

Fountas & Pinnell Text Level Descriptions

Level	Description
A DRA 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  One line of text (focus on print, directionality)  Large spaces between words  Sentence structure is similar to students' language  Repeated pattern  Includes basic sight words  Punctuation includes periods, question marks, and exclamation marks  Pictures are highly supportive  Topics are familiar to children  Focus on a single idea
B DRA 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Two lines of text (return sweep)  Large spaces between words  Sentences increase in length  Sentence structure is similar to students' language  Repeated words or pattern  Includes more basic sight words  Includes some word endings (e.g., s, ed, ing)  Punctuation includes periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and some commas  Simple dialogue  Pictures are highly supportive  Topics are familiar to children  Focus on a single idea  Setting is present, but seldom a plot
C DRA 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Increased number of words and lines of text  Large spaces between words  Sentences increase in length and may include some embedded clauses  Sentence structure is similar to students' language  Some books have repeated words or pattern  Most books are about eight pages  Pictures are highly supportive (Students cannot rely on patterns and pictures to read with accuracy.)  Includes more basic sight words and some compound words  Includes word endings (e.g., s, ed, ing)  Opportunities for decoding simple words  Punctuation includes periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas  Dialogue is frequently included  Topics are familiar to children  Characters and story plots are straightforward  Experiential books – events and artifacts of everyday life
D DRA 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Longer, more complex stories  Some compound sentences conjoined by "and"  Simple plot but may include several elaborate episodes  Topics are familiar, but may include abstract or unfamiliar ideas  Text layout is easy to follow, but font size may vary  Texts range from ten to twenty pages  Pictures begin to extend meaning of text  New punctuation may be included (i.e., dashes, ellipses)  Larger number of high frequency words/greater variety  Includes more word endings, compound words, and multisyllable words  More opportunities for decoding words with familiar patterns
E DRA 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Sentences include more embedded phrases and clauses  More variety in language including some literary language  Topics range beyond the familiar  Genres include realistic fiction, fantasy, and nonfiction (simple informational books)

Benchmark: Almost all kindergarten children should be reading level 3 books by the end of the year.

<p>E (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Font size may vary 📖 Texts range from ten to twenty pages 📖 Text structure is more complex, often with several simple episodes 📖 More characters, but not very developed 📖 Picture support is moderate 📖 Increase number of words and lines of print 📖 Greater variety of high frequency words 📖 Frequent dialogue and full range of punctuation 📖 More multisyllable words and less common spelling patterns
<p>F DRA 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Language reflects patterns that are more characteristic of written language than spoken language 📖 Concepts are more distant from local knowledge or the everyday world 📖 Some texts have abstract ideas which require discussion 📖 Themes emerge 📖 Genres include realistic fiction, human and animal fantasy, simple folktales, and nonfiction (informational texts) 📖 Text range from ten to thirty pages 📖 Full range of punctuation to enhance meaning 📖 Longer texts may have longer sentences and/or more lines of text per page and shorter texts may have unusual language patterns or technical words 📖 Greater variety in vocabulary
<p>G DRA 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Sentences are longer with many embedded clauses 📖 Several high frequency words which increase in difficulty 📖 Large number of decodable words with regular and irregular patterns 📖 Several episodes with a variety of characters 📖 Ideas and vocabulary are more challenging with some specialized vocabulary 📖 Story line is carried by the text 📖 Pictures support and extend meaning 📖 Readers are expected to remember information and action over a longer reading time <p>Text Examples: <i>Teddy Bear for Sale, Rabbit's Party, Say It, Sign It</i></p>
<p>H DRA 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Language is not repetitious 📖 Full range of high frequency words 📖 Size and placement of print varies widely 📖 Some repeated episodes 📖 Content moves away from familiar experiences 📖 Genres include realistic fiction, fantasy, folktales, and nonfiction (informational texts) 📖 Characters tend to learn and change 📖 Picture support is used to enhance and extend meaning as well as arouse interest 📖 Story events require interpretation <p>Text Examples: <i>A Clean House for Mole and Mouse, A Kiss for Little Bear, The New Baby Calf</i></p>
<p>I DRA 16</p> <p>Benchmark: Almost all first graders should be able to independently read, with understanding and fluency, books at level 16.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Multiple episodes are highly elaborated 📖 Most text lengths are about the same as G and H (ten to thirty pages) but have smaller print size 📖 Some longer texts thirty to forty pages 📖 Texts use a great deal of dialogue 📖 Pictures enhance meaning but provide little support for precise word solving and meaning 📖 Complex word solving is required with multi-syllable words 📖 Paragraphs and sentences are longer 📖 Readers transition to texts that may call for sustaining interest and meaning over several reading periods 📖 Some chapter-like books 📖 Most books are narrative (realistic fiction, fantasy, and folktales) with a plot and solution 📖 Informational books are shorter with more difficult content 📖 Characters and story events require interpretation <p>Text Examples: <i>The Bunny Hop, The Dinosaur Who Lived in My Backyard, Apples and Pumpkins</i></p>

Sources: *Leveled Books for Readers Grades 3-6* (Fountas & Pinnell) and *Matching Books to Readers: Using Leveled Books in Guided Reading, K-3* (Fountas & Pinnell)

<p>J DRA 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Stories have similar characteristics to level I but are generally longer (some over fifty pages)  First chapter books  Characters in series books will expand reading interest in reading, increasing the amount of time reading  Large amount of dialogue  Full range of punctuation within longer, more complex sentences with many adjectives and adverbs  Texts have one main plot with several episodes over a period of time – chapter books may only cover a period of one day  Requires more interpretation on the part of the reader  Requires quick solving of new words, including three or four syllables. <p>Text Examples: <i>Mouse Tales, Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble, Seeds</i></p>
<p>K DRA 20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Includes longer, slightly more complex chapter books with more characters  Books have one plot, but many episodes are carried over a period of time  Shorter books have more difficult vocabulary (not often used in speech by children), challenging content, or more complex themes  Genres include realistic fiction, fantasy, and nonfiction (informational texts)  Some fables or legends and historical fiction may be include (not requiring extensive background knowledge to understand)  Large amount of dialogue used to determine what is going on in the plot  Characters show various perspectives  Illustrations are placed throughout the text and are used to enhance enjoyment and helps students visualize  Readers explore the various connotations of words <p>Text Examples: <i>Nate the Great and the Tardy Tortoise, Frog and Toad are Friends, What Happens When You Recycle?</i></p>
<p>L DRA 24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Includes chapter books with fewer illustrations and complex picture books  Texts contain many multisyllable and technical words  Words are used for a range of connotative meanings  Print size is varied but often much smaller  Most sentences end in the middle of lines and continue from one line to the next  Includes a full range of genres from realistic fiction to biography  More characters are speaking with dialogue not always assigned  Plots and characters are more sophisticated  Characters develop and change in response to events in the story  Events in chapters build on each other requiring the reader to recall and keep track of information <p>Text Examples: <i>Pinky and Rex and the Spelling Bee, Horrible Harry in Room 2B, Looking at Insects</i></p>
<p>M DRA 28</p> <p>Benchmark: Almost all second graders should be able to independently read, with understanding and fluency, books at level 28.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Chapter books are longer texts (sixty to one hundred pages) with short chapters and few pictures  Informational books are shorter with new information and text features  Includes a full range of genres with more biographies included  Text have subtle meanings that require interpretation and more background knowledge  More complex and expanded plots  More complex themes (i.e., respect for difference, loneliness, independence)  Vocabulary may be introduced to create feeling or mood  Writer's style may be clearly marked by use of words, sentence structure, descriptions of characters, or humor <p>Text Examples: <i>Matt Christopher: Man Out at First, A picture Book of Frederick Douglass, Caves</i></p>
<p>N DRA 30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Chapter books are usually one hundred or more pages with short chapters and memorable characters  Nonfiction titles are generally shorter and may present social issues

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<p>N (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Topics of informational books and settings for narratives go well beyond readers' personal experiences  Complex picture books illustrate themes and build experience in character interpretation  More demand on the reader to use a variety of strategies to understand plot, theme, and new vocabulary  Writers use devices such as irony and whimsy to create interest and communicate the nature of characters <p>Text Examples: <i>Shoeshine Girl, My Name is Maria Isabel, Helen Keller: Courage in the Dark</i></p>
<p>O DRA 34</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Multiple characters are developed through what they say, think, and do or what others say about them  Characters deal with everyday experiences or more serious problems such as war or death  Genres expand to include historical and science fiction  Chapter books have between fifty and two hundred pages  Text have few illustrations - usually black and white drawings or photographs  Highly complex sentences employ a wide range of punctuation necessary for understanding the text <p>Text Examples: <i>Beezus and Ramona, Mieko and the Fifth Treasure, Harry Little Critters</i></p>
<p>P DRA 38</p> <p>Benchmark: Almost all third graders should be able to independently read, with understanding and fluency, books at level 38.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Wide variety of fiction and nonfiction  Fiction texts include novels with longer chapters  Characters are often concerned with issues related to growing up and family relationships  Settings are very detailed  Informational texts and biographies present complex ideas  Topics may be unfamiliar  Longer texts require readers to sustain interest and attention over several days  Structural complexity, theme sophistication, and necessary background experience increases <p>Text Examples: <i>Fantastic Mr. Fox, Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear, Stone Fox, Maps and Codes</i></p>
<p>Q DRA 40 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Wide variety of fiction and nonfiction  Fiction texts include novels with longer chapters  Characters are often concerned with issues related to growing up and family relationships  Settings are very detailed  Informational texts and biographies present complex ideas  Topics may be unfamiliar  Longer texts require readers to sustain interest and attention over several days  May have more mature themes focusing on problems of society as they effect children  Texts contain difficult words to solve, often including words from other languages <p>Text Examples: <i>Dear Mr. Henshaw, Anastasia Krupnik, Amazing Spiders</i></p>
<p>Benchmark: Almost all fourth graders should be able to independently read, with understanding and fluency, books in the 40 range.</p>	
<p>R DRA 40 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Fiction and nonfiction texts represent a range of times in history  Wider variety of texts  Sophisticated vocabulary requires an understanding of connotative shadings of meaning  Literary devices such as simile and metaphor require background knowledge  Technical aspects of texts requires background knowledge  Mature themes include family problems, war, and death  Readers must connect concepts and themes to political and historical events or environmental information <p>Text Examples: <i>Fig Pudding, Her Piano Sang, Sadako and the Thousand Paper Crane</i></p>

<p>S DRA 40 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Complex ideas and information  Includes a wide variety of topics and cultures  Paragraphs and sentences are complex requiring rapid and fluent reading with attention to meaning  Requires automatic assimilation of punctuation  Chapter books include all genres with many works of historical fiction and biographies  Texts present settings from that are distant from students' own experiences  Literary selections offer opportunities for readers to make connections with previously read texts as well as historical events <p>Text Examples: <i>Bridge to Terabithia, The Star Fisher, The Story of Harriet Tubman: Conduction of the Underground Railroad</i></p>
<p>T DRA 50 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Include a variety of genres and text structures  Chapter books are long, with few illustrations  Readers need to recognize symbolism  Texts contain many sophisticate, multi-syllable words that readers will need to analyze in terms of both literal and connotative meaning  Readers need more prior knowledge of political and historical events and about the problems of different culture and racial groups  Themes include growing up, demonstrating courage, and experiencing hardship and prejudice <p>Text Examples: <i>Souder, The Watsons Go to Birmingham, The Double Life of Pocahontas, Follow That Fin! Studying Dolphin Behavior</i></p>
<p>U DRA 50 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Informational texts cover a wide range of topics and present specific technical information  Illustrations require interpretation and connection to the text  Narratives are complex with plots and subplots  Texts have several different themes and characters  Readers need to understand symbolism and themes which are more abstract  Creative text formats are used <p>Text Examples: <i>Tuck Everlasting, The View from Saturday, Insects</i></p>
<p>V DRA 50 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Biographies go beyond simple narratives to provide significant amount of historical information and focus on harsh themes and difficult periods of history  Science fiction presents sophisticated ideas and concepts  Texts require readers to think critically  Full appreciation of the texts requires noticing aspects of the writer's craft  Texts have print in a small font  Novels may be two hundred to three hundred pages long <p>Text Examples: <i>The Fighting Ground, A Wrinkle in Time, Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson</i></p>
<p>Benchmark: Almost all fifth graders should be able to independently read, with understanding and fluency, books at the 50 range.</p>	

<p>W DRA 50 range</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Themes explore the human condition  Fiction and nonfiction text present characters who suffer hardship and learn from it  Writing is sophisticated, with complex sentences, literary language, and symbolism  Text have print in a small font  Readers must have an awareness of social and political issues to comprehend texts  Fantasy and science fiction introduce heroic characters, moral questions, and contests between good and evil  Informational texts may present complex graphic information and require a whole range of content knowledge  Readers must understand all the basic nonfiction organizational structures  Narrative biographies include many details and prompt readers to make inferences about what motivated the subject's achievements <p>Text Examples: <i>Dragonwings, Dacey's Song, The Life and Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., Ocean Detectives: Solving the Mysteries of the Sea</i></p>
<p>X</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Science fiction at this level incorporates technical knowledge as well as high fantasy depicting quests and the struggle between good and evil  Readers are required to go beyond the literal meaning of the text to construct implied meaning by a writer's use of symbolism  There is a continuing increase in the sophistication of vocabulary, language, and topic <p>Text Examples: <i>Where the Red Fern Grows, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Beecher Preachers</i></p>
<p>Y</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Texts have subtle themes and complex plots  Include a whole range of social problems as themes with more explicit details (e.g., details about death or prejudice)  Texts include irony and satire, literary devices requiring readers to think beyond the literal meaning of the text  Fantasies are complex, depicting hero figures and heroic journeys  Readers are required to discern underlying lessons and analyze texts for traditional elements <p>Text Examples: <i>The Giver, Ann Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl</i></p>
<p>Z</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Informational books deal with controversial social concepts and political issues and include detailed historical accounts of periods less well-known  Readers learn new ways of finding technical information  Informational texts include complex examples of the basic organizational structures  Fiction texts explore a wide range of mature themes relative to the human condition  Fantasy texts present heroic quests, symbolism, and complex characters  Some texts present graphic details of hardship and violence <p>Text Examples: <i>The Farthest Shore, We Shall Not be Moved: The Women's Factory Strike of 1909</i></p>