

Dear Families,

Your child was recently assessed in reading to determine his/her independent reading level. The independent level is the level your child can read (fluently with comprehension) without support. Levels are an approximation, and within each level some books may be easier or harder. Below are the characteristics of this new level to help support your child as a reader.

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

Parent Tip: Praise children for self-correcting and assist them in using character voices when there is dialogue in the text.

Happy Reading 😊

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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

Parent Tip: Children should stop pointing to each word. Attention should be given to word endings.

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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

Parent Tip: Choose text with familiar vocabulary to your child that is likely used in their oral language.

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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?

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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.

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