

Using Leveled Text to Teach and Support Reading Strategies

The text structures of leveled text support the teaching of strategies along a developmental continuum. As the levels increase, the demands on the reader increase. Early leveled text support emergent reader strategies such as how print works (concepts of print), voice print match, early phonics strategies (initial sounds), and print picture match to allow for context/word predictions. As text move through the continuum the demands of decoding lessen and the focus of instruction centers on applying comprehension strategies, understanding genre, and recognizing literary techniques. Teachers use leveled text to support the teaching and practice of reading strategies along the developmental continuum.

Please remember that the strategies suggested in this section reflect an analysis of which strategies are often used to read text at various levels. The lists are not meant to take the place of curriculum dictates. All strategy work is cumulative and builds upon the strategies taught at lower levels. The graphophonic strategies are based upon the assumption that phonics and word study skills are introduced outside of a typical guided reading lesson.

Strategy Code Key

CP = Concepts of Print

W = Word Level Strategies

S = Monitoring and Fix-Up Strategies

C = Comprehension Strategies

F = Fluency Strategies

Levels A - B

Strategies to teach:

- Understanding left to right directionality (CP)
- Matching one-to-one speech to print (CP)
- Pointing under the words (CP)
- Using a pattern to predict (W)
- Locating known words on a page and using them as anchors (W)
- Attending to initial letter in a word (W)
- Using picture cues (C, W)
- Begin rereading at point of difficulty (S)
- Read fluently (F)
- Making connections to background knowledge (C)
- Making personal connections to text (C)

Note: Students must have solid control of one-to-one matching before moving on to level C. Occasional slips when confronted with multi-syllable words are to be expected, however. Students may also miscue a word that makes sense and begins with the same initial letter (i.e. house for home).

Level C

Strategies to teach:

- Understanding how patterns change (CP)
- Understanding left to right directionality when there is more than one line of print (CP)
- Attending to beginning letters in a word – predicting from initial letters (W)
- Locating known words on a page and using them as anchors (W)
- Monitoring for meaning – “Does it makes sense?” (S)
- Monitoring for language – “Does it sound right?” (S)
- Rereading at point of difficulty (S)
- Reading fluently (F)
- Using picture cues to search for meaning (C)
- Activates background knowledge with prompts (C)

Note: Students must understand that what they read needs to make sense and sound right. They must also be able to self-correct when a word they read does not match the first letter of the word on the page when prompted.

Level D

Strategies to teach:

- Locating some high frequency words automatically and using them as anchors (W)
- Look through to the end of the word (W)
- Beginning to use word analogies to decode simple unknown words (You know this word “cat.” So what would this word be? “bat”) (W)
- Beginning to blend sounds of CVC words (W)
- Observing inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing) (W)
- Monitoring for meaning – “Does it make sense?” (S, C)
- Monitoring for language - “Does it sound right?” (S, Syntax)
- Monitoring for visual – “Does it look right?” (S, W)
- Cross checking M, S, and V to confirm reading (S)
- Rereading at point of difficulty (S)
- Beginning to understand when a book is “just right” (S)
- Reading fluently (F)
- Reading with phrasing (F)
- Moving away from finger pointing (F)
- Beginning to note punctuation (CP, F)
- Responding to a text (C)
- Retelling a story (C)
- Making personal connections (C)
- Making simple predictions based on title and pictures (C)
- Activating background knowledge (C)

Note: Students must understand that what they read needs to make sense and sound right. They must also be able to self-correct when a word they read does not match the first letter of the word on the page. Students should show growing ability to cross check cueing systems to confirm their reading.

Levels E-F

Strategies to teach:

- Reading many high frequency words automatically (W)
- Recognize inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing) (W)
- Applying phonic knowledge by blending (W)
- Applies phonic knowledge using analogy (W)
- Flipping/alternating the vowel sound to read an unfamiliar word (i.e. I rid/ride on the bus.) (W)
- Rereading at difficulty (S)
- Self-correcting (S)
- Choosing “just right” books (S)
- Reading fluently (F)
- Reading with phrasing and intonation (F)
- Using finger pointing only at the point of difficulty (F)
- Observing and using punctuation (CP, F)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Monitoring for meaning – “Does it make sense?” (S, C)
- Beginning to understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction texts (C)
- Retelling the story using beginning, middle, and end (C)
- Making predictions (C)
- Making connections (C)
- Activating background knowledge (C)

Note: Students who have not been attending to the details within a word and over-relying on patterns will have a difficult time at this level. Most of the strategy work will undoubtedly focus on using phonetic skills and analogy to figure out unknown words. However, if the teacher notices a decrease in rereading, other monitoring behaviors, or self-correction, the instruction may need to be more balanced.

Levels G-H

Strategies to teach:

- Using rimes and chunks within words to decode unfamiliar words (W)
- Learning how to read non-fiction texts by using the table of contents, headings, and captions (CP, C)
- Beginning to recognize characteristics of genre (CP, C)
- Rereading for accuracy and fluency (S, F)
- Self-correcting using multiple cueing systems (S)
- Skipping a word, reading on, and coming back (S)
- Choosing “just right” books (S)
- Reading fluently with expression (F)
- Using punctuation to read fluently with expression (F)
- Independently reading texts silently (S)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Ongoing monitoring of meaning (C)
- Asking questions at the word level and passage level (C)
- Retelling using narrative structures (C)
- Making connections (C)
- Making inferences (C)
- Monitoring for meaning (C)

Note: Students will need to have a clear sense of what to do when they come to unknown words or phrases while reading. Students need to know when reading doesn't make sense and have independent strategies for problem solving through text.

Levels I-J-K

Strategies to teach:

- Using rimes and chunks within words to decode unfamiliar words (W)
- Begins to divide words into syllables (compound words, VCCV patterns) (W)
- Beginning to recognize characteristics of genre (CP, C)
- Understands how series books are organized (CP, C)
- Skipping a word, reading on, and coming back (S)
- Self-correcting using multiple cueing systems at point of error (S)
- Choosing “just right” books (S)
- Rereading for accuracy and fluency (S, F)
- Reading fluently with expression (F)
- Using punctuation to read fluently with phrasing (F)
- Using context clues to understand an unknown word (C)
- Retelling using specific language and narrative structures (C)
- Begins to use evidence from the text to support thoughts and opinions (C)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Making connections (C)
- Making inferences (C)
- Asking questions (C)
- Monitoring for meaning (C)
- Learning how to read non-fiction texts by using the table of contents, headings, and captions (CP, C)
- Applying appropriate strategies for reading various genres (CP, C)
- Beginning to understand characteristics of particular authors (C, S)

Note: Students at this level will usually read silently. They will demonstrate understanding through retelling, discussion and written responses. Students need to know when reading doesn't make sense and have independent strategies for problem solving through text. Book choices should be “just right” on a consistent basis.

Levels L-M

Strategies to teach:

- Self-correcting regularly (S)
- Reading with fluency, intonation and phrasing (F)
- Dividing words into syllables (all types) (W)
- Choosing “just right” books (S)
- Learn how to carry a story line through chapters (S)
- Building stamina for longer texts (S)
- Using context clues to understand an unknown word (C)
- Making inferences (C)
- Retelling the story including connected, personal thoughts (C)
- Making connections (C)
- Creating visual images (C)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Understanding point of view (C)
- Defining character traits (C)
- Synthesizing information (C)
- Understanding how to read dialogue (C, F)
- Understanding how series books are organized (CP, C)
- Skimming and scanning nonfiction text for important information (S, C)

Note: If students at this level are able to read the words, but are not consistently checking for understanding, it is imperative that the teacher does not move on until they are monitoring for their own comprehension regularly.

Levels N-O

Strategies to teach:

- Using meanings of word parts (prefixes, suffixes, root words) to decipher unknown words (W)
- Building stamina for longer texts (S)
- Making connections (C)
- Creating visual images (C)
- Retelling the story including connected, personal thoughts (C)
- Making inferences (C)
- Inferring from multiple sources within the text (C)
- Determining importance of events/facts within text (C)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Understanding point of view (C)
- Defining character traits (C)
- Synthesizing information (C)
- Skimming and scanning nonfiction text for important information (S, C)
- Understanding theme (C)
- How characters change from beginning to end of a book (and why) (C)
- Using nonfiction for research purposes (C)

Note: If students at this level are able to read the words, but are not consistently checking for understanding, it is imperative that the teacher does not move on until they are monitoring for their own comprehension regularly. Students should be comfortable with reading both fiction and nonfiction and should have many opportunities to read both.

Levels P+

Strategies to teach:

- Understanding characteristics of a variety of genres (C)
- Applying and integrating multiple strategies to comprehend text
- Using meanings of word parts (prefixes, suffixes, root words) to decipher unknown words (W)
- Building stamina for longer texts (S)
- Making connections (C)
- Creating visual images (C)
- Retelling the story including connected, personal thoughts (C)
- Making inferences (C)
- Inferring from multiple sources within the text (C)
- Determining importance of events/facts within text (C)
- Making and revising predictions while reading (C)
- Understanding point of view (C)
- Defining character traits (C)
- Synthesizing information (C)
- Skimming and scanning nonfiction text for important information (S, C)
- Understanding theme (C)
- How characters change from beginning to end of a book (and why) (C)
- Using nonfiction for research purposes (C)
- Understanding historical perspectives (C)
- Understanding text with content not connected with direct experiences. (C)

Note: If students at this level are able to read the words, but are not consistently checking for understanding, it is imperative that the teacher does not move on until they are monitoring for their own comprehension regularly. Students should be comfortable with reading both fiction and nonfiction and should have many opportunities to read both.