

Independent (“Just Right”) Reading Descriptions Level U

Characteristics of Level U Books

- Wide range of genre and forms - including historical fiction *with settings different from students' own cultural histories*; some sentences have more than 20 words
- In information texts, texts with multiple topics and categories within them; prior knowledge often required; *variety of structures combined in complex ways*
- Fiction texts address important problems, social issues, challenging themes; highly literary texts - *most containing themes presenting mature issues* and problems in society (eg: racism) and human problems (war, hardship, economic issues); complex plots with subplots and/or multiple storylines; content appealing to preadolescents; complex fantasy showing good vs. evil; some obvious symbolism
- *Require inference to understand characters and why they change; multidimensional characters that develop over time*; themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- Many stories have moral lessons & many have parallel or circular plots
- Long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred; long stretches of descriptive language important to understanding setting, characters
- *Literary devices such as story w-in story, symbolism, flashback&figurative language*
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode; *long multisyllable words requiring attention to roots to read and understand*
- New vocabulary in fiction largely unexplained, while content-specific words are mostly defined in text, illustrations or glossary
- 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 U

- Can remember information in summary form to understand larger themes; *can follow complex plots, including texts with literary devices (flashbacks...)*
- *Search for/use information from texts with many new/unfamiliar concepts; can organize important ideas in summary form&later use them as background knowledge*
- Can explain how author supports points in a text; collects evidence for arguments
- Can express changes in ideas or perspective after and while reading
- Will vary the pace of reading, as needed; will form questions & search for answers
- *Can process texts with very small fonts and more difficult layouts*
- Can solve complex multisyllable words (vowels, phonograms, affixes, word origins...)
- Can understand words with multiple meanings, difficult proper nouns, can derive meaning from words from dialects and languages other than English
- Can infer characters' feelings/motivations, using cause/effect, dialogue, or what other characters say about them; can manage multidimensional characters
- Integrates content knowledge while reading to consciously create new understandings
- *Crafts and revises many predictions using knowledge of genre and evidence from text*

Sample Texts - Level U

All-Star Examples: *Julie of the Wolves*, *The Secret Garden*, *Wringer*, *Baseball in April and Other Stories*, *Nothing But the Truth*, *Number the Stars*, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963*

Books titles at my level include:

TITLE	AUTHOR
Heaven	Johnson, Angela
The Burning Questions Of Bingo Brown	Byars, Betsy
Freeglader	Stewart, Paul and Chris Riddell
The View From Saturday	Konigsburg, E.L.
Thunder Rolling In The Mountains	O'Dell, Scott
Who Really Killed Cock Robin?: An Ecological Mystery	George, Jean Craighead
Words By Heart	Sebestyen, Ouida
Bud, Not Buddy	Curtis, Christopher Paul
Evangeline Mudd's Great Mink Rescue	Elliott, David
The Graduation Of Jake Moon	Park, Barbara
The Miraculous Journey Of Edward Tulane	DiCamillo, Kate
The Voyage Of Patience Goodspeed	Frederick, Heather Vogel
The Wonderful Story Of Henry Sugar And Six More/BFG	Dahl, Roald
Wait Till Helen Comes: A Ghost Story	Hahn, Mary Downing
Rules Of The Road	Bauer, Joan
So Hard To Say	Sanchez, Alex
Buried In Ice: The Mystery of a Lost Arctic Expedition	Beattie, Owen And Geiger, John
The Tarantula Scientist/Quest for the Tree Kangaroo	Montgomery, Sy
Who Really Killed Cock Robin?	George, Jean C.
The Calder Game	Balliett, Blue
Eleven	Giff, Patricia Reilly
Half Moon Investigations	Colfer, Eoin
Secret Series	Bosch, Pseudonymous
The House On The Gulf	Haddix, Margaret P.
Animorphs (series)	Applegate, K.A.
Charlie Bone (series)	Nimmo, Jenny
Land of Loss	Applegate, K.A.
The Ruins Of Gorlan	Flanagan, John
Sisters Grimm (series)	Buckley, Michael
Warriors (series)	Hunter, Erin
Book Of Three	Alexander, Lloyd
Dragon Slippers	George, Jessica Day
Ella Enchanted	Levine, Gail Carson
Merlin and the Dragons	Yolen, Jane
The Boggart and the Monster	Cooper, Susan
The Magician's Elephant/The Tale of Despereaux	DiCamillo, Kate
The Tales of Beedle the Bard	J.K. Rowling
Castle In The Air	Jones, Diana Wynne
Room One: A Mystery Or Two	Clements, Andrew
John Lewis In The Lead	Haskins, James & Kathleen Benson
Passage To Freedom: The Sugihara Story	Mochizuki, Ken

*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.