

Levels A and B

- Handling books – moving through the text from front to back, turning pages.
- Controlling left-to-right movement and return sweep.
- Noticing and interpreting detail in pictures.
- Using oral language in relation to the text.
- Matching word by word (indicated by precise pointing).
- Paying close attention to print – noticing some features of letters and words.
- Locating familiar and new words.
- Remembering and using language patterns.
- Using knowledge of language syntax as a source of information.
- Using oral language in combination with pointing – matching voice with words on the page.
- Predicting what makes sense.
- Self-monitoring – checking one’s reading by using word-by-word matching, noticing known words in text, or noticing mismatches in meaning or language.

Level E

- Tracking print with the eyes except at points of difficulty or on novel text.
- Using knowledge of language syntax and meaning to read with phrasing.
- Reading fluently.
- Solving new words while maintaining a focus on meaning.
- Rereading to check, confirm, and search.
- Cross-checking one source of information with another.
- Self-correcting using multiple sources of information.
- Predicting what will happen next and reading to confirm.
- Using known words to get to words not yet known.
- Relating one text to another.
- Using more information from print to construct the meaning of the story.

Level C

- Using visual information to help predict, check, and confirm.
- Controlling word-by-word matching of voice with print.
- Using illustrations to predict meaning as well as particular words.
- Checking illustrations with print.
- Using known words as anchors.
- Moving fluently through the text while reading for meaning.
- Solving some unfamiliar words independently.
- Engaging independently in same behaviors listed for Level B.

Level F

- Being aware of punctuation and using for phrasing and meaning.
- Searching visual information to figure out new words while reading.
- Using the syntax of written language to predict, then checking the accuracy of the prediction.
- Analyzing new words and checking them against what makes sense or sounds right.
- Controlling early strategies even on novel texts.
- Reading with fluent phrasing and attention to meaning.
- Moving quickly through text.
- Using known words and parts of words as well as letter-sound relationships to get to new words, and checking against other information such as meaning.
- Using multiple sources of information to self-correct.

Level D

- Controlling early strategies (word-by-word matching and directional movement) on longer stretches of text.
- Moving away from finger pointing as eyes take over the process.
- Using pattern and language syntax to read with phrasing.
- Checking on one’s reading using knowledge of letter-sound relationships, words, and parts of words.
- Moving more fluently through the text.
- Actively reading for meaning.

Levels G and H

- Moving through the text using pictures and print in an integrated way while attending to meaning.
- Solve new words by using word analysis, then checking the words against meaning.
- Monitoring one’s reading (accurately reading long stretches of text with intermittent hesitations and repeats).
- Self-correcting close to the point of error.
- Rereading to check and search.
- Discussing ideas from the story in a way that indicates understanding.
- Discussing characters in a way that indicates understanding and interpretation.
- Effectively managing a variety of texts, including fictional and informational texts.
- Connecting text to other texts.

Level I

- Fluent and phased reading, especially when rereading.
- Competent problem solving of new words on initial reading.
- Flexibility checking one's reading against meaning.
- Using information sources (meaning, syntax, and visual information) in integrated ways while focusing on meaning.
- Making connections between texts through discussion, art, or writing.
- Demonstrating an understanding of and empathy with characters through discussion, art, or writing.
- Moving forward easy, fluent reading even of unfamiliar and difficult texts.
- Self-correcting at the point of error with fewer returns to the beginning of sentences or phrases.
- Coping with unfamiliar concepts.
- Gaining momentum while moving through the text because knowledge is being constructed about how this text works and what it is likely to say.

Level L

- Longer stretches of text.
- More difficult vocabulary, ideas, and language structures.
- More complex ideas and topics.
- A greater range of genre.

Level J

- Using skills and strategies effectively on a variety of texts.
- Sustaining interest and fluency through a longer text.
- Easily coming back to a text if it requires more than one sitting.
- Solving unfamiliar words or concepts "on the run" without detracting from meaning.

Level M

- Longer stretches of text.
- More difficult vocabulary, ideas, and language structures.
- More complex ideas and topics.
- A greater range of genre.

In addition, watch for indications that children:

- Can use texts as references.
- Can search for and find information in texts.
- Can interpret texts from a variety of perspectives.
- Can read critically.
- Can understand subtleties of plot and humor.
- Can reflect on their personal response in relation to how others see the text.

Level K

- Using multiple sources of information in an integrated way.
- Reading silently much of the time.
- Effectively and efficiently analyzing longer words.
- Using a variety of word analysis strategies without losing meaning or fluency.
- Reading in a phrased, fluent way over longer stretches of text.
- Demonstrating through discussion, writing, or other media that they can understand and interpret the stories from different perspectives and empathize with the characters.
- Using text structure (both narrative and logic) to predict a likely sequence of events or to analyze and critique the text.
- Sustaining characters and plot over.

Levels N, O, P, Q, R & S

- Is the book appropriately placed on the level?
- Are there points of difficulty that make it harder than it seems?
- Is the text supportive in ways that might not be noticeable when examining the superficial characteristics and therefore easier than it seems?
- Are there other books that you feel are appropriate for guided reading at this level?