



**SEVEN KEYS TO
COLLEGE READINESS**

www.mcps7keys.org

**Key 1: Read at Advanced Levels
in Grades K–2**

**Description and Examples of
Reading Text Levels**

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

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Teaching reading to young children is a complex process. Young children develop reading skills and strategies at different rates and reach benchmarks at different times. This document provides examples and characteristics of texts at levels 4, 6, 16 and M. Text levels are used to plan and deliver reading instruction. Provide feedback on this document to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary Reading Language Arts Department, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland, 20850, Room 256, or at 301-279-3154.

Elementary Reading Text Level Description

Leveled texts are an arrangement of books, both literary and informational, from easiest to hardest defined by a set of characteristics. Literary texts are stories, poems, and plays. Informational texts convey or explain. Assigning levels to texts assists teachers in selecting books that match readers' skills to the supports and challenges in the text.

Text characteristics determine whether a text is easy or hard for a student to read. There is a degree of variation within each level. The challenge of one book might be figurative language, while the challenge 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

The Reading Recovery numerical system is used to designate kindergarten and first grade level-appropriate text in all MCPS schools and aligns with Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery is a first grade intervention that is implemented in selected elementary schools. The transition to the Guided Reading alphabetical system occurs at the second grade level.

Text levels indicate a progression from easiest to most challenging and are not limited to a specific grade level. However, to provide guidance to teachers, a Reading Targets Text Level Chart has been developed.

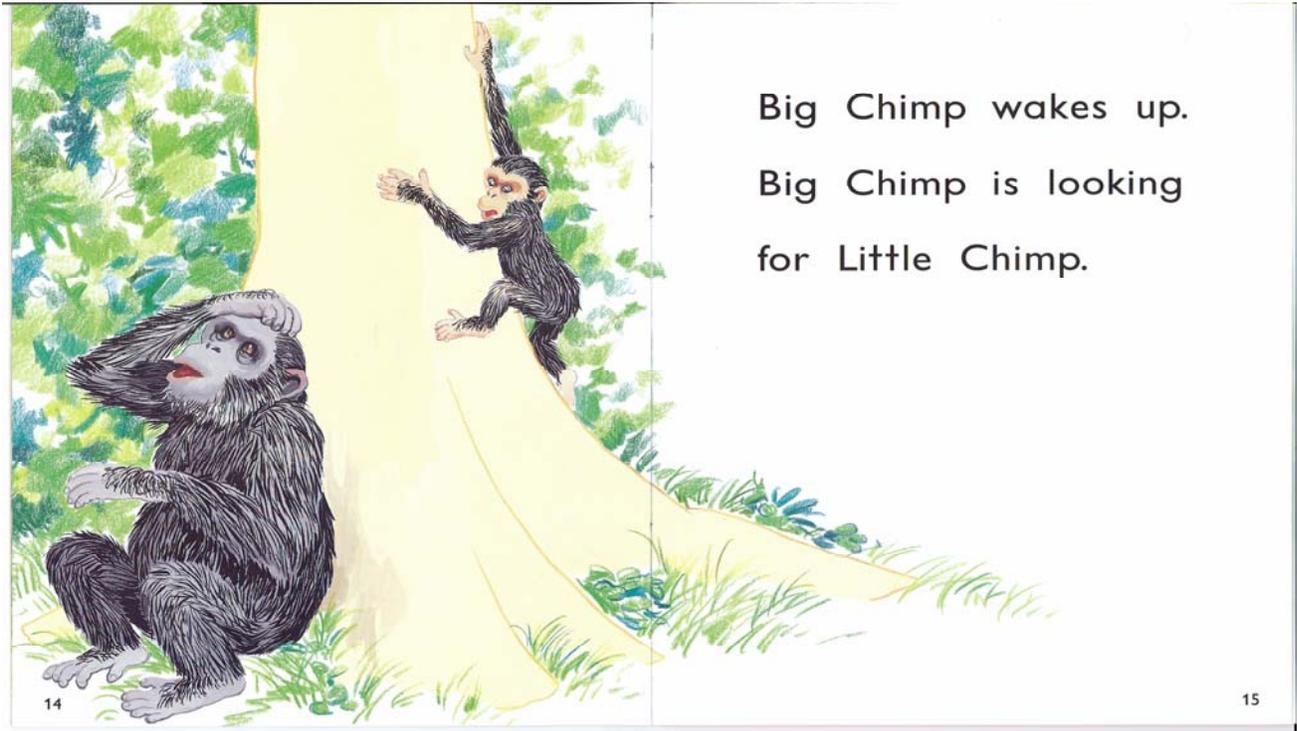
Reading Targets Text Level Chart: K–5

Grade Level	End of First Quarter	End of Second Quarter	End of Third Quarter	End of Fourth Quarter
Kindergarten	(Not Applicable)	Level 1 (A)	Level 2–3 (B–C)	Level 4 (C)*
First Grade	Level 5–7 (D–E)	Level 8–11 (E–G)	Level 12–15 (H–I)	Level 16–17 (I)
Second Grade	Level J	Level K	Level L	Level M
Third Grade	Level M	Level N	Level O	Level P
Fourth Grade	Level Q–R		Level S–T	
Fifth Grade	Level T–U		Level V–W	

* Text level 6 has been identified as the stretch goal for the end of kindergarten, in accordance with the 7 Keys to College Readiness Advanced Reading in Grades K–2.

Text Level 4—Literary Text

Sample text from *Little Chimp and Big Chimp*.



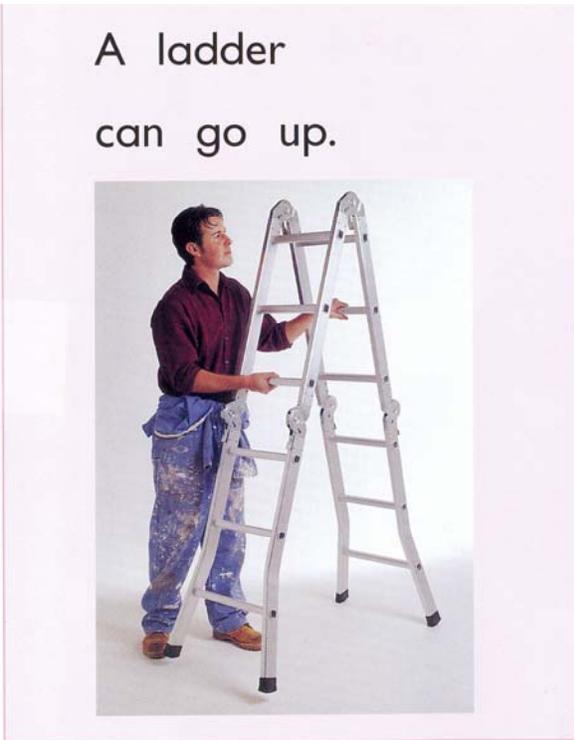
Big Chimp wakes up.
Big Chimp is looking
for Little Chimp.

The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• simple three- and four-word sentences.• many familiar words repeated throughout the book.• some words with inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing).• pictures that help tell the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• read and write about 25–30 familiar words.• think about: <i>Does it make sense?</i> and <i>Does it sound right?</i>• use beginning consonant sounds to read unknown words.• accurately read the words as if talking.• retell the story in own words.

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

Text Level 4—Informational Text

Sample text from *Up and Down*.

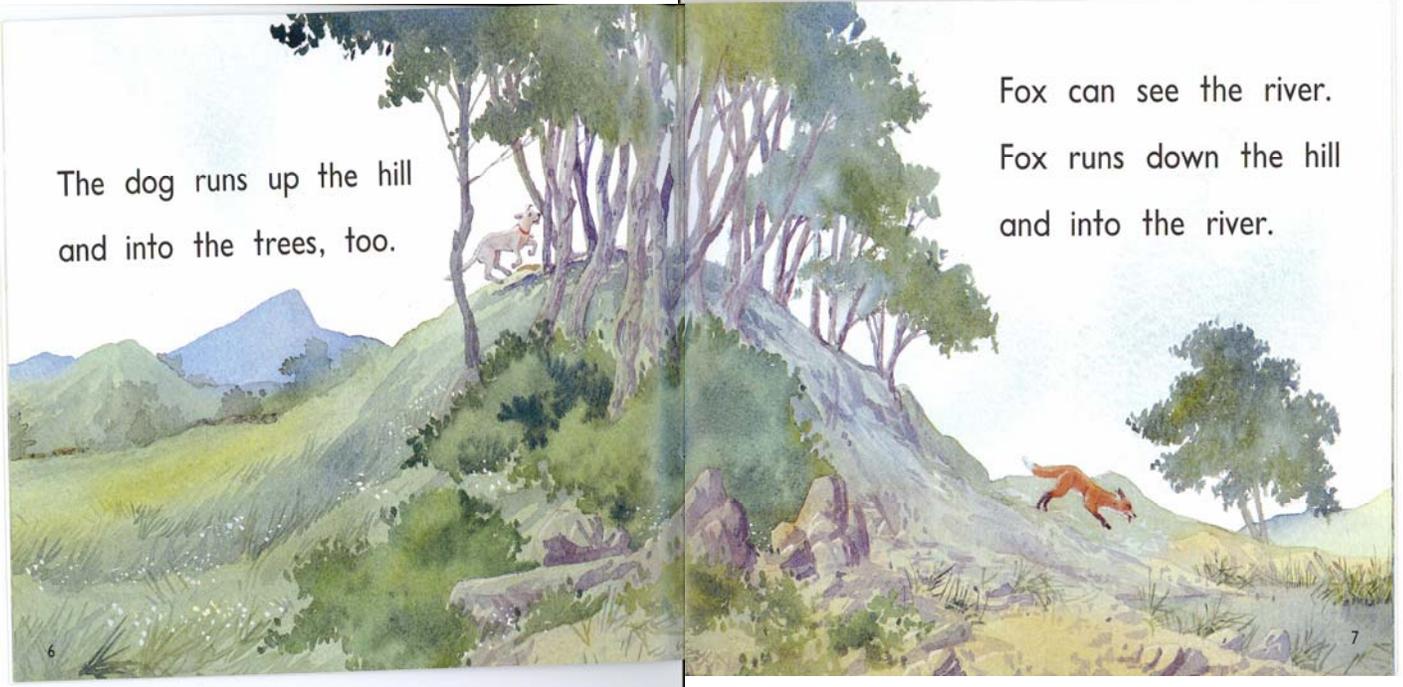


The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• simple three- and four-word sentences.• many familiar words that are repeated throughout the book.• some words with inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing).• pictures that support the facts in informational text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• read and write about 25–30 familiar words.• think about: <i>Does it make sense?</i> and <i>Does it sound right?</i>• use beginning consonant sounds to read unknown words.• accurately read the words as if talking.• retell the facts in own words.

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

Text Level 6—Literary Text

Sample text from *Clever Fox*.



The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a variety of sentences with up to eight to ten words. • many familiar words that students need to read quickly. • words with basic phonetic patterns, such as consonants, digraphs, and short vowel sounds. • words with inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing). • some compound words. • some irregular past tense verbs (<i>ran, came</i>). • pictures that support a storyline with real problems and solutions in narrative text or facts in informational text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and write 40 or more familiar words. • use basic phonetic skills, such as consonants, digraphs, and short vowel sounds to read unfamiliar words. • think about, while reading: <i>Does it make sense? Does it sound right? and Does it look right?</i> • reread to self-correct errors. • read with fluency, expression, and phrasing. • use punctuation to guide meaning and fluency. • retell the story or facts in own words. • answer questions about what is read.

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

Text Level 6—Informational Text

Sample text from *How Machines Help*.

A screwdriver will help you turn the screw.



A screwdriver is a machine.

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Can you cut paper with your fingers?



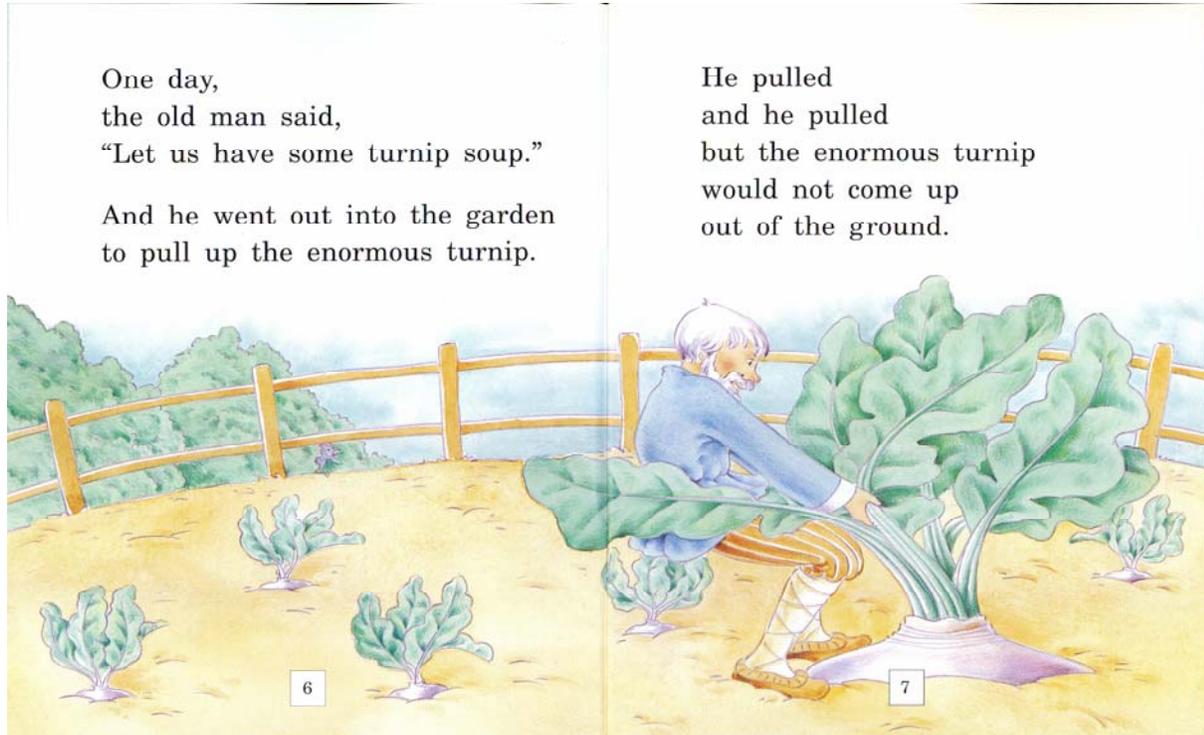
13

The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a variety of sentences with up to eight to ten words. • many familiar words that students need to read quickly. • words with basic phonetic patterns, such as consonants, digraphs, and short vowel sounds. • words with inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing). • some compound words. • some irregular past tense verbs (<i>ran, came</i>). • pictures that support facts in informational text. • additional features, such as labels, bold print, headings, table of contents, index, and challenging concepts and vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and write 40 or more familiar words. • use basic phonetic skills, such as consonants, digraphs, and short vowel sounds to read unfamiliar words. • think about, while reading: <i>Does it make sense? Does it sound right? and Does it look right?</i> • reread to self-correct errors. • read with fluency, expression, and phrasing. • use punctuation to guide meaning and fluency. • retell the story or facts in own words. • answer questions about what is read.

Beginning level texts can be previewed at the school.

Text Level 16—Literary Text

Sample text from *The Tale of the Turnip*.



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"> • longer simple sentences and longer compound sentences that may include clauses and prepositional phrases. • a wide range of familiar words. • many multisyllable words, generally easy to take apart to decode. • many words with endings (-s, -ed, -ing), plurals, contractions, compound words, and possessives. • more detailed episodes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-monitor for meaning and sentence structure. • apply phonetic skills to unknown words by taking words apart as they read. • self-correct errors more consistently. • discuss what is stated directly and what is implied in text. • gain speed during reading and strength for longer periods of reading.

Familiar books—Level 16:

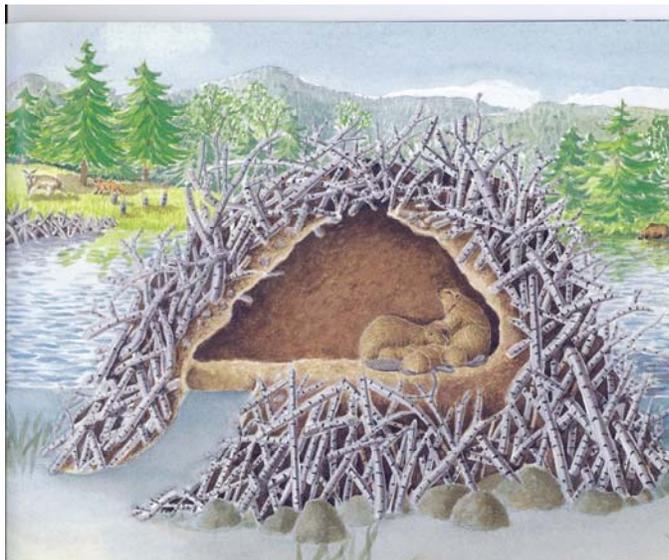
- *Angus and the Cat*, Marjorie Flack
- *Are You My Mother?*, P.D. Eastman
- *A Color of His Own*, Leo Lionni
- *Henny Penny*, Paul Goldone
- *Leo the Late Bloomer*, Robert Kraus

Text level 16—Informational Text

Sample text from *The Busy Beavers*.

A father beaver, a mother beaver and their four little beavers lived in a home in a lake.

Their home was a little island with a secret tunnel that went down into the water. They were safe on the island. The bears and the foxes and the great wild cats could not get them.



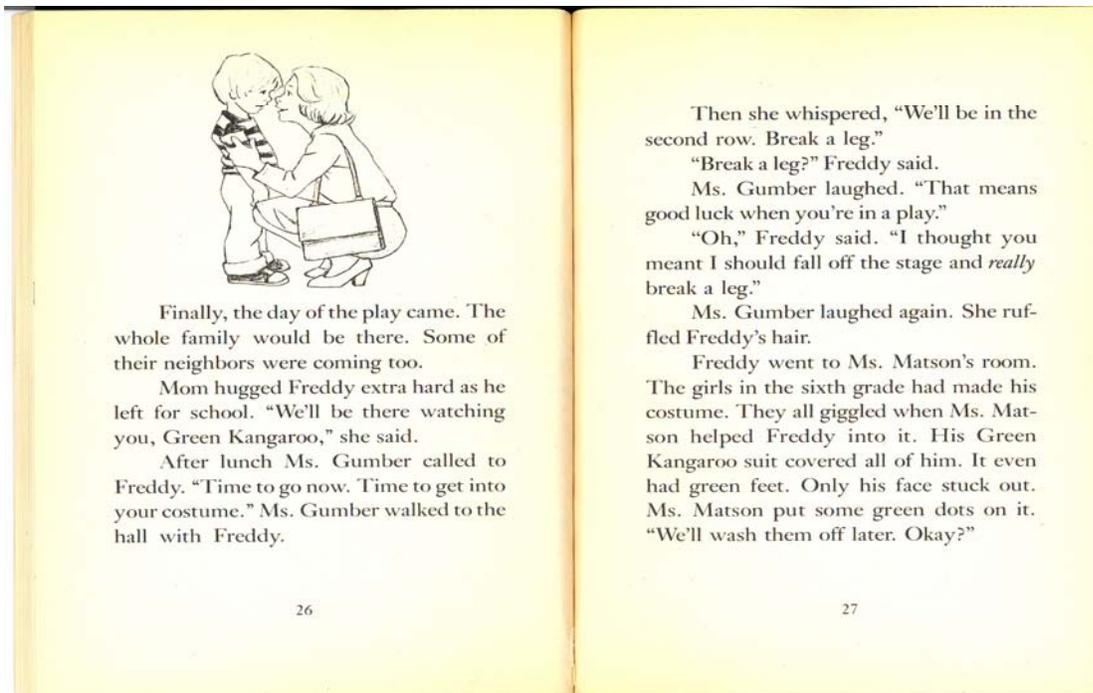
The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longer simple sentences and longer compound sentences that may include clauses and prepositional phrases. • a wide range of familiar words. • many multisyllable words, generally easy to take apart to decode. • many words with endings (-s, -ed, -ing), plurals, contractions, compound words, and possessives. • more detailed episodes. • abstract ideas and unfamiliar concepts within informational text. • a variety of additional features, such as labels, bold print, headings, glossary, insets, table of contents, index, and challenging concepts and vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-monitor for meaning and sentence structure. • apply phonetic skills to unknown words by taking words apart as they read • self-correct errors more consistently. • discuss what is stated directly and what is implied in text. • gain speed during reading and strength for longer periods of reading.

Familiar books—Level 16:

- *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

Text Level M—Literary Text

Sample text from *The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo*.



The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentences of varying length, with some very long complex sentences containing introductory clauses, and nouns, verbs, or adjectives in a series. • unfamiliar content supported or extended by illustrations. • simple plots and may include chapters with multiple episodes. • more challenging vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think about what he/she already knows about the topic or subject, preview the text before reading, and make predictions. • self-monitor for meaning. • apply strategies when meeting challenges while reading. • demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension orally and in writing after reading. • read longer text silently and independently.

Familiar books—Level M:

- *A Picture Book of Thurgood Marshall*, David Adler
- *Sharks*, Gail Gibbons
- *Blueberries for Sal*, Robert McCloskey
- *A Chair for My Mother*, Vera Williams
- *Junie B. Jones*, Barbara Park

Text Level M—Informational Text

Sample text from *Seasons and Weather*.

<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction</p> <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>  <p>In autumn, the weather is cooler. The leaves on many trees change color and fall to the ground.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<p>In some places, it snows in winter. The weather is very cold.</p>  <p>In spring, the weather gets warmer again. Plants grow new flowers and leaves.</p>  <p>There are changes all around us during the year.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>
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The Book Has...	The Student Is Learning to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sentences of varying length, with some very long complex sentences containing introductory clauses, and nouns, verbs, or adjectives in a series. • unfamiliar content supported or extended by illustrations. • a variety of layouts in informational text (question/answer, paragraphs, boxes, legends). • a combination of graphics providing information that matches and extends the text, such as captions that provide important information to supplement the body of the text. • more challenging vocabulary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think about what he/she already knows about the topic or subject, preview the text before reading, and make predictions. • self-monitor for meaning. • apply strategies when meeting challenges while reading. • demonstrate literal, inferential, and critical comprehension orally and in writing after reading. • read longer text silently and independently.

Familiar books—Level M:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Picture Book of Thurgood Marshall</i>, David Adler • <i>Sharks</i>, Gail Gibbons • <i>Blueberries for Sal</i>, Robert McCloskey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Chair for My Mother</i>, Vera Williams • <i>Junie B. Jones</i>, Barbara Par |
|--|---|

TerraNova, The Second Edition (TN2) Example

The TN2 is a standardized nationally normed assessment given to second grade students in the spring of each school year. The assessment tests knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics. In the reading item below, students read the poem, *My Favorite Snow*, and then respond to several multiple choice questions. A sample of a multiple choice question is provided below.



My Favorite SNOW

by Mark Merfeld

My favorite snow is the happy snow
that flutters down
in friendly flakes
smiling from peaceful piles
then invites me
into powdery games
laughing all the while
and becomes a man
of snowball shapes
wearing a frosty smile.



03 Analyze Text

This item measures the student's ability to draw conclusions from inferences in the poem. Other items in this objective measure the student's ability to determine the main idea, or theme, in a passage, analyze character, infer relationships such as cause and effect, or identify story elements such as plot and setting.

2 What is the friendly snow inviting the poet to do?

- make a snowman
- throw a snowball
- catch a snowflake