events.

#### EXAMPLES:

*There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* by Louis Sachar

*Little House on the Prairie* by Laura I. Wilder

*The Borrowers* by Mary Norton

*The Cybil War* by Betsy Byars

*Flying Solo* by Ralph Fletcher

*Journey to Jo'burg* by Beverly Naidoo

*Matilda* by Roald Dahl

*The Star Fisher* by Laurence Yep

*Taking Sides* by Gary Soto

*A Taste of Blackberries* by Doris Buchanan Smith

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### LEVEL L

- Picture books are longer and more complex.
- Chapter books involve more complex plots that span longer periods of time.
- Texts represent full range of genres.
- Most chapter books are 70 to 80 pages long.
- Print size is varied and often smaller.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King* by Jean Marzollo

*Katy and the Big Snow* by Virginia L. Burton

*Amelia Bedelia* series books by Peggy Parish

*Cam Jansen* series books by David A. Adler

*George and Martha* series books by James Marshall

*Horrible Harry* series books by Suzy Kline

*Pee Wee Scouts* series books by Judy Delton

*Pinky and Rex* series books by James Howe

*Triplet Trouble* series books by Debbie Dadey & Marcia Thornton Jones

### LEVEL M

- Chapter books are longer with fewer pictures.
- Themes and topics vary widely and are more complex.
- Print size is smaller with more lines and words per page.
- Ancillary information materials may be included, such as maps, glossaries, vignettes, biographies and time lines.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch

*Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey

*Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett

*Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express* by Margaret K. Wetterer

*Blue Ribbon Blues* by Jerry Spinelli

*Ghost Town Treasure* by Clyde Robert Bulla

*Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots* and other *Bailey*

*School Kids* books by Debbie Dady and Marcia Thornton Jones

*Arthur* books by Marc Brown

*Magic Treehouse* books by Mary Pope Osborne

*Polk Street School* series books by Patricia Reilly Giff

*Junie B. Jones* series books by Barbara Park

*The Littles* series of books by John Peterson

*Marvin Redpost* series books by Louis Sachar

*Russell Sprouts* series books by Johann Hurwitz

*Sophie* series books by Dick King-Smith

### LEVEL N

- Books are 100 pages or more.
- Chapters are 15 to 20 pages in length.
- More emphasis is placed on reading informational texts.
- Texts still have one plot and episodic structures.
- Books require a cultural or historical context for interpretation.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Rumpelstiltskin* by Paul O. Zelinsky

*Lion Dance* by Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low

*The Most Wonderful Doll in the World* by Phyllis McGinley

*We'll Never Forget You, Roberto Clemente* by Trudie Engel

*Max Malone Makes a Million* by Charlotte Herman

*Squanto: Friend of the Pilgrims* by Clyde Robert Bulla

*Adam Joshua Capers* series books by Janice Lee Smith

*Amber Brown* series books by Paula Danzinger

*The Zack Files* series of books

Many of the books by Ann Cameron (*The Stories Julian Tells*, etc.)

### LEVEL O

- Texts have multiple characters with interwoven plots, flashbacks, or other complex styles.
- Longer books have up to 200 pages and include realistic fiction, biographies, science fiction, and folk and fairy tales.
- Illustrations are primarily black and white but are used infrequently.
- Many new multisyllable words are used.

#### EXAMPLES:

*Gladly Here I Come* by Joy Cowley

*The Mouse and the Motorcycle* by Beverly Cleary

*The Bad Dad List* by Anna Kenna

*The Sock Gobbler and Other Stories* by Barbara Berge

*E Is for Elisa* by Johanna Hurwitz

*Henry and Ribsy* by Beverly Cleary

*Ramona Forever* by Beverly Cleary

*Baby-Sitters Club Mystery* series of books by Ann M. Martin

*Boxcar Children* series books by Gertrude Chandler Warner

*Henry Huggins* series books by Beverly Cleary

*Pony Pals* series books by Jeanne Betancourt

- Stories have a distinct beginning, middle and end.
- Use of dialogue increases.
- Word-analysis skills are increasingly needed at this level.

**EXAMPLES:**

*My Very Hungry Pet* by Debbie Swan  
*The Best Thing About Food* by Fay Robinson  
*The Jigaree* by Joy Cowley  
*Late for Soccer* by Jeremy Giles  
*Tabby in the Tree* by Beverly Randell

**LEVELS G & H**

- Ideas and vocabulary are more challenging.
- Content is increasingly distant from children’s experiences.
- Stories contain repeated language patterns in multiple episodes.
- Stories are longer with more pages per book than in previous levels.
- Repetition within episodes becomes less in level H books.

**EXAMPLES:**

**LEVEL G**

*Knobby Knuckles, Knobby Knees* by Jill Carter and Judy Ling

*How Have I Grown?* By Mary Reid  
*Balcony Garden* by Rebecca Weber  
*Grandpa’s Lemonade* by Helen Upson  
*William’s Skateboard* by Dale Golder

**LEVEL H**

*Mom’s Secret* by Meredith Costain  
*I Was Walking Down the Road* by Sarah Barchas  
*Digging to China* by Katherine Goldsby  
*Robert and the Rocket* by Leesa Waldron  
*George Shrinks* by William Noyce

**LEVEL I**

- Texts are of greater variety, including information texts.
- Story structure is more complex, with more episodes and with themes less related to experiences of children.
- Point of view is introduced.
- Texts increase in length, and there are more than eight sentences per page.
- Texts include large numbers of unfamiliar words requiring word analysis skills.

**EXAMPLES:**

*Dancin’ Down* by Evangeline Nicholas  
*The Friendly Crocodile* by Monica Hiris  
*Swimming Lessons* by Amy Algie

*Big Bad Rex* by Betty Erickson  
*The Witch’s Haircut* by Mavis Wyvill

**LEVEL J**

- Variety of genre increases.
- Books are 30 to 60 pages in length.
- Chapter books start at this level.
- Longer books have easier text to sustain interest.
- Shorter books have more difficult text, requiring greater word analysis and interpretative abilities.
- Character development is enhanced in these texts.

**EXAMPLES:**

*Stone Soup* by Ann McGovern  
*Dolphins* by Marion Rego  
*There’s an Alligator Under My Bed* by Mercer Mayer  
*King Midas and the Golden Touch* by Allan Trussell-Cullen  
*Children of Sierra Leone* by Arma Christiana  
*Henry and Mudge* series of books by Cynthia Rylant  
*Mr. Putter & Tabby* series of books by Cynthia Rylant  
*Poppleton* series of books by Cynthia Rylant  
*Young Cam Jansen* series of books by David. A. Adler  
 Many of the books by Pat Hutchins

**LEVEL K**

- Easy chapter books have a picture on each or every other page
- Text is relatively easy in these books, helping children sustain the reading of longer books.
- Literary picture books at this level have about 15 lines per page.
- Oral reading is now moving toward more silent reading.

**EXAMPLES:**

*Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express* by Elenor Coerr  
*Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* by Peter and Connie Roop  
*More Tales of Oliver Pig* by Jean V. Leeuwen  
*Nate the Great Goes Undercover* by Marjorie W. Sharmat  
*Arthur* series of books by Lillian Hoban  
*Clifford* series of books by Norman Birdwell  
*Commander Toad* series of books by Jane Yolen  
*Frog and Toad* series books by Arnold Lobel (Little Readers )

Many of the books by Betsy Byars

*Lionel* series of books by Stephen Krensky

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## **Book Levels**

Please note that each level incorporates the features of the preceding level and builds upon it.

### **LEVELS A-B**

- There is a single idea or storyline.
- Pictures and text are interdependent to carry the story.
- Topics are familiar to children's experiences.
- Texts use natural oral-language structures.
- Print and layout are consistent and easy to follow.
- Print is separate from pictures.
- Texts use the full range of punctuation.
- Spacing is sufficient to easily demonstrate boundaries.
- Words are repeated throughout the story.
- Pages contain one to four lines of print, with Level A having fewer and Level B having more.

EXAMPLES:

#### **LEVEL A**

*Underwater* by Rebel Williams

*I Like to Find Things* by Gavin Bishop

*Dogs* by Amy Levin

*Painting* by Joy Cowley

*Moms & Dads* by Beverly Randell, Jenny Giles and Annette Smith

#### **LEVEL B**

*Hats Around the World* by Liza Charlesworth

*Making Mountains* by Margaret Ballinger and Rachel Gossett

*For Breakfast* by Patricia T. Cousin, Claudette C. Mitchell and Gracie R. Porter

*Here I Am* by Judy Nayer

*Sally's New Shoes* by Annette Smith

### **LEVEL C**

- Page contains two to five lines each
- Story is carried more by the print than the pictures, but pictures remain important.
- Print may carry across a two-page layout in columns.
- Sentences are longer.
- More words are used

EXAMPLES:

*At the Store* by Patricia T. Cousin, Claudette C.

Mitchell and Gracie R. Porter

*One for You and One for Me* by Wendy Blaxland

*In the City* by Susan Pasternac

*Bo and Peter* by Betsy Franco

*Fishing* by Annette Smith

### **LEVEL D**

- Stories still simple but storyline is more complex.
- Pictures are still important but story is increasingly based on the print.
- Pages contain up to six lines of print per page.
- Sentences are longer.
- Texts use more words, including those with inflected endings.

EXAMPLES

*The Ball Game* by David Packard

*Hide and Seek* by Roberta Brown and Sue Carey

*Where We Live* by Brenda Parkes

*The Farm Concert* by Joy Cowley

*Lizard Loses Its Tail* by Beverly Randell

### **LEVEL E**

- Pages contain up to eight lines of print.
- Placement of text on page may begin to vary.
- Pictures contain several ideas and the text carries the story.
- Problem solving is needed to connect text and pictures.
- Words require a greater degree of word analysis skills.
- Concepts in the story may be less familiar to children.
- Longer stories have more words.

EXAMPLES:

*The Rain and the Sun* by Allan Trussell-Cullen

*Which Hat Today?* By Margaret Ballinger and Rachel Gossett

*The Red Rose* by Joy Cowley

*My Dad's Truck* by Meredith Costain

*Tortillas* by Maragrta Gonzalez-Jensen

### **LEVEL F**

- Print is smaller.
- Literary language is mixed with oral-language patterns.
- Frequently used words are expanded in the stories.