

Finding a “Good Fit” Book:

One golden rule about good fit books is that when a child reads the book, the book should seem easy (not simple) for the child. When a child can read without too many comprehension issues, reading becomes fun.

Use AR (Accelerated Reader) levels

Your child has taken a STAR test to get a range of reading levels to read. You may ask your child, teacher, or librarian for this information. This is usually a pretty accurate way to get a good fit book.

Five Finger Test

If you think a book may be too hard for you, try the "five finger test!"

To check the reading level of your book, take this simple test:

1. Open the book to the middle and choose any page to read.
2. Read the page. (aloud if possible)
3. Put out 1 finger for every word you do not know or cannot pronounce.
4. If you have 5 fingers out, the book is too difficult to read without help.
5. If you do not get any fingers up, but are reading very slowly and decoding almost every word, you will not enjoy the book.

Here's the finger guide:

- 1 Finger:** This book is o.k. for you.
2 Fingers: Still good.
3 Fingers: Could be a bit hard for you to understand.
4 Fingers: Will be too difficult to read and understand.
5 Fingers: Choose another book.

Check Oral Reading at Home

Listening to your child read a book is usually a great way to make sure the text is appropriate (although comprehension issues may still occur.)

To check oral reading rate, try the following (you will need a stopwatch or timer):

1. Open the book to the middle and choose any page to begin reading.
2. As soon as child begins reading, start the time.
3. As child reads, keep track of errors being made (you can try to write down each error as well. If child self-corrects, it does not count as an error!)
4. When time is up, count up how many words your child was able to read (words per minute)
5. Take total words and subtract total number of errors child made. Take this new number and divide it by total number of words to get the percent correct.
6. Use the information below to estimate whether book is just write based on oral reading (as you get closer to the next grade level, you should be looking at the upper range of words per minute):

Kindergarten = **(AR 0.1 – 0.9)** 40 – 75 words per minute with 95% accuracy

First grade **(AR 1.0 – 1.9)** 55 – 85 words per minute with 95% accuracy

Second grade **(AR 2.0 – 2.9)** 70 – 105 words per minute with 95% accuracy

Third grade **(AR 3.0 – 3.9)** 80 – 110 words per minute with 96% accuracy

Fourth grade **(AR 4.0 – 4.9)** 100 – 135 words per minute with 97% accuracy

Fifth grade **(AR 5.0 – 5.9)** 110 – 150 words per minute with 97% accuracy

There are times when you may think you have found a good fit book, but for some reason your child does not seem to understand the text. The following are ways to make sure your child has a good fit book. In my experience, the three most common reasons comprehension breaks down are:

- 1. Vocabulary:** There are some words or phrases that are difficult which makes it challenging for reader to understand main ideas.
- 2. Prior knowledge:** Although your child may be able to read the text well, they may not have enough experience with the topic. The author may assume the reader knows more about the topic than they do. This is especially true with historical fiction.
- 3. Author's style:** Sometimes the way an author writes can be difficult for some readers to understand.