

Matching Readers with *Just-Right* Books

It is important to choose books that are at the appropriate reading level for the child you are tutoring. Also make sure to match the level of the book to the activity you are doing.

Independent reading level - 97%+ words read with accuracy, 95%+ comprehension. A child can read a book at this level with minimal or no adult assistance. These are great books for the child to read to you.

Instructional reading level - 95% words read with accuracy. A child can read a book at this level with adult support. Books at this level can be read by the tutor and the child together.

Frustration reading level - 90% or fewer words read with accuracy. A child cannot successfully read a book at this level even with adult assistance. Books at this level should be read to kids.

Listening comprehension level - Level at which children can listen and can understand the story, even though they are not able to read it themselves. Books at this level should be read to kids.



Five-finger Test

A simple way to gauge reading level is to do the “five finger test.” Have the student read a few pages. Tell the child to raise a finger every time he/she can’t comfortably read a word. If after a couple pages, he/she has 0-1 fingers up, you can consider it at independent reading level and appropriate for the child to read on his/her own. If there are 2-3 fingers up, it is at instructional level and you should provide support. If there are 4-5 fingers up, it is too hard for the student to read alone. Choose a different book or read the book to him/her.

Tips for Reading Aloud to Children



Before Reading

Select material that is interesting to the children. Consider non-fiction for students who are not into fairytales.

Get to know the book. Reading aloud cold is challenging. Take a few seconds to look through the book, identify any vocabulary that might be unknown to the children, and look for places where they can participate (e.g, huffing and puffing, saying a repeated phrase, etc)

Sit next to the child and make sure he/she can see the print and pictures

Talk to the kids about the subject of the book. Gauge and activate their prior knowledge of the topic. Ask them if they have read the book before, what they remember, what they think it might be about.

Take a book walk before reading. Flip through the book. Have the child look at pictures, skim text and then predict what the story will be about.

While Reading

Model Fluent Reading. Create different voices for each character. Use different intonations in your voice. Ham it up and make the story come alive.

Encourage the child to follow the text. Point to words in the text, if appropriate. Draw children's attention to punctuation, etc.

Pause and ask questions. "What just happened?" and "What do you think will happen?" are two great basic questions. Look for opportunities to connect the story to the child's life ("Have you ever been to the zoo?")

Allow the children to ask questions. Even if the questions are only remotely related to the story, they are still developing oral language.

Give them a task. Have them listen for the answer to a question. Or have them moo along with you (but only at the appropriate time).

Keep the story moving. Too much participation or discussion may detract from the flow and cause the child to lose interest. Find a balance.

After reading

Discuss the story. What happened? What did they like most? Etc.

Relate the story to real-life experience

Have the students **retell the story** in their own words.

Activities for Reading with Children



Echo Reading

The tutor reads a sentence or phrase aloud while running a finger under each word. The child then repeats what was read.

Paired Reading

The tutor and child read aloud together. The tutor should read at a normal pace and draw a finger underneath what is being read. If the child stops, keep going. Eventually he/she will probably jump back in.

Alternate Reading

The tutor and student take turns reading aloud. The tutor's reading provides a break for the child, moves the story along, demonstrates fluency, and helps the child with new words.

Assisted Reading

The child reads aloud. The tutor assists when necessary. The goal is to provide a successful reading experience for the child.

Coaching Children Through Reading



In assisted / guided reading, it is important to help the children apply their reading skills in a positive manner

Help with Self-Monitoring

You said _____. Does that make sense? (comprehension)

You said _____. Does that look and sound right (alphabetics)

Were there enough words? (one-to-one matching)

Help with Alphabetics

Good job! How did you figure that out? (After the child pauses but then decodes a word.)

What word that starts with the letter _____ (or sound _____) would make sense here?

Is there part of the word that you recognize?

Can you sound it out and come up with a word that would make sense?

Why don't you start over at the beginning of the sentence?

Know When to Jump In

Knowing when to jump in and help a reader can be a challenge. You want them to try, but you don't want them to get frustrated. Good coaches know when to provide children with an unknown word. Usually you will pause for 3 seconds before supplying the word, allowing the student some time to decode it independently. After that, decide whether to supply the word or provide coaching.

You may wish to come up with a signal. For example, have the child touch his/her nose if they want help. Otherwise, let them work!