

Characteristics of Readers Fountas & Pinnell Levels

Fountas & Pinnell reading levels range from A to Z. AB is considered kindergarten, CD early 1st grade, EFG mid 1st grade, HI late 1st grade, JKL 2nd grade, MN early 3rd grade, OP late 3rd grade, QRS 4th grade, TUV 5th grade, and levels WXYZ are considered 6th. Each student's reading level is determined in September, January, and May to measure growth. Below is a list of characteristics of print and skills that are mastered at each level. The characteristics and skills continue to build as the child moves from level to level.

Level A

- Concept of left to right
- Word by word matching
- Track with finger
- Story has one idea
- Pictures carry the story
- Letter/sound connection
- Learn some sight words

Level B

- Concept of left to right & 2 or more lines of print
- Word by word matching
- Track with finger
- Repeating language patterns
- Story has one idea
- Pictures carry the story
- Letter/sound connection
- Expanding sight words
- Self-Correct mismatches

Level C

- 2-6 lines of print
- Smoothly read left to right & across lines
- Some phrasing of words
- Moving away from tracking with finger
- Repeating language patterns
- Notice punctuation & quotations
- Larger sight word vocabulary
- Quick recognition of sight words
- Self-corrects mistakes
- Slowly attack entire word

Level D

- Simple fiction, fantasy, & informational stories
- Few repeating language patterns
- Notice range of punctuation & quotations
- Do NOT track unless a difficult word
- Reflect meaning through expression
- 2 syllable words with endings (ing), compound words, regular spellings
- Even larger, quicker sight word vocabulary

Level E

- 3-8 lines of print
- Placement of print varies on page
- More complex stories
- Sentences are longer and carry to the next line
- Less supportive pictures
- Fluent, effortless reading
- Easily decode regular words
- Solve some irregular words

Level F

- Building knowledge of different genres
- Simple and split dialogue
- Characters are more developed
- Stories may have multiple episodes
- Use endings, plurals, contractions, possessives
- Take apart multi-syllable words to decode

Level G

- Continue to build knowledge of genres
- 3-8 lines per page with smaller print
- Automatic reading allows for attention to more complex stories
- Use a variety of word solving strategies
- Decoding does not distract from meaning
- Stories have a few challenging vocabulary words or content specific words

Level H

- More complex language and vocabulary
- Longer stories
- Story structure is less repetitious
- More dialogue
- Better interpretation/expressiveness with dialogue
- Many multi-syllable words
- Complex spelling patterns
- Begin to read silently more often

Level I

- 8-16 page stories & easy chapter books
- Sustain attention and memory longer
- Longer, more complex sentence structure (prepositional phrases, adjectives)
- More complex spelling patterns
- Read many texts silently

Level J

- Variety of text (chapter books, familiar informational text)
- Adjust reading strategies to text
- Sentences are complex and contain more than 10 words
- Read silently for all independent reading
- Quickly word solve

Level K

- Realistic fiction, biographies, informational text, traditional literature
- Many chapter and series books
- Multi-episode fictional stories with 1 plot
- Characters are more complex
- Dialogue is not specifically assigned to a character
- Concepts are distant in time, space, and reflect a variety of cultures
- Content specific words
- Words contain both suffixes and prefixes
- Can demonstrate all aspects of fluency

Level L

- Chapter books and series books have more complex plots
- Mysteries are added
- Chapters are related to a single plot
- Learn content through reading
- Required to bring prior knowledge to comprehend
- Recognize themes across texts
- Some abstract ideas
- Multiple character traits are shown through dialogue, description, and what others say about the character
- Figurative language
- Flexibly solve words

Level M

- Know characteristics of variety of genres
- Interested in a special series or mysteries
- Elaborate plots
- Multiple characters that change over time
- Can identify non-fiction structures: description, comparison & contrast, temporal sequencing, problem/solution, cause & effect
- Automatic decoding in silent & oral reading
- Understand some content specific, descriptive, and technical words

Level N

- Non-fiction contains information on categories related to a topic
- Slow down reading to problem solve or search for information

Level O

- Books with sequels
- Are able to solve new vocabulary words, some defined and others unexplained

Level P

- Books are on less well-known subjects
- Abstract or mature themes
- Contain diverse perspectives and issues related to race, culture, language
- Nonfiction contains information on topics beyond reader's experiences

Level Q

- Understand perspectives, settings, and characters beyond their own experiences
- Challenging descriptive, content specific, and technical words that require background knowledge, glossaries, embedded definitions
- Variety of layouts, organization and fonts are used
- Search for information in illustrations and complex graphics

Level R

- Complex fantasies, less known subjects, diaries, logs

Level S

- Process complex sentences of more than 15 words

Level T

- Increased text on a page requires read to remember information and connect ideas over time
- Complex fantasy, myths, legends increase use of symbolism
- Search for and use information using complex graphics, content requiring background knowledge

Level U

- Connect ideas over many days of reading

Level V

- Use of satire
- Very expressive poetry and readers' theater

Level W

- Challenging fantasy, myths, legends with classical themes such as "the quest"
- Biographies may be of less admirable characters
- Mature, social themes
- Forms of literature: satire, irony
- Multidimensional themes, understood differently on several levels
- Heavy load of content specific vocabulary
- Texts require knowledge of historical events, regional dialects, archaic language

Levels XYZ

- Very mature themes of sexuality, abuse, poverty, war
- Biographies require critical thinking
- Apply prior knowledge of content, history, and science to critically understand both fiction and nonfiction