

How to Choose Books for Kids

Looking for appropriate material for your child's maturity level, interest level or reading ability?

Wondering how to decipher various reading levels?

Check out this guide for matching books to kids.

Be sure to choose books that will keep your child's interest. Are they bored by trucks and fascinated by dinosaurs? Try to choose materials that will make your child excited to read! Those who like reading become good readers.

Pick up a book and have your child flip through the first few pages. Often your child can tell you if there is too much text or if the words are too big.

Consider your child's two or three favorite books. Compare other books by this standard. Feel free to pick up a few that are slightly easier and slightly harder than their favorite titles! Don't forget to consider the illustrations. Interest in the pictures can spark interest in the words about them.

Be sure that the subject matter is appropriate for your child's age and/or maturity level and match your family values. All titles in the Library are available to patrons of all ages. Only parents and guardians have the right and responsibility to guide the reading, viewing and listening choices of their children.

Reading Levels & Ratings

Many publishers and independent companies organize books based on different reading levels. These levels can be determined by text difficulty, curriculum standards, reading comprehension, or some other criteria.

Since there is no reading level or ratings standard for all books (unlike movies, music, or video games), the library does not organize books based on reading levels. Instead, we organize titles based on general age groups, author and/or subject matter. You may wish to check with your child's teacher to find out what reading level and rating system is recommended to enhance what's learned at school.

Below is a list of web sites with information about reading levels and rating systems. Many also give information about books and their age-appropriateness.

Five Finger Test

<http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/bookzone/5finger.html>

Sometimes it is difficult to know if a book is going to be too easy or too hard by just looking at it. The Five Finger test is a quick and easy way to "test" a book before you spend too much time with it and get frustrated.

Reading Levels of Children's Books | Hoagies' Gifted

http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/reading_levels.htm

A detailed explanation of the complicated world of reading levels. Covers reading levels by publishers as well as Accelerated Reader and Lexile explanations.

Scholastic Book Wizard

<http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/>

Find books published by Scholastic based on reading level or topic.

Matching Books and Readers

<http://courseweb.lis.illinois.edu/~diekman/LIS590/Matching.htm>

Explores the differences between different reading standards, including Accelerated Reader, Lexile Ratings, Fountas & Pinnell, the Fry Readability Graph and the Five-Finger Method.

Lexile Ratings | Find a Book

<http://www.lexile.com/findabook/>

The Lexile Framework measures both reader ability and text difficulty on the same scale, called the Lexile scale. Use this site to search for books by grade level, difficulty and subject matter.

AR BookFinder

<http://www.arbookfind.com/UserType.aspx>

Need to find a book that fits your child's accelerated reading level? Search here, then check the library's catalog for available titles.

Common Sense Media

<http://www.common sense media.org/>

This site provides parents and educators a wealth of information on how to judge the appropriateness of popular web sites, movies, books, music, TV and games. Gives ratings, offers tips for how to talk to kids about what they see, read or listen to, etc.