

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level A Descriptors	Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers at Level A
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction• Picture books• Text and concepts highly supported by pictures• One line of text on each page• Familiar, easy content• Repeating language patterns (3-6 words per page)• Short, predictable sentences• Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – strongly sight-word based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just beginning to learn how print works• Just beginning to learn the <i>alphabetic principle</i> – the relationship between letters and sounds• Learning to use 1-1 matching• Learning to follow text from left to right• Differentiating between print and pictures• Beginning to notice each letter’s distinct features• Learning some easy, high-frequency words
Guided Reading Level B Descriptors	Characteristics of Early Emergent Readers at Level B
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple factual texts, animal fantasy and realistic fiction• Simple, one-dimensional characters• Picture books• Text and concepts highly supported by pictures• Two or more lines of text on each page• Repeating language patterns (3-7 words per page)• Very familiar themes and ideas• Short, predictable sentences• Almost all vocabulary familiar to children – strongly sight-word based	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and apply repeating language patterns• Stronger awareness of left-to-right directionality• Stronger awareness of 1-1 matching• Learning concept of return sweep (moving from one line of text to the next)• Able to distinguish and identify more letters according to their distinct features• Developing stronger understanding of the connection between sounds and letters• Expanding their core of easy, high-frequency words

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level C Descriptors

- 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 Early Emergent Readers at Level C

- Begin to move smoothly across the printed page when reading
- Begin to use some expression when reading
- Eyes are taking over the process of matching the spoken word to the printed word (removal of finger tracking)
- Developing phrased reading
- Noticing dialogue and punctuation and reflecting this with the voice
- Developing a larger core of high-frequency words
- Consistently monitoring reading and cross-checking one source of information against another; self-correcting

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level D Descriptors

- 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 Early Emergent Readers at Level D

- Eyes can track print over two to six lines per page
- Can process texts with fewer repeating language patterns
- Voice-print match is smooth and automatic; finger pointing is rarely needed, if ever
- Notices and uses a range of punctuation and read dialogue, reflecting the meaning through phrasing
- Can solve many regular two-syllable words, usually with inflectional endings (*-ing*).
- Consistently monitors reading and cross-checks one source of information against another; self corrects

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level E Descriptors

- 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 Early Emergent Readers at Level E

- Flexible enough to process texts with varied placement of print and a full range of punctuation
- Attend to more subtle ideas and complex stories
- Solve longer words with inflectional endings
- Read sentences that carry over 2-3 lines or over two pages
- Rely much more on the print; pictures are becoming less supportive
- Left-to-right directionality and voice-print match are automatic
- Oral reading demonstrates fluency and phrasing with appropriate stress on words
- Read without finger pointing, bringing in finger only at point of difficulty
- Recognize a large number of high-frequency words
- Easily solve words with regular letter-sound relationships, as well as a few irregular words

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level F Descriptors

- 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 conjoined by *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 Early Emergent Readers at Level F

- Beginning to build knowledge of the characteristics of different genres of texts
- Read stretches of both simple and split dialogue
- Recognize a large number of high-frequency words quickly and automatically
- Use letter-sound information to take apart simple, regular words as well as some multisyllable words
- Process and understand text patterns that are particular to written language
- Beginning to read fiction with more well-developed characters
- Left-to-right directionality and voice-print match are completely automatic
- Read without pointing and with appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and stress

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level G Descriptors

- 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 Developing Readers at Level G

- Able to internalize more and deeper knowledge of different genres
- Early reading behaviors now completely automatic
- Recognize a large number of high-frequency words
- Able to attend to more complex story lines and ideas
- Use a range of word-solving strategies (letter-sound information, making connections between words, using word parts) to read unknown words
- Read texts with some content-specific words
- Demonstrate appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation, and word stress

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level H Descriptors

- 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 Early Emergent Readers at Level H

- Encounter more complex language and vocabulary
- Read longer, more literary stories
- Able to process a great deal of dialogue and reflect it through appropriate word stress and phrasing
- Solve a large number of multi-syllable words, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Able to read a larger and larger number of high-frequency words
- Able to think at increasingly deeper levels
- Solve words with complex spelling patterns
- Begin to read more new texts silently, in order to achieve efficient and smooth processing

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level I Descriptors

- 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
- Underlying 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 Developing Readers at Level I

- Able to process mostly short texts (eight to sixteen pages); some easy illustrated chapter books
- Able to sustain attention and memory over longer periods of time
- Can process longer (ten words or more) and more complex sentences
- Have a large sight-word vocabulary
- Able to use word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Read many texts silently, following text with their eyes and without pointing
- Oral reading reflects appropriate rate, stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level J Descriptors

- 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)
- Underlying 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 Developing Readers at Level J

- Able to process a variety of texts (short fiction texts, short informational texts, and longer narrative texts that have illustrations and short chapters)
- Adjust reading strategies as needed to process different genres
- Process increasingly more complex sentences
- Have a large, expanding sight-word vocabulary
- Able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives
- Read silently during independent reading
- Oral reading reflects appropriate rate, stress, intonation, phrasing, and pausing

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level K Descriptors	Characteristics of Readers at Level K
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (Q/A, 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to accommodate the higher-level processing of several fiction texts with multiple episodes connected to a single plot • Read about and understand characters that are increasingly more complex • Able to process a great deal of dialogue within a story • Challenged to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and space and reflect diverse cultures • Have a large, expanding sight-word vocabulary • Able to quickly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives • Read silently during independent reading • Oral reading fully demonstrates all aspects of fluent reading
Guided Reading Level L Descriptors	Characteristics of Readers at Level L
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries • Underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution) • Some technical content that is challenging and not typically known • Some texts with plots, settings, and situations outside typical experience • 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 (largely unexplained) • Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to process easy chapter books, including some series books, with more sophisticated plots and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational texts • Adjust reading to process a variety of genres • Understand that chapter books have multiple episodes connected to a single plot • Bring background knowledge to new reading in order to process and learn new information • Begin to recognize themes across texts (friendship, courage) • Able to understand some abstract ideas • Able to see multiple perspectives of characters through description • Able to flexibly apply word-solving strategies for complex spelling patterns, multisyllable words, and words with inflectional endings, plurals, contractions, and possessives • Read silently during independent reading • Oral reading fully demonstrates all aspects of fluent reading

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level M Descriptors

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), simple biographies, simple mysteries
- Most of the content carried by print, rather than pictures
- Some abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- 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
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text

Characteristics of Readers at Level M

- Know the characteristics of a range of genres
- Developing preferences for specific forms of reading (mysteries, biographies)
- Can understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time
- Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text
- Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading
- Can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level N Descriptors

- 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
- 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
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
- Words with prefixes and suffixes
- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text

Characteristics of Readers at Level N

- Know the characteristics of and can process the full range of genres
- Developing preferences for specific forms of reading (mysteries, biographies)
- Can understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time
- Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text
- Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading
- Reader will slow down to problem solve or search for information, then resume normal reading pace
- Most word solving is unconscious and automatic; little overt problem solving needed
- Can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level O Descriptors

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, chapter books with sequels
- Prior knowledge needed to understand content in many informational texts
- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopic of a larger topic or theme
- Content requiring the reader to take on perspectives from diverse cultures and bring cultural knowledge to understanding
- Multiple characters to know and understand
- Characters revealed by what they say, do, think, and by what others say or think about them
- Descriptive and figurative language that is key to understanding the plot
- Characters with both good and bad traits, who change and develop over time
- Some words used figuratively
- New vocabulary in fiction texts largely unexplained
- Some words with connotative meanings that are essential to understanding the text
- Some multi-syllable proper nouns that are challenging to take apart or decode

Characteristics of Readers at Level O

- Know the characteristics of and can process the full range of genres
- Read a wide range of texts: chapter books, shorter fiction and informational text, including special forms such as mysteries, series books, and short stories
- Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and some unexplained
- Most word solving is unconscious and automatic; little overt problem solving needed
- Can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words
- Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading
- Demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level P Descriptors

- Informational texts, fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, chapter books with sequels, genre combinations (hybrids)
- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experience
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (race, language, culture)
- Ideas and themes requiring taking a perspective not familiar to the reader
- Some more challenging themes (war, the environment)
- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Multiple characters to know and understand
- Characters revealed by what they say, do, think, and by what others say or think about them
- Extensive use of descriptive and figurative language that is key to understanding the plot
- Building suspense through events of the plot
- Some more complex fantasy elements
- Many complex content-specific words in nonfiction, mostly defined in text, illustrations, or glossary
- Multi-syllable proper nouns that are challenging to take apart or decode
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction text, with denser format

Characteristics of Readers at Level P

- Can identify the characteristics of a full range of genres, including biographies on less well known subjects and hybrid genres
- Read a wide range of texts: chapter books, shorter fiction and informational text, including special forms such as mysteries, series books, and short stories
- Able to identify and use underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect) to help navigate through text
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and some unexplained
- Most word solving is unconscious and automatic; little overt problem solving needed
- Can read and understand descriptive words, some complex content-specific words, and some technical words
- Word solving is smooth and automatic with both oral and silent reading
- Demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level Q Descriptors

- Informational texts, more complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Many abstract themes requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues
- Some more challenging themes (war, the environment)
- 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 that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Nonfiction may contain a variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
- Some nonfiction texts with graphics that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation

Characteristics of Readers at Level Q

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and some 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/technical words
- Able to take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level R Descriptors

- 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

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level R

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and some 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/technical words
- Able to take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level S Descriptors

- 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, multi-syllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Increasingly difficult layout of informational texts, with dense content and format

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level S

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well known subjects, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space
- Able to process lengthy, complex sentences, containing prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives
- Solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and some 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/technical words
- Able to take apart multi-syllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level T Descriptors

- 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, multi syllable 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

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level T

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well know subjects, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to read longer texts and remember information and connect ideas over a long period of time (a week or two)
- Read and interpret complex fantasy, myths, legends that contain symbolism
- Understand perspectives different from their own
- Understand settings and people far distant in time and space
- Readers are challenged by many longer descriptive words and by content-specific/technical words
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level U Descriptors

- Informational texts, complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, etc.)
- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Many themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (racism, war)
- Many texts focusing on human problems (war, hardship, economic issues)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- Texts requiring inference to understand characters and why they change
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Some literary devices (for example, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
- Fantasy and science fiction showing struggle between good and evil
- Some words from languages other than English
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand
- Most fiction texts with no illustrations other than the cover jacket
- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphics, maps)

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level U

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well known subjects, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to read longer texts and remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading
- Read and interpret complex fantasy, myths, legends that contain symbolism
- Understand perspectives different from their own
- Understand settings and people far distant in time and space
- Most reading is silent, but fluency and phrasing in oral reading are well-established
- Able to take apart multisyllable words and use a full range of word-solving skills
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Able to search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level V Descriptors

- Informational texts, complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (folktales), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, etc.)
- Topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge
- 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
- Many themes presenting mature issues and the problems of society (racism, war)
- Many texts focusing on human problems (war, hardship, economic issues)
- Themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- Some switching from setting to setting, including time change (often un signaled, or signaled only by dialogue)
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Archaic words or words from languages other than English that do not follow conventional pronunciation patterns
- Introduction to more abstract literary forms, such as satire

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level V

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well known subjects, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to read longer texts and remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading
- Read and interpret complex fantasy, myths, legends that contain symbolism
- Able to read and interpret more abstract forms of literature (satire)
- Understand perspectives different from their own
- Understand settings and people far distant in time and space
- Readers can be very expressive when presenting poetry or readers' theater
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Able to search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level W Descriptors

- Informational texts, more complex fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature (myths, legends), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries, satire
- Unusual text organizations (e.g. flashbacks)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents (family issues, growing up)
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition
- Character interpretation essential to understand the theme
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as “the quest”)
- 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 that evoke alternative interpretations
- Some switching from setting to setting, including time change (often un signaled, or signaled only by dialogue)
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Archaic words or words from languages other than English that do not follow conventional pronunciation patterns
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level W

- Automatically read and understand a full range of genres, including biographies on less well-known subjects, hybrid genres, fiction with elaborate plots and complex characters, informational texts, etc.
- Able to read longer texts and remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading
- Read and interpret complex fantasy, myths, legends that contain symbolism and classical motifs (“the quest”)
- Encounter mature themes that expand their knowledge of social issues
- Able to read and interpret more abstract forms of literature (satire), and literary devices, such as irony
- Understand multidimensional themes on several different levels
- Understand settings and people far distant in time and space
- Readers can be very expressive when presenting poetry or readers’ theater
- Read and understand texts in a variety of layouts and formats
- Apply background knowledge of historical events, archaic language and/or regional dialects when reading

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level X Descriptors

- Informational texts, high fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, traditional literature (myths, legends), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries, satire
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents (family issues, growing up)
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters who represent the symbolic struggle between good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
- Some switching from setting to setting, including time change (often un signaled, or signaled only by dialogue)
- Some very long sentences (more than thirty words)
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Level X

- Understand and process a wide range of texts, including all genres
- Able to read very long texts with complex sentences and paragraphs, with many multisyllable words
- Understand and respond to mature themes such as poverty and war
- Able to read and interpret more abstract forms of literature (satire), and literary devices, such as irony
- Read and understand texts with multidimensional characters, texts that can be interpreted on several levels, and that are developed in complex ways
- Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well-established
- Challenged by a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and reader's tools (glossaries, indexes, etc.)
- Apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading both fiction and nonfiction texts

Guided Reading Indicators

Guided Reading Level Y/Z Descriptors

- Informational texts, high fantasy and science fiction, realistic fiction, traditional literature (myths, legends), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, mysteries, historical fiction, short stories, genre combinations (hybrids), diaries, satire
- Many texts with the complex structure of adult reading
- Unusual text organizations (flashback, flash forward, time lapses)
- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents (family issues, growing up)
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters who represent the symbolic struggle between good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
- Some switching from setting to setting, including time change (often un signaled, or signaled only by dialogue)
- Some very long sentences (more than thirty words)
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English

Characteristics of Independent Readers at Y/Z

- Understand and process a wide range of texts, including all genres
- Read very long texts with complex sentences and paragraphs, with many multi-syllable words
- Identify classical motifs such as “the quest” and moral issues
- Able to read and interpret more abstract forms of literature (satire), and literary devices, such as irony
- Read and understand texts with multidimensional characters, texts that can be interpreted on several levels, and that are developed in complex ways
- Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well-established
- Challenged by a heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and reader’s tools (glossaries, indexes, etc.)
- Apply prior understandings in a critical way when reading both fiction and nonfiction texts