

**Ann Arbor Public Schools**  
**Reading Levels A - M**  
*Parent Handbook*



Dear Family:

Welcome to the wonderful world of reading! The purpose of this book is to provide an overview of the developmental stages for beginning readers. This is *not* a precise sequence in which every child will progress in reading. Rather, it is a collection of texts in which the vocabulary, sentence structure and content gradually increase in difficulty. When the reader is matched with a text which provides just the right amount of challenge, maximum learning takes place. Helpful ideas and activities are provided at the end of each stage to assist you in working with your child. We hope this booklet will support you and your child in meaningful and enjoyable reading experiences.

All the Best,  
The Ann Arbor Public Schools

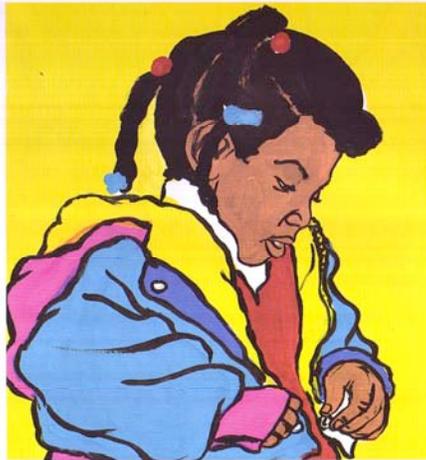


# Level A

Level A books include picture books with a one line sentence on a page. The sentence contains 5 or 6 words and the text is written in a predictable pattern. There is a direct relationship between text and pictures and story lines are about familiar objects or experiences.



Can I button?



Can I snap?

*I Can, The Wright Group*

# Level B

Level B books have one or two lines of print on a page, somewhat longer sentences, and a variety of punctuation. There is direct correspondence between the text and the pictures, and repeating patterns support the reader. Topics are familiar to the reader.

I'm going to walk  
in my new shoes.



*Sally's New Shoes, Rigby-Harcourt*

## Activities for Developing Readers (Levels A-B)

Read picture books with predictable patterns and rhymes and familiar stories.

Reread favorite stories and poems.

Encourage your child to chime in as you read stories, sing songs, or recite poems.

Ask questions about what you read to help your child connect books with their life and experiences.

Celebrate early memorizing as reading (it's the first step)!

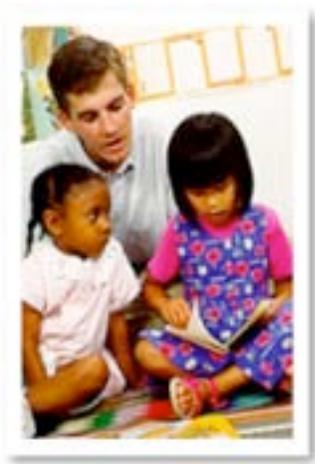
Point out words around you (such as signs, logos, commercials, and billboards).

Encourage your child to tell stories from pictures in magazines and newspapers.

Play rhyming riddles such as "I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with hoop and it's something warm you can eat for lunch.

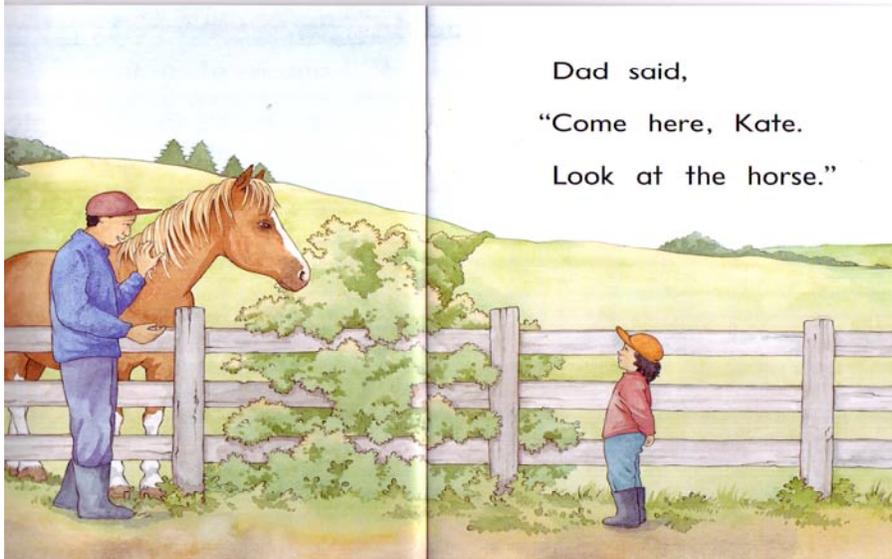
Play games with words: "I'm thinking of a word that starts like soup, and it's where we wash the dishes.

Read books with patterns, rhythm and rhyme. Ask your child to identify the rhyming words.



# Level C

Level C books generally have more words and lines of print than books at earlier levels. Most sentences are simple, but some have more complex structure, offering readers a challenge. Language patterns are more likely to change from page to page, so children cannot rely on them as much to make predictions and must pay closer attention to print.



*Kate Goes to a Farm,  
Rigby*

## Activities for Developing Readers (Level C)

As you read together, ask your child to predict what might happen next or talk about how the book relates to your child's life.

Read several books by the same author. Talk about how they are the same. Help your child notice illustrations and how they can help tell the story.

Talk about characters in the books you read. Ask questions, such as, “Does that character remind you of anyone you know or a character in another book?”

After reading a story aloud, retell it in your own words with your child's help.

Make word cards of the words your child can read. Make sentences with the words. The focus is “playing with the words” rather than on drilling!

Once in awhile, make a mistake while you're reading and problem-solve with your child about how to figure out what would have made more sense.

## Level D

Level D books have sentences that are a little longer than at Level C. There are compound words, multi-syllable words, and words with a variety of inflectional endings. Illustrations are still supportive but less so than at the previous level, requiring the reader to pay more attention to print.

These are my books.



These are the books

I had when

I was a baby.



**When I was a Baby,**  
*Wright Group*

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## Level E

Level E books have a text structure that is generally more complex: stories have more or longer episodes, and informational books have more difficult ideas and concepts. There are multi-syllable and compound words at this level.



On wet days,

we stay inside.

We read some books.

My big sister is good at reading.

She reads books to me.

**My Big Sister,**  
*Rigby*

# Level F

Level F books are slightly longer and have smaller print than level E books. Pictures still support text but the text begins to carry more of the meaning. More of the frequently used sight words begin to appear in the text and stories contain more episodes or events.



Matthew and Emma  
looked in the box.

“I can’t see a house,” said Emma.

“I can see a big blue bag,”  
said Matthew.

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The Beach House, *Rigby*

## Activities for Readers at Levels D, E, F:

Help your child to recognize common words in newspapers, magazines, on billboards, and so on. Examples include: the, go, on, in, and, see,

Give your child a riddle and write the one word answer on a piece of paper. Show your child the first letter and have him make a guess about the answer.

Listen to your child read every day. Take turns reading. You read a page and then have your child read a page. Hearing fluent reading is important for beginning readers.

## More Activities for Readers at Levels D, E, and F:

Encourage your child to reread a sentence when he makes an error that doesn't make sense.

Ask your child to retell a story that you have read together.

Point out ways to figure out words in addition to "sounding it out" (such as looking at the picture, looking for parts of words that are known, reading on, or thinking what would make sense.)

Read aloud daily.

Point out punctuation as you read aloud. ("Oops, an exclamation mark! I'd better read that a little louder.")

When your child reads and makes a mistake, don't correct him right away. Provide enough time for him to self-correct. Before telling him the word ask, "What have you tried?"

Encourage your child to practice reading aloud to siblings, relatives, or senior citizens.

Encourage your child to reread favorite stories. This helps promote fluency, and quick recognition of high frequency words.

Ask relatives to send your child postcards when they go on trips.

## Level G

At text level G, vocabulary and ideas are more challenging. Stories continue to have more events and more episodes. Most books contain 4 to 8 lines per page but sentences continue to grow longer and sight-word vocabulary continues to be added.



“I can’t swim,” said Max.

“I can help you,” said Jake.

“I’m good at swimming.”

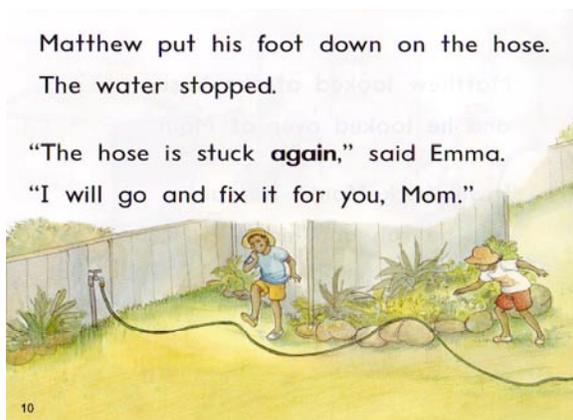
“Can Grandpa come with us?”  
said Max.

“Yes,” smiled Jake’s mom.

**Max and Jake, *Rigby***

## Level H

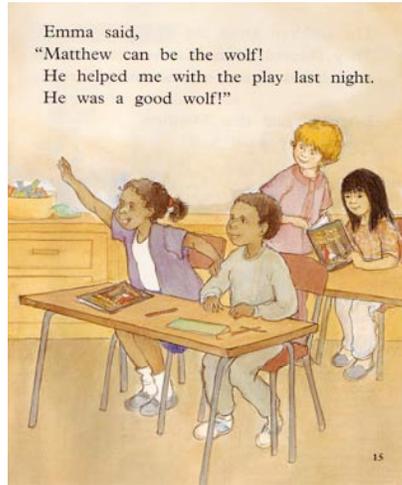
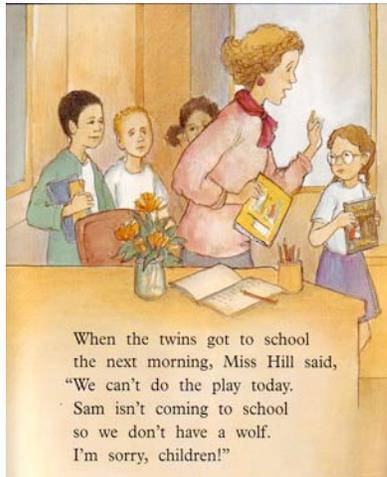
Text level H is very similar to level G but language and vocabulary grow more complex and stories grow longer. Readers are likely to find less repetition of episode patterns.



**Teasing Mom, *Rigby***

# Level I

Level I books are longer and more complex. There are multi-syllable words, requiring complex word solving skills. The level offers a greater variety of texts, including some that are informational, with technical language.



The Classroom Play,  
*Rigby*

## Activities for Developing Readers Levels G, H, I

Read poems, magazines, cartoons, recipes, maps, and nonfiction as well as fiction.

Begin to read series books (e.g., Junie B. Jones, Henry and Mudge series). If you read a few, children will often read the rest of the series on their own.

Read aloud daily. Your child might be read for you to read a chapter book together. Children also enjoy picture books, nonfiction, and joke books.

Find a subject you are both interested in, and go to the library and get books to read together. You will probably find books at easy reading levels, as well as more difficult ones for you to read to your child.

Talk about how you select books and the types of things you like to read.

Help your child learn how to find information in books.

Talk about the characters from books, movies, and television programs.

Cook together. Ask your child to read and explain directions.

Play word games such as Boggle, Hangman, or Junior Scrabble.

# Level J

Level J books include informational text with new concepts and beginning chapter books with complex narratives and memorable characters. The difficulty of language varies. Texts may have high frequency words but also unfamiliar words, some technical.

## Hiding from Danger

Harvest mice are always in danger, because many animals try to catch them. Foxes hunt them in the grass. Owls hunt them from the sky.



But in the summer, harvest mice have a good place to hide.

Foxes and owls cannot see them, or hear them, in tall, thick wheat.

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**Harvest Mice,**  
*Rigby*

# Level K

Level K books include a variety of texts. Some books contain long stretches of easy text which develops children's ability to read longer passages. Illustrations support and extend text and enhance interpretation. Stories may have multiple episodes related to a single plot.



Frog and Toad went back to the river. They looked for the button in the mud.

"Here is your button," said Frog.

"That is not my button!" shouted Toad.

"That button is thin.

My button was thick."

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A raccoon came out from behind a tree

"I heard that you were looking for a button," he said.

"Here is one that I just found."

"That is not my button!" wailed Toad.

"That button is square.

My button was round."

Toad put the square button in his pocket.



**Frog and Toad  
are Friends,**  
*Harper and Row*

# Level L

At level L there is greater variety of texts, including informational books, biography, chapter books, and some longer, highly literary, or informational picture books. Chapter books have more sophisticated plots and characters that are developed throughout the text. Texts contain an expanded vocabulary with many multi-syllable words.

Eric reached into his pocket and took out a page torn from a newspaper.

"Here it is," Eric said, pointing to the page, "rule three."

"I know the rules," Cam said.

Cam closed her eyes and said, "Click." She always said, "Click," when she wanted to remember something. "My mind is a mental camera," Cam often explained, "and cameras go click."

"Announcing our first Junior News Photography Contest," Cam said. Her eyes were still closed. "Grand prize one hundred dollars. Entry rules. One. Only twelve-year-olds and under may enter."

As Cam talked, Eric looked at the contest announcement in the newspaper.

"Two. Photographs must be black-and-white. Three. Photographs must be of local interest. They must not be posed. Four. All entries must be received no later than November thirtieth."

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Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the UFO, Scholastic

# Level M

Level M books have a variety of formats. Literary selections have complex language and subtle meanings that require interpretation and background knowledge. Chapter books are longer with few pictures, requiring control of aspects of print. Vocabulary is expanded, and many words require background knowledge for comprehension.



People have been cutting down trees for thousands of years.

The wood from trees is very useful. It can be used to build houses. It can be used to make tables and chairs and other furniture. Wood can be made into paper, too.

But, all around the world, too many trees have been cut down. More and more houses have been built. Large cities have been built.

In the past, people decided to turn huge areas of forest into farm land. They cut down millions of trees. They cleared the land quickly. But then some heavy rains came, and good soil on top of the ground was washed away. Nothing much would grow there.

Today, people realize how important trees are. Their wide branches help to stop the rain from washing the topsoil away. Their strong roots hold the soil in place, even on steep mountains. And forests provide a home for many different kinds of animals.

So people are now growing trees to replace the ones that have been cut down. When the young trees are strong enough, they are planted where they are needed most. But they take a long time to grow tall.

We must all help to put trees back on our planet.

Trees on Our Planet, Rigby

## Activities for Expanding Readers (Levels J-M)

Talk about the characters, theme, and exciting or favorite parts in movies, television shows or books.

Invite your child to read more challenging books, as well as books at his/her level.

Encourage your child to try new genres of reading (poetry, fantasy, and nonfiction).

Talk together about why you like or dislike certain books or authors.

When your child asks questions, seek answers together in books, encyclopedias, newspapers, or on the Internet.

Continue reading aloud to your child. You can model fluent reading.

Listen to books on tape in the car, especially on long trips.

Read and compare several versions of a story (such as a fairy tale or folktale.)

Show your child how to break down multisyllable words into manageable units. (e.g., unfolded = un fold ed.)

Talk about word meanings. Have your child play games by generating synonyms and antonyms for words.