

**A Continuum of Reading/Language Development
To Guide Instruction**

An intensive review of the literature on word recognition and comprehension instruction identified the strategies listed at each level of reading development. In the comprehension section, the strategies in italics were stressed by authorities as the most important. Descriptors under each strategy describe behaviors teachers can attempt to identify in their students. If these are missing in the children, the behaviors will guide teachers in what to teach next. (*Note: Information on monitoring reading logs as a means of assessment will be added; it is forthcoming.*)

	Emergent Reader Level A-C	Beginning Reader Level D-J	Independent Reader Level K-N	Experienced Reader Level O-Z
Characteristics of Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple stories focused on a single idea with much support in illustrations. • Content of books is limited to situations and events beginning readers would know with themes and ideas that are easy to understand. • Repetitive language patterns with 3-7 words on a page, containing little or no dialogue statements. • Short predictable sentences with no embedded phrases or clauses. • Mostly one syllable words with very easy letter sound relationships. • Illustrations clearly and fully support meaning with little distracting detail. • Print is clearly separated from illustration, and appears in the same place on each page. • Usually 8 pages of print with one line (sometimes two lines in B and C) of text on each page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story lines contain more episodes that are usually repetitive in nature. Stories have a clear beginning, series of events, and ending and are focused on a single idea or series of related ideas/events. • Content of books begins to add things students would not know. • Themes/ideas become more complex (I-J) but are easily supported by text and illustrations. • Longer sentences with less and less repetition are introduced. Eventually, no repetitions of language patterns are used, although story events may be repeated. • Sentences become more complex across levels as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verb may precede subject. 2. Sentences may contain beginning phrases. 3. Embedded phrases and clauses are common. 4. Finally, complex sentence structures are introduced. • Mostly one and two syllable words which are generally easy to take apart into easily decodable units. • More details are progressively added to illustrations. • Illustrations move away from providing meaning support to merely providing a backdrop for the story. • Stories vary from 8-16 pages with 5-12 lines of text on a page (H-I-J can be longer). • Text may move to different locations on a page. • Varied punctuation marks are used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Level K, beginning chapter books contain short chapters connected by a character or broad theme. • Chapters contain many episodes, usually connected to a longer plot that is simple and straightforward. • At the end of this level of development (i.e. M-N), plots become more complicated with detailed episodes and multiple episodes related to a single plot. • Content and themes outside the readers' background of experience are supported by text and some illustrations. • Figurative language becomes common (simile, metaphor). • Attributes of multiple characters are described, and these characters carry story line. • Multiple points of view may be introduced. • Setting becomes important to understand characters and plot. • Longer, more complex sentences are introduced (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, and/or lists of nouns, verbs or adjectives). • Long stretches of text without illustration, requiring the reader to envision story events, setting, and character actions/reactions. • Some illustrations that support interpretation, enhance enjoyment, set mood, but are not necessary for understanding. • Range from 24-48 pages with 3-15 lines of text to chapter books of 60-100 pages with 5-24 lines of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text structure progresses from plots with a series of detailed episodes to more complex plots, many with multiple story lines and subplots. • Complexity also moves to unusual text organizations such as flashbacks, unusual structures for presenting information, such as a combination of different genres. • Books of short stories are introduced with plots that intertwine begin at levels R-S to books that contain collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book (Y, Z). • Much content, themes, and ideas outside the readers background of experience. Support for these is carried by print rather than illustrations. • Extensive use of descriptive and figurative language that is important to understanding plot, setting, and characters. • Complex plots which create suspense progression to problem resolution, and complex fantasy elements are introduced. • Literary language in narrative is common in complex sentence structures. • Many words with three syllables or more which are difficult to decode. • Some hyphenated words. • Book length ranges from 24-48 pages to chapter books with 100-300 pages. • Little or no illustration and denser text format; 30 or more lines per page.

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<p>Reading Strategies for Print</p> <p>Teachers can find this information in the following places:</p> <p>During the assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Running Records 2. Spelling Subtest. 3. Reading Words Subtest 4. Concept about Print Subtest 5. Reading Logs <p>During their teaching:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Conference notes 7. Writing folders. 8. Responses during shared reading. 9. Responses during interactive writing 10. Responses during word study. 	<p>Book handling/Print layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds book appropriately; tries to understand what book is about • Highlights title and author/illustrator on cover and title page • Knows that writing on page can be read orally; knows pictures help to tell the story • Turns pages; knows the difference between beginning and end of book • Begins to understand punctuation <p>One-one-matching/directional movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies difference between a letter and a word. • Locates known words in sentence. • Matches voice, print and eye (concept: one to one matching and correct directional movement left to right). • Makes return sweep to beginning of next line on two lines of print. • Holds voice/print/eye match in place when reading a multi-syllable word. <p>Graphophonic/Visual strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In level C, begins to use initial letters to identify words. 	<p>Book handling/Print layout/One-one-matching/Directional movement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These behaviors (listed in previous level) become automatic at level E. • Pointing to each word while reading ceases at level D, but reader can point to tricky words to assist with print work. <p>In addition to print strategies at the previous level, reader does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses initial letter at beginning and endings of words to identify difficult words. • Uses initial letters (consonant blends—br, cl, str, etc. and consonant diagraphs—sh, ch, etc.) at the beginning and endings of words. • At Level E, begins to check internal part of words moving left-to-right, letter by “chunk” to identify words. • Monitors and searches, using information from meaning and structural (syntax) cues to support print work. 	<p><i>All previous print strategies become automatic, and require little attention, freeing the reader to focus on more difficult, polysyllabic words and comprehension of longer more involved text.</i></p> <p>Graphophonic/Visual Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reads and understands the meaning communicated by prefixes and suffixes. ○ Decodes unknown words by moving across longer, polysyllabic words as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. letter by part, 2. recognizing known parts and/or 3. using parts of known words to identify parts of the unknown word. 	<p>Prefixes and suffixes as well as the meaning they communicate are recognized automatically.</p> <p>“Mediated word recognition” described at the previous level as using known words or parts of known words to identify unknown words becomes increasingly more automatic.</p>

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<p>Reading Strategies for Vocabulary and Comprehension</p> <p>Teachers can find this information in the following places:</p> <p>During assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Answer to questions on assessment passages. 2. Type of substitution of unknown words on Running Record <p>During teaching:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Turn and talk during read aloud. 4. Conference notes. 5. Responses in reading journals, post its, stop and jot samples. 6. Responses during shared reading. 7. Observation of book club discussions. 	<p><u>Vocabulary:</u> Almost all vocabulary is familiar to children. (Teacher screens books with too many difficult vocabulary words or complex concepts outside the students’ background of experience, pulling these books for individual/small group work with students or not using them at all.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines word meanings by attending to illustrations. <p><u>Comprehension:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows the pattern of sentences repeated in a story. • Notices changes in story pattern. • Follows the logic of a story, making word choices and predictions that match story and illustration’s content. • Retells story with teacher prompting (i.e. in stories with repetitive patterns, names at least 3 of repeated objects, events, actions, etc.) • Responds appropriately (laughs, connects to own experiences, comments on or questions story happenings) during or after reading. • Begins to understand cause and effect, and main idea, in simple stories. • Shares favorite parts of 	<p><u>Vocabulary:</u> Students begin to see how story events, illustrations, and sentence context assist them in identifying the meaning of unknown words. Teacher must teach this process with explicit instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines meaning of unknown words by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. searching for information in text that communicates flow, mood or tone of the story, 2. checks pictures (if any), and 3. uses background of experience related to the topic. • Reads words other than “said” used in dialogue to identify story happenings and/or to get information about characters (i.e. cried, shouted, thought). • Reads adverbs introduced into sentence structures (i.e. loudly, quietly) and determines their meaning in the context of the sentence and overall story. <p><u>Comprehension:</u> <i>Makes connections to known ideas/facts that helps in understanding information in text.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses background and semantics knowledge to gain meaning • Follows the logic of a story, making word choices and predictions that match story and illustration’s content. • Relates stories to own experiences; shares opinion of 	<p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When words are unknown, reader uses the mood or flow of the story along with context of the sentence to approximate a meaning for the word with teacher support and direction. ○ Demonstrates graphophonic/visual strategies for reading many polysyllabic words which are difficult to decode. (Often occurs through the increase of adjectives and adverbs.) ○ Reads and has meanings for the many inflectional endings that are added to words. ○ Reads words with affixes, plurals, contractions, possessives, and understands meaning changes that occur with these additions (i.e. past tense, ownership, shift in meaning—but..., and so forth). <p><u>Comprehension:</u> <i>Image/Envision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends to text language noticing use of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ descriptions ○ word play ○ simile ○ metaphor ○ irony ○ references to known topics • Makes connections to text, other texts and prior experiences and tells how making a connection helps in understanding the story being read. • Uses information gained in previewing a text (cover, chapter 	<p><u>Vocabulary:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When words are unknown, reader becomes skilled at using the mood or flow of the story along with context of the sentence to approximate a meaning for the word. • When new vocabulary is unexplained, reader uses his/her background of experience to approximate a meaning. • Reads and understands the many longer, descriptive words used as adjectives and adverbs. • Reads and uses the common use of metaphor, simile, idiom, and words with connotative meaning to demonstrate understanding of the text. <p><u>Comprehension:</u> (All of the dimensions of these strategies discussed in previous levels are applied with greater skill and automaticity on more complex texts that approximate adult reading.)</p> <p><u>Image/Envision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends to text language noticing use of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ descriptions ○ word play ○ simile ○ metaphor ○ irony ○ references to known topics • Makes connections to text, other texts and prior experiences and tells how making a connection helps in understanding the story being read.

	<p>stories and why he likes them.</p>	<p>stories.</p> <p><i>Monitors comprehension/Repairs if necessary.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses pictures to help gain meaning to correct if reading does not fit the topic. • Notices changes in story pattern. • Rereads, reads on, and goes back to gain meaning • Uses punctuation (quotations, question marks, commas) to gain meaning <p><i>Synthesizes important information across reading experiences (e.g. multiple books in a series, comparing and contrasting different books, etc.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compares two stories and describes both <p><i>Draws inferences from Important Details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses knowledge of syntax and language patterns to gain meaning (i.e. past tense, prepositional phrase markers such as “to” tells where someone is going). • Responds appropriately (laughs, connects to own experiences, comments about or questions story happenings) during or after reading. • Understands cause and effect and main (“Big”) idea in stories <p><i>Asks questions about text, author, self (i.e. readers engagement and understanding of text).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to cross-check using semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues, making sure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reading makes sense (semantic/meaning), 2. sounds like it would in a book (syntax/structure), and/or 	<p>titles, author bio, “content blurb,” and other books like this one) to make mental images that will set the reader up for the story.</p> <p><i>Monitors comprehension/Repair if necessary.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knows when meaning is lost; Uses strategies sustaining meaning to gain meaning when stuck. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rereads or reads ahead. • Checks illustrations (if any). • Checks to see what kind of word would fit (syntax/structure) • Checks for more complicated language structures (embedded prepositional phrases, dependent clauses, question format, and so forth). • Applies these strategies to longer texts <p><i>Synthesizes important information across text selection.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begins to understand complex plots and character development. <p><i>Synthesizes important information across reading experiences (e.g. multiple books in a series, comparing and contrasting different books, etc.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintains meaning over longer passages and more complex story lines ○ At Level J and up, summarizes chapters to predict later chapters or stories in a collection of stories about the same characters. <p><i>Draws inferences from Important Details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infers while reading to understand text <p><i>Asks questions about text, author, self (i.e. readers engagement and understanding of</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses information gained in previewing a text (cover, chapter titles, author bio, “content blurb,” and other books like this one) to make mental images that will set the reader up for the story. <p><i>Monitors comprehension/Repair if necessary.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Copes with difficult text by continuing to read for information and a deeper understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rereads or reads ahead. • Checks mental images and makes sure he/she is envisioning at all levels. • Checks to see what kind of word would fit (syntax/structure) • Checks for more complicated language structures (literary language, idiom, metaphor, irony, and so forth) and interprets these. • Applies these strategies to much longer and more complex text. <p><i>Synthesizes important information across text selection.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focuses on overall text rather than small details to figure out difficult text ○ Is able to integrate a variety of sources of information effectively while he is reading, sorting out what is most important.
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		<p>3. matches the print on the page (graphophonic/visual).</p> <p><i>Summarizes important information from part of or the entire text selection.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retells story with teacher prompting keeping accurate the <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting 2. Events, 3. Episodes, 4. Character actions. 5. Shares favorite parts of stories and elaborates on why he likes them 	<p><i>text).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-questions while reading to understand text ○ Predicts before and during reading to understand author’s message <p><i>Differentiates important information from less important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sorts out important details/information from less important and uses important ones to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make predictions. ● Summarize story. ● Answer self-questions. ● Read closely to synthesize information across a text or different books. ● Notice how making connections helps to understand the story. ● Make inferences. <p><i>Increases volume and type of reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moves from being “locked” in one type of book to reading a greater variety of texts and genres. ○ Maintains meaning over longer passages and more complex story lines. 	<p><i>Synthesizes important information across reading experiences (e.g. multiple books in a series, comparing and contrasting different books, etc.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Synthesizes new information to gain insight into a topic. ○ Can compare and contrast different characters from within the same book or from a variety of books <p><i>Draws inferences from Important Details.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summarizes a book’s main idea and gives supporting details ○ Evaluates more complex characters to decide whether their actions in the story were appropriate ○ Infers author’s message; states when author is expressing a particular bias or view. ○ Predicts what characters might do in other situations. ○ Predicts what will happen next in the story. ○ Can reflect on what he/she is reading and determine theme and/or tone of the selection. ○ By synthesizing information from details, connections, and close reading, draws necessary conclusions about the topic being read. ○ Can reflect on what he is reading and responds critically and/or emotionally to the text’s content or moral issues. <p><i>Asks questions about text, author, self (i.e. readers engagement and understanding of text).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is able to self-question as he is reading in order to gain a deeper understanding of the text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyzes plot to determine
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				<p>authors purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes important parts of story to understand the author’s purpose. • Sets a purpose for his reading: before, during, and after. • Uses his own questions and knowledge to gain more information about a topic. • <p><i>Differentiates important information from less important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorts out important details/information from less important and important ones to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make predictions. ○ Summarize story. ○ Answer self-questions. ○ Read closely to synthesize information across a text or different books. ○ Notice how making connections helps to understand the story. ○ Make inferences. <p><i>Increases volume and type of reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reads a wider range of genres, including novels, historical fiction, and non-fiction by choice. ○ Can deal with longer time periods in which the plot fluctuates from the past to the present and perhaps back again
	<p>Emergent Reader Level A-C</p>	<p>Beginning Reader Level D-J</p>	<p>Independent Reader Level K-N</p>	<p>Experienced Reader Level O-Z</p>

**A Continuum of Language Development to be
Compared and Contrasted with Level of Reading Development**

From: Cappellini, M. (2005). *Balancing Reading & Language Learning: A Resource for Teaching English Language Learners, K-5*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, Pp. 27 and 29.

Stage of Language Acquisition	Language Output	English Language Patterns
1. Preproduction Speech	Often silent; uses gestures to communicate; then one-word responses, yes/no answers, a few two-word phrases.	Yes/no responses Regular plurals Prepositions Verb <i>to be</i> Common nouns Simple sentences: <i>I am a girl.</i>
2. Speech Emergence	Uses short phrases and sentences; answers a variety of questions but makes simple speech errors.	Pronouns Subject statements: <i>there is/are, here is/are</i> Negative statements Verbs: Present Progressive tense: <i>She is going to school.</i> Prepositional phrases: <i>on the table</i> Basic adjectives Coordinating conjunctions: <i>and, or, but</i>
3. Intermediate Fluency	Has basic command of conversational English; uses full sentences and narratives; basic proficiency with academic language; makes common grammatical errors.	Possessive pronouns Verbs, habitual present tense: <i>She goes to her friend's house every day.</i> Past tense: <i>He played soccer yesterday.</i> Subject verb agreement Adjectives Coordinating conjunctions: <i>for, so, yet</i> Clauses linked by conjunction: <i>We go to the market so we can buy some food.</i> Subordinating conjunctions: <i>because, when, before, after</i> Contractions: <i>it's, isn't</i> Comparatives Questions, future tense.
4. Advanced Fluency	Has command of conversational English; uses complete and longer sentences and narratives; nearly native proficiency with academic language; makes some grammatical errors.	Reflexive pronouns: <i>myself, yourself</i> Abstract nouns: <i>bravery, curiosity</i> Verbs, irregular past tense: <i>get/got, catch/caught</i> Coordinating conjunctions: <i>however, therefore, neither/nor</i> Clauses linked by more advanced conjunction: <i>I liked the play; however, I didn't like the main character.</i> Gerunds: <i>singing, sleeping.</i> Superlatives: <i>widest, hottest</i> Questions, past tense: <i>Did you go to the museum yesterday?</i> Difficult idioms: <i>call it quits, carry out</i>
5. Advanced	Has full command of conversational English; native proficiency with academic language.	Verbs, conditional tense: <i>I wish she would answer me.</i> Past perfect tense: <i>had occurred</i> Auxiliary verbs: <i>could, would, should, might</i> Auxiliary verb contractions: <i>couldn't</i> Relative Pronouns: <i>who, whom, whose, which, that</i> Clauses linked by relative pronoun: <i>She was the lady who lived down the street.</i> Subordinating conjunctions: <i>although, whenever, until</i> Adverbial clauses: <i>whenever you finish your homework, you can watch TV.</i>

	<p>Abstract language: <i>I want freedom.</i> Passive voice: <i>The house was being painted when I arrived.</i> Metaphors: <i>You are my sunshine.</i> Similes: <i>My love is like a red, red rose.</i></p>
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