

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, First Grade, 2014-2015
Overview of the Year for First Grade Readers**



Overview of the Year for First Grade Readers

September	Unit One – Readers Build Good Habits
October/November	Unit Two – Word Detectives Use All They Know to Solve Words
November/December	Unit Three – Learning About the World by Reading
January/February	Unit Four – Readers Get to Know the Characters in Books
February/March	Unit Five – Readers Can Be Their Own Teachers, Working Hard to Figure Out the Tricky Words and Parts in Books
April/May	Unit Six – Reading Across Genres to Learn About a Topic: Information Books, Stories, and Poems
May/June	Unit Seven – Dramatizing Characters and Deepening Comprehension in Reading Clubs

How happy we are to share with you the 2014-2015 First Grade Reading Curricular Calendar. Those of you who receive new calendars every year may glance at this quickly and notice that in many ways it is similar to last year's calendar. It is true that we've tried to maintain most of the same units as last year, but this does not mean there are not important changes woven throughout. We believe these changes will make all the difference in planning a curriculum that helps your students rise to the many challenges of this important year.

This curriculum calendar has been designed for first-grade teachers and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Norman Webb's work on Depth of Knowledge (DOK). You will see references to both DOK and the Standards throughout the curricular calendars, and to the ways in which your teaching aligns with these important initiatives. We have also taken into account benchmark reading levels for first grade. You can find the TCRWP's Benchmarks for Independent Reading Levels chart below in the assessment section of this document or on our website: www.readingandwritingproject.com. This chart has been developed based on data we have collected over the years. To determine these levels, we

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queried New York City schools, researched what other states were doing, learned the levels of passages used in New York State’s ELA exams, distributed tentative recommendations, received feedback, and finally settled upon some expectations. We acknowledge, however, that these are open to debate. Therefore, we do not necessarily advocate that a district adopt levels we propose.

You’ll notice the reading benchmarks at the top of each unit. These include ones for months when you may be formally assessing your students (September, November, January, March, and June), as well as approximate levels for interim months. This will give you a sense of how children will ideally progress across the entire year so that you can help pace your students. Please note that this is just a suggested path; it will not hold true for all children. You may find it helps to refer to these month-by-month benchmarks as you create your own big goals for each unit.

The first grade reading curriculum builds upon the spiral curriculum laid out in kindergarten, and is designed to continue moving students up levels of text complexity through independent and guided practice. Of course the goal is to move all of your students up levels of text complexity with increasing focus on fluency and higher levels of comprehension—as is laid out in the Common Core State Standards. We know from years of research in classrooms around the world that the best way to meet this goal is to first match students to books that they read with 96% accuracy, fluency and comprehension. The progress grows out of lots of reading, strong reading behaviors, and of course instruction with texts on and just above students’ just right levels. As always, students work with teacher-support to read mentor texts, working closely with selected short passages from those texts, and they learn to transfer reading practices developed through that close study of shared texts to their independent reading

We’ve written this curricular plan, imagining that your classroom contains a wide array of readers, as first-grade classrooms generally do. We also assume that many of your children will enter your class reading books that are somewhere around levels D/E, or higher. The calendar is designed with an eye toward helping your readers progress in a way that, by the end of the year, they’ll be in the proximity of levels I/J/K or higher. If the majority of your readers enter first grade reading closer to levels A-C, it will be especially important for you to draw upon this curricular calendar, as well as the winter and spring units of the kindergarten reading calendar. On the other hand, if many of your readers enter first grade reading books like *Henry and Mudge* (J), you can look at the second-grade curricular calendar for the way each of the units described here looks when it supports readers who are working at those levels.

Reading instruction happens moment-to-moment in the classroom as teachers establish the conditions under which children learn to read and to write, assess what children can

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do, and then teach them to take steps forward as readers. Starting in kindergarten and continuing through higher education, teaching is always responsive; it is always assessment-based. But this doesn't mean that teachers cannot imagine, beforehand, how the classroom work will likely evolve across the year.

As readers grow, their needs change fairly dramatically—and kids don't all grow in sync! It is almost as if one teacher needs to simultaneously support a kindergarten, first-, and sometimes even a second-grade curriculum. Then too, readers always need to integrate sources of meaning, drawing on learning from across the year as they read. Throughout these calendars, we suggest ways to use the various components of balanced literacy so that children progress in all aspects of reading.

This curricular calendar, written with input from teachers, literacy coaches, staff developers, and reading experts, is one informed pathway for the upcoming year. There are hundreds of ways a teacher could plan. We expect that all of you will work with grade-level colleagues to determine your school's own curricular plans for first grade, taking into account your particular areas of expertise, your children's needs and interests, the Standards, DOK, the assessments to which you and your children are held accountable, the span of reading levels in your classroom, and your school's larger curricular plans. We hope that you will, in fact, produce a written document that includes some of your own variations of these units—or new units altogether. Above all, we recommend that you and your colleagues agree upon a shared journey, through which you support one another.

New Work for the Coming Year

You will see that we have kept to the same timeline as last year but have made some substantial revisions to units we've carried over. In some cases we have added suggestions and strategies (such as in Units 2 and 5) while in other units we have reduced the variety of teaching points to give the unit more focus and students more practice (such as in Units 1 and 3).

You will also notice that this year, as we introduced last year, we suggest a first priority assessment or two for each unit of study as well as ways to conduct formative assessments throughout the unit. In some units, we suggest additional assessments that you may administer to more specifically assess particular skills—if you have the time. We are aware how much there is to assess in first grade, and that it is often hard to decide what to assess when. You will notice, too, that we kept some of the units as many as six weeks long, so that your assessments don't take away from your teaching time. You may decide to structure your units in other ways. Always, our intent is that teachers adapt this curriculum in ways that benefit their particular students. Knowing your students' strengths and needs will position you to make a better matched instructional plan.

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This year, we have added to our appendix. We have streamlined the phonics and word study work to match the shared reading plans as well as small suggestions of simple formative assessments, we are calling ‘dipstick assessments’ to do ongoing throughout the unit. This is to provide guidance in how to truly tailor your units and component work so that these lessons match what your kids truly need to grow. You will also find additional charts and tools that will be supportive for you and your students to use. Each one is designed to accompany a unit of study.

Finally, the word study section at the end of each unit has been revised to also complement the shared reading plan designated for the same time. We have suggested phonics instruction that would support the developmental sequence from the spelling inventory and also made suggestions aligned with reading level benchmarks. In this way we hope to help you reflect on not just *how* to teach, but also *what* content to address, and *when* to address it. Our intent was that you would use this plan as a template for reading other shared reading texts that follow the same structure. We hope that this will be a useful tool to strengthen the other components of balanced literacy on which workshop teaching relies, to support all readers in your classroom.

This calendar aims to give children a well-balanced reading curriculum in first grade and to prepare them for the work ahead in Grade Two.

Workshop Structures

Your reading workshop will follow the same structure day to day. Every day, you’ll provide direct and explicit instruction through a brief minilesson, followed by long stretches of time for children to read just-right books (and sometimes slightly challenging ones), punctuated by assessment-based conferences and coaching. Each day your first graders will have time to sit hip-to-hip, one copy of a book between them, reading aloud in unison or taking turns. You’ll also convene in small groups within the reading workshop. Some schools provide additional time for small groups outside the workshop—mostly for students who need additional support.

Minilessons start the day’s reading workshop, and instruct children toward an essential skill. For example, you might teach all your children how to test whether a book feels “just right.” You’ll teach children ways to get ready to read and strategies to make meaning once they begin. You’ll also teach them how to work with a partner and what to do when they encounter a challenge. Minilessons revolve around a clear teaching point that crystallizes the message of a lesson.

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Each minilesson is designed to teach readers a skill that they can draw upon that day and any day—so that readers accrue a repertoire of strategies they will draw upon over and over. We suggest you create and post a chart of abbreviated teaching points so that children can continually review what they have learned from prior minilessons. You can then bring these anchor charts from one unit of study into subsequent ones. It is essential that you make new charts each year within the presence of new learners. These will also provide support as children learn to use not just a single strategy (DOK Level 1 work) as they read, but multiple ones (DOK Level 4 work).

The most important part of a reading workshop is the actual reading time. At the start of the year, you may need to remind children of routines and expectations for independent reading time versus whole-class or partner reading. Children’s stamina for maintaining reading may be a bit low early on in the year. The length of independent reading time will grow as children’s skills grow. Children might begin the year reading alone for fifteen minutes, then reading in partnerships for fifteen more. If you have students who read level J books or above, they should be able to sustain reading independently for longer periods (twenty to twenty-five minutes) and then talk with partners at the end of the workshop (five to ten minutes). By February, first-grade readers should be able to sustain reading for at least forty-five minutes in a close to sixty-minute-long reading workshop.

As children read by themselves, teach them to use Post-its to mark parts in their books that capture their attention: funny parts, important pages, places where they grew a big idea or learned something surprising. They’ll later share these with partners. Across the year, you will vary their configurations so that children sometimes meet with just one partner, and sometimes with clubs consisting of foursomes.

During each unit of study, children will read books at their just-right level as well as ones at easier levels. Depending on their level, they will select ten to twelve books a week to store in their book bin, which they will read multiple times across the week. Mid-week, they will then swap books with a same-level partner, thus doubling the number of books they read in the week.

Although some children will move almost seamlessly from one level to the next, the majority will move more gradually. During the transition from one level to the next, students will begin to read books at the next level up. You’ll give your students “transitional book baggies” that include mostly titles at the child’s just-right level in addition to a handful of books at the higher one. The latter can come from books you’ve shared through book introductions, or during guided reading, or it might include titles that the child has read with his or her partner. The idea is to scaffold readers as they move into a new level.

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As children read, you'll confer with individual students, lead small groups, and give book introductions—especially for children who are relatively new to a level. Your conferences in reading may follow the research-compliment-teach structure of many writing conferences, or you will use them to coach into children's reading. Reading Recovery teachers are expert at the latter, so learn from them! Small group shared reading will help children who need help with fluency and integrating sources of information, while strategy lessons are ideal for children who need help attending to meaning while also considering multisyllabic words. Some small groups may need support moving to the next level, and you may do guided reading with them. Your small groups need to be flexible, need-based, and quick, lasting no more than approximately ten to twelve minutes a group.

Additional Components of Balanced Literacy

A full balanced reading program includes not only a reading workshop, but also a variety of other structures. Some of the most important for early elementary school-aged children are reading aloud, shared reading, phonics (also referred to as word study), and writing workshop.

Once children are in first grade, reading workshop, and its counterpart, writing workshop, last almost an hour each every day. In addition, you'll want to read aloud every day—and at least a few times a week, you'll support conversations about the read-aloud book. First graders have a lot to learn about spelling and phonics, which you will teach during a daily word study time. You'll also draw on the other components of balanced literacy, sometimes weaving them into social studies, science work, or morning meetings. These will include additional small-group work, shared reading, and interactive writing.

Reading Aloud

We cannot stress enough the importance of reading aloud. You will read aloud to teach children discipline-based concepts that are integral to social studies and science, to create a sense of community, and to foster a love of reading. You'll also read aloud to teach children vocabulary and higher-level comprehension skills, which are integral to their growth.

Each read-aloud can include a demonstration of a skill or a collection of skills. To plan, place Post-its in the text you'll use, ahead of time, marking spots where you'll either think aloud to model a reading strategy or ask students to do similar work together by jotting down their thoughts or turning to talk to a partner about their ideas. Your prompts could sound something like, "Turn and tell your partner what you think will happen next" or "Let's think about what's going on here. Turn and tell your neighbor what you think is happening in this part." After a one- or two-minute interlude for partners to externalize their thoughts (that is, to talk), you'll read on, to maintain the thread of the text.

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After pausing several times, either to demonstrate or to provide children with guided practice, and after reading the chapter or the section of the text, you might engage in a whole-class conversation. During these longer conversations, which will happen at least twice a week, it is important for children to direct their comments to each other. That is, rather than posing questions, calling on one child and then another to respond, instead, pose a question to the entire class—and then set children up to respond to it with one another. You might throw out prompts such as “I want to add on to what you said. . .” or “Another example of that is. . .” or “But I’m not sure you’re right because. . .” to keep children engaged in a back and forth dialogue.

As you consider the partnerships for your read aloud time, bear in mind that while it is *organizationally* easier for children to maintain the same partnerships across both independent reading and read-aloud, it is *educationally* preferable for read-aloud partnerships to be different so that these relationships are not ability-based. You may, in fact, opt to (quietly) group students so that one partner (Partner A) is the stronger reader and talker, and the other one (Partner B), less strong. Then, when you set children up to do challenging work, you can say, “Partner A, please tell Partner B...,” and if the task is one that you believe is perfect for Partner B, you can channel the work that way, instead.

Of course, you need not rely solely on the prompt for partners to “turn and talk” during a read-aloud. You may intersperse directions for children to also “stop and jot” or to “stop and sketch.” When children jot or sketch, provide them with a few moments to record their ideas before you continue reading, so that they don’t miss large chunks of the story.

Your read-aloud work will sometimes foreshadow work that the whole class will soon do. If your class will soon begin a unit on nonfiction reading, for example, you could read aloud nonfiction during the last week of the previous study. This way, by the time your children begin their own independent work, they will have a common resource to draw upon.

Shared Reading

Shared reading is the time in the day when teachers and children read in sync with one another, eyes on the same text. Usually shared reading revolves around big books, songs, or enlarged texts written on chart paper, with the teacher pointing under words as the class reads in sync. A classroom community spends some time rereading familiar texts and also some time, usually less, working together with a new text.

In many first grade classrooms, with a large number of students reading around levels D/E, many teachers begin the year with daily shared reading time (often ten to fifteen minutes), during which they work on phonics and fluency, as well as the print strategies they’ve

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determined many of their students still need to internalize and to use on the run as they read. Additionally, the act of gathering all students around a text in the beginning of the year helps build community and inspires enthusiasm for reading. This year, for the first unit of study, we've selected *The Gingerbread Man* (a big book available in FAMIS) by Brenda Parkes, and planned daily shared reading sessions each day with a focus on a specific skill/strategy. Of course, we want readers to orchestrate multiple skills and strategies, so our teaching during shared reading will be both explicit and implicit.

As your readers progress, you may focus more on fluency, phrasing, and prosody, as well as how to handle difficult vocabulary. You may also use whole-class shared reading to provide comprehension instruction, coaching readers to envision, infer, and synthesize.

Word Study

As a school, you will need to decide upon an approach to phonics. The TCRWP does not try to make this decision for a school. Most schools that we work with draw upon a combination of *Words Their Way*, *Phonics Lessons*, (the *Firsthand* series by Fountas and Pinnell), *Fundations*, and Pat Cunningham's work, *Month-by-Month Phonics*.

These reading units of study should not replace the work you do to grow students' knowledge of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics. The purpose of word study is to build students' knowledge of features of words and high-frequency words to help children become efficient problem-solvers of words in reading and writing. You will want to devote fifteen to twenty minutes each day to explicit, direct phonics instruction.

Assess your students' knowledge to determine what features you will focus on. Most teachers use the *Words Their Way* Spelling Inventory along with the Word Identification Task to determine their students' stages of spelling development. Once you have assessed your students, you will want to organize your teaching. You may want to spend the first few weeks on whole-group instruction. Plan to focus on what most students are ready to learn next. Choose features to work on that most students are confusing. For example, if you notice that many students are spelling 'sh' words with 'ch' you'll work on digraphs. Once you differentiate your class into three groups for word study, begin by teaching students the routines to several word study activities so that they can work in partnerships as you work with one group. Be sure you spend enough time studying each feature (e.g., blends, spelling patterns) in a variety of ways. Make sure to support students' ability to read and write these features both in isolation and in context. Always, provide explicit teaching of phonics as part of your day. In some units, you will notice an emphasis on word solving. You will want to support children's transfer of their word knowledge to their reading.

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Small-Group Instruction

It is critically important that you lead small-group instruction as often as you can. Any teaching that you do in a whole group can also be done in a small group—you can do small-group shared reading, small-group interactive writing, small-group phonics, small-group read-aloud and accountable talk, and so forth. Your small-group work can reteach, enrich, or pre-teach. For example, to pre-teach, you might gather together a group of children who don't tend to engage in accountable talk, read the upcoming section of the chapter book you are reading to the class, and engage them in a very active book talk. In this way, you will set them up for the next day, when you'll read aloud that same section of the read-aloud text to the whole class. These children will thus have an easier time talking about ideas that you have already sanctioned, and you will be able to draw them into more active roles in the whole-class book talk.

You will want to run table conferences, strategy lessons and guided reading sessions for your students. You may decide to use your small group instruction time to work on an isolated skill or to orchestrate a set of skills to help students read more complex texts.

Your small-group work will be shaped especially by your assessments. For example, if you have some children whose writing is not readable, who do not yet represent every sound they hear in a word with a letter (correctly or incorrectly), those children will need extra help, which begins with extra assessments. Do they know their letters of the alphabet? Their sound-letter connections? How many sight words do they know? Once you've determined the level of work at which these children can be successful, you can use this calendar for suggestions of the sort of instruction they will need. You'll then offer that instruction intensely over the first six weeks of the year, and will check that children are making rapid progress. Those who enter first grade as early emergent readers and who do not progress very rapidly when given high-quality classroom instruction will need specialized support.

The instruction that this group receives will be multifaceted. First and foremost, set them up with books they can read with 96% accuracy, and give them book introductions to these. They will need phonics support that is tailored to their level, which could mean work with the alphabet, but will probably mean work with beginning and ending sounds and, soon to follow, short vowels (like the short *a*) and with simple CVC words such as "rat" and "sat." In small groups, these children can do the kind of picture-sorts and word-hunts that are recommended in *Words Their Way*, for example. These readers will also need intensive emphasis on their own writing, on hearing more sounds in words as they write, rereading their writing, and writing more. Aim to move these children up from one level of text to another as soon as you can, relying on guided reading to prepare them for the characteristics of the harder level of text. In guided reading, much of your teaching will

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involve setting children up for the features of the new level, especially the challenging ones. For example, in a guided reading group for readers moving into level B/C texts, you may set students up for text that wraps around.

Any children who come into your classroom reading level C or below will also need special attention. If possible, meet more frequently with these readers, making sure they can read their books with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Book introductions can always help. Keep an eye on their volume of reading and their level of engagement.

Throughout the year, plan to pull together small groups of any children with similar needs. Based on your assessments, you might determine that certain children need help orchestrating the sources of information and drawing on multiple strategies to deal with harder words and longer texts. In a small group strategy lesson, you can build their “tool box” of print strategies.

Assessment and Moving Students up Levels

The first assessment we suggest you give students at the start of first grade is the writing assessment, which is described in the writing curricular calendar. We also recommend that you give the spelling inventory designed by Donald Bear, which is foundational to his Words Their Way program. Because this can be given as a whole-class spelling test, it is the quickest assessment you can deliver. You can consult Bear’s book, *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*, for more information on how to analyze this inventory. You’ll need to follow directions to count features correct for each child (this will take longer than giving the test but still requires just minutes per child). Your calculations will quickly tell you whether a particular child is an early beginning reader (a level C/D reader, who will need you to help him learn “letter name-alphabetic” spelling features and patterns, e.g., those involving short vowels, digraphs, and blends), or an emergent reader (a level A reader, who will need help with “emergent” spelling features, and will benefit from support with initial and final sounds).

That is, the spelling inventory can proxy for the informal reading inventory. It can, for a few days, take the place of each child reading aloud a leveled text while you take running records to quickly determine the level of books each student is able to read with ease. You will want to conduct running records soon, but before doing so, you can use the spelling inventory to learn about the range of readers in your class, to identify those in need of immediate extra supports starting day one, to match readers to books they can handle with ease, and to begin tailoring your whole-class instruction—your shared reading, read-aloud, minilessons, and so forth—to the readers in your care. You will also want to begin phonics instruction soon, and your spelling inventory (plus a copy of *Words Their Way* or another book on assessment based phonics) can get you started.

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Of course, you can also use your students' book levels from the previous year, and in fact, last year's favorite books, as a place to start. It is ideal for each grade level to begin the year by borrowing a huge armload of familiar texts from the previous year—poems, big books, read-aloud picture books, and independent books. This is especially ideal for counteracting summer reading loss, as children will be familiar with these books. Don't for a minute think it will do children good to start this year reading books they cannot read with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Make sure they can read the books with 96% accuracy and can answer a couple of literal questions about them, as well as an inferential question.

In order to assess individual student reading progress we have developed the TC Fiction Reading Level Assessment. This assessment takes what works well from the DRA, the QRI, and Fountas and Pinnell assessments. Simply told, this is a running record assessment followed by multiple choice text-dependent questions designed to determine if a child is reading with a level of understanding that allows him to infer, synthesize, predict, and so forth. This system, available on the TCRWP website (www.readingandwritingproject.com), has been accepted by NYC's Department of Education as an option for all NYC schools. This tool contains two books (levels A-K) or two passages at each text level, A-Z, ranging in length from 20 to 400-plus words, followed by literal and inferential comprehension questions for each passage. Through this assessment, a teacher can ascertain the general level of text difficulty that a child is able to read with ease and comprehension.

Following is a table of benchmark reading levels. These are derived from a study of data from AssessmentPro, the online database that allows Project schools to track their reading data, as well as the state and city benchmarks. The chart is updated and available always at www.readingandwritingproject.com. These levels are comparable to the bands recommended by the CCSS.

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SEPTEMBER	NOVEMBER	JANUARY	MARCH	JUNE
<u>Kindergarten</u> Emergent Story Books Shared Reading	<u>Kindergarten</u> Emergent Story Books Shared Reading A/B (with book intro)	<u>Kindergarten</u> B/C (with book intro)	<u>Kindergarten</u> 1=Early Emergent 2=A/B (with book intro) 3=C (with book intro) 4=D/E	<u>Kindergarten</u> 1=B or below 2=C (with book intro) 3=D/E 4=F or above
<u>Grade 1:</u> 1=B or below 2=C 3=D/E 4=F or above	<u>Grade 1:</u> 1=C or below 2=D/E 3=F/G 4=H or above	<u>Grade 1:</u> 1=D or below 2=E/F 3=G/H 4=I or above	<u>Grade 1:</u> 1=E or below 2=F 3=G/H 4=I or above	<u>Grade 1:</u> 1=G or below 2=H 3=I/J/K 4=L or above
<u>Grade 2:</u> 1=F or below 2=G/H 3=I/J/K 4=L or above	<u>Grade 2:</u> 1=G or below 2=H/I 3=J/K/L 4=M or above	<u>Grade 2:</u> 1=H or below 2=I/J 3=K/L 4=M or above	<u>Grade 2:</u> 1=I or below 2=J/K 3=L/M 4=N or above	<u>Grade 2:</u> 1=J or below 2=K/L 3=M 4=N or above
<u>Grade 3:</u> 1=K or below (avg. H) 2=L 3=M 4=N or above	<u>Grade 3:</u> 1=K or below (avg. I) 2=L/M (avg. L) 3=N 4=O or above	<u>Grade 3:</u> 1=L or below 2=M/N 3=O 4=P or above	<u>Grade 3:</u> 1=M or below (avg. J) 2=N 3=O 4=P or above	<u>Grade 3:</u> 1=N or below (avg. K) 2=O 3=P 4=Q or above
<u>Grade 4:</u> 1=M or below (avg. J) 2=N/O (avg. N) 3=P/Q (avg. P) 4=R or above	<u>Grade 4:</u> 1=N or below (avg. L) 2=O/P (avg. P) 3=Q/R (avg. Q) 4=S or above	<u>Grade 4:</u> 1=O or below 2=P/Q 3=R/S 4=T or above	<u>Grade 4:</u> 1=O or below (avg. K) 2=P/Q (avg. P) 3=R/S (avg. R) 4=T or above	<u>Grade 4:</u> 1=P or below (avg. L) 2=Q/R (avg. Q) 3=S/T (avg. S) 4=U or above

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<u>Grade 5:</u> 1=P or below (avg. M) 2=Q/R (avg. Q) 3=S 4=T or above	<u>Grade 5:</u> 1=P or below (avg. N) 2=Q/R/S (avg. Q) 3=T 4=U or above	<u>Grade 5:</u> 1=Q or below 2=R/S/T 3=U 4=V or above	<u>Grade 5:</u> 1=Q or below (avg. O) 2=R/S/T (avg. R/S) 3=U 4=V or above	<u>Grade 5:</u> 1=R or below (avg. P) 2=S/T/U (avg. S/T) 3=V 4=W or above
<u>Grade 6:</u> 1=R or below (avg. O) 2=S/T/U (avg. S) 3=V/W (avg. V) 4=X or above	<u>Grade 6:</u> 1=S or below (avg. P) 2=T/U/V (avg. T) 3=W 4=X or above	<u>Grade 6:</u> 1=T or below 2=U/V 3=W/X 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 6:</u> 1=T or below (avg. Q) 2=U/V (avg. U) 3=W/X (avg. W) 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 6:</u> 1=U or below (avg. Q) 2=V/W (avg. V) 3=X 4=Y or above
<u>Grade 7:</u> 1=T or below (avg. P) 2=U/V (avg. U) 3=W/X (avg. W) 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 7:</u> 1=T or below (avg. Q) 2=U/V/W (avg. U) 3=X 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 7:</u> 1=U or below 2=V/W 3=X 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 7:</u> 1=U or below (avg. R) 2=V/W (avg. V) 3=X 4=Y or above	<u>Grade 7:</u> 1=V or below (avg. R) 2=W/X (avg. W) 3=Y 4=Z or above
<u>Grade 8:</u> 1=V or below 2=W 3=X/Y/Z 4=Adult Lit	<u>Grade 8:</u> 1=V or below 2=W 3=X/Y/Z 4=Adult Lit	<u>Grade 8:</u> 1=W or below 2=X/Y 3=Z/Adult Lit 4=Adult Lit	<u>Grade 8:</u> 1=W or below 2=X/Y/Z 3=Adult Lit 4=Adult Lit	<u>Grade 8:</u> 1=W or below 2=X/Y/Z 3=Adult Lit 4=Adult Lit

** The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 in this table represent the NY ELA test scores that would predictably follow from a student reading at the text level named, at the grade level named. There is no text level that predicts a 4, because a score of 4 generally only allows for one or two errors—and is therefore unpredictable.*

A word about fluency: It is essential that children read books “like they’re talking,” that is, with speed as well as with expression and phrasing. Children who are “transitional readers” (levels H–M) especially need to accelerate their fluency. Hasbrook and Tindle did

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a fluency development study of children at different grade. For more information about this study, you can read the second-grade reading calendar’s overview section.

General Range of Adequate Reading Rates by Grade Level

Grade	WPM	Grade	WPM
1	60-90	6	195-220
2	85-120	7	215-245
3	115-140	8	235-270
4	140-170	9	250-270
5	170-195	12	250-300

Harris and Sipay (1990)

Take note of the sight words that your children can read with automaticity. If your children are on track, they may enter first grade with a sight word vocabulary of approximately thirty to forty known words. By the end of first grade, they should have somewhere around 150 words. As they progress up levels of books and read with increasing fluency, their sight vocabulary will tend to grow. If a child does not have a sight vocabulary of roughly thirty words at this point, pay close attention to that child’s progress and assess and teach into this dimension of reading growth more often.

We suggest you give each child a keychain full of word cards representing the sight words he or she knows or almost knows. Children can then use a portion of every reading workshop to flip through these cards, reading the words aloud to themselves. Children may play “I spy a word that. . .” games with partners involving word wall words, and use the pointer to read aloud the words on the word wall. You could jazz this up by asking children to pull directions from a can. One day the directions will say, “Read the sight words in a witch’s voice” and another day, “Read the sight words like you are a cat—meow each word.” Do whatever you need to do to lure kids to develop automaticity in reading an increasing bank of sight words, and of course help children use these words as they read.

There is little that is more important than attending to your readers’ developing abilities to comprehend texts deeply. Listen closely to book talks, to what children say to partners, and to children’s retelling of their independent reading books. Each child could keep a reading portfolio that includes artifacts that represent the child’s growing abilities to comprehend. For example, you might read aloud a short story and, at preset places in the text, ask each

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child to stop and jot in response to the prompt, “What do you think will happen next?” You could date the child’s responses and keep these, along with the text, from September and from several subsequent months, perhaps also including a rubric that analyzes what that child does and does not do yet when asked to predict. You could keep similar records for any other comprehension skill.

It’s important also to plan for how you’ll continue to assess your students throughout the year. Many teachers institute a system for keeping track of children’s reading levels and growth (both individual and by class) and for moving readers along to more challenging texts when they are ready. That is, you may decide to devote the reading workshop on the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth of each month to a consideration of whether children are ready to progress to new levels. In general, your children need to make rapid progress this year, so you need to vigilantly watch for and seize opportunities.

Performance Assessments and Assessing Comprehension Proficiency

In recent years, we developed a series of performance assessments that engage students in authentic, high-level work that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Many of you helped us pilot and refine these assessments, and found them useful for planning instruction that meets students where they are and moves them forward. The performance assessments, available on our website, were designed to align to particular standards in reading and writing, and to anchor specific units of study in data collection and close observation of student work. We recommend viewing these as both pre- and post-assessments; you may (as we suggest) conduct the assessment in whole or in part before teaching the relevant units, as a measure of what students are capable of prior to your instruction; you will then use the data from this assessment to tailor your units to students’ specific strengths and needs, and then conduct the same assessment again at the end of the unit, to determine growth and to reflect on your instruction.

In each character and informational unit, we suggest a couple of standards to highlight and use to guide the instruction of the unit. We also suggest ways to construct your own performance assessment for some of the units so that you can adjust your curriculum to match what students need.

Asking students to perform in these ways will give you a clear sense of what they have internalized and what they still need. You will find teacher instructions as well as student-facing instructions and supports; you will also find rubrics that connect the task to the CCSS, and annotated and graded examples of student work. The texts for these tasks are included where we have obtained permissions; in some cases you will need to purchase the relevant texts.

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Classroom Libraries

Once you have assessed your students and matched them to just-right books, make sure that the books in your library reflect your readers and then show them where to find books that they can read. Students will need help, especially early in the year, as they learn to manage their independent book choices, and you will want to establish a system for checking out and returning books that travel between home and school.

One of the key factors in making any unit of study successful is having a collection of excellent books that can be used as just-right books and as read-alouds. Take a careful look at your library and think about which units will require more leveled texts. One common example is nonfiction units. Many schools have taken to using “easy,” “medium” and “hard” baskets during informational reading units because these books can be tough to level. While we understand this, we feel that children should be well matched to books, including informational texts, throughout the year. The need for well-leveled informational texts is all the more important because of the particular emphasis the Common Core has put on informational reading and writing. Through our work with students and educators across the country, we have begun developing lists of books to support particular units of study. The book lists include levels—Fountas and Pinnell’s, when those exist, otherwise Scholastic’s. If neither source exists, we note the Lexile level, which you can convert to an approximation of Fountas and Pinnell levels (take them with a grain of salt, though). Visit our website at www.readingandwritingproject.com throughout the year for updated information.

As you well know, this is a transformative year for your children. They are ready to dive into the reading world, to think in more sophisticated ways, and to set bigger goals. It is a year of huge growth. Enjoy the wonderful work with your energetic readers!