

An Introduction to Guided Reading

What is Guided Reading?

Guided Reading is a system used to teach reading in many school districts. Developed in the late 1990s by renowned teaching specialists Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, it is one of the most popular leveling systems in use today.

How does it work?

Guided reading is used in the classroom in small-group instruction and for independent reading. When your child enters a new grade, he or she is assessed and assigned a guided reading level based on word knowledge, comprehension, and fluency. Levels range alphabetically from A to Z, encompassing kindergarten through middle school (for reference, the *Dick & Jane* series is levels D and E, while *To Kill a Mockingbird* is level Z). Once your child has a guided reading level, he or she should be able to read any book at that level.

How are books leveled?

Books are assigned guided reading levels based on ten “benchmark” common book characteristics that readers encounter:

Genre	The type of book; mystery, science fiction, historical fiction, etc
Text Structure	How the book is organized and presented
Content	The book’s subject matter
Themes & Ideas	The big ideas communicated by the author
Language & Literary Features	The types of writing techniques employed by the author
Sentence Complexity	How challenging the syntax is of each sentence
Vocabulary	The frequency of new words introduced
Words	The ease at which the words in the book can be figured out or decoded by a reader
Illustrations	The correlation and consistency of images and pictures to the words printed on the page
Book & Print Features	The physical aspects of the printed word on the page

How can I find books at my child’s Guided Reading Level?

It’s easy to browse any reading level at The Curious Reader’s unique Leveled Reading Library, where each level is represented by two to three shelves of fiction and non-fiction.

