

Characteristics of Leveled Texts

Characteristics of Texts at *Levels A and B*:

- A single word, phrase or simple sentence on each page
- Patterned and predictable text
- Larger, easy to read font
- Exaggerated spacing between words
- Illustrations are highly supportive of text, most of meaning conveyed through the illustrations.
- One or two familiar words (“sight words”) or short, predictable sentences
- Consistent placement of the text, typically top left to right or bottom left to right
- Familiar, easy content
- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – strongly sight-word based

Characteristics of Texts at *Level C*:

- Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction
- Picture books
- Amusing one-dimensional characters
- Familiar, easy content
- Introduction of dialogue (assigned by *said* in most cases)
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – greater range of high-frequency words
- Some simple contractions and possessives (words with apostrophes)
- Two to five lines of text on each page
- Some bolded words
- Some ellipses, commas, quotation marks, question marks, and exclamation points

Characteristics of Texts at *Level D*:

- Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction
- Picture books
- Amusing one-dimensional characters
- Familiar, easy content, themes, and ideas
- Simple dialogue (some split dialogue)
- Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives
- Some longer sentences (some with more than six words)
- Some simple contractions and possessives (words with apostrophes)
- Two to six lines of text on each page
- Some sentences turn over to the next line
- Some words with *-s* and *-ing* endings
- Fewer repetitive language patterns

Characteristics of Texts at Level E:

- Simple informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, very simple retellings of traditional tales, simple plays
- Some texts with sequential information
- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Most concepts supported by pictures
- More literary stories and language
- Concrete, easy-to-understand ideas
- Some longer sentences – more than ten words
- Some three-syllable words
- Some sentences with verb preceding subject
- Variation of words to assign dialogue in some texts (*said, cried, shouted*)
- Easy contractions
- Mostly words with easy, predictable spelling patterns
- Two to eight lines of print per page

Characteristics of Texts at Level F:

- Simple informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, very simple retellings of traditional tales, simple plays
- Some texts with sequential information
- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Both simple and split dialogue, speaker usually assigned
- Some longer stretches of dialogue
- Some longer sentences – more than ten words – with prepositional phrases, adjectives, and dialogue
- Variation in placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs
- Some compound sentences connected with “and”
- Many words with inflectional endings
- More details in the illustrations
- Most texts three to eight lines of text per page
- Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, and ellipses

Characteristics of Texts at *Level G*:

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)
- Some longer texts with repeating longer and more complex patterns
- Some unusual formats, such as questions followed by answers or letters
- Some texts with sequential information
- Familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school
- Some texts with settings that are not typical of many children's experience
- Some sentences that are questions in simple sentences and in dialogue
- Sentences with clauses and embedded phrases
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some content-specific words introduced, explained and illustrated in the text
- Complex illustrations depicting multiple ideas
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page
- Slightly smaller print

Characteristics of Texts at *Level H*:

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)
- Narratives with more episodes and less repetition
- Accessible content that expands beyond home, school and neighborhood
- Multiple episodes taking place across time
- Some stretches of descriptive language
- Wide variety in words used to assign dialogue to speaker
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Some complex spelling patterns
- Some easy compound words
- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations
- Italics indicating unspoken thought
- Most texts three to eight lines of print per page

Characteristics of Texts at *Level I*:

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales)
- Some informational texts with a table of contents and/or a glossary
- Narratives with multiple episodes and little repetition of similar episodes; more elaborated
- Episodes
- Organizational structures used and presented clearly (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers
- Both familiar content and some new content children may not know
- Contain a few abstract concepts that are highly supported by text and illustrations
- Longer sentences that can carry over to two or three lines, and some over two pages
- Many two-to-three-syllable words from all parts of speech
- Some complex spelling patterns
- Some complex letter-sound relationships in words
- Eight to sixteen pages of print (some easy chapter books of fifty to sixty pages)
- Three to eight lines of text per page

Characteristics of Texts at *Level J*:

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), some simple biographies on familiar subjects
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations (forty to seventy-five pages)
- Organizational structures used and presented clearly (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution)
- Some unusual formats, such as letters or questions followed by answers
- Some ideas new to most children
- Some texts with settings that are not familiar to most children
- Varied placement of subject, verb, adjectives and adverbs in sentences
- Contain some abstract concepts that are highly supported by text and illustrations
- Some complex spelling patterns and letter-sound relationships in words
- Many lines of print on a page

Characteristics of Texts at *Level K*:

- Informational texts, simple animal fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), some simple biographies on familiar subjects
- Beginning chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)
- Varied organization in nonfiction text formats (question/answer, boxes, legends, etc.)
- Some texts with plots, situations, and settings outside what a child would typically find familiar
- Longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences
- Variety of words used to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Longer stretches of print without the support of pictures

Characteristics of Texts at *Level L*:

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries
- The text is organized so the child can identify the problem and solution, describe the information, and practice comparing and contrasting
- More complex plot structures
- Some information/ideas that are new or unknown to the reader
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words in nonfiction text introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- New vocabulary in fiction texts
- Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)

Use these questions to *guide* conversations with your child:**Fiction:**

- What is the problem in the story? What prediction can you make about the outcome?
- What evidence does the author give to tell you about the character?
- Could this story have happened in another setting?

Nonfiction:

- What did the author want you to learn?
- Why did the author organize the book this way?
- What does the illustration mean?

Characteristics of Texts at Level M:

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries
- Most of the content carried by print, rather than pictures
- Content of information text supported and/or extended by illustrations
- Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Multiple characters to understand and notice how they develop and change
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text

Use these questions to guide conversations with your child:

Fiction:

- How does the character feel? Find the evidence.
- What do you think the character will do based on his/her personality?
- Find the part in the story where the problem is resolved. Why is this event so significant?

Nonfiction:

- What new ideas have you learned?
- What connections can you make to other books?
- How did the author organize this book?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level N*:

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries
- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Topics that go beyond readers' personal experiences
- Descriptive and figurative language that is important to understanding the plot
- Various ways of showing characters' attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others' perspectives)
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Multiple characters to understand and notice how they develop and change
- Variety in sentence length and complexity
- Many two-to-three-syllable words; some words with more than three syllables
- Words with prefixes and suffixes
- Chapter books with 80-150 pages of print

Use these questions to *guide* conversations with your child:

Fiction:

- Why did the character make that choice?
- Why was that event so significant in this story?
- What did the author do that made this book interesting/funny?

Nonfiction:

- Do you agree with the author's point of view? Support your answer.
- What do the illustrations mean?
- Why did the author organize the book in this way?

Characteristics of Texts at Level O:

- Fiction
 - Chapter books with more text per page and less pictures
 - Multiple characters, with good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
 - Understand characters by their actions, thoughts, and dialogue and by what others say or think about them
 - Less reliance on pictures
 - Descriptive and figurative words/language important to understanding plot.
 - More challenging themes (ie, war and environment)
- Nonfiction
 - Personal knowledge and experiences needed to understand content of informational texts
 - Topics that go beyond reader's personal experiences
 - Multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic
- Different cultural perspectives requiring the reader to have an open mind and read from a different point of view
- Technical words not defined in context and require some background knowledge.
- Highly complex sentence structures and punctuation usage
- Some words with implied meanings essential to understanding text

- Some multi-syllable proper nouns challenging to take apart or decode

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- Why is the setting important?
- You may not have had the same experience as this character, but how can you understand him anyway?
- What things can you infer about this character? Using that information, what do you think the character will do?

Nonfiction

- How would you categorize the information in the text?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level P*

- Fiction
 - Chapters with multiple events related to a single plot
 - Multiple characters whose thoughts, actions, and dialogue are used to gain an understanding about each character
 - Settings from different time periods where students may lack knowledge or experience.
 - Plots with detailed events
 - Meaning of vocabulary is found within the text (context clues)
 - Longer selections of text with less illustrations

- Nonfiction
 - Multiple topics presented
 - Texts organized into a few simple categories
 - Variety of literary and informational texts
 - Glossary/Text dependent vocabulary – topic specific
 - Graphics
 - provide information and extend the text
 - complex and not fully explained
 - scales or legends important to understanding text
 - Format varies – question/answer, paragraphs, etc.
 - Features (table of contents, glossary, index, headings/subheadings, references, maps, cross-sections, diagrams, etc.)

- Content requires the reader to read from many different viewpoints (culture, language, race)
- Ideas and themes may be sophisticated or unfamiliar to the reader and require an understanding of cultural diversity.
- Extensive use of figurative language important to understanding plot
- Longer, complex sentence structures – dialogue, clauses, phrases
- Words are used figuratively – simile, metaphor, idiom
- Complex words with multiple syllables that are challenging to sound out
- Book and Print Features
 - Many lines of text on a page
 - Space varies between lines
 - Varied print styles and font sizes
 - Print often wraps around pictures, illustrations, graphics

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- *Fantasy*- How did the author use symbols or magic in this story?
- *Historical Fiction*- Did the author depict a story that actually could have happened during that time? How do you know?

Non Fiction

- How can what you have read in the past help you understand the people and cultures in this text?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level Q*:

- Fiction
 - Chapters with multiple events related to plot
 - Characters are memorable and reader identifies with how they change.
 - Settings require knowledge of content – history, geography
 - Plots with detailed events
 - Meaning of vocabulary is found within the text (context clues)
 - Longer, complex selections of text with few illustrations
- Nonfiction
 - Multiple topics presented
 - Texts organized into categories
 - Variety of literary and informational texts
 - Glossary/Text dependent vocabulary – topic specific
 - Graphics
 - provide information and extend the text
 - complex and not fully explained
 - scales or legends important to understanding text
 - Format varies – question/answer, paragraphs, etc.
 - Features (table of contents, glossary, index, headings/subheadings, references, maps, cross-sections, diagrams, etc.)
- Content requires the reader to read from many different viewpoints (culture, language, race)
- Complex ideas and themes on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences (through reading)
- Extensive use of figurative language important to understanding text
- Longer, complex storylines that are highly fictional
- Many multi-syllabic words that are difficult to decode (proper nouns – names)
- Many words with prefixes and suffixes (affixes) which are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and difficult to decode
- Book and Print Features
 - Many lines of text on a page
 - Space varies between lines
 - Varied print styles and font sizes
 - Print often wraps around pictures, illustrations, graphics

Use these questions to *guide* conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How does the author build suspense throughout the story?

Nonfiction

- How does this text give you a new perspective?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level R*:

- Informational texts, more complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Fiction – settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding the setting and characters
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Settings distant in time and space from students' experiences
- Many new vocabulary words for readers to derive meaning from context
- Extensive use of figurative language (idioms, simile, metaphor)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode

Use these questions to guide conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How has your view of this character changed as you read more?

Nonfiction

- Why did the author organize the text this way?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level S*:

- Informational texts, more complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Some fiction settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography, etc.)
- Complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious experiences
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding the setting and characters
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Many new vocabulary words that depend on readers' tools (such as glossaries)
- Many new vocabulary words for readers to derive meaning from context
- Extensive use of figurative language (idioms, simile, metaphor)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode

- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Increasingly difficult layout of informational texts, with dense content and format

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How did the author use symbols?

Nonfiction

- What did the author do that made this book interesting?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level T*:

- Informational texts, more complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Nonfiction texts with multiple topics and categories and subcategories within them
- Themes focusing on the problems of preadolescents
- Many texts focusing on human problems (war, hardship, economic issues)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- Some more complex fantasy elements, some showing conflict between good and evil
- Some obvious symbolism
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, or interrogative sentences
- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English
- Most texts with no or only minimal illustrations

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How does the dialect spoken affect the authenticity of the story?
- Why was that even so significant in the story?

Nonfiction

- What new ideas have you developed?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level U*:

- Fiction- Complex plots with multiple story lines. Students are able to connect them back to the primary plot.
- Nonfiction Structure-
 - Can be combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, sequence, problem and solution)
 - Variety in format (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)
- Complicated characters that develop over time
- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Many themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (ie: racism, war)
- In Fantasy and Science Fiction- struggle of good and evil
- Some symbolism and figurative language
- Many technical words that require background knowledge, and are not defined in context
- Long words that require the reader to pay attention to the root
- Some passages may be written in dialect or with some foreign words/phrases
- Illustrations:
 - Fiction- most books do not have pictures other than the cover. Some symbolic decoration on margins or chapter headings
 - Nonfiction- many graphics that require interpretation such as photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphics, maps
- Many texts with very small font

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How have your predictions changed during reading? Support with text examples

Fiction and Non fiction

- Are the social issues/cultural groups in the text accurate? Why or why not?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level V*:

- Heavy content load in fiction and non-fiction. Requires research in other texts to better understand the content.
- Many texts require knowledge of history
- Multiple characters- understanding of them required to comprehend themes
- Range of literary devices such as flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, irony, and figurative language. These devices add to the understanding of the characters and their conflicts.
- Critical thinking is required to evaluate informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Content particularly appealing to preadolescents and adolescents
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity

- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change
- Some texts may have archaic language such as the use of “thine” and “thou”
- Illustrations in many nonfiction texts are complex, dense, and challenging

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- How has the author used irony to make a point or increase enjoyment? Provide examples.

Nonfiction

- How does this book give you a new perspective?

Characteristics of Texts at *Level W*:

- Multiple themes that may be understood in many ways
- Adolescent social issues that require mature interpretation such as war, death, prejudice, and courage
- Some texts with heroic or “larger than life” type characters who represent the symbolic struggle of good and evil
- Fantasy- incorporates classical motifs (such as “the quest”— a journey in which a hero hears a call and leaves his home—alone or in the company of others—to search out a treasure. Along the way he undergoes trials, receives aid, fights enemies and may even die, and, if he succeeds in attaining the treasure sought, may change who and what he is.)
- Words with multiple meanings in the same text
- Words used in satirical ways
- Chapter books can be 300 pages

Use these questions to ***guide*** conversations with your child:

Fiction

- What connections can you make about the social/moral issues in the text and real current events?
- How does your character/text fit into the classical

Nonfiction

- Biography- What do you think of your subject’s decisions, motivations, accomplishments, etc.? Support your opinion.