

**My child talks about what level book they read. What does that mean?**

In the workshop model the students have a collection of books to read. Typically, students have their books chosen and ready for reading workshop time. The books include books that are at the student's independent reading level (a book the student can read with about 95-98% accuracy, at a comfortable rate and understand the text), a book related to the current unit of study and books chosen by the student based on interest. Depending on the grade or level of the student, a student may have more or less books in their book bag or basket. Younger readers tend to have 6-8 books in their book bags for independent reading and older students have 3-4 books. Younger students are encouraged and praised for rereading their books during reading workshop, as it helps improve their reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

**WOW? That must mean the classrooms need a lot of books?**

Yes, that is true and thanks to a very generous donation by the Pelham Education Foundation last year the classroom libraries have almost doubled in size.

**What can I do to help my child?**

Parents can help in a variety of ways.

- One way is to support a student's book choices, especially if it was guided by the teacher. As exciting as it may be for children to read 'harder' books, research has shown that students grow more as a reader by reading books that are relatively easy for them rather than books that are too hard or frustrating. Nonfiction texts are sometimes an exception as readers can get the gist of the content through the graphics even if some text is too difficult.
- Another way is to read together as much as possible. Encourage conversation asking open ended questions, such as I wonder..., what do you think would happen if..., I think the author's message is...etc.
- Read aloud to your child, even your older children. It is a great way to share a challenging book that they are interested in reading but may be too difficult for them to read independently at this time.
- Allow your young reader to make mistakes while reading, as often they will go back and reread and correct their mistakes when their comprehension falters.
- Encourage your child to read for extended periods of time. If it is difficult at first you can alternate reading with your child or extend the reading time a little bit at a time.
- Be sure to read fiction AND nonfiction with your child. When reading nonfiction be sure to model using the text features, such as the table of contents, maps, captions, etc. to gain information prior to reading the book.

# Comprehension Strategies

Reading is not just pronouncing words—it requires understanding. Most experienced readers use a variety of strategies to understand text. Research has shown that teachers can, and should, teach these strategies to beginning readers. Many of these strategies have been modeled for students by their teachers. Parents can encourage their children to:

## Make Predictions

Predictions encourage active reading and keep students interested. Student's predictions should be based on the text.

- Look at the pictures, table of contents, chapter headings, maps, diagrams, and the other nonfiction text features. What subjects are in the book?
- Write down predictions about the text. During reading, look for words or phrases from those predictions.
- While reading, revise the predictions or make new ones.

## Visualize

Many students think visually, using shapes, spatial relationships, movement, and colors, and can benefit greatly from this strategy. Students can:

- Imagine a fiction story taking place as if it were a movie. Imagine the characters' features. Picture the plot in time and space.
- Imagine processes and explanations happening visually. Use nouns, verbs, and adjectives to create pictures, diagrams, or other mental images.
- Use graphic organizers to lay out information. Make sketches or diagrams on scrap paper.

## Ask and Answer Questions

Having children form their own questions encourages active learning:

- Before reading, think about the subject based on the title, chapter heads, and visual information. Make note of anything you are curious about.
- While reading, pause and write down any questions. Be sure to ask questions if there is confusion.
- Look for the answers while reading. Pause and write down the answers.
- Were all the questions answered? Could the answers come from other sources?

## Retell and Summarize

Relating the text in a students' own words helps maintain meaning and helps retention of the story. Summarizing the story allows students to discriminate between main ideas and minor details.

- During reading, note the main ideas or events. Put a check mark in the book or write a note to point out a main idea.
- At the ends of chapters or sections, review the information or story. Note main ideas or events and the details that support them.
- After reading, retell/ summarize the text. Focus on the important points, and support them with relevant details.
- Refer to the book to check the retelling/ summarization.

# Word-Attack Strategies

Word-attack strategies help students decode, pronounce, and understand unfamiliar words. They help students attack words piece by piece or from a different angle. Many of these strategies have been modeled for students by their teachers. Parents can encourage their children to:

## Use Picture Clues

- Look at the picture.
- Are there people, objects, or actions in the picture that might make sense in the sentence?

## Sound out the Word/Tap out the word

- Start with the first letter, and tap each letter-sound out loud.
- Blend the sounds together and try to say the word. Does the word make sense in the sentence?

## Look for Chunks in the Word

- Look for familiar letter chunks. They may be sound/symbols, prefixes, suffixes, endings, whole words, or base words.
- Read each chunk by itself. Then blend the chunks together and sound out the word. Does that word make sense in the sentence?

## Connect to a Word You Know

- Think of a word that looks like the unfamiliar word.
- Compare the familiar word to the unfamiliar word. Decide if the familiar word is a chunk or form of the unfamiliar word.
- Use the known word in the sentence to see if it makes sense. If so, the meanings of the two words are close enough for understanding.

## Reread the Sentence

- Read the sentence more than once.
- Think about what word might make sense in the sentence. Try the word and see if the sentence makes sense.

## Keep Reading

- Read past the unfamiliar word and look for clues.
- If the word is repeated, compare the second sentence to the first. What word might make sense in both?

## Use Prior Knowledge

- Think about what you know about the subject of the book, paragraph, or sentence.

Do you know anything that might make sense in the sentence? Read the sentence with the word to see if it makes sense.

## Working with the "Shifts"

### What Parents Can Do to Help their Children Learn

The Common Core State Standards ask teachers to make 12 major “shifts” or (changes) in their classrooms – six shifts in English language arts and six shifts in Mathematics. These changes may be tough at first as students and teachers adjust to higher expectations.

As a parent, you can help and learn more by talking with your child about what they are learning. Ask open-ended questions about what they learned in school each day, read their homework and attend school events to learn about what their teachers expect.

This document explains some of the ways that your child’s classroom is changing and how you can help; for more information, check out [www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org).

#### THE 12 SHIFTS

English Language Arts/Literacy	Mathematics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read as much non-fiction as fiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build skills across grade levels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about the world by reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn more about less</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read more challenging material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use math facts easily</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about reading using "<i>evidence</i>"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think fast AND solve problems</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write about texts using "<i>evidence</i>"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Really know it, really do it</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know more vocab words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use math in the real world</li> </ul>

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS & IDEAS FOR PARENTS

What's the shift?	What will students have to do?	What can parents do to help?
Read as much fiction as non-fiction	Read more non-fiction	Supply more non-fiction texts
	Understand how non-fiction is written and put together	Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child
	Enjoy and discuss the details of non-fiction	Have fun with non-fiction in front of your child
Learn about the world by reading	Learn more about science and social studies through reading	Supply series of texts on topics that interest your child
	Use "primary source" documents	Find books that explain how things work and why
	Get smarter through the use of texts	Discuss non-fiction texts and their ideas
Read more challenging material	Re-read until they understand	Know what is grade-level appropriate
	Read books both at and above their comfort level	Provide challenging texts as well as books they can read easily
	Handle frustration	Read challenging books with your child
	Keep pushing to improve	Show that challenging books are worth reading
Talk about reading using evidence	Find evidence to support their arguments	Talk about texts
	Form judgments and opinions	Demand evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements
	Discuss what the author is thinking	Read aloud or read the same book as your child and discuss
	Make predictions about what will happen next	Discuss predictions
Write about text using evidence	Make arguments in writing using evidence	Encourage writing at home
	Compare multiple texts in writing	Write "books" together using evidence and detail
	Learn to write well	Review samples of exemplar student writing
Know more vocab words	Learn the words they will need to use in college and career	Read often and constantly with young children
	Get smarter at using the "language of power"	Read multiple books on the same topic
		Talk to your children, read to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes and word games#

## MATHEMATICS: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS & IDEAS FOR PARENTS

What's the shift?	What will students have to do?	What can parents do to help?
Build skills across grade levels	Keep building on learning year after year	Be aware of what your child struggled with last year and how that will effect ongoing learning
		Advocate for your child
		Ensure that support is given for “gap” skills, such as negative numbers, fractions, etc.
Learn more about less	Spend more time on fewer concepts	Know what the priority work is for your child at their grade level
Use math facts easily	Go more in-depth on each concept	Spend time with your child on priority work
		Ask your child’s teacher for reports on your child’s progress on priority work
Think fast AND solve problems	Spend time practicing by doing lots of problems on the same idea	Push children to know, understand and memorize basic math facts
		Know all of the fluencies your child should have
		Prioritize learning the fluencies your child finds most difficult
Really know it, really do it	Make the math work, and understand why it does	Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands <i>why</i> as well as <i>what</i> the answer is.
	Talk about why the math works	Advocate for the time your child needs to learn key math skills
	Prove that they know why and how the math works	Provide time for your child to work on math skills at home
Use math in the real world	Apply math in real world situations	Ask your child to do the math that comes up in daily life
	Know which math skills to use for which situation	

## Parent Resources Apps and Websites

- Reading Apps are listed below however the available apps are constantly changing. The ones listed below are generally for students in K-3. The starred apps are more appropriate for grades 2 and up.
  1. Reading Magic
  2. Word Bingo
  3. Bluster
  4. Star Speller
  5. Teach Me
  6. Jumbled Sentences
  7. Speech with Milo: Sequencing
  8. Sentence Builder
  9. 1000 Sight Word Super Hero by Hetel Shah
  10. Spelling Wizard
  11. Quizlet (makes flashcards)\*
  12. Language Adventure Quiz Game Show\*
  13. Reading Raven
  14. Grammar Wonderland\*
  15. Word Wonderland
  16. Reading Comprehension (various grades) by Abitalk
  17. I Prompt Pro

## Helpful Websites

- Helpful websites
  1. <http://earobics.com/gamegoo/games/squanky/squanky.html>
  2. Brainpop Jr.
  3. Starfall.com
  4. [www.guysread.com](http://www.guysread.com)
  5. Gigglepoeetry.com
  6. BookAdventure.com
  7. Nerdybookclub.wordpress.com

NEED A RECCOMENDATION?

READY TO BROWSE FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK?

## CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES

Website to help families choose books for independent reading:

<http://www.storysnoops.com/results.php?type=tween&list=Great%20for%20Middle%20School%20Book%20Reports>

Bank Street Bookstore provides a great resource for suggested reading. ( Click on your age and the ages below you on the left side of the home page for descriptions of the books.)

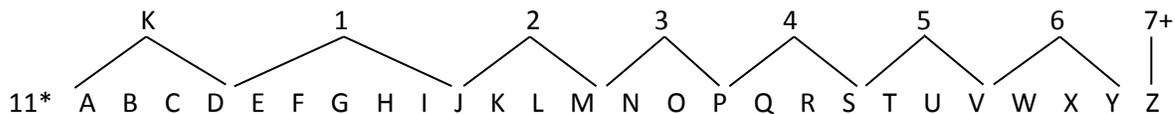
<http://www.bankstreetbooks.com>

Here's one of the best websites around, for boys *and* girls.

<http://www.boysread.org/books.html> (Website dedicated to Boys)

Great list of books for girls, and of course, boys.

<http://school.familyeducation.com/reading/fiction/37735.html>



### **Fountas and Pinnell Reading Level Characteristics**

Instructional Level: With teaching and support, the child can read the text.

Independent Level: Text the child can easily read and understand on his/her own.

A <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers are beginning to learn how print works and to notice the relationship between sounds and letters. They are learning to look at print from left to right, match the written word with the spoken word in print, read text with one line of print with simple words and on familiar topics, and use illustrations to match the print. <i>Children must be given the opportunity to read and reread these simple texts <u>with help</u>. Encourage your child to finger point each spoken word to the written word.</i>
B <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers are learning how print works, developing left to right directionality, firming up word-by-word matching with two lines of print, self-monitoring and attempting to self-correct and use illustrations to match the print. <i>Continue to provide opportunities to read and reread these simple texts <u>with help</u> while encouraging to finger point each spoken word to the written word. Provide both fiction and nonfiction texts with familiar topics.</i>
C <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers encounter simple stories and familiar topics with 2-6 lines of print on each page. They smoothly and automatically read from left to right. Pointing is smooth, and the eyes are taking over the process to match the spoken word to the printed word, with less picture support. Readers are consistently monitoring their reading. <i>Praise children for self-correcting and assist the use of dialogue with the voice.</i>
D <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers track print with their eyes and process texts with fewer repeating language patterns. They use a range of punctuation and read dialogue. Word by word matching is smooth and automatic. <i>Children should drop pointing to each word. Attention should be given to word endings.</i>
E <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers encounter texts with 3-8 lines of print per page. Texts have more complex stories and require more attention to understand. Readers rely more on print with less supportive pictures. Oral reading demonstrates fluency and phrasing with appropriate stress on words. They solve words with regular letter-sound relationships as well as a few irregular words. <i>Choose text with familiar vocabulary to your child which is likely used in their oral language.</i>
F <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers are beginning to build knowledge of the characteristics of different genre of texts. They can read both simple and split dialogue. In fiction, they are beginning to meet characters that are more developed. Children are reading without pointing and use appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation and word stress. <i>Texts may include familiar content that expands beyond home, neighborhood, and school.</i>
G <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers encounter a wider range of texts. They are still reading texts with 3-8 lines of print per page, but the print is slightly smaller. They are able to give attention to slightly more complex story lines and ideas. They are also able to use a range of word solving strategies as they read while making meaning. Illustrations are generally on every other page and depict multiple ideas. Texts have a few challenging vocabulary words. <i>Children should be reading for understanding. Encourage self-correcting and rereading.</i>
H <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers encounter same challenges as Level G; but the language and vocabulary are more complex. The stories are longer and there is less repetition. <i>Children will begin to read more new texts silently in order to achieve efficient and smooth processing. When reading orally they should be using appropriate rate, phrasing, intonation and word stress.</i>
I <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers will be processing texts that are mostly short (8-16 pages) as well as some easy illustrated chapter books (40-60 pages) that require them to sustain attention and memory over time. They can effectively process complex sentences and follow text with their eyes without pointing. <i>Find <u>short</u> chapter books with a single point of view and illustrations to help support the text. Nonfiction text focuses on a single idea/topic.</i>
J <i>Parent Tips:</i>	Readers are able to process a variety of texts such as: short informational text, short fiction texts with simple plots, short chapter books and simple biographies. <i>Children read silently during independent reading. Choose humorous stories typical of childhood experiences.</i>

K	Readers are able to process a wide variety of genres. They will read many illustrated chapter books, including some series books. The demand on reader's memory is increased. Texts have many characters which are more complex. Nonfiction text is organized into a few simple categories.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>As children read orally they should be demonstrating all aspects of fluency: appropriate rate, word stress, intonation, phrasing and pausing. Children should also recognize and use all punctuation appropriately.</i>
L	Readers process easy chapter books including some series books. Plots become more sophisticated with fewer illustrations. They learn new content through reading and are required to bring prior knowledge to the process. Children are able to understand multiple perspectives of characters.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Children should be able to solve many complex words including multi-syllable words, contractions, possessives, content-specific and some technical words.</i>
M	Readers know the characteristics of a range of genres. Series books and mysteries are often chapter books children are interested in reading. Elaborate plots and multiple characters that develop and change over time are evident in fictional chapter books. Children read shorter nonfiction texts with single topics.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Encourage children to explore chapter books and nonfiction topics they are interested in learning about.</i>
N	Readers are able to process a full range of genres. They read special forms of chapter books such as mysteries and series books. Fiction narratives have elaborate plots and multiple characters that change over time.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Children are able to solve words smoothly and automatically in both silent and oral reading.</i>
O	Readers have very similar genre characteristics as Level N. They can process complex sentences and solve new vocabulary words, some defined in the text and others unexplained.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Some abstract themes require inferential thinking to gain meaning. At this level children should be able to read <b>and</b> fully understand the text.</i>
P	Readers can identify the characteristics of a full range of genres. They are able to understand abstract and mature themes and take on diverse perspectives and issues.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>As children encounter more abstract text it is crucial that it can be comprehended by the child.</i>
Q	Readers automatically read and understand a full range of genres. They read special forms such as mysteries, series books, books with sequels, short stories and short informational text. They understand perspectives different from their own as well as settings and people far distant in time and space.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Children are challenged by many longer descriptive words and content specific and technical words that require using embedded definitions, background knowledge and readers' tools, such as glossaries.</i>
R	Similar to Level Q, readers encounter special forms which also include diaries and logs. Nonfiction contains multiple topics that go well beyond readers' personal experiences and content knowledge.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Children understand texts in a variety of layouts as well as fonts. They consistently search for information in illustrations and increasingly complex graphics.</i>
S	Readers encounter fiction text with complex plots, subplots and multiple story lines. Nonfiction content is particular to preadolescents' interests.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>Children will read text with more challenging themes, some requiring an understanding of cultural diversity, as well as texts with deeper meanings applicable to important human problems and social issues.</i>
T	Readers' text will be longer with many lines of print on each page, requiring readers to remember information and connect ideas over a long period of time. Complex fantasy, myths and legends offer added challenge and an increased use of symbolism.
<i>Parent Tips:</i>	<i>As text becomes more challenging, be sure your child is able to understand this complex level of text.</i>
U	Characteristics are similar to Level T. Themes present mature ideas, problems of society and human problems such as war, hardship, racism and economic issues.
V	Readers will encounter longer texts requiring them to remember information and connect ideas over many days of reading. Complex fantasy, myths and legends offer added challenge and an increased use of symbolism. Readers also encounter some abstract special forms of literature, such as satire.
W	Readers will encounter mature themes that expand their knowledge of social issues. In addition, they will encounter abstract special forms of literature, such as satire, and literary devices, such as irony. Themes are multidimensional and may be understood at many levels. Readers are challenged by many content-specific and technical words.
X, Y, Z	Although readers may encounter many texts that are long and have complex sentences and paragraphs as well as many multisyllabic words, they may vary greatly because readers are expected to understand and respond to mature themes such as abuse, poverty, sexuality, and war. Biographies offer a range of individuals who may not be admirable, requiring thinking on the part of readers. Text may include archaic language and regional dialect.

# Raz-Kids.com

This website provides developing readers with the opportunity to **go online and listen to, read, and record themselves reading books written at 27 levels of difficulty**. After reading a book, students can take an **interactive quiz** to check their comprehension. Teachers have the option of building a roster of students, making student-specific assignments, and tracking each reader's progress, or opening up a bookroom to give students free access to all books.

The Raz-Kids website **allows students to independently hear fluent reading modeled, practice reading skills, and check their comprehension**. New books and features are added to this website regularly.

## How to get students started on Raz-Kids

### 1. Go to Manage Students

Click **Roster** -Add/Delete/Transfer

**Add-Name**

**Reading Level** - Kindergarten-aa, Grades 1-5 (DRA)

**Bookroom**- Gives students access to books for free choice reading.

**Incentive** - Allows students to buy items in the Raz Rocket or Robot Builder using stars earned from listening, reading, and quizzes.

**Password**-Select text or icon for each individual student so students can't enter another's reading site.

**\*Click Save**

### 2. Go back to Roster

#### Send home Information

**Personalized Student Login Cards**- Gives website, teacher's username, and student's password.

**Letter to Parent**- Explains Raz-Kids website, teacher's username, student's password, and parent login information to view their child's activity.

#### Email Activity Report

Sent to teacher to view students' progress either weekly or monthly.

#### Send Class Message

The teacher can speak or write a message to all the students.

#### Send Individual Message

After you create the roster, you click student's name and you are able to write a message, plus give extra incentive stars as a reward.

## Reports on Students

**Activity Report-** Lists student's book level, amount of books listened to, read, and quizzes. Also **Alerts** teacher to student's quiz errors in specified reading skill area.

### **Click Individual Student Name**

**Activity-**Lists all book titles students listened, read, and were quizzed on.

**Assignment-**Book level completion progress

**Level Progress-**Chart that dates the reading level progress

**Reading Rate-**Teacher has to assign

**Quiz Skills-** Show students' reading comprehension accuracy from quizzes in specific skill area. Such as vocabulary, sequence, story elements etc.

### **Assign Assessment**

Running Record

Alphabet Assessment

High Frequency Word Assessment

## Create Custom Assignment

Assign a book or books targeting specific skills or topics.

## On Student's Site

**Reading Assignment (Blue Planet)** Students read assigned leveled books from this site and get audio assistance with difficult words if needed. There are fewer books and students move to next reading level quicker.

**On Your Own Book Room (Yellow Planet)** Gives Students access to more books

### - **BOOKS**

Leveled Books

Alphabet Books

Decodable Books

Serial Books  Favorite Characters

High-Frequency Word Books

Nursery Rhymes

Poetry Books

Read Aloud Books  Read Alouds

Song Books

Sound/Symbol Books

Vocabulary Books

### **TRANSLATIONS**

Spanish Leveled Books

### **BOOK-RELATED RESOURCES**

Trade Book Quizzes