The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades PreK–8: A Guide to Teaching, second edition

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Introduction

As the world of literacy changes, we also see some important changes in the acquisition of literacy and its increasing demands across grade levels. The second edition of *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* has been adjusted to reflect those changes.

First, the preschools of today are different and require different experiences from those of five years ago; so a prekindergarten set of continua has been added to the prekindergarten–8 and prekindergarten–2 versions of this book. This prekindergarten continuum does not represent moving the kindergarten curriculum down. Instead, it presents a rich array of understandings relative to oral language, story telling, and playful print and sound awareness to provide a strong foundation for kindergarten learning. The behaviors and understandings are goals for the four-year olds to achieve by the end of their school year, prior to entering kindergarten. Some of the goals may be achievable in three-year old classes, but be sure to honor the development and range of strengths and needs in your children.

The basic detailed descriptions of behaviors and understandings to notice, teach, and support for grades K through 8 remain mostly the same; but in this new edition of the seven continua, we have added new challenges such as the effective processing of graphic texts and novels. We have also examined carefully the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) framework and made changes in some of the ways behaviors and understandings are expressed. Additionally, we have strengthened the expectation to recognize and effectively process genres that are embedded within other genres (hybrid texts—for example a letter, diary entries, or newspaper articles within fictional narratives).

The continuum has also been adjusted in response to current research as well as to a great deal of information related to the implementation of assessment in schools. Finally, the continuum has a new design that makes it easier to read and interpret. We hope you will find this an invaluable tool for assessing and planning your teaching.
Content of the Continuum

Across the seven continua included in this volume, several principles are important to consider:

- **Students learn by talking.** Talking represents the student’s thinking. We engage students in conversation that is grounded in a variety of texts—those that students read, hear read aloud, or write—and that expands their ability to comprehend ideas and use language to share thinking.

- **Students need to process a large amount of written language.** A dynamic language and literacy curriculum provides many daily opportunities for students to read books of their choice independently, to read more challenging instructional material with teacher guidance, and to hear teacher-selected and grade-appropriate texts read aloud.

- **Talking and writing expand the ability to read and comprehend texts.** Students need to acquire a wide range of ways to write about their reading and also to talk about texts with the teacher and other students.

- **Learning deepens when students engage in reading, talking, and writing about texts across many different instructional contexts.** Each mode of communication provides a new way to process the ideas learned from oral and written texts and from each other.

This continuum provides a way to look for specific evidence of learning from prekindergarten through grade eight, and across seven curricular areas. To create it, we examined a wide range of research on language and literacy learning, and we asked teachers and researchers for feedback. We also examined the curriculum standards of many states. Some guiding principles were:

- Learning does not occur in stages but is a continually evolving process.
- The same concepts are acquired and then elaborated over time.
- Many complex literacy understandings take years to develop.
- Students learn by applying what they know to the reading and writing of increasingly complex texts.
- Learning does not automatically happen; most students need expert teaching to develop high levels of reading and writing expertise.
- Learning is different but interrelated across different kinds of language and literacy activities; one kind of learning enhances and reinforces others.

In this volume, we include seven different learning continua (see Figure I–1). Each of these continua focuses on a different aspect of our language and literacy instructional framework (Fountas and Pinnell 1996, 2001b); and each contributes substantially, in different but complementary ways to students’ development of
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| Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion | Students engage in deep discussion with one another about a text that they have heard read aloud or one they have read independently. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Genres appropriate to grades PreK–8  
• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text |
| Shared and Performance Reading | Students read together or take roles in reading a shared text. They reflect the meaning of the text with their voices. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Genres appropriate to grades PreK–8  
• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text |
| Writing About Reading | Students extend their understanding of a text through a variety of writing genres and sometimes with illustrations. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Genres/forms for writing about reading appropriate to grades PreK–8  
• Specific evidence in the writing that reflects thinking within, beyond, and about the text |
| Writing | Students compose and write their own examples of a variety of genres, written for varying purposes and audiences. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Genres/forms for writing appropriate to grades PreK–8  
• Aspects of craft, conventions, and process that are evident in students’ writing, grades PreK–8 |
| Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication | Students present their ideas through oral discussion and presentation or though the use of technology. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Specific behaviors and understandings related to listening and speaking, presentation, and technology |
| Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study | Students learn about the relationships of letters to sounds as well as the structure of words to help them in reading and spelling. | • Year by year, grades PreK–8  
• Specific behaviors and understandings related to nine areas of understanding related to letters, sounds, and words, and how they work in reading and spelling |
| Guided Reading | Students read a teacher-selected text in a small group; the teacher provides explicit teaching and support for reading increasingly challenging texts. | • Level by level, Pre-A to Z  
• Genres appropriate to grades PreK–8  
• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text  
• Specific suggestions for word work (drawn from the phonics and word analysis continuum) |
reading, writing, and language processes. Each continua is described in more detail in a separate introduction, but we briefly introduce them here.

**Reading Process: Systems of Strategic Actions**

Four of the continua specifically address reading: interactive read-aloud and literature discussion, shared and performance reading, guided reading, and writing about reading. Here we focus on strategic actions for thinking:

- **Within the text** (literal understanding achieved through solving words, monitoring and correcting, searching for and using information, summarizing, maintaining fluency, and adjusting for purposes and genre of text)
- **Beyond the text** (making predictions, making connections with personal experience, content knowledge and other texts, inferring what is implied but not stated, and synthesizing new information)
- **About the text** (analyzing or critiquing the text)

**Interactive read-aloud and literature discussion** offer students an opportunity to extend their understandings through talk. In interactive read-aloud you have the opportunity to engage students with texts that are usually more complex than they can read for themselves. You can take strategic moments to stop for quick discussion during the reading and continue talking after the end. Students’ talk provides evidence of their thinking.

**Shared and performance reading** offer an authentic reason for reading aloud. As they read in unison or read parts in readers’ theater, students need to read in phrases, notice punctuation and dialogue, and think about the meaning of the text. All of these actions provide evidence that they are understanding the text and processing it effectively. On these familiar texts, you have the opportunity to support and extend students’ understandings.

**Guided reading** offers small-group support and explicit teaching to help students take on more challenging texts. As they read texts that are organized along a gradient of difficulty, students expand their systems of strategic actions by meeting the demands of increasingly complex texts. They provide evidence of their thinking through oral reading, talk, and extend understanding through writing. The guided reading continuum is related to text reading levels rather than grade levels because we envision continuous progress along these levels. In the introduction to the guided reading continuum, you will find a chart indicating a range of levels that approximately correlates with goals for each grade level.

In addition to specific evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about a text, each of these three continua described list genres of texts that are appropriate for use at each grade level or text level.
**Writing about reading**, which often includes drawing, is another way for students to extend their understanding and provide evidence of thinking. Writing about reading may be used in connection with interactive read-aloud and literature discussion or guided reading.

As you work with the continua related to reading, you will see a gradual increase in the complexity of the kinds of thinking that readers do. Most of the principles of learning cannot be pinpointed at one point in time or even one year. You will usually see the same kind of principle (behavior or understanding) repeated across grades or across levels of text; each time remember that the learner is applying the principle in a more complex way to read harder texts.

**Oral and Written Communication**

**Writing** is a way of experimenting with and deepening understanding of genres students have read. Although writing about reading is an excellent approach to help students extend their thinking and support discussion, it does not take the place of specific instruction devoted to helping students develop as writers. Through the writing workshop, teachers help young writers continually expand their learning of the craft, conventions, and process of writing to communicate meaning to an audience. The writing continuum in this book lists specific understandings for each grade level related to craft, conventions, and process. It also suggests genres for students to write at each grade level.

**Oral, visual, and technological communication** are integral to all literacy processes; you’ll see their presence in all other continua. This continuum singles out particular behaviors and understandings for intentional instruction.

**Word Study**

Finally, we include a continuum for phonics, spelling, and word study. This grade-by-grade continuum is drawn from the longer continuum published in *Phonics Lessons: Letters, Words, and How They Work* (Pinnell and Fountas 2003). For each grade, you will find specific principles related to the nine areas of learning that are important for grades PreK–8: phoneme awareness, early reading behaviors, letter knowledge, letter-sound relationships, spelling patterns, high-frequency words, word meaning, word structure, and word-solving actions. Here you will find specific understandings related to spelling, which interface with the section on conventions provided in the writing continuum.

**Some Cautions**

In preparing these continua we considered the typical range of students that can be found in PreK through grade eight classrooms. We also consulted teachers about
their expectations and vision as to appropriate instruction at each grade level. We examined the district and state standards. We need to have a vision of expected levels of learning because it helps in making effective instructional decisions; and even more important, it helps us to identify students who need intervention.

At the same time, we would not want to apply these expectations in an inflexible way. We need to recognize that students vary widely in their progress—sometimes moving quickly and sometimes getting bogged down. They may make faster progress in one area than another. The continua should help you intervene in more precise ways to help students. But it is also important to remember that learners may not necessarily meet every expectation at all points in time. Nor should any one of the understandings and behaviors included in this document be used as criteria for promotion to the next grade. Educators can look thoughtfully across the full range of grade-level expectations as they make decisions about individual students.

It is also important to recognize that just because grade-level expectations exist, not all teaching will be pitched at that level. Through assessment, you may learn that your class only partially matches the behaviors and understandings on the continuum. Almost all teachers find that they need to consult the material at lower and higher levels (one reason that the guided reading continuum is not graded).

**Ways to Use the Continuum**

We see many different uses for this continuum, including the following.

**Foundation for Teaching**

As you think about, plan for, and reflect on the effectiveness of providing individual, small-group, and whole-group instruction, you may consult different areas of the continuum. For example, if you are working with students in guided reading at a particular level, use the lists of behaviors and understandings to plan text introductions, guide observations and interactions with individuals, and shape teaching points. The word work section gives you specific suggestions for principles to explore at the end of the guided reading lessons. You can plan specific teaching moves as you examine the section on interactive read-aloud and literature discussion. The interactive read-aloud as well as the writing and word study continua will be useful in planning explicit minilessons. When you and your colleagues teach for the same behaviors and understandings, your students will benefit from the coherence.

**Guide for Curriculum Planning**

The continuum can also be used by a grade-level team or school staff to plan the language and literacy curriculum. It offers a starting point for thinking very
specifically about goals and expectations. Your team may adapt the continuum to meet your own goals and district expectations.

**Linking Assessment to Instruction**

Sometimes assessment is administered and the results recorded, but then the process stops. Teachers are unsure what to do with the data or where to go next in their teaching. This continuum can be used as a bridge between assessment data and the specific teaching that students need. With assessment, you learn what students know; the continuum will help you think about what they need to know next.

**Evaluation and Grading**

The continuum can also serve as a guide for evaluating student progress over time. You can evaluate whether students are meeting grade-level standards. Remember that no student would be expected to demonstrate every single competency to be considered on grade level. *Grade level* is always a term that encompasses a range of levels of understanding at any given time.

**Reporting to Parents**

We would not recommend that you show parents such an overwhelming document as this continuum. It would get in the way of good conversation. However, you can use the continuum as a resource for the kind of specific information you need to provide to parents, but in easy-to-understand language.

**Guide to Intervention**

Many students will need extra support in order to achieve the school’s goals for learning. Assessment and observation will help you identify the specific areas in which students need help. Use the continuum to find the specific understandings that can guide intervention.

**Organization of the Continuum**

Seven continua are included in this document. They are arranged in the following way.

**Grade-by-Grade**

Six of the continua are organized by grade level. Within each grade, you will find the continua for: (1) interactive read-aloud and literature discussion; (2) shared and performance reading; (3) writing about reading; (4) writing; (5) oral, visual,
and technological communication; and (6) phonics, spelling, and word study. These six continua are presented at each grade level, PreK through grade eight. You can turn to the tabbed section for your grade level and find all six. If you have many students working below grade level, you can consult the next lower grade continuum in the area of interest; if you have students working above grade level, you can consult the continuum for the grade above for ideas.

**Level-by-Level**

The guided reading continuum is organized according to Fountas and Pinnell text gradient levels A to Z (see Figure I–2). These levels typically correlate to grades K–
8, but students may vary along them in their instructional levels. It is important for all students to receive guided reading instruction at a level that allows them to process texts successfully with teacher support.

**Additional Resources**

At the end of the book, we have included the expanded Phonics and Word Study continuum from which the grade-level Phonics, Speaking and Word Study continuum as well as the word work section of Guided Reading were derived. Consult this expanded version if you need greater detail to guide the teaching of phonics.

Finally, you will find a glossary of terms at the end of the book that will assist you in interpreting the continuum. For additional information on instruction, consult the texts in the references section, also found at the end of this book.
Readers at **Level C:**

At level C, readers encounter simple stories and familiar topics in texts that usually have two to six lines of print on each page. They smoothly and automatically move left to right across words and across lines of print, sweeping back to the left margin for each new line and reading print on both left and right pages. Reading is becoming smooth, allowing for some expression, and the eyes are taking over the process of matching the spoken word to the printed word. Readers are moving away from needing to point and are showing phrased reading. Readers are noticing quotation marks and reflecting dialogue with the voice. They are developing a larger core of high-frequency words that they recognize quickly and easily. At this level, readers are consistently monitoring their reading and cross-checking one source of information against another. Overt self-correction reveals readers’ growing control of the ability to process print.

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**Selecting Texts:** Characteristics of Texts at This Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>SENTENCE COMPLEXITY</th>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Familiar, easy content (family, play, pets, school)</td>
<td>Simple, predictable sentence structure but varied patterns</td>
<td>Almost all vocabulary familiar to children and likely to be used in their oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms</td>
<td>All concepts supported by pictures</td>
<td>Sentences that are questions</td>
<td>Word meanings illustrated by pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Familiar themes and ideas</td>
<td>Many sentences with prepositional phrases and adjectives</td>
<td>Some variation in words used to assign dialogue (mostly said)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Amusing one-dimensional characters</td>
<td>Subject preceding verb in most sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>Repeating natural language patterns</td>
<td>Simple sentences (subject and predicate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texts with familiar settings close to children’s experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simple dialogue (assigned by said in most texts)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A few simple elements of fantasy (for example, talking animals)</td>
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She was sleeping on the rug.
I said, “Wake up, Socks!”
## Selecting Goals: Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

### Thinking within the Text

#### Solving Words
- Recognize easy high-frequency words and simple regular words easily with support of meaning and language structure
- Locate the first and last letters of words in continuous text
- Notice the beginning letter of a word, connect to a sound, and say the first sound of a word
- Use letter-sound information in coordination with meaning and language structure to solve words
- Say words slowly to identify first sound, connect to letter, and locate the word in a text
- Recognize ten or more high-frequency words within continuous text
- Make connections between words by letters, sounds, or spelling patterns
- Use known words to make connections and solve words

#### Monitoring and Correcting
- Reread the sentence to problem solve, self-correct, or confirm
- Self-monitor and self-correct reading using initial letters and connections to sounds
- Self-monitor and self-correct using language structure
- Cross-check one kind of information against another to monitor and self-correct reading (for example, meaning with visual information)
- Self-monitor and self-correct using meaning in text and pictures
- Use known words to self-monitor and self-correct

### Searching for and Using Information

#### Reading and Using Information
- Read left to right across more than one line of print and return to the left to read the next line of print
- Search for and use information in print (letters, sounds, known words)
- Search for and use information from pictures
- Process texts with simple dialogue, all assigned to speakers
- Reread to search for/use information from language or meaning
- Remember and use language patterns to help in reading a text

#### Summarizing
- Remember information to help in understanding the end of a story
- Remember and use details when discussing a story after reading
- Understand and identify a simple sequence of events in a story

#### Maintaining Fluency
- Reflect language syntax by putting words together in phrases
- Notice and use ending punctuation and reflect it in the voice
- Reflect understanding of words in bold by saying the word louder (in fiction texts)
- Notice and use quotation marks and reflect dialogue with the voice
- Demonstrate appropriate stress on words in a sentence

#### Adjusting
- Slow down to problem solve words and resume reading with momentum

### Planning for Word Work after Guided Reading

One- to three-minute demonstrations and active student engagement using a chart or easel, white board, magnet letters, or pencil and paper can develop fluency and flexibility in visual processing. Plan for explicit work in specific visual processing areas that need support.

#### Examples:
- Recognize a few easy high-frequency words (e.g., the, and, like, here, look, see, is, can, in, it)
- Make several CVC words (cat, but, can, hot, get)
- Break apart CVC words (s-un, n-ot, g-et)
- Recognize several CVC words (for example, get, sun, man, not)
- Write/make several easy high-frequency words
- Sort letters quickly by a variety of features (uppercase or lowercase; tall or short; with and without sticks, circles, tails, dots, tunnels)
- Match/sort words with rhymes (using pictures)
- Match pictures with letters using beginning or ending sounds
- Say and clap syllables in one-, two-, and three-syllable words (from pictures)
- Locate words rapidly using first letter and related sounds
- Say words slowly and write letters related to sounds
- Read the Alphabet Linking Chart in a variety of ways (for example, all consonants, all vowels, every other letter)
Thinking beyond the Text

Predicting
• Use knowledge of language structure to anticipate the text
• Make predictions using information from pictures
• Predict the ending of a story based on reading the beginning and middle
• Make predictions based on personal experiences and knowledge
• Make predictions based on information gained through reading

Making Connections
• Make and discuss connections between texts and reader’s personal experiences
• Make connections between texts that are alike in some way (topic, ending, characters)

Synthesizing
• Identify what the reader already knows relative to information in the text
• Identify new information in text or pictures
• Remember new information for discussion
• Talk about what the reader already knows about a topic or character prior to reading

Inferring
• Talk about characters’ feelings and motives
• Show evidence in the print or pictures to support inference

Thinking about the Text

Analyzing
• Notice and point out connections between text and pictures
• Realize stories have a beginning and an end
• Understand how the ideas in a text are related to the title

Critiquing
• Share opinions about the text as a whole (beginning, characters, ending)
• Share opinions about illustrations
Readers at Level L:

At level L, readers process easy chapter books including some series books, with more sophisticated plots and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational and fiction books. They adjust their reading to process a range of genres (realistic fiction, simple fantasy, informational texts, traditional literature, and biography, as well as some special types of texts, for example, shorter series books, very simple mysteries, and graphic texts). They understand that chapters have multiple episodes related to a single plot. They learn some new content through reading and are required to bring more prior knowledge to the process; but the content is usually accessible through the text and illustrations. At this level, readers are beginning to recognize themes across texts (friendship, courage), and they understand some abstract ideas. They see multiple perspectives of characters as revealed through description, what they say, think, or do, and what others say about them. They process complex sentences with embedded clauses and figurative language. They recognize and/or flexibly solve a large number of words, including plurals, contractions, possessives, many multisyllable words, many content-specific words, and some technical words. They read silently in independent reading; in oral reading, they demonstrate all aspects of smooth, fluent processing.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre

- Informational texts
- Simple fantasy
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature (folktales, fables)
- Biography, mostly on well-known subjects
- Simple mysteries
- Some graphic novels
- Simple hybrid genres

Forms

- Picture books
- Plays
- Beginning chapter books with illustrations
- Series books
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction

- Narrative structure including chapters with multiple episodes related to a single plot
- Simple, straightforward plots
- Some embedded genres such as directions or letters

Nonfiction

- Presentation of multiple topics
- Underlying structures (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Texts organized into a few simple categories
- Some longer texts with sections presenting different information
- Variety in organization and topic
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- New content requiring prior knowledge to understand
- Some texts with plots, settings, and situations outside typical experience
- Some technical content that is challenging and not typically known
- New content accessible through text and illustrations

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many light, humorous stories, typical of childhood experiences
- Some ideas that are new to most children
- Themes accessible given typical experiences of children
- Texts with universal themes illustrating important human issues and attributes (friendship, courage, challenges)
- Some texts (graphic novels) requiring readers to infer the story from pictures with minimal text or dialogue only

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Some complex and memorable characters
- Multiple characters to understand and follow development
- Various ways of showing characters’ attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others’ perspectives)
- Figurative language and descriptive language
- Setting important to understanding the plot in some texts
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots with numerous episodes, building toward problem resolution
- Simple, traditional elements of fantasy
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters’ behaviors and dialogue

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Variety in sentence length and complexity
- Longer (more than fifteen words), more complex sentences (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, lists of nouns, verbs, or adjectives)
- Questions in dialogue (fiction) and questions and answers (nonfiction)
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Assigned and unassigned dialogue

VOCABULARY

- Some new vocabulary and content-specific words introduced, explained, and illustrated in the text
- Wide variety of words to assign dialogue, with verbs and adverbs essential to meaning
- New vocabulary in fiction texts (largely unexplained)
- Words with multiple meanings
Hang On, Baby Monkey
by Donna Latham

Newborn

Deep in the rain forest, a baby monkey is born. His mother is part of a family group called a troop. Monkeys in the troop work together to stay alive.

Monkeys from the troop come close to look at the new baby.

Monkeys make their home in the huge Amazon rain forest in South America.

WORDS

• Wide variety of high frequency words
• Many two- to three-syllable words
• Some words with more than three syllables
• Words with suffixes and prefixes
• Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
• Multisyllable words that are challenging to take apart or decode
• Many plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS

General

• A variety of complex graphics, often more than one on a page
• Some long stretches of text (usually a page or two) with no illustrations or graphics

Fiction

• Many texts with no or only minimal illustrations
• Some complex and artistic illustrations that communicate meaning to match or extend the text

Nonfiction

• More than one kind of graphic on a page
• Combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text
• Graphics that are clearly explained in most texts
• A variety of graphics: photos, drawings, maps, cutaways, tables, graphs
• Variety in the layout of print in nonfiction texts (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, maps, charts, call-outs, illustrations with labels and legends)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

Length

• Chapter books (sixty to one hundred pages of print)
• Shorter texts (most approximately twenty-four to forty-eight pages of print) on single topics (usually nonfiction)
• Many lines of print on a page (five to twenty-four lines; more for fiction)

Print and Layout

• Ample space between lines
• Print and font size varying with some longer texts in small fonts
• Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
• Variety in print and background color
• Some sentences continuing over several lines or to the next page
• Print and illustrations integrated in many texts
• Variety in layout reflecting different genres

• Usually friendly layout in chapter books, with many sentences starting on the left
• Bubbles, strips or print, and other print/picture combinations in graphic texts
• Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs)

Punctuation

• Periods, commas, quotation marks, exclamation points, question marks, dashes, and ellipses in most texts

Tools

• A variety of readers' tools: table of contents, glossary, punctuation guide, titles, labels, headings, subheadings, sidebars, legends

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**Selecting Goals:** Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

**Thinking within the Text**

**Solving Words**
- Notice new and interesting words, and actively add them to speaking or writing vocabulary
- Connect words that mean the same or almost the same to help in understanding a text and acquiring new vocabulary
- Demonstrate knowledge of flexible ways to solve words (noticing word parts, noticing endings and prefixes)
- Solve words of two or three syllables, many words with inflectional endings and complex letter-sound relationships
- Solve content-specific words, using graphics and definitions embedded in the text
- Recognize multiple meanings of words
- Use context to derive meaning of new words
- Understand longer descriptive words
- Demonstrate competent, active word solving while reading at a good pace
- Derive meaning of words from graphics

**Monitoring and Correcting**
- Self-correct when errors detract from the meaning of the text
- Self-correct intonation when it does not reflect the meaning when reading aloud
- Use multiple sources of information to monitor and self-correct (language structure, meaning, and letter-sound information)
- Realize when more information is needed to understand a text

**Searching for and Using Information**
- Use multiple sources of information together to solve new words
- Search for information in illustrations to support text interpretation
- Search for information in graphics (simple diagrams, illustrations with labels, maps, charts, captions under pictures)
- Use chapter titles and section headings as foreshadow content
- Use readers’ tools (table of contents, headings, glossary, chapter titles, and author’s notes) to gather information
- Process long sentences (fifteen or more words) with embedded clauses (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses)
- Process sentences with a series of nouns, verbs, or adverbs
- Process a wide range of dialogue, some unassigned
- Follow a sequence of actions from graphics
- Search for important information in pictures

**Summarizing**
- Follow and remember a series of events over a longer text in order to understand the ending
- Summarize ideas from a text and tell how they are related
- Summarize a longer narrative text with multiple episodes, reporting events in the order they happened
- Identify important ideas in a text and report them in an organized way, either orally or in writing
- Understand the problem of a story and its solution

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**Planning for Word Work after Guided Reading**

One- to three-minute demonstrations with active student engagement using a chart or easel, white board, or pencil and paper can develop fluency and flexibility in visual processing. Plan for explicit work in specific visual processing areas that need support.

**Examples:**
- Recognize and take apart words with inflectional endings (painting, skated)
- Make and change words to add inflectional endings (-ing, -ed, -ing-cry-cried)
- Change words to make a full range of plurals by adding -s and -es (stoves, axes, toys, hobbies, echoes)
- Work flexibly with base words, taking apart and making new words by changing letters and adding prefixes and suffixes (tied/tie/tied)
- Recognize word patterns that look the same but sound different (dear, bear) and that sound the same but look different (said, bed)
- Recognize and connect homophones (same pronunciation, different spellings and meanings) (dear, dear)
- Read homographs (same spelling, different meanings, and sometimes different pronunciations) (bear, bear; boss, bass)
- Recognize and pronounce vowel sounds in open (CV: ho-tel) and closed (CVVC: lem-on) syllables
- Read words that have double vowel patterns (WC: feel) as well as words that have vowel sounds with r (march)
- Take apart and make words using more complex phonograms and long vowel patterns (WC: paint), (VCCe: raise), (VCCe: large), (VCCC: lunch), (VCCCe: health)
- Take apart and make words using more complex phonograms and long vowel patterns (WC: paint), (VCCe: raise), (VCCe: large), (VCCC: lunch), (VCCCe: health)
- Make and change words to create comparatives (-er, -est) (light/lighter/lightest)
- Take apart words with comparatives (short-er, short-est)
- Take apart compound words and discuss how the parts are related to meaning (cook-book)
- Take apart two- and three-syllable words (sal-od, cu-cum-ber)
- Read words using letter-sound analysis from left to right (s-i-pp-er)
- Use what is known about words to read new words (fan, fancy; ate, later)
- Read words with silent consonants (sight, knife)
- Read, take apart, or write words with consonant blends and digraphs at the ends (spend, splash)
- Recognize and take apart the full range of contractions (I’m, that’s, he’ll, won’t, they’re, you’ve)
- Take apart words with open and closed syllables (be-ver, ped-od)
Maintaining Fluency
- Demonstrate phrased, fluent oral reading
- Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding of characters and events
- Demonstrate awareness of the function of the full range of punctuation
- Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, pausing and phrasing, intonation, and use of punctuation
- Use multiple sources of information (language structure, meaning, fast word recognition) to support fluency and phrasing
- Quickly and automatically solve most words in the text in a way that supports fluency
- Use multiple sources of information in an integrated way to support fluency
- Read silently and orally at an appropriate rate, not too fast and not too slow

Adjusting
- Slow down to search for information or think about ideas and resume normal pace of reading again
- Demonstrate different ways of reading fiction and nonfiction texts
- Demonstrate adjustment to process simple biographies
- Reread to solve words and resume normal rate of reading
- Realize that illustrations carry a great deal of the meaning in graphic texts

Thinking beyond the Text

Predicting
- Use text structure to predict the outcome of a narrative
- Make predictions about the solution to the problem in a story
- Make a wide range of predictions based on personal experiences, content knowledge, and knowledge of similar texts
- Search for and use information to confirm or disconfirm predictions
- Justify predictions using evidence
- Predict what characters will do based on the traits revealed by the writer

Making Connections
- Bring knowledge from personal experiences to the interpretation of characters and events
- Bring background knowledge to the understanding of a text before, during, and after reading
- Make connections between the text and other texts that have been read or heard
- Specify the nature of connections (topic, content, type of story, writer)

Synthesizing
- Differentiate between what is known and new information
- Demonstrate learning new content from reading
- Expresses changes in ideas after reading a text

Inferring
- Demonstrate understandings of characters, using evidence from text to support statements
- Infer characters’ feelings and motivations through reading their dialogue
- Show understanding of characters and their traits
- Infer cause and effect in influencing characters’ feelings or underlying motives
- Infer the big ideas or message (theme) of a text
- Infer causes of problems or of outcomes in fiction and nonfiction texts
- Infer setting, character’s traits and feelings, and plot from illustrations in graphic texts
- Use evidence from the text to support thinking

Thinking about the Text

Analyzing
- Notice and discuss aspects of genres (fiction, nonfiction, realistic stories, traditional literature, and fantasy)
- Understand a writer’s use of underlying organizational structures (description, compare/contrast, temporal sequence, problem/solution, cause/effect)
- Demonstrate the ability to identify how a text is organized (diagram or talk)
- Identify important aspects of illustrations (design related to the meaning of the text)
- Notice variety in layout (words in bold or larger font, or italics, variety in layout)
- Notice the way the writer assigns dialogue
- Notice aspects of a writer’s style after reading several texts by the same author
- Notice specific writing techniques (for example, question and answer format)
- Notice and interpret figurative language and discuss how it adds to the meaning or enjoyment of a text
- Notice descriptive language and discuss how it adds to enjoyment or understanding
- Understand the relationship between the setting and the plot of a story
- Identify a point in the story when the problem is resolved
- Identify the author’s explicitly stated purpose
- Notice and discuss how the writer of a graphic text has communicated meaning through illustrations and print

Critiquing
- State opinions about a text and provide evidence to support them
- Discuss the quality of illustrations or graphics
- Hypothesize how characters could have behaved differently
- Judge the text as to whether it is interesting, humorous, or exciting, and specify why
Readers at Level W:

At level W, readers will process the full range of genres, and texts will be longer, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading. They automatically adjust strategic actions to skillfully use genre. Complex fantasy, myths, and legends offer added challenge and require readers to identify classical motifs such as “the quest.” Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be previously known to readers and may not be admirable. Readers will encounter mature themes that expand their knowledge of social issues. In addition, readers will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary devices, such as irony. Themes are multidimensional and may be understood on several levels. Most reading is silent; fluency and phrasing in oral reading is well established. In addition, students are able to read aloud with expressiveness after practice (for example, readers theater). Readers are challenged by heavy load of content-specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge, and readers’ tools, such as glossaries. They search for and use information in an integrated way, using complex graphics and texts that present content requiring background knowledge. Many texts require knowledge of historical events and may contain language that is archaic or from regional dialects or languages other than English.

Selecting Texts: Characteristics of Texts at This Level

GENRE/FORMS

Genre
- Informational texts
- High fantasy and science fiction
- Realistic fiction
- Traditional literature, including myths and legends
- Biography, memoir, and autobiography
- Historical fiction, many with settings different from students’ own cultural histories
- Mysteries
- Genre combination (hybrids)
- Satire

Forms
- Picture books
- Plays
- Chapter books
- Chapter books with sequels
- Series books
- Short stories
- Diaries and logs
- Photo essays
- Graphic texts

TEXT STRUCTURE

Fiction
- Unusual text organizations (e.g., flashbacks)
- Plots with detailed episodes
- Plots with subplots and some multiple story lines
- Some collections of short stories that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book
- Texts with a variety of structures (parallel and circular)

Nonfiction
- Presentation of multiple topics that represent subcategories of a larger topic or theme
- Variety of underlying structures often combined in complex ways (description, comparison and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect)
- Variety in nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, and call-outs)

CONTENT

- Many texts requiring knowledge of history and current world events
- Content requiring the reader to take on diverse perspectives (culture)
- Content particularly appealing to adolescents
- Critical thinking required to judge authenticity of informational texts, historical fiction, and biography
- Heavy content load in many texts, both fiction and nonfiction, requiring study

THEMES AND IDEAS

- Many ideas and themes requiring understanding of cultural diversity
- Many texts with complex themes focusing on human problems (war, hardship, racism, social class barriers)
- Many texts presenting mature societal issues, especially those important to adolescents (family issues, growing up, sexuality)
- Many texts presenting multiple themes that may be understood in many layers
- Wide range of challenging themes that build social awareness and reveal insights into the human condition

LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- Multiple characters revealed by what they say, think, and do and what others say or think about them
- Multidimensional characters that develop over time
- Character interpretation essential to understand the theme
- Some texts with heroic or larger-than-life characters who represent the symbolic struggle of good and evil
- Long stretches of descriptive language that are important to understanding setting and characters
- Some texts with archaic language, included for authenticity
- Specific descriptions of settings that provide important information for understanding the plot
- Many texts with settings distant in time and space from students’ experiences
- Some long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred
- Some switching through dialogue from setting to setting, including time change (often unsignaled)
- Many complex narratives that are highly literary
- Fantasy incorporating classical motifs (such as “the quest”)
- Use of symbolism
- Full range of literary devices (for example, flashback, stories within stories, symbolism, and figurative language)
How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by Kim Carson
for Mr. Bukowski's English Class
September 2005

September 2005
If I'd had a choice, I would have picked going camping for our reunion, but Dad suggested volunteering in Thailand with a group from our church to help with disaster relief. More than 8,000 people died there in the 2004 tsunami. Conditions were not good and I didn't want to go, but I really had no other option. We were going to Thailand. We were each allowed only one small bag, so I packed lightly. Of course I wore the heart-shaped locket that's always around my neck. My great-grandmother had given me the locket. It was the only thing she'd been able to save when her family's house in Italy was destroyed in an earthquake. She was just a girl at the time.

SENTENCE COMPLEXITY
- Longer (some with more than twenty words) complex sentence structures
- Many complex sentences including dialogue and many embedded phrases and clauses, as well as parenthetical material
- Sentences with nouns, verbs, or adjectives in series, divided by commas
- Wide range of declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences

VOCABULARY
- Many new vocabulary words that readers must derive meaning from context or use glossaries or dictionaries
- Words used figuratively or with unusual or hard-to-understand connotations
- Many technical words requiring background knowledge or use of glossary or dictionary
- Words used in regional or historical dialects
- Some words from languages other than English
- Some archaic words
- Words with multiple meanings
- Words used in satirical ways
- Many words that represent abstract concepts
- Word connotations signaled by picture and print combinations in graphic texts

WORDS
- Many words with three or more syllables
- Many words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes, multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode)
- Words with a wide variety of very complex spelling patterns
- Many multisyllable proper nouns that are difficult to decode
- Many technical words that are difficult to decode
- Words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- Long, multisyllable words requiring attention to word parts
- Words that offer decoding challenges because they are archaic, come from regional dialect, or from languages other than English
- Many complex plurals, contractions, and compound words

ILLUSTRATIONS
Fiction
- Most texts with no illustrations other than cover jacket or symbolic decoration on margins or at chapter headings
Nonfiction
- Many texts with graphics that are complex, dense, and challenging
- Many texts that have scales or legends that require understanding and interpretation
- A wide variety of complex graphics that require interpretation (photos with legends, diagrams, labels, cutaways, graphs, maps)

BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES
Print and Layout
- Varied space between lines, with some texts having dense print
- Use of words in italics, bold, or all capitals to indicate emphasis, level of importance, or signal other meaning
- Large variation among print styles, color, and font size
- Many texts with very small font
- Print and illustrations integrated in most texts, with print wrapping around pictures
- More difficult layout of informational text, and some fiction texts, with denser format
- Variety in layout of nonfiction formats (question and answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends, call-outs) often occurring across a two-page spread
- Some text layouts in columns
- Long series of complex picture and print combinations in graphic texts

Punctuation
- Full range of punctuation as needed for complex sentences
- Occasional use of less common punctuation (colon, semicolon)

Tools
- Full range of readers’ tools (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)
Thinking Within the Text

Solving Words
- Notice new and useful words and intentionally record and remember them to expand oral and written vocabulary
- Demonstrate ability to use automatically and flexibly a wide range of word-solving strategies (for example, dividing words into syllables, using phonograms within multisyllable words, using word parts, using prefixes and affixes, and connecting words to known words)
- Using word-solving strategies, background knowledge, graphics, text context, and readers' tools (glossaries, dictionaries) to solve words, including content-specific and technical words
- Begin to use word roots and origins to understand meaning of words
- Derive the meaning of words that reflect regional or historical dialects as well as words from languages other than English
- Understand words with multiple meanings
- Understand words representing abstract concepts
- Understand the meaning of words when an author uses satire

Monitoring and Correcting
- Continue to monitor accuracy and understanding, self-correcting when errors detract from meaning
- Monitor understanding closely, searching for information within and outside the text when needed

Searching for and Using Information
- Search for and use information in a wide range of graphics and integrate with information from print (for example, pictures, captions, diagrams, illustrations with labels, maps, charts)
- Use a full range of readers' tools to search for information (table of contents, glossary, headings and subheadings, call-outs, pronunciation guides, index, references)
- Process long sentences (twenty or more words) with embedded clauses (prepositional phrases, introductory clauses, series of nouns, verbs, or adverbs)
- Process texts with a variety of complex layouts and with some pages of dense print and some printed in columns
- Follow complex plots, including texts with literary devices (for example, flashbacks and stories within stories)
- Gain important information from longer texts with complex plots, multiple characters and episodes, and long stretches of description or dialogue
- Gain important information from much longer texts, most with no illustrations (fiction)
- Search for and use information from texts (both fiction and nonfiction) that have many unfamiliar concepts and ideas within a single chapter or section (dense concepts)
- Process sentences with the syntax of archaic or regional dialects
- Notice details in illustrations that provide important information in comprehending a text

Summarizing
- Identify important ideas and information (longer texts with chapters and sometimes multiple texts) and organize them in summary form in order to remember and use them as background knowledge in reading or for discussion and writing
- Exercise selectivity in summarizing the information in a text (most important information or ideas and facts noted by the reader's purpose)
- Construct summaries that are concise and reflect the important and overarching ideas and information in texts

Maintaining Fluency
- Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding of characters and events
- Demonstrate appropriate stress on words, pausing and phrasing, intonation, and use of punctuation while reading in a way that reflects meaning
- With rehearsal, read texts orally with dramatic expression that reflects interpretation of the deeper meaning of a text

Adjusting
- Change style and pace of reading to reflect purpose
- Adjust the reader's stance to better understand genres, such as complex fantasy, and special forms, such as satire
- Change style, pace, and processing to reflect understanding of genre
- Simultaneously follow illustrations and print in an orchestrated way when reading graphic texts

Thinking Beyond the Text

Predicting
- Support predictions with evidence from the text or from knowledge of genre
- Use characteristics of genre as a source of information to make predictions before and during reading
- Change predictions as new information is gathered from a text
- Make and continually revise a wide range of predictions (what characters will do, what will happen to solve the problem) based on personal experiences, content knowledge, and knowledge of similar texts

Making Connections
- Bring knowledge from personal experiences to the interpretation of characters and events, particularly content and situations related to adolescents
- Make connections between the text and other texts that have been read or heard (particularly texts with diverse settings) and demonstrate in writing
- Connect characters within and across texts and genres by circumstances, traits, or actions
- Specify the nature of connections (topic, content, type of story, writer)
- Make connections between the social and moral issues of today and those presented in realistic and historical fiction, in biography, and in the imaginary worlds of high fantasy
- Make connections between satirical literature and the social issues they represent
- Build meaning across several texts (fiction and nonfiction)

Synthesizing
- Mentally form categories of related information and revise them as new information is acquired across the text
• Integrate existing content knowledge with new information from a text to consciously create new understandings.
• Express changes in ideas or perspective across the reading (as events unfold) after reading a text.
• Acquire new content and perspectives through reading both fiction and nonfiction texts about diverse cultures, times, and places.
• Draw conclusions from information.
• Find evidence to support an argument.
• Use situations focusing on the problems of adolescents to develop new perspectives on readers’ own lives.
• When reading chapters, connected short stories, or sequels, incorporate new knowledge to better understand characters and plots from material previously read.

Inferring
• In texts with multiple complex characters, infer traits, motivations, and changes through examining how the writer describes them, what they do, what they say and think, and what other characters say about them.
• Infer characters’ or subjects’ thinking processes and struggles at key decision points in their lives in fiction or biography.
• Infer the big ideas or themes of a text (some texts with mature themes and issues) and discuss how they are applicable to people’s lives today.
• Infer the meaning of symbols (objects, events, motifs, characters) that the writer uses to convey and enhance meaning.
• Infer causes of problems or outcomes in fiction and nonfiction texts.
• Identify significant events and tell how they are related to the problem of the story or the solution.
• Infer setting, characters’ traits and feelings, and plot from illustrations in graphic texts.
• Infer themes and ideas from illustrations in graphic texts.

Thinking About the Text

Analyzing
• Begin to recognize and understand satire and its purposes and characteristics.
• Notice and understand aspects of genres (realistic and historical fiction, fantasy, myths and legends, biography, autobiography, memoir and diaries, and other nonfiction, hybrid texts).
• Identify the selection of genre in relation to inferred writer’s purpose for a range of texts.
• Understand when a writer has combined underlying organizational structures (description, compare and contrast, temporal sequence, problem and solution, cause and effect) and be able to represent in diagrams or graphic organizers.
• Notice how the author or illustrator has used illustrations and other graphics to convey meaning or create mood.
• Recognize the use of figurative or descriptive language (or special types of language such as irony) and talk about how it adds to the quality (enjoyment and understanding) of a text.
• Notice how an author uses words in a connotative way (to imply something beyond the literal meaning).
• Understand the role of the setting in realistic and historical fiction as well as fantasy.

Guiding
• Represent the structure of complex plots in fiction and the organization of the text in nonfiction in diagrams or graphic organizers.
• Analyze works of fantasy to notice classical motifs such as “the quest,” “the hero,” and symbolism representing good and evil.
• Notice aspects of a writer’s craft (style, language, perspective, themes) after reading several texts by the same author.
• Notice and discuss the meaning of symbolism when used by a writer to create texts, including complex fantasy representing good and evil.
• Notice the writer’s choice of words that are not English and reflect on the reasons for these choices and how those words add to the meaning of a text.
• Notice the way writers use regional dialect and discuss how it adds to the authenticity of the text or characters.
• Examine character traits in a complex way, recognizing that they are multidimensional and change over time.
• Identify similarities across texts (concepts, theme, style).
• Find the topic sentence or main idea of a paragraph.
• Identify main ideas and supporting details.
• Locate textually explicit information such as setting, plot, resolution, and character development.
• Identify multiple points of view.
• Derive author’s implicitly stated purpose.
• Distinguish between fact and fiction.
• Identify the mood of a piece of writing.
• Notice how illustrations and text work together in graphic texts.
• Notice aspects of the writer/illustrator’s style in graphic texts.

Critiquing
• Evaluate the text in terms of readers’ own experience as adolescents.
• Critique a text as an example of a genre.
• Assess the author’s qualifications to write an informational text.
• Evaluate the author’s use of characterization and plot (for example, believability or depth).
• Assess whether a text is authentic and consistent with life experience or prior knowledge, including how the text reflects the lives of preadolescents or adolescents.
• Use other sources of information to check the authenticity of a text (fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction) when questions arise.
• Evaluate the authenticity of the details of the setting and reporting of events against knowledge from other sources for historical fiction.
• Discuss whether social issues and different cultural groups are accurately represented in a fiction or nonfiction text.
• Express tastes and preferences in reading and support choices with specific descriptions of text features (plots, use of language, kinds of characters, genres).
• Become critical of the subjects of biography (decisions, motivations, accomplishments).
• Critique the biographers presentation of a subject, noticing bias.
• Critique the integration of illustrations and print in graphic texts.
• Evaluate how the writer has used illustrations and print to convey big ideas.
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