Level It Up!
Evaluating Beginning Readers

Presented by Katie MacKendrick, Librarian and Gigi Pagliarulo, Children’s Librarian
Learning Objectives

1. Explain access issues related to Beginning Readers and leveling
2. Understand the details of the Beginning Reader Collection Criteria and Classification Rubric used for evaluating books in Beginning Reader collections by level
3. Gain experience using these tools to evaluate Beginning Readers by level
Who We Are

Katie MacKendrick
Librarian

Gigi Pagliarulo
Children’s Librarian
What issues have you experienced with Beginning Reader levels or leveling systems?

Please share your experiences in the chat box!
Grade Level Reading at the Denver Public Library
Why Grade Level Reading?

40% of students in Colorado read at grade level
Grade Level Reading Project Mission

Support and empower library staff, families and educators to connect children (K-3rd grade) with diverse books they enjoy and that inspire curiosity to foster lifelong readers.
Early and Transitional Books
Early and Transitional Book Subject Headings

Subject headings created to increase access points to books for developing readers.

Early Books
Support kids beginning to read.

Transitional Books
Support kids bridging from early books to chapter books.
Early Books Criteria

Lexile 0-350

Ample white space around and between text

Font is 14 pts or larger

"It has a striped tail."

Forest Babies series: Raccoon Cubs by Genevieve Nielsen
Early Books Criteria

Strong word repetition

Illustrations on every 2 page spread

Short words and sentences

Punctuation is clear and simple

You are (Not) Small by Anna Kang, Illustrated by Christopher Weyant
Early Books Examples
Transitional Books Criteria

100 pages or less

Wide margins and sufficient white space around and between text

Font is 13 pts or larger

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Fox + Chick: The Party and Other Stories by Sergio Ruzzier
Charlie & Mouse passed Spencer's house.
They passed Marley's house.
They passed Nora Ann's house.
Baby Sylvia rode in the wagon with Blanket.
Soon they could all see the playground.
“Hurray!” shouted Charlie. “Soon we will be at the party.”

Tess and Lottie followed Jack and Max,
who followed Helen and Lilly and Sam,
who followed the wagon.
Transitional Books Examples

- Tiger vs. Nightmare by Emily Tetri
- Charlie & Mouse Even Better by Laurel Snyder
- Meet Yasmin! by Saadia Faruqi
- Fly Guy Presents Sharks by Tedd Arnold
How is the Beginning Reader collection organized at your library? Do you have separate designations for Early and Transitional books (or a similar name.) And what about levels? Do you use any kind of leveling system for Beginning Readers?
Beginning Reader Collection Criteria
Beginning Reader Collection Criteria

Created by the Grade Level Reading Team in response to several needs:

- Understanding the inner workings of the different leveling systems of multiple publishers.
Beginning Reader Collection Criteria

Created by GLR Team in response to several needs:

2. Consistency and clarity in DPL’s leveling system for Beginning Readers for the existing collection as well as new books to make them easier to access

3. Enhanced staff access to Beginning Reader collection

4. Enhanced customer access to Beginning Reader collection
Beginning Reader Collection Criteria

Books at each level - jR1, jR2 and jR3 - are evaluated using the following criteria categories:

- Words
- Sentences
- Pagination
- Repetition
- Illustrations
- Notes and Exceptions
Beginning Reader Collection Classification Rubric

- Weighted system
- Based on the criteria
- Each criteria item is scorable and weighted
- Weights are determined by importance to category
- Criteria items scored by prevalence

Make your own copy here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DZSIiPHELXdgwHFPlwbtYefA1TmAdwWUlewhe_7EsIk/copy
Beginning Reader Collection Classification Rubric

EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Column

● Use EDI lens for all of our work
● Although there’s no point value for this column, we feel it’s important to denote diverse representations in a collection that is largely devoid of them
Let’s try it out!
Level 1

- *Today I will Fly!* by Mo Willems
- *Elephant & Piggie* series #1
- Geisel Award-winning series
To my friend Alessandra

Today I Will Fly!

By Mo Willems

An ELEPHANT & PIGGIE Book
Hyperion Books for Children / New York
An imprint of Disney Book Group
Today I will fly!
No.

You will not fly today.
You will not fly tomorrow.

You will not fly next week.
YOU WILL NEVER FLY!
Fly, fly, fly, fly, fly, fly, fly, fly, fly, fly!
Fly, fly, fly, fly!

You need help.
Thank you. I *do* need help!

I will get help!
Level 2

- *Frog and Toad Are Friends* by Arnold Lobel
- *Frog and Toad* series #1
- Caldecott Honor Award-winning book
A Lost Button

Toad and Frog
went for a long walk.
They walked across
a large meadow.
They walked in the woods.
They walked along the river.
At last they went back home
to Toad’s house.
“Oh, drat,” said Toad.

“Not only do my feet hurt,
but I have lost
one of the buttons on my jacket.”
“Don’t worry,” said Frog.
“We will go back
to all the places where we walked.
We will soon find your button.”
They walked back to the large meadow.
They began to look for the button
in the tall grass.

“Here is your button!” cried Frog.
“That is not my button,” said Toad.
“That button is black.
My button was white.”
Toad put the black button
in his pocket.
A sparrow flew down.
"Excuse me," said the sparrow.
"Did you lose a button? I found one."
"That is not my button," said Toad.
"That button has two holes.
My button had four holes."
Toad put the button with two holes in his pocket.

They went back to the woods and looked on the dark paths.
"Here is your button," said Frog.
"That is not my button," cried Toad.
"That button is small.
My button was big."
Toad put the small button in his pocket.
A raccoon came out from behind a tree.
“I heard that you were looking for a button,” he said.
“Here is one that I just found.”
“That is not my button!” wailed Toad.
“That button is square.
My button was round.”
Toad put the square button in his pocket.

Frog and Toad went back to the river.
They looked for the button in the mud.
“Here is your button,” said Frog.
“That is not my button!” shouted Toad.
“That button is thin.
My button was thick.”
Toad put the thin button in his pocket. He was very angry. He jumped up and down and screamed, “The whole world is covered with buttons, and not one of them is mine!”

Toad ran home and slammed the door. There, on the floor, he saw his white, four-holed, big, round, thick button. “Oh,” said Toad. “It was here all the time. What a lot of trouble I have made for Frog.”
Level 3

- *Meet Yasmin!* by Saadia Faruqi
- *Yasmin* series #1
- Starred reviews, Kirkus, SLJ, Amazon, JLG best books
To Mariam for inspiring me, and
Mubashir for helping me find the right
words — S.F.

To my sister, Eman, and her amazing
girls, Jana and Kenzi — H.A.
Ancient Maps

One afternoon Yasmin sat reading with Baba.

"A long time ago, explorers used big paper maps to find their way," Baba said.

"What’s an explorer?" asked Yasmin.

"Someone who discovers new places. An adventurer," Baba said.
Yasmin looked at the maps in Baba’s book. There were straight roads and curvy roads. There were lakes and rivers and forests.

“I want to be an explorer!” she said.

“Well, then, the first thing you’ll need is a map,” Baba replied.

Yasmin clapped her hands. “I’ll make a map of our neighborhood.”

“Good idea,” Baba said.

Yasmin found crayons and paper. She drew their house. Down the street was the market. Near that was the park.

“This is excellent, jaan!” Baba said, using his sweet name for her.
Soon Mama came in. “Yasmin, I’m going to the farmer’s market. Want to come with me?”

Yasmin jumped up. “Yes! It will be an exploration!” She could hardly wait as Mama got her hijab and purse.
Level ???

- *Diamond* by Suzanne Weyn
- *Breyer Stablemates* series #1
Thanks to Diana Gonzales for help in writing this story.
—S.W.

Dedicated to my parents and all the wonderful professors who helped lead me here.
—E.A.

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Ava stroked Diamond’s neck. Diamond nicked softly.

“Diamond is really sweet and should be a good horse for lessons,” Ann said.

“Everyone will love her,” Ava agreed.

“Have you tried out Diamond for lessons yet?” Ava asked Ann the next day.

“Not yet. I would like you to try her first,” Ann replied. “Can you help me?”

“Sure,” Ava agreed.
A trail had been set up inside the ring.
A small bridge had been built between posts.
There was a gate with a latch and a mailbox.
There were also two barrels.

Ann reviewed what each rider and horse would have to do. “You will be judged on how well your horse behaves, as well as on your time and your skill,” Ann said.

Kit was on a bay gelding named Leo. She went first. Leo walked to the bridge and stopped. He seemed afraid to step on it. Kit urged him on but he wouldn’t move.
Ava and Diamond were the last ones up. Diamond walked across the bridge, moved right to the gate, and waited while Ava unlatched it. Once they were through, she turned and lowered her neck to allow Ava to latch it again. She trotted to the mailbox and waited while Ava put in the letter. Then she backed smoothly between the barrels. Ava knew they had won!

“Diamond, you may be an old horse,” she said as the crowd clapped, “but you know what you’re doing!”
Questions?
Criteria and Rubric Links

- DPL Beginning Reader Collection Criteria
- DPL Beginning Reader Classification Rubric
  - Make your own copy here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DZSIiPHHEXdgwHFrPIwbtYefA1TmAdwWULewh_7Eslk/copy
Sources and further reading

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Thank you for attending!