

Dear Parents,

To provide you with a list of book suggestions for summer and school year reading would be a daunting task. Instead, what I would like to offer you is some ideas to consider as you and your children choose books to enjoy.

- 1) Children need a large diet of “just right” books and a healthy dose of “light reading” as well. “Too hard” books need parental guidance.
 - “**Just right**” books---children **read independently at a fluent rate**, encountering new vocabulary along the way. “Just right” books gradually extend a reader’s ability to comprehend, analyze and synthesize reading material. These books are challenging at a comfortable and independent level. For an adult, this reading would include novels that get you thinking, professional/personal development material and maybe “how-to” books.
 - “**Light reading**” consists of vocabulary and content that allows the reader to **relax, wonder a bit, and still enjoy a story**. Entertainment magazines and romance novels come to mind for adults. Students may enjoy rereading of favorite characters and themes from earlier reading experiences.
 - “**Too hard**” books are just that ~**too hard for students to read and/or comprehend independently**. Too many “too hard” books produces readers who are comfortable *not* comprehending text. That is not good practice. Books with much unfamiliar reading vocabulary or with themes too mature for the reader are signs of “too hard” books. Professional journals *outside* one’s own profession would be an example of “too hard” for adults.

- 2) With the categories above in mind, I am offering a **guide** to the many characteristics of text that may help you to recognize “just right” books.
 - Pay particular focus to the **center column of the chart**. It highlights aspects of text to watch for: *length of book and length of sentences, vocabulary, content, size of print, language usage, prior knowledge necessary, conventions, number of characters, dialogue and more!*
 - Children grow and progress through different levels of books for different reasons. The **chart is a guide** in helping you to match your children’s developmental level (A-P)* with appropriate books.

- 3) Readability scales (Kincaid, Fog, Flesch, etc) offer grade level determinations for books based on a formula unique to each scale. It is not uncommon to have one text score on a variety of levels, depending on the scales used.
 - Visit the website: <http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante> for a list of books for all developmental levels* from a team of highly respected reading consultants, Fountas and Pinnell.
 - Stay **focused on description** rather than grade level.

Teachers are always happy to help with suggestions. Feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Robin Kreines, Primary School Learning Specialist