



# Understanding End of Year Reading Benchmarks: A Parent's Guide



**Montgomery County Public Schools**  
Rockville, Maryland

<https://mymcps-instruction.mcpsmd.org/sites/ic/default.aspx>  
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/>

## Introduction

Learning to read is a complex process. Children develop reading skills and strategies at different rates and at different times; therefore, students progress through different levels of text as they grow as readers. Within a grade, a student may read a variety of texts depending on the student's strengths and needs and the challenges of the text. This document provides information about reading targets and how they are reported on the standards-based report card. Included are specific examples and characteristics of texts for the end-of-year reading benchmarks in grades K–5. The examples of books used for instruction include both literature and informational text. Literature is narrative in nature and includes stories, poems, and plays. Informational texts convey or explain information which builds students' content knowledge and include news articles, magazines, reference materials and books with factual content. The following chart indicates reading targets for each marking period.

**Reading Targets Text Level Chart: K–5**

<b>Grade level</b>	<b>End of First Quarter</b>	<b>End of Second Quarter</b>	<b>End of Third Quarter</b>	<b>End of Fourth Quarter</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Level 1-2</b>	<b>Level 3-4</b>	<b>Level 4-5</b>	<b>Level 6</b>
<b>First Grade</b>	<b>Level 6–7</b>	<b>Level 8–11</b>	<b>Level 12–15</b>	<b>Level 16</b>
<b>Second Grade</b>	<b>Level J</b>	<b>Level K</b>	<b>Level L</b>	<b>Level M</b>
<b>Third Grade</b>	<b>Level M</b>	<b>Level N</b>	<b>Level O</b>	<b>Level P</b>
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	<b>Level Q–R</b>		<b>Level S–T</b>	
<b>Fifth Grade</b>	<b>Level T–U</b>		<b>Level V–W</b>	

## Text Levels

Assigning levels to texts assists teachers in selecting books that match a reader's developing skills to the challenges in a text. Text levels indicate a progression from easiest to most challenging material that students can read and are not limited to a specific grade level. Text characteristics determine whether a text is easy or hard for a student to read. There is a degree of variation of challenges within each level. The challenge of one book might be figurative language, while the challenge or complexity of another book at the same level might be sentence length, vocabulary, or advanced concepts.

In MCPS, two leveling systems are used:

- Reading Recovery Text Levels 1–16
- Guided Reading (Fountas and Pinnell) Text Levels J–Z

## Reporting Instructional Reading Levels by Marking Period

At the end of each marking period, the student’s instructional reading level is included on the report card. The instructional reading level reported on a student’s report card refers to the level of texts read daily in small group guided reading instruction. A reading instructional text level is determined by the student’s accuracy (90% and above), fluency and comprehension of literary and informational text.

### Reading Chart on Standards–based Report Card Grades K–5

The following tables are included on the report card for Grades K–5 to give parents more information about their child’s reading level.

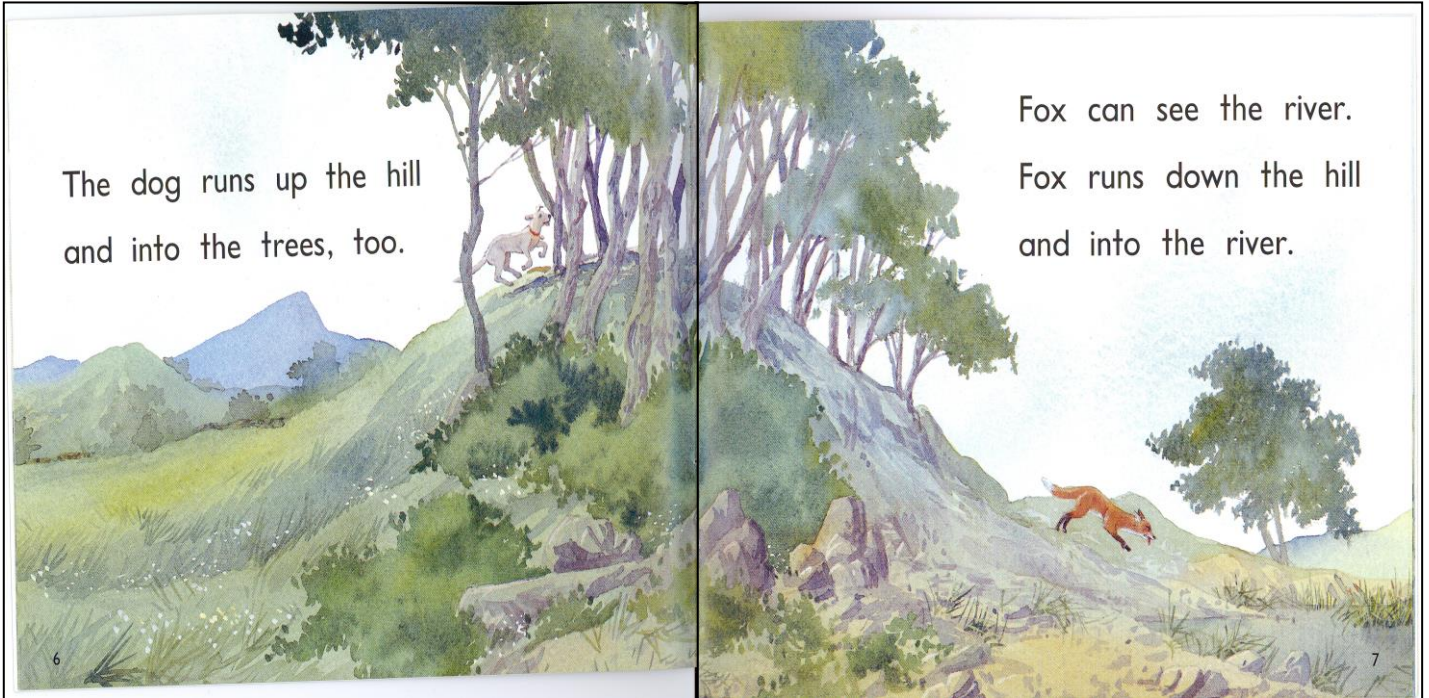
Instructional Reading Level	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4
Accuracy, Fluency and Comprehension of text				

<b>READING TARGETS – Text Level Chart: Grades K-5</b>				
Grade	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4
K	1-2	3-4	4-5	6
1	6-7	8-11	12-15	16
2	J	K	L	M
3	M	N	O	P
4	Q-R		S-T	
5	T-U		V-W	

Students reading at levels X, Y, and Z are reading above the end-of-year benchmark for Grade 5.

## End of Year Benchmark Kindergarten Text Level 6—Literary Text

Sample text from *Clever Fox* by: Claire Llewellyn





The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a variety of sentences with up to eight to ten words</li> <li>• many familiar words that students need to read quickly</li> <li>• words with basic phonetic patterns, such as beginning and ending consonant sounds, digraphs (e.g.-<i>sh, ch, th</i>), and short vowel sounds (e.g.- the <i>a</i> in the word <i>cat</i>)</li> <li>• words with inflectional endings (-<i>s, -ed, -ing</i>)</li> <li>• some compound words (e.g., <i>playground</i>)</li> <li>• some irregular past tense verbs (<i>ran, came</i>)</li> <li>• pictures that support a storyline with real problems and solutions in narrative text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and write 40 or more high frequency words (e.g., <i>is, up, little</i>)</li> <li>• check accuracy of familiar words as he/she reads and makes corrections as needed</li> <li>• read without pointing to words</li> <li>• use illustrations and/or photographs to support understanding</li> <li>• use basic phonetic skills, such as beginning and ending consonant sounds, digraphs (e.g.-<i>sh, ch, th</i>), and short vowel sounds to read unfamiliar words</li> <li>• think about, while reading: “<i>Does the word make sense? Does the word sound right? and Does the word look right?</i>”</li> <li>• reread to self-correct errors</li> <li>• use punctuation to read sentences smoothly and accurately</li> <li>• ask and answer questions about key details in text</li> <li>• retell familiar stories including key details</li> <li>• read with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression</li> </ul>

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

## End of Year Benchmark Kindergarten Text Level 6—Informational Text

Sample text from *How Machines Help* by: John Sheridan

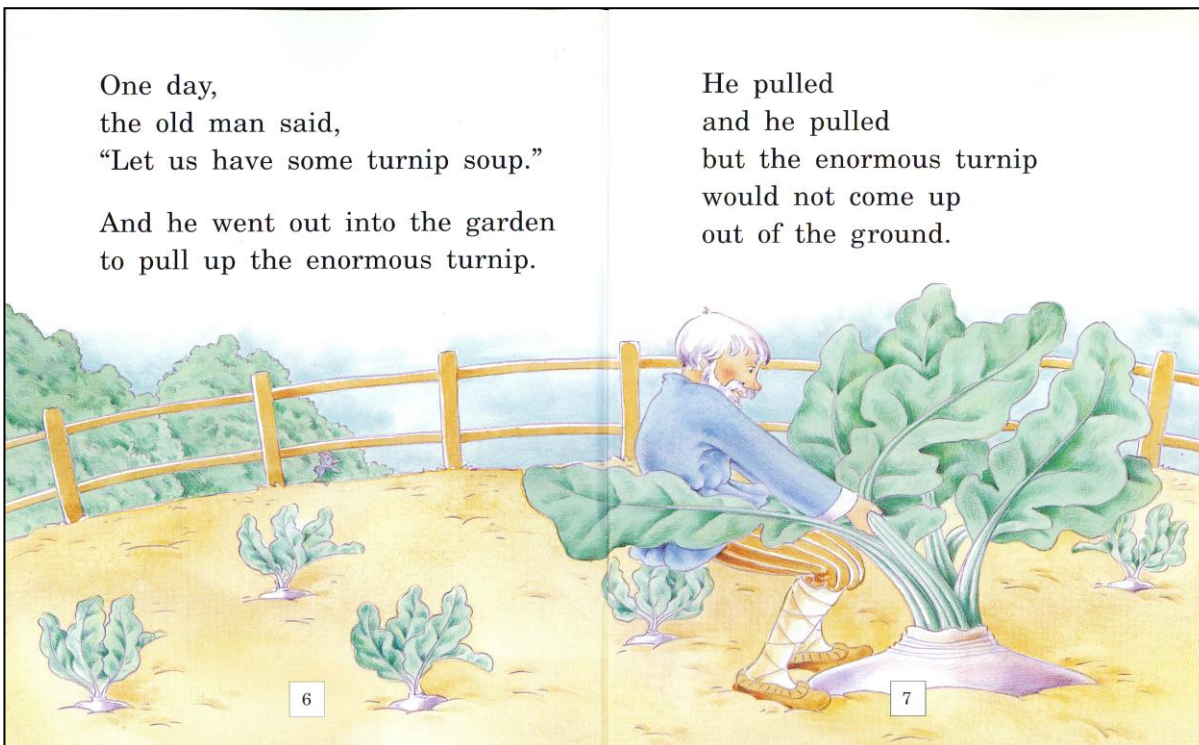
<p style="text-align: center;">A screwdriver will help you turn the screw.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">A screwdriver is a machine.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Can you cut paper with your fingers?</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">13</p>
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The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information that is familiar to students</li> <li>• a variety of sentences with up to eight to ten words</li> <li>• many familiar words that students need to read quickly</li> <li>• words with basic phonetic patterns, such as beginning and ending consonant sounds, digraphs (e.g.-<i>sh, ch, th</i>), and short vowel sounds (e.g.- the <i>a</i> in the word <i>cat</i>)</li> <li>• words with inflectional endings (-<i>s, -ed, -ing</i>)</li> <li>• some compound words</li> <li>• some irregular past tense verbs (<i>ran, came</i>).</li> <li>• pictures or photographs of facts presented in the text</li> <li>• additional text features, such as labels, bold print, headings, or table of contents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read and write 40 or more high frequency words</li> <li>• check accuracy of familiar words as he/she reads and makes corrections as needed</li> <li>• read without pointing to words</li> <li>• use illustrations and/or photographs to support understanding</li> <li>• use basic phonetic skills, beginning and ending consonant sounds, digraphs (e.g.-<i>sh, ch, th</i>), and short vowel sounds to read unfamiliar words</li> <li>• think about, while reading: “<i>Does the word make sense? Does the word sound right? and Does the word look right?</i>”</li> <li>• reread to self-correct errors</li> <li>• use punctuation to read sentences smoothly and accurately</li> <li>• ask and answer questions about key details in text</li> <li>• retell facts that were learned, including key details</li> <li>• read with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression</li> </ul>

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 1 Text Level 16—Literary Text

Sample text from *The Tale of the Turnip* by: Jenny Giles



One day,  
the old man said,  
“Let us have some turnip soup.”  
  
And he went out into the garden  
to pull up the enormous turnip.

He pulled  
and he pulled  
but the enormous turnip  
would not come up  
out of the ground.

The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple sentences and compound sentences with details</li> <li>• a wide range of high frequency words</li> <li>• many multisyllable words, generally easy to take apart to decode</li> <li>• many words with endings (-s, -ed, -ing), plurals, contractions, compound words, and possessives</li> <li>• events that include details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read texts independently</li> <li>• make the transition from reading aloud to silent reading</li> <li>• read a variety of materials and genres</li> <li>• ask questions about key details to clarify meaning</li> <li>• check accuracy of words as he/she reads and makes corrections as needed</li> <li>• flexibly use a variety of strategies to independently read unknown words</li> <li>• discuss what is stated directly and what is implied in text</li> <li>• rely less on illustrations for meaning</li> <li>• read with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression</li> </ul>

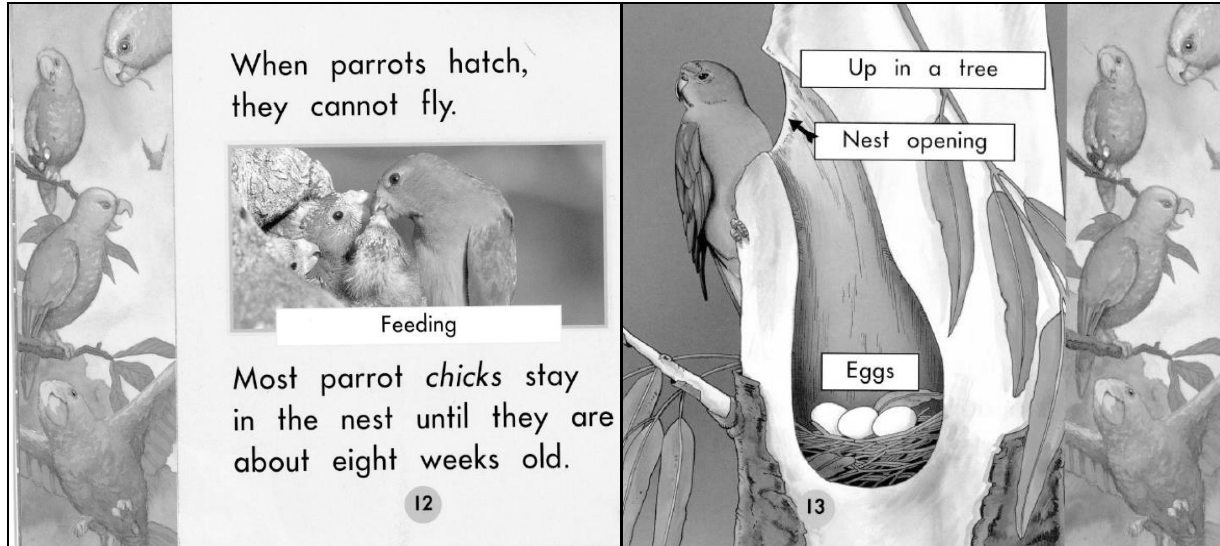
Some examples of Level 16 books include:

*Angus and the Cat*, Marjorie Flack  
*Are You My Mother?*, P.D. Eastman  
*A Color of His Own*, Leo Lionni

*Henny Penny*, Paul Goldone  
*Leo the Late Bloomer*, Robert Kraus

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 1 Text level 16—Informational Text

Sample text from *Look Inside* by: Avelyn Davidson



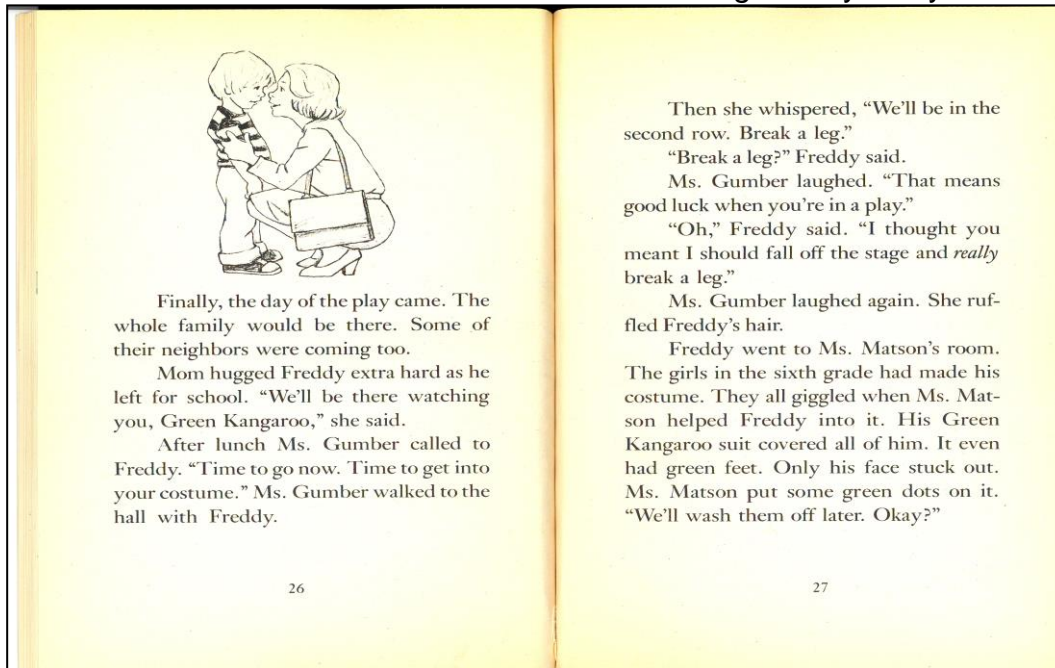
The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple sentences and compound sentences with details</li> <li>• a wide range of high frequency words</li> <li>• many multisyllable words, generally easy to take apart to decode</li> <li>• many words with endings (-s, -ed, -ing), plurals, contractions, compound words, and possessives</li> <li>• abstract ideas and unfamiliar concepts</li> <li>• a variety of text features, such as labels, bold print, headings, glossary, insets, table of contents, photographs, and an index</li> <li>• challenging academic vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read texts independently</li> <li>• make the transition from reading aloud to silent reading</li> <li>• read a variety of materials and genres</li> <li>• ask questions about key details to clarify meaning</li> <li>• check accuracy of words as he/she reads and makes corrections as needed</li> <li>• flexibly use a variety of strategies to independently read unknown words</li> <li>• discuss what is stated directly and what is implied in text</li> <li>• notice and interpret the graphic features of informational text (e.g., tables of contents, photographs, index, etc.)</li> <li>• understand how informational texts are organized (e.g., by chapters, subjects, etc.)</li> <li>• read with appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level 16 books include:

*Ambulances*, Marcia Freeman  
*Red-Eyed Tree Frog*, Joy Cowley  
*What is Matter?*, Don L. Curry

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 2 Text Level M—Literary Text

Sample text from *The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo* by: Judy Blume



The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences of varying length, with some that are long and complex</li> <li>• pages full of print with no illustrations or very small illustrations</li> <li>• small print</li> <li>• chapters with multiple events</li> <li>• characters, setting, and plot that are important to the understanding of the story</li> <li>• challenging vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read texts independently and silently while reading for meaning</li> <li>• read a variety of materials and genres</li> <li>• use a variety of reading strategies flexibly and successfully</li> <li>• think about what he/she already knows about the topic or subject, preview the text before reading, and make predictions</li> <li>• ask and answer questions while reading to check for understanding</li> <li>• demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension through discussion</li> <li>• determine and clarify the meaning of unknown words</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of word relationships (e.g., multiple meanings of the same word)</li> <li>• determine central message, moral, or lesson</li> <li>• discuss themes, settings, and plots</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level M books include:


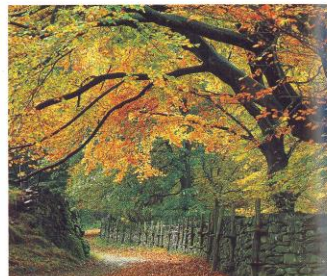


*Blueberries for Sal*, Robert McCloskey  
*A Chair for My Mother*, Vera Williams

*Junie B. Jones*, Barbara Park



# End of Year Benchmark Grade 2 Text Level M—Informational Text

Sample text from *Seasons and Weather* by: Linda Bruce

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Introduction</h2> <p>As the year passes, the seasons change. In most places, there are four seasons: summer, autumn, winter, and spring.</p> <p>During summer, we can play outside in the hot weather.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>In autumn, the weather is cooler. The leaves on many trees change color and fall to the ground.</p> <p style="text-align: left; font-size: small;">4</p>	<p>In some places, it snows in winter. The weather is very cold.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>In spring, the weather gets warmer again. Plants grow new flowers and leaves.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>There are changes all around us during the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">5</p>
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<b>The Book Has...</b>	<b>The Student Is Learning to...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences of varying length, with some that are long and complex</li> <li>• small print</li> <li>• familiar or unfamiliar content and may be organized by chapters or sections</li> <li>• a combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text, such as captions or photographs that provide important information to supplement the body of the text</li> <li>• challenging vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read texts independently and silently while reading for meaning</li> <li>• use a variety of reading strategies flexibly and successfully</li> <li>• think about what he/she already knows about the topic or subject, preview the text before reading, and make predictions</li> <li>• ask and answer questions while reading to check for understanding</li> <li>• demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension through discussion</li> <li>• determine and clarify the meaning of unknown words</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of word relationships</li> <li>• use information gained from text features to increase understanding</li> <li>• study structure of a text and determine how the different pieces fit together</li> <li>• identify the main idea of a text or section of text</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level M books include:

*A Picture Book of Thurgood Marshall*, David Adler  
*Sharks*, Gail Gibbons

# End of Year Benchmark Grade 3 Text Level P— Literary Text

Sample text from *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by: Roald Dahl

<p style="font-size: small;">DAHL, ROALD</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 20px 0;">2</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0 0 10px 0;">Mr. Fox</p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p style="font-size: small;">ON A HILL above the valley there was a wood. In the wood there was a huge tree. Under the tree there was a hole. In the hole lived Mr. Fox and Mrs. Fox and their four Small Foxes. Every evening as soon as it got dark, Mr. Fox would say to Mrs. Fox, "Well, my darling, what shall it be this time? A plump chicken from Boggis? A duck or a goose from Bunce? Or a nice turkey from Bean?" And when Mrs. Fox had told him what she wanted, Mr. Fox</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">FANTASTIC MR. FOX</p> <p style="font-size: small;">would creep down into the valley in the darkness of the night and help himself.</p>  <p style="font-size: small;">Boggis and Bunce and Bean knew very well what was going on, and it made them wild with rage. They were not men who liked to give anything away. Less still did they like anything to be stolen from them. So every night each of them would take his shotgun</p>
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The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chapters with small print and multiple detailed events</li> <li>• little to no illustrations</li> <li>• complex themes</li> <li>• complex plot and sub plots</li> <li>• challenging vocabulary</li> <li>• cultural or historical contexts (e.g., settings, situations, perspectives)</li> <li>• sophisticated language and humor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read silently</li> <li>• use reading strategies flexibly and smoothly to understand text</li> <li>• sustain reading longer texts in multiple genres, which require several days or weeks to read</li> <li>• analyze words in order to read new multisyllable words</li> <li>• build background knowledge and use prior knowledge to understand stories</li> <li>• identify with characters in books and see themselves in the events of the stories</li> <li>• connect ideas in multiple texts</li> <li>• examine the craft and structure of a text</li> <li>• ask and answer questions while reading to check for understanding</li> <li>• demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension through discussion</li> <li>• demonstrate understanding of word relationships (e.g., multiple meanings of the same word)</li> <li>• determine central message, moral, or lesson</li> <li>• discuss themes, settings, and plots</li> </ul>


Some examples of Level P books include:

*Bunnicula*, James Howe  
*Who Stole the Wizard of Oz*, Avi

*Koya Delaney and the Good Girl Blues*, Eloise Greenfield

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 3 Text Level P—Informational Text

Sample text from *If you Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King* by: Ellen Levine

<p><i>What else was segregated?</i></p> <p>When Martin Luther King was growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, and into the 1950s, almost all public places in the South were segregated by law. If you walked out of your house or apartment, any place you could think of was probably segregated.</p> <p>Everywhere you would see signs: WHITES ONLY, or COLORED ONLY, or NO NEGROES.</p> <p>At the movies, black people had to sit in the back and usually upstairs. Sometimes they had to go to separate black theaters.</p> <p>White people could get on a bus, put their money in the box, and take a seat. Blacks in many cities climbed aboard buses and put their money in. Then they had to leave the bus and get on again through the back door.</p> <p>When you went to the doctor or dentist, whites waited in one room; blacks had to wait in a separate,</p>	<p>smaller room. Blacks and whites sat at separate lunch counters and went to separate restrooms. They even had to drink at separate water fountains.</p> <p>There were white restaurants and black restaurants, white hotels and black hotels, white elevators and black elevators, and separate public beaches.</p> 
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The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chapters with small print and multiple detailed events</li> <li>• academic vocabulary</li> <li>• new and complex ideas, concepts, or topics</li> <li>• cultural or historical contexts (e.g., settings, situations, perspectives)</li> <li>• complex text structures</li> <li>• sophisticated language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read silently</li> <li>• use reading strategies flexibly and smoothly to understand text</li> <li>• sustain reading longer texts with many pages which require several days or weeks to read</li> <li>• analyze words in order to read new multisyllable words</li> <li>• interpret and use information from a wide variety of visual aids</li> <li>• build background knowledge and use prior knowledge to understand new ideas, concepts, or topics</li> <li>• connect concepts and ideas in multiple texts read</li> <li>• examine the craft and structure of a text</li> <li>• ask and answer questions while reading to self-monitor for meaning</li> <li>• demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension through discussion</li> <li>• determine main idea</li> <li>• summarize key details</li> </ul>

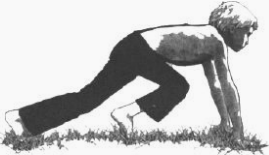
Some examples of Level P books include:

*Star Messenger: Galileo Galilei*, Peter Sis

*The Magic School Bus: At the Waterworks*, Joanne Cole and Bruce Degen

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 4 Text Level S/T—Literary Text

Sample text from *Bridge to Terabithia* by: Katherine Paterson (S)

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">PATERSON, KATHERINE</p> <p>every which way. He had never learned to run properly, but he was long-legged for a ten-year-old, and no one had more grit than he.</p> <p>Lark Creek Elementary was short on everything, especially athletic equipment, so all the balls went to the upper grades at recess time after lunch. Even if a fifth grader started out the period with a ball, it was sure to be in the hands of a sixth or seventh grader before the hour was half over. The older boys always took the dry center of the upper field for their ball games, while the girls claimed the small top section for hopscotch and jump rope and hanging around talking. So the lower-grade boys had started this running thing. They would all line up on the far side of the lower field, where it was either muddy or deep crusty ruts. Earle Watson who was no good at running, but had a big mouth, would yell “Bang!” and they’d race to a line they’d toed across at the other end.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>One time last year Jesse had won. Not just the first heat but the whole shebang. Only once. But it had put into his mouth a taste for winning. Ever since he’d been in first grade he’d been that “crazy little kid that draws all the time.” But one day—April the twenty-second, a drizzly Monday, it had been—he ran ahead of them all, the red mud slooching up through the holes in the bottom of his sneakers.</p> <p>For the rest of that day, and until after lunch on the next, he had been “the fastest kid in the third, fourth, <i>and</i> fifth grades,” and he only a fourth grader. On Tuesday, Wayne Pettis had</p>
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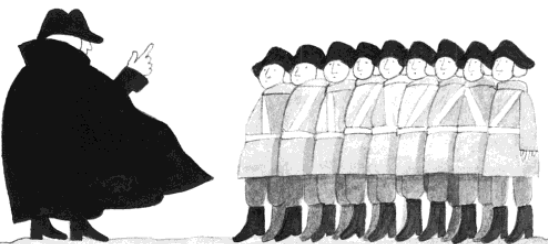
<b>The Book Has...</b>	<b>The Student Is Learning to...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small print and reduced word spacing</li> <li>• minimal illustrations</li> <li>• complex ideas, figurative language, long descriptive narratives, sophisticated themes, and abstract/complex topics</li> <li>• cultural or historical contexts (e.g., settings, situations, perspectives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read silently</li> <li>• sustain reading in multiple genres, which require several days or weeks to read with understanding</li> <li>• use understandings of how words work to read a wide range of unknown words (e.g.- using analogy to known word parts, word roots, base words, and affixes)</li> <li>• acquire new vocabulary through reading</li> <li>• use reading as a tool to build knowledge across all content areas (e.g., science, social studies, health)</li> <li>• connect ideas in several texts for greater understanding and finer interpretations</li> <li>• form interpretations and apply understandings in other areas</li> <li>• notice and comment on aspects of the writer’s craft</li> <li>• determine theme(s)</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level S/T books include:

*The Cricket in Times Square*, George Selden (S)  
*Harriet the Spy*, Louise Fitzhugh (T)

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 4 Text Level S/T—Informational Text

Sample text from *Shh! We're Writing the Constitution* by: Jean Fritz (T)

 <p>After the Revolutionary War most people in America were glad that they were no longer British. Still, they were not ready to call themselves Americans. The last thing they wanted was to become a nation. They were citizens of their own separate states, just as they had always been: each state different, each state proud of its own character, each state quick to poke fun at other states. To Southerners, New Englanders might be “no-account Yankees.” To New Englanders, Pennsylvanians might be “lousy Buckskins.” But to everyone the states themselves were all important. “Sovereign states,” they called them. They loved the sound of “sovereign” because it meant that they were their own bosses.</p> <p>George Washington, however, scoffed at the idea of “sovereign states.” He knew that the states could not be truly independent for long and survive. Ever since the Declaration of Independence had been signed, people had referred to the country as the United States of America. It was about time, he thought, for them to act and feel united.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p>	<p>Once during the war Washington had decided it would be a good idea if his troops swore allegiance to the United States. As a start, he lined up some troops from New Jersey and asked them to take such an oath. They looked at Washington as if he'd taken leave of his senses. How could they do that? they cried. New Jersey was their country!</p>  <p>So Washington dropped the idea. In time, he hoped, the states would see that they needed to become one nation, united under a strong central government.</p> <p>But that time would be long in coming. For now, as they started out on their independence, the thirteen states were satisfied to be what they called a federation, a kind of voluntary league of states. In other words, each state legislature sent delegates to a Continental Congress which was supposed to act on matters of common concern.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p>
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<b>The Book Has...</b>	<b>The Student Is Learning to...</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small print and reduced word spacing</li> <li>• a variety of complex text structures, such as problem-solution, chronological order, cause-effect</li> <li>• sophisticated content vocabulary</li> <li>• abstract and complex topics or content with historical, scientific, or technical information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read silently</li> <li>• sustain reading longer texts which require several days or weeks to read with understanding</li> <li>• use understandings of how words work to read a wide range of unknown words (e.g.- using analogy to known word parts, word roots, base words, and affixes)</li> <li>• acquire new vocabulary through reading</li> <li>• use reading as a tool to build knowledge across all content areas (e.g., science, social studies, health)</li> <li>• connect ideas in several texts for greater understanding and finer interpretations</li> <li>• go beyond the text read to form interpretations and apply understandings in other areas</li> <li>• determine main idea(s)</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level S/T books include:

- To Fly: The Story of the Wright Brothers*, Wendie C. Old (S)
- For the Love of Chimps: The Jane Goodall Story*, Martha Kendall (S)

# End of Year Benchmark Grade 5 Text Level V/W—Literary Text

Sample text from *The City of Ember* by: Jeanne DuPrau (W)

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">THE CITY OF EMBER: THE FIRST BOOK OF EMBER (BOOKS OF EMBER)</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 10px 0;">CHAPTER 1</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center; font-style: italic; margin: 10px 0;">Assignment Day</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">In the city of Ember, the sky was always dark. The only light came from great flood lamps mounted on the buildings and at the tops of poles in the middle of the larger squares. When the lights were on, they cast a yellowish glow over the streets; people walking by threw long shadows that shortened and then stretched out again. When the lights were off, as they were between nine at night and six in the morning, the city was so dark that people might as well have been wearing blindfolds.</p> <p>Sometimes darkness fell in the middle of the day. The city of Ember was old, and everything in it, including the power lines, was in need of repair. So now and then the lights would flicker and go out. These were terrible moments for the people of Ember. As they came to a halt in the middle of the street or stood stock-still in their houses, afraid to move in the utter blackness, they were reminded of something they preferred not to think about: that someday the lights of the city might go out and never come back on.</p> <p>But most of the time life proceeded as it always had. Grown people did their work, and younger people, until they reached the age of twelve, went to school. On the last day of their final year, which was called Assignment Day, they were given jobs to do.</p> <p>The graduating students occupied Room 8 of the Ember School. On Assignment Day of the year 241, this classroom, usually noisy first thing</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">THE CITY OF EMBER: THE FIRST BOOK OF EMBER (BOOKS OF EMBER)</p> <p>in the morning, was completely silent. All twenty-four students sat upright and still at the desks they had grown too big for. They were waiting.</p> <p>The desks were arranged in four rows of six, one behind the other. In the last row sat a slender girl named Lina Mayfleet. She was winding a strand of her long, dark hair around her finger, winding and unwinding it again and again. Sometimes she plucked at a thread on her ragged cape or bent over to pull on her socks, which were loose and tended to slide down around her ankles. One of her feet tapped the floor softly.</p> <p>In the second row was a boy named Doon Harrow. He sat with his shoulders hunched, his eyes squeezed shut in concentration, and his hands clasped tightly together. His hair looked rumpled, as if he hadn't combed it for a while. He had dark, thick eyebrows, which made him look serious at the best of times and, when he was anxious or angry, came together to form a straight line across his forehead. His brown corduroy jacket was so old that its ridges had flattened out.</p> <p>Both the girl and the boy were making urgent wishes. Doon's wish was very specific. He repeated it over and over again, his lips moving slightly, as if he could make it come true by saying it a thousand times. Lina was making her wish in pictures rather than in words. In her mind's eye, she saw herself running through the streets of the city in a red jacket. She made this picture as bright and real as she could.</p> <p>Lina looked up and gazed around the schoolroom. She said a silent goodbye to everything that had been familiar for so long. Goodbye to the map of the city of Ember in its scarred wooden frame and the cabinet whose shelves held <i>The Book of Numbers</i>, <i>The Book of Letters</i>, and <i>The Book of the City of Ember</i>. Goodbye to the cabinet drawers labeled "New Paper" and "Old Paper." Goodbye to the three electric lights in the ceiling that seemed always, no matter where you sat, to cast the shadow of your head over the page you were writing on. And goodbye to their teacher, Miss Thorn, who had finished her Last Day of School speech,</p>
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The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small print and reduced word spacing</li> <li>• minimal illustrations</li> <li>• complex ideas, figurative language, symbolism</li> <li>• long descriptive narratives</li> <li>• sophisticated themes and abstract/complex topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustain reading longer texts which require several days or weeks to read with understanding</li> <li>• use understandings of how words work to read a wide range of unknown words (e.g.- using analogy to known word parts, word roots, base words, and affixes)</li> <li>• acquire new vocabulary through reading</li> <li>• connect ideas in several texts for greater understanding and finer interpretations (e.g., symbolism)</li> <li>• form interpretations and apply understandings in other areas</li> <li>• notice and comment on aspects of the writer's craft (e.g.-figurative language, symbolism, mood, and theme)</li> <li>• use reading as a tool to build knowledge across all content areas (e.g., science, social studies, health)</li> <li>• determine theme(s)</li> </ul>


Some examples of Level V/W books include:

*Journey Home*, Yoshiko Uchida (V)  
*Invitation to the Game*, Monica Hughes (W)

*The Batboy*, Mike Lupica (V)

## End of Year Benchmark Grade 5 Text Level V/W—Informational Text

Sample text from *Through My Eyes* by: Ruby Bridges (W)

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">A NEW HOME</p> <p><i>M</i>y family moved to the old seaport city of New Orleans in 1958, when I was four. On the block where I lived, everyone was black. White families lived on the next block, but at the time, it seemed as if they were a world apart. A lot of the black people, like my parents, had left farms in Louisiana or Mississippi to make a better living in the city.</p> <p>In New Orleans, we rented the front part of a large house on France Street. It was a big rooming house, with other families living in apartments upstairs and in the back. Our part of the house had only two bedrooms, so my younger brothers and my sister and I shared a room. In 1960, when I started first grade, there were four Bridges children, but eventually there were eight of us piling into bunk beds in that bedroom.</p> <p>The best part of the house was the kitchen, where we ate all our meals. My mother did a lot of cooking. We had big southern breakfasts with grits, bacon and eggs, and homemade</p>	<p>biscuits. At night, my mother sometimes cooked New Orleans-style food, like red beans and rice or fried catfish or shrimp. For dessert, she sometimes made one of my favorites—banana pudding or sweet potato pie.</p> <p>The weather in New Orleans never gets too cold, so we played outside most of the year. We stayed close to home and never left the block. Most afternoons, my mother wanted me to keep an eye on my brothers and sister, but I managed to play jacks and jump rope with my friends and climb the huge China ball tree by the house. On the weekends, somebody was always starting up a softball game in the lot next door. My world in those days was comfortable and safe.</p> <p>My parents didn't have much education, and it took everything they had to keep the family going. My father worked as a service station attendant. My mother sometimes took night jobs, like cleaning rooms in one of the city's hotels. I remember my mother taking a job making caskets. She would tell stories about how</p>
<p>she and the other workers would get into the caskets to see if they were comfortable and how they would take naps in the caskets during their breaks. My brothers and sister and I thought those stories were fascinating.</p> <p>My mother brought us up to believe that God is always there to protect us. She taught us there</p>	<p>is a power we can pray to anytime, anyplace. At the same time, my mother didn't allow any nonsense from her children. She was strict. We all had chores and were expected to carry them out. When she told us to do something, we were supposed to say, "Yes, m'am," and not too much else about it.</p>
	
<p style="font-size: x-small;">NEW ORLEANS IS THE HOME OF THE FAMOUS MARDI GRAS PARADE.</p>	

The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small print and reduced word spacing</li> <li>• complex graphic information</li> <li>• a variety of complex text structures, such as problem-solution, chronological order, cause-effect</li> <li>• sophisticated content vocabulary</li> <li>• abstract and complex topics/content</li> <li>• historical, scientific, or technical information embedded into the story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read silently</li> <li>• sustain reading longer texts which require several days or weeks to read with understanding</li> <li>• use understandings of how words work to read a wide range of unknown words (e.g.- using analogy to known word parts, word roots, base words, and affixes)</li> <li>• use reading as a tool to build knowledge across all content areas (e.g., science, social studies, health)</li> <li>• connect ideas in several texts for greater understanding and finer interpretations</li> <li>• form interpretations and apply understandings in other areas</li> <li>• notice and comment on aspects of the writer's craft</li> <li>• determine main idea(s)</li> </ul>

Some examples of Level V/W books include:

- A History of US: The New Nation 1789-1850*, Joy Hakim (W)
- Shelter Dogs*, Peg Kehret (W)