

# Yellow Level

## **What is a Yellow Reader?**

Successful Yellow readers do not really read the words on the page. They don't have a sight word bank and they can't yet "sound out" words. They use the repeated sentence pattern, the initial consonant sound, the pictures, and the spaces between words to "read" the book. Yellow readers are integrating all three cuing systems (syntax, phonics, meaning) while exhibiting fluency, confidence, and comprehension. While they are working in the Yellow level, they will need help accumulating sight words for their independent work in One-Green. A Yellow reader's success is dependent on his or her basic background knowledge, phonemic awareness, speaking vocabulary, common sense, and ability to reason.

## 1G

### **What is a 1G Reader?**

1G readers will know and use 25–75 very high-frequency sight words as a reliable and familiar support framework when reading. They will be able to read these words in books they have never seen before and out of context (lists, flash cards, etc.) at Flash Speed. Power Words provide "islands of certainty" from which emergent readers can navigate the unknown. Although there are other skills involved with success at 1G, the acquisition of a bank of sight words is fundamental. They will use these words at the Blue levels as a foundation for learning the basic vowel patterns.

## 2G

### **What is a 2G Reader?**

**Power Words:** 2G readers will know and use 125 very high-frequency Power Words as a reliable and familiar support framework when reading. They will be able to read these words in books they have never seen before and out of context (lists, flash cards, etc.) at Flash Speed. Power Words provide "islands of certainty" from which emergent readers can navigate the unknown. The combined Power Words in G and GG make up 50% of all adult and student writing.

**Initial Blends & Digraphs:** When students come to a word they don't know, they will successfully use initial blends and digraphs as clues.

# 1B

## **What is a 1B Reader?**

1B readers take a huge jump forward in reading. Not only do they have a sight word bank of 200–300 high frequency words, they are now able to use these known words, and knowledge of regular vowel patterns, to figure out unknown words (e.g., ride/ pride). 1B readers have their fingers out, covering parts of unfamiliar words to find something they know inside them. Once they find a chunk that looks familiar, they have to recall what known word it is part of, take off the first letter of the known word in their mind, vocalize the isolated chunk, add the beginning sound of the new word to the chunk, and see if it works out to be a sensible word. If it doesn't work out they have to start all over again. The phonological awareness skills required for this level are tremendous.

# 2B

## **What is a 2B Reader?**

2B readers know to look for the known inside the unknown. They have their fingers on the text, covering up beginnings and endings of unfamiliar words, looking for chunks, vowel patterns, endings, little words inside bigger words, as they successfully figure out the 2-syllable words common to 2B text. 2B books begin to include narratives with some characterization and simple plots. Be careful, because 2B is the first level in which readers can decode without following the meaning of the text. Be sure to check comprehension carefully. Don't allow students who are working too hard on decoding to move into 1R. Make sure students learn to be fully engaged with the message of 2B books. Catch them laughing at the stories, not just figuring out what the words say, before moving them into 1R.

# 1R

## **What is a 1R Reader?**

1R readers are able to sit for 30 minutes and enjoy one long picture book. Their focus is not on decoding, but on the content of the book. They are enjoying traditional tales, silly stories, poetry, and informational text. They should be given the opportunity to read picture books that come in series (e.g., Clifford, Arthur, Amelia Bedelia, Berenstain Bears). Picture books with the same characters and similar plot elements prepare 1R readers for the move into chapter books at 2R. As decoding 1R text becomes easier, silent reading will become the preferred mode. Allow students to spend enough time enjoying and engaging at the 1R level before moving them into the longer and more complicated books at the 2R level.

# 2R

## **What is a 2R Reader?**

### **Finish 1 Chapter Book Each Week**

2R readers begin 2R as picture book readers and leave as chapter book readers. They develop the habit of silent reading, the ability to sustain interest across sittings, and finally, the chapter book reading habit, where they must engage and understand without the aid of illustrations. Students should not leave 2R until they are successfully reading (and finishing) at least one chapter book a week.

### **Decode All Multi-Syllabic and Irregularly Spelled Words Familiar from Everyday Speech**

2R readers are able to try various vowel sounds for unfamiliar words until they recognize the word from everyday speech. 2R books are full of irregularly spelled words, multi-syllabic words, special vowel spellings, but all of the words in 2R books should be familiar to readers from their oral language (e.g., gigantic, scientist). Their use of decoding and context clues allows the 2R readers to get close enough to the pronunciation of any word so that as they try different possible pronunciations, they recognize one. Expect 2R readers to be able to approximate pronunciation of difficult names.

# Wt

## **What is a Wt Reader?**

### **Notice and Acquire Literary Vocabulary**

Wt-level books include “literary” vocabulary, language not normally used in everyday speech (e.g., exclaimed, cautiously). For many students this is truly a foreign language. Students who arrive at the Wt level with a vast background of listening to higher-level books will already have much of this vocabulary. Students who have not been read to will not. Students acquire literary vocabulary through immersion in text, the same way they acquired their speaking vocabulary through immersion in oral language. Wt books have 1–2 literary words per chapter-book size page of text. Wt readers must spend enough time reading at the Wt level to acquire the 1,500 new “literary” vocabulary words expected of proficient 3rd-grade readers. This is entirely different and unrelated to decoding. At the Wt level, the major focus is on noticing these literary words and learning them through immersion in reading.

### **Finish 1 Chapter Book Each Week**

Wt readers continue to develop silent reading fluency, the ability to sustain interest across sittings, and the chapter book reading habit. Students should not leave Wt unless they are successfully reading (and finishing) at least one Wt chapter book a week.

# Bk

## **What is a Bk Reader?**

Bk-level readers really get hooked on reading. This is when silent reading takes off and readers will sit and read for long periods of time, reluctant to stop because they want to find out what happens next. Bk is the level where good readers binge on junky series books (e.g., *Goosebumps*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Matt Christopher’s sports fiction). This should be encouraged because it builds fluency, silent reading speed, endurance, and the habit of reading. Literary taste will come with experience. Require Bk-level readers to demonstrate their proficiency in both fiction and nonfiction, but otherwise let them indulge their passions. The levels that follow require students to broaden their reading into new genres. Take advantage of all the junky fiction and have students master the narrative form: characters, settings, dialogue, point of view, theme, etc., in both reading and writing.

In Bk text, the vocabulary demands are increasing, with 3–5 words on a typical chapter book page not familiar from everyday speech. Be sure readers can define those words either from past reading

experience or through the use of context clues. Bk-level readers should finish a Bk chapter book, or its equivalent, each week.