

Text Complexity

Appropriate Achievement

Students select, at times with assistance, and read independently a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Texts include

- accessible content, based on familiar experiences of home, school, and community
- main ideas/themes that are concrete and easy to understand
- some longer, simple sentences with adjectives, adverbs, and phrases; some compound sentences
- language commonly used by students; many high-frequency words; occasional use of some unfamiliar words or content-specific vocabulary, explained and illustrated in text
- mostly one or two syllable words with a few easily decodable multi-syllable words; some plurals, contractions, and possessives
- illustrations/photographs enhance/match the text but offer minimal word-solving support
- approximately four to eight lines of text per page, with sentences that carry over two or three lines; short sentences may begin mid-line; longer sentences usually start at left margin; large clear font with ample spacing between words and lines; some variation in text layouts

Fiction (Realistic, Simple Animal Fantasy, Folktales)

Texts are characterized by

- a predictable structure with a clear beginning, a series of events, and an ending
- a straightforward plot with sequential structure, often repetitive
- one-dimensional characters easily defined by actions; some opportunity to make simple inferences to understand thoughts and feelings
- dialogue clearly assigned to a speaker using a variety of verbs (e.g., cried, shouted)
- stories that may move from one time/place (usually no more than two settings)

Strong Achievement

Students demonstrating strong achievement select and read independently texts as described above, as well as, some texts at a higher level of difficulty. The increase in text complexity is often created by

- the presence of some content beyond the personal experiences of most children
- the inclusion of a greater number of compound and longer simple sentences
- the use of more “story-language” as well as content-specific and multi-syllabic words
- minimal, if any, direct word-solving support from illustrations and photographs, yet their inclusion does enhance the style and mood
- the introduction of early chapter books and more detailed plots in narratives, sometimes requiring the making of more inferences to understand main character’s traits and actions
- more text and more complex layouts (e.g., insets) in nonfiction books as well as the inclusion of features such as table of contents and glossaries to support comprehension

Nonfiction (Informational)

Texts are characterized by

- one idea or series of related ideas presented through clear structures (e.g., description, compare/contrast, sequence, problem/solution)
- usually one idea/main topic per page
- illustrations and photographs that convey a great deal of information, are clearly separated from print, and are arranged linearly; minimal text is included; understanding of illustrations and photographs is independent of presented text
- some simple graphics, usually only one type per page
- text features such as headings, captions, and labels support main ideas



Reading Strategies and Behaviours Appropriate Achievement

Students

- monitor reading and self-correct when reading does not make sense, sound right and/or look right; reread to check for meaning (may require occasional prompting)
- use meaning, word structure (plurals, roots and *ing*, *ed*, *s* endings), language structure (e.g., predictable word order and language patterns), and phonics (e.g., initial/final/medial sounds; onsets and rimes; common spelling patterns) to solve simple words; may require occasional prompting
- recognize common high-frequency words and personally significant words
- read familiar texts fluently with expression, attending to punctuation; may hesitate with unfamiliar words
- use ideas in text and prior knowledge/experiences to make obvious predictions about “what will happen next”
- use basic punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks, exclamation marks), and a few simple text features (e.g., title, headings, illustrations) to support comprehension

Reading Strategies and Behaviours Strong Achievement

Students demonstrating strong achievement apply strategies and exhibit behaviours described as appropriate achievement in an increasingly independent manner, and

- monitor comprehension closely while drawing upon a range of self-correcting strategies when problems occur
- solve a variety of unfamiliar words
- have acquired a sight-word bank of personally significant and content-specific words

Comprehension Responses

Appropriate Achievement

Students demonstrating appropriate achievement respond to a variety of comprehension tasks in the manner described below. Students

Literal Response

Reading
“the lines”

- respond accurately to most literal questions by identifying specific facts; rely on information located in one place in the text, rather than skimming complete text
- retell narrative text by recounting main events (usually three to four) in sequence, providing general details, and including many story elements (i.e., setting, main characters, problem/solution); verbal prompts or graphic organizers may be used to support/extend retelling
- recount main topic(s) and some related details; verbal prompts or graphic organizers may be used to support/extend recount

Inferential/Interpretive Response

Reading
“between the lines”

- make simple inferences about a character (his/her actions or feelings), using concrete examples from the text; may require verbal prompts
- interpret basic relationships among ideas to draw conclusions or make concrete comparisons, with general reference to the text
- use obvious context clues, and background knowledge to understand word meanings
- use text features (e.g., title, headings, photographs, labels, font) to access obvious information

Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

Reading
“beyond the lines”

- make personal connections, and relate prior knowledge to text; connections may be obvious
- express preferences for, and simple opinions (e.g., like/dislike) about texts, authors, and illustrators, providing general reasons for their responses
- identify a few simple text forms (e.g., narrative, retell, basic reports) and describe the general purpose of the form

Comprehension Responses

Sample Questions/Tasks

The following types of questions/tasks may be used to assess students' comprehension.

Strong Achievement

Literal Response

- *Find a part that tells about ____.*
- *What happened at the beginning/middle/end of the story?*
- *Who was in the story? Where did it take place?*
- *What problem did ____ (name of character) have? How did he/she solve it?*
- *What are the most important things to remember about ____ (this book/topic)?*
- *What facts did you learn from this book?*

Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy. They also

- provide complete responses, including more textual details, with minimal prompting

Inferential/Interpretive Response

- *____ (name of character) is very happy in this story but it doesn't say that. How can you tell he/she is happy?*
- *After reading this book, why do you think someone might want to be a fireman?*
- *How is being a fireman the same as being a policeman? How are they different?*
- *Tell me what ____ (word from book) means. How did you know?*
- *What does the title tell you about this story?*
- *Look at this photograph. What does it tell you?*
- *Why do you think this (point to word in book) is written in such big, black letters? Is the character speaking in a quiet voice or a loud voice?*

- make greater use of textual details in their responses
- make some inferences that go beyond the obvious

Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

- *Has anything like this ever happened to you? Could this ever happen to you? Why or why not?*
- *What would you say if you were the character in this book?*
- *What did you already know about ____ (topic)? What did you learn that was new?*
- *Did you like this book? Why or why not?*
- *Show me your favourite picture. Why is it your favourite?*
- *Is this a story or an information book? How can you tell?*
- *Why might someone want to write an information book about ____ (topic)?*

- demonstrate some reflection in the connections they make with texts (i.e., relating text to personal experiences and knowledge, as well as making comparisons with other texts)
- often show defined preferences for an author or genre