

Independent (“Just Right”) Reading Descriptions

Level O

Characteristics of Level O Books

- Informational texts, simple fantasy, realistic fiction, traditional literature, biographies, simple mysteries, historical fiction; most content in the print
- In information texts, a presentation of multiple topics that represent subtopics of a larger topic or theme; prior knowledge often required; *texts are organized into a few simple categories*
- In fiction texts, content requiring the reader to bring cultural knowledge to understanding; deeper meanings applicable to important human problems & social issues; *some more challenging themes (eg: war, the environment)*
- Various ways of showing characters' attributes; multiple characters to understand, but factors related to their change are explicit and obvious; *memorable characters have both good and bad traits that change over time*
- Complex plots with numerous episodes & time passing; *many stories have moral lessons close to the end of the story & some have parallel or circular plots*
- A few abstract themes & lessons requiring inferential thinking to derive
- Figurative/descriptive language & setting are important to understand plot
- Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode; words hyphenated across lines
- Words with prefixes and suffixes; *longer descriptive words*
- New vocabulary in fiction largely unexplained, while content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in informational text
- Vocabulary words are used figuratively/to show an abstract idea and/or must be figured out from context in order to fully understand the story

Characteristics of Readers at Level O

- Can understand and process narratives with more elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop/change over time, though some themes are unfamiliar
- 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 oral and silent reading
- Reader will slow down to problem solve or search for information, then resume normal reading pace; *will form implicit questions and search for answers*
- Can read and understand *the connotative meaning of words, and when words are used figuratively; can add new and interesting words to his/her vocabulary*
- *Can identify and use words with multiple meanings, or difficult proper nouns*
- *Can manage the challenge of working with characters who are multi-dimensional - not all good or all bad*

Sample Texts - Level O

All-Star Examples: *Beezus and Ramona (series)*, *Clementine (series)*, *Night Crossing*, *Pippi Longstocking (series)*, *The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson*

Books titles at my level include:

TITLE	AUTHOR
Spider Kane and the Mystery at Jumbo Nightcrawlers	Osborne, Mary Pope
Harriet Bean And The League Of Cheats	Smith, Alexander M.
Bud Barkin, Private Eye	Howe, James
The Boxcar Children (Series)	Warner, Gertrude C.
Einstein Anderson Mysteries (series)	Seymour Simon
The Golden Glove	Bowen, Fred
The New Kid At School	McMullan, Kate
Officer Spence Makes No Sense!	Gutman, Dan
Babysitter's Club Graphic Novels (series)	Martin, Ann M. and Raina Telgemeier
Pony Pals: A Pony In Trouble	Betancourt, Jeanne
Sable	Hesse, Karen
Seven Kisses in a Row	MacLachlan, Patricia
Smasher	King-Smith, Dick
Starring Grace	Hoffman, Mary Ann
Summer Wheels	Bunting, Eve
Tornado	Byars, Betsy
Gettin' Through Thursday	Cooper, Melrose
Saving Sweetness	Stanley, Diane
Talk About A Family	Greenfield, Eloise
The Gold-Threaded Dress	Marsden, Carolyn
Three On Three	Walters, Eric
A Mother's Journey	Markle, Sandra
Baseball's Best: Five True Stories	Gutelle, Andrew
How My Family Lives In America	Kuklin, Susan
Disasters At Sea	Donkin, Andrew
Mailing May	Tunnell, Michael O.
My Visit To The Aquarium	Aliki
Abiyoyo	Pete Seeger
Evil Elves, The	Bruce Coville
Fairy Called Hilary, A	Linda Leopold Strauss
Fairy's Mistake, The	Gail Carson Levine
Garden of Abdul Gasazi, The	Chris Van Allsburg
Happily Ever After	Anna Quindlen
Iron Giant, The	Ted Hughes
Magic Dogs of the Volcano	Manilo Argueta
Magic Elements Quartets Series	Mallory Loehr
Night of the White Sage, The	M. C. Helldorfer
Raising Dragons	Jerdine Nolan
Treasure of a Dragon Stories	M. Clark
Wizzil	William Steig

*Bold titles are Series books.

REMEMBER: You can sometimes find titles at your level or check the level of a book you already have on Scholastic's Book Wizard site. Look for the initials GRL (meaning Guided Reading Level) - this is the level we use at school. www.scholastic.com/bookwizard

Nancy Giansante is a librarian who keeps a leveled book list at her website: <http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante>
This site is searchable by grade level suggestions, titles, and author names.