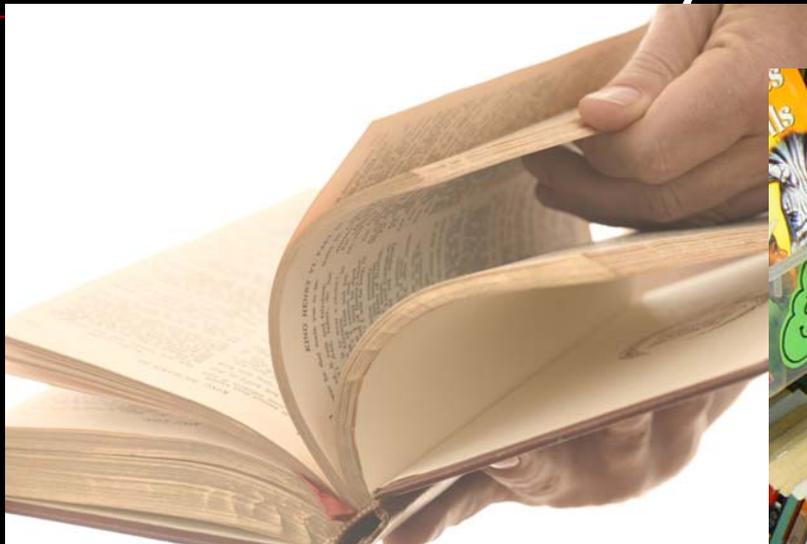


# How to Choose a "Just Right Book"



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March, 2008

# Choosing Books...

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Readers choose books to read in many different ways and for many different purposes. At home, first and foremost, allowing your child to make choices driven by his or her *interests* is the key to developing a love for reading. However, one of the most important issues to consider in helping our children make suitable choices is making

sure most of the books they read are appropriate to their reading level.



# In class...

...We teach the children that it is important to choose a “just right” book for their independent reading, and provide them with strategies to use when evaluating a book. An appropriately leveled book will allow your child to apply strategies for understanding (outlined on the accompanying Power Point) effectively. While, of course, all types of books have a time and a place in the overall enjoyment of reading, a book which is too easy will not support opportunities for growth, while one that is too challenging will only lead to frustration. This guide will help you assist your child in choosing “just right” books for their at-home reading, by outlining those strategies we share with them in class.



# When choosing books with your child...



- Begin by encouraging your child to choose books based on topics, themes or authors that interest her.
- Ask your librarian to steer you in the direction of grade-level appropriate books to start, but then take the time to be sure the books selected are “just right” for *your* child:
  - Share the inside jacket or back cover to evaluate whether or not it may have difficult thematic elements.
  - Encourage your child to read the first few pages to you to assess level of difficulty, based on the suggestions outlined above.
  - Select several books to bring home so your child can “abandon” a book if it turns out to be too easy or too difficult.
  - Use the “5 Finger Rule:” If there are more than 5 difficult words on the first page, bypass the book, or plan to read it together.



# An "Easy" Book...

- Has words that are very easy to decode and understand.
- Includes larger type, fewer words per page.
- Often has many pictures.
- Takes very little effort to read and understand.
- Is a short, quick read.
- Usually gives little or no sense of satisfaction.
- Is appropriate to read once in awhile, just for fun.

# A "Difficult" Book...

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- Has many words that are difficult to decode and/or understand.
- Usually includes few or no pictures.
- Has small type and many words per page.
- Includes situations and characters that make it difficult for children to "make connections."
- Frequently causes the reader to stop in order to sound out or try and understand new words.
- Does not effectively facilitate understanding beyond the literal.
- Often becomes frustrating to read.
- Can be appropriate to read occasionally, accompanied by an adult to guide understanding and address misunderstandings.



# A "Just Right" Book...

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- Will have **some** words that are challenging to decode or understand.
- Causes the reader the **occasional** need to reread a passage for better understanding.
- Has a reasonable font size.
- May have a few pictures.
- Includes characters and situations to which children can easily "connect."
- Provides an enjoyable, satisfying and interesting reading experience.
- Should be selected most frequently to support growth in reading.



# Your child's teacher...

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...is, as always, your best resource for guidance in selecting the most appropriately leveled books for your child's independent reading. However, utilizing the suggestions in this guide will help your child develop the skills necessary to do so independently.

Working together, as partners in your child's education, is the best way for us to successfully enrich your child's reading skills, leading to a rich and enduring love for reading!

