

What parents can do to support reading at home:

- ◆ *Read aloud to your child daily.*
- ◆ *Encourage daily independent reading.*
- ◆ *Visit libraries and bookstores. Find books that interest your child.*
- ◆ *Enhance your child's vocabulary with stimulating conversation.*
- ◆ *Establish a special place for books at home.*
- ◆ *Show that reading is important and enjoyable. Let your child see you reading.*



Marie Clay defines reading as "... a message-getting problem solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced correctly."



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A Parent's Guide to Understanding Elementary Reading Levels



**Houston County Board of Education
Teaching and Learning
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Reading Overview

The reading and language arts program is a balanced literacy approach that is evidence based. Throughout the elementary grades, ongoing assessments of reading and writing inform instructional decisions and allow the teacher to meet the specific needs of each student. These assessments are administered individually, and teachers are able to determine the appropriate independent and instructional reading levels.

Independent Level

An important part of teaching literacy is to provide daily opportunities for students to read books, on their own, at their independent level. Through independent reading, students:

- develop fluency;
- develop an interest in favorite books, topics, authors, series, and types of text;
- develop the habit of reading and become absorbed in books;
- learn about themselves as readers;
- develop reading stamina and read for increasingly longer periods of time; and
- put into practice the reading skills and strategies that have been taught.

Instructional Level

Based on ongoing reading assessments, teachers are aware of what students can do as readers, what they can almost do, and what instruction they need to progress to the next level. This instructional level provides just the right amount of challenge for the students to take on new learning, with the support of the teacher.

Reading Levels

(Based on Fountas and Pinnell research)

| Grade | Independent Reading Level |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten | A B C D (By May) |
| Grade 1 | E F G H I J (By May) |
| Grade 2 | J K L M (By May) |
| Grade 3 | M N O P (By May) |
| Grade 4 | P Q R S (By May) |
| Grade 5 | S T U V (By May) |

In order to be independent, a student must be able to read with fluency, comprehend and retell.

In addition to whole-group reading instruction, small group and individualized instruction also help students move to the independent level. There are many different formats for small group reading instruction, such as:

Guided Reading – Teachers work with flexible, small groups and carefully chosen text on the student’s instructional level. The teacher may focus on building decoding, fluency, comprehension skills or problem solving strategies.

Strategy Lesson – Teachers pull together small groups of students who need similar coaching or support. The teacher may demonstrate a strategy and then have students try the strategy on their own as he/she observes.

Book Clubs – Small groups of students are given the opportunity to read and discuss the same text. Their focused discussions have guidelines and encourage deeper reading and self-reflection.

