

GRADES  
PreK–8



The **Fountas & Pinnell**  
**Literacy**  
**Continuum**

A Tool for Assessment, Planning, and Teaching

**Digital EDITION**



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HOW TO USE



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Tap any of these buttons to jump to the beginning of each section of the book.



Tap here to open  
the Fountas &  
Pinnell web site.

# How to Use the Continuum Digital Edition

Welcome to *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum*, Digital Edition. This eBook has been designed to duplicate the layout and pagination of the printed book, allowing you to easily switch back and forth between the two versions using the same page references. In addition to the regular page-by-page navigation features of an eBook, *The Literacy Continuum*, Digital Edition includes a navigation bar across the top of the page so that you can easily jump between sections and grade levels.

## Navigation

To move forward or backward one page, use the regular page-turning feature built into your eBook reader app:

- ▶ On a tablet, either tap on the side of the page or use a swipe gesture.
- ▶ On a Mac/PC, use the arrow keys or the scroll bar.

## HOME PAGE (TABLE OF CONTENTS)

The Table of Contents serves as your Home page. Tapping the house icon in the upper left-hand corner from anywhere in the book returns you to this page.

From the Home page you can jump to the beginning of each section of the book by tapping its entry in the Table of Contents, or by using the corresponding buttons that run across the top of the page.

Tapping the icon in the upper right-hand corner opens the Fountas & Pinnell web site in a separate browser window.

Note: The Glossary button in the navigation bar opens a web page with the glossary entries for quick reference. If you do not have an internet connection, you can still view the glossary by returning to the Home page and tapping the Glossary entry in the Table of Contents.

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### NAVIGATING WITHIN A CONTINUUM

The first page of each learning continuum includes an additional row of buttons that send you straight to each of the grade levels (or text levels). From there, navigate up or down levels by tapping the arrow buttons, or return to the Introduction by tapping the active section's navigation bar button.

For example:

From the Interactive Read-Aloud Introduction, jump to Grade 1 by tapping the "1" button.

INTRO IRA LD SR WAR W OVC TC PSWS GR APPENDIX GLOSSARY INTRODUCTION

PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7&8

## Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion Continuum

In selecting curriculum goals for an interactive read-aloud, consider the text and opportunities for new learning. At all grade levels, students need to listen to and comprehend age-appropriate texts in a variety of genres and increasingly complex texts within those

INTERACTIVE READ AND LITERATURE DISCUSSION

From Grade 1, move up to Grade 2 by tapping the right arrow.

INTRO IRA LD SR WAR W OVC TC PSWS GR APPENDIX GLOSSARY GRADE 1

## Selecting Texts Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

**GENRE**

- Fiction
  - Realistic fiction
  - Traditional literature: e.g., folktale, fairy tale, fable
- Content that engages children's intellectual curiosity and emotions
- Language and word play: e.g., rhymes, nonsense, alliteration, alphabet
- Content that reflects early conceptual understandings: e.g., colors, shapes.

**LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES**

- Elements of traditional literature and modern fantasy: e.g., the supernatural, talking animals
- Basic motifs of traditional literature

INTERACTIVE READ AND LITERATURE DISCUSSION

From anywhere in the Interactive Read-Aloud section, return to the start of the Introduction by tapping the IRA/LD button.

INTRO IRA LD SR WAR W OVC TC PSWS GR APPENDIX GLOSSARY GRADE 2

## Selecting Texts Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

**GENRE**

- Fiction
  - Realistic fiction
  - Traditional literature: e.g., folktale, tall tale, fairy tale, fable
- Simple biographical and historical texts with narrative structure
- Informational texts with some examples of simple argument and persuasion
- Ideas close to children's experience: e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, empathizing with others, helping your family, doing your job, caring for your world, problem solving, being fair

**CONTENT**

INTERACTIVE READ AND LITERATURE DISCUSSION

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## Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion Continuum

In selecting curriculum goals for an interactive read-aloud, consider the text and opportunities for new learning. At all grade levels, students need to listen to and comprehend age-appropriate texts in a variety of genres and increasingly complex texts within those

INTERACTIVE READ AND LITERATURE DISCUSSION



### NAVIGATING BETWEEN CONTINUA

From the grade level page of any continuum, jump to the same level of another continuum by tapping that button in the navigation bar. (In the case of Guided Reading you will jump to the correlated reading level.)

For example:

**Selecting Texts** Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion

Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

**GENRE**

- Fiction
  - Realistic fiction
  - Traditional literature: e.g., folktale, tall tale, fairy tale, fable
  - Fantasy
  - Hybrid texts

- Simple biographical and historical texts with narrative structure
- Informational texts with some examples of simple argument and persuasion

**CONTENT**

- Content that is appropriate for children's cognitive development, social and

Ideas close to children's experience: e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, empathizing with others, helping your family, doing your job, caring for your world, problem solving, learning about life's challenges, valuing differences, being part of a community

INTERACTIVE READ-ALOU AND LITERATURE DISCUSS

From Interactive Read-Aloud Grade 2, jump to Shared Reading Grade 2 by tapping the SR button.

**Selecting Texts** Characteristics of Texts for Sharing and Performing

Shared and Performance Reading

**GENRE**

- Fiction
  - Realistic fiction
  - Traditional literature: e.g., folktale, tall tale, fairy tale, fable
  - Fantasy
  - Hybrid texts

- Some texts with nonnarrative structure
- Some stories with repeating refrains suitable for reading in unison
- Stories with simple plot (problem and solution)
- Some biographical and historical texts with narrative structure
- Most texts focusing on a single topic usually

Imaginary characters, events (some nonsensical and funny), and settings that occur in fantasy

Content that reflects beginning understanding of the physical and social world

THEMES AND IDEAS

From Shared Reading Grade 2, jump to Guided Reading level K by tapping the GR button.

**Readers at Level K**

At level K, readers process a wide range of genres (realistic fiction, animal fantasy, traditional literature, some simple biographies, expository nonfiction, and other informational texts). They read many illustrated chapter books (including some series books). Most fiction texts have multiple episodes related to a single plot, but the demand on the reader's memory is higher than at previous levels. They read about characters that change very little but are at the same time more complex; and readers encounter some literary language. Readers process a great deal of dialogue, some of it unassigned, and are challenged to read stories based on concepts that are distant in time and geography and reflect diverse cultures. Readers solve many content-specific words and some technical words in informational texts. They encounter new information and ideas in nonfiction texts and learn



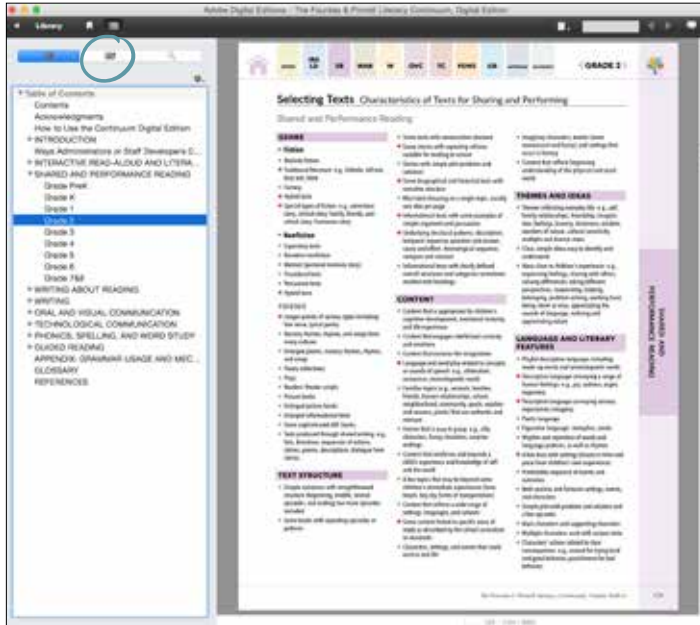
# Using the Built-in Table of Contents and Custom Bookmarks

As an alternative to navigating via the topline navigation bar, you can use the eBook reader's built-in Table of Contents. You can also create your own custom Bookmarks, giving quick access to pages you reference frequently.

## VIEWING THE EBOOK READER'S CONTENTS/BOOKMARKS PANEL

In Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) for Mac/PC, select "Show Navigation Panel" from the Reading menu. By default, it will show a panel with the built-in Table of Contents. To see your custom Bookmarks, tap the middle button.

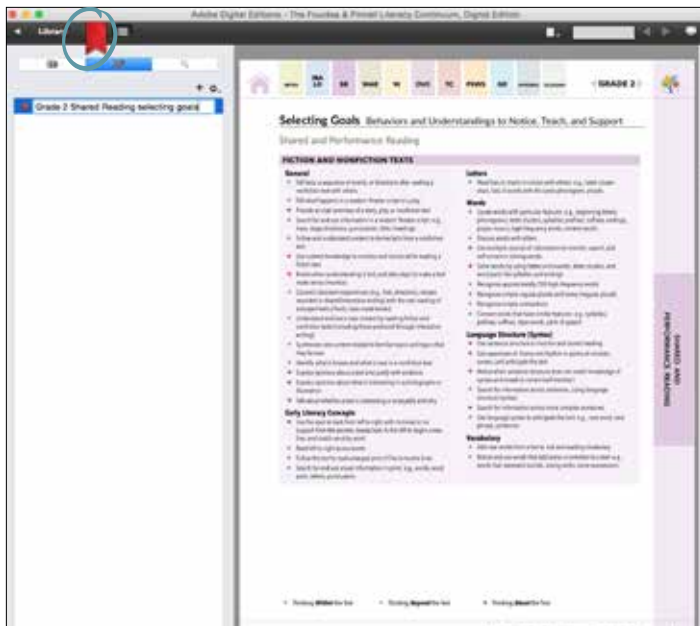
In Bluefire Reader for tablets, tap the center of the page once to bring up the Reading Toolbar. In the Toolbar, switch between the eBook, the built-in Contents, and your custom Bookmarks.



## CREATING BOOKMARKS

To create a Bookmark, click the ribbon icon in the upper left. The Bookmark will be named with the page number and current date; you can double-click the name of the Bookmark to change its description.

In Bluefire Reader, tap the center of the screen to bring up the Reading Toolbar, then tap the ribbon icon in the upper right-hand corner. You can add a description to the Bookmark below the page/date.





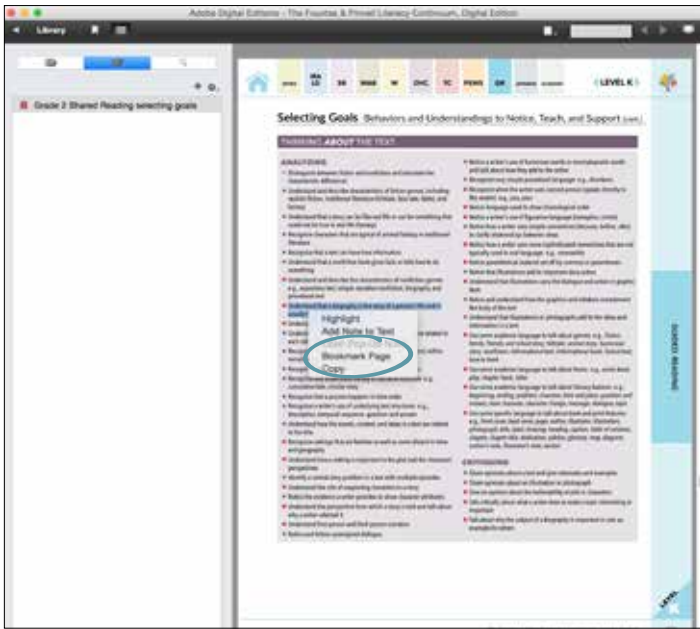
### CREATING HIGHLIGHTS AND NOTES

Highlights and Notes work almost the same as Bookmarks; they both create a page link in the same Bookmarks panel. The difference is that Highlights and Notes automatically add the selected text to the Bookmark description, and Notes allow you to include further information.

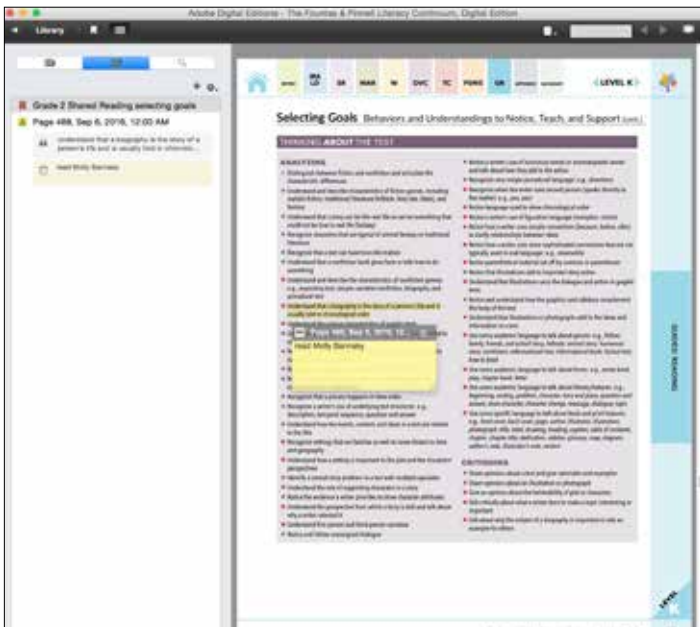
Please be aware: Bookmarks, Highlights, and Notes are stored locally in your eBook reader app. They are not cloud-based, therefore they will not sync across multiple devices.

Use the cursor to select a portion of text. Right-click (ctrl-click on Mac) and choose either "Highlight" or "Add Note to Text."

In Bluefire Reader, tap and hold on a portion of text to select, then tap "Highlight" or "Note."



If you choose "Highlight," the selected text will be included in the Bookmark description. If you choose "Note," you can also add more information to the description.





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# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

This edition of *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum* is labeled “expanded” because every part of it has been refined and at the same time elaborated. The basic descriptions of text characteristics and behaviors and understandings to notice, teach, and support are essentially the same. After all, reading, writing, and oral language are still the processes we have worked with for many years. But the descriptions are more precise. Our intention was to create a document that holds these precise details in a way that serves as a reference for teaching. In this way it serves as a curriculum guide to use in observation, planning, teaching, and reflecting, always asking, “What are my students showing that they know and can do?”

The continuum describes text characteristics and behavioral goals for prekindergarten through middle school, across the areas pertinent to the language arts. Taken together, the eight continua present a broad picture of the learning that takes place during the important years of school. The progress of learners across these continua, or even within each of them, is not an even, step-by-step process. Students learn as they have opportunities and give attention in different ways. A learner might make tremendous gains in one area while seeming to almost “stand still” in another. It’s our job to provide these learning opportunities and guide their attention so that learning in one area informs and supports learning in others. Looking across the continua, we can see patterns of progress over time. Learners progress in their individual ways, but they ultimately reach the same goal—a complex and flexible literacy processing system.

In creating and now refining the continuum, we have consulted current research on the reading process, learning literacy, and English language learners. We have examined many sets of standards to determine how policy makers are looking at progress at the district, state, and national levels. You are probably working towards a set of standards that your district or school has adopted; we are confident that this continuum will not only be consistent with language and literacy standards but also will present descriptions of learning that are more detailed. We have attempted to describe the evidence of literacy learning that you will see in your students’ behavior.

In this edition, you will notice more organization within categories as well as a red bullet to show new text characteristics or new behaviors that you expect to see evidence of at this grade or this level. You will also notice that behaviors evidencing “thinking within the text” are identified with a round bullet, behaviors evidencing “thinking beyond the text” with a diamond bullet, and behaviors evidencing “thinking about the text” with a square bullet.



## Content of the Continuum

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Across the eight continua included in this volume, several principles are important to consider:

- ▶ ***Students learn by talking.*** Talking represents the student’s thinking. We engage students in conversation that is grounded in a variety of texts—those that students read, hear read aloud, or write—and that expands their ability to comprehend ideas and use language to share thinking.
- ▶ ***Students need to process a large amount of written language.*** A dynamic language and literacy curriculum provides many daily opportunities for students to read books of their choice independently, to read more challenging instructional material with teacher guidance, and to hear teacher-selected and grade-appropriate texts read aloud.
- ▶ ***The ability to read and comprehend texts is expanded through talking and writing.*** Students need to acquire a wide range of ways to write about their reading and also to talk about texts with the teacher and other students.
- ▶ ***Learning deepens when students engage in reading, talking, and writing about texts across many different instructional contexts.*** Each mode of communication provides a new way to process the ideas learned from oral and written texts and from each other.

This continuum provides a way to look for specific evidence of learning from prekindergarten through grade eight, and across eight curricular areas. To create it, we examined a wide range of research on language and literacy learning, and we asked teachers and researchers for feedback. We also examined the curriculum standards of many states. Some guiding principles were:

- ▶ Learning does not occur in stages but is a continually evolving process.
- ▶ The same concepts are acquired and then elaborated over time.
- ▶ Many complex literacy understandings take years to develop.
- ▶ Students learn by applying what they know to the reading and writing of increasingly complex texts.
- ▶ Learning does not automatically happen; most students need expert teaching to develop high levels of reading and writing expertise.
- ▶ Learning is different but interrelated across different kinds of language and literacy activities; one kind of learning enhances and reinforces others.

In this volume, we include eight different learning continua (see Figure I–1). Each of these continua focuses on a different aspect of our language and literacy instructional framework (*Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades*, Fountas and Pinnell 2017); and each contributes substantially, in different but complementary ways, to students’ development of reading, writing, and language processes. Each of the continua is described in more detail in a separate introduction, but we briefly introduce them here.

**FIGURE I-1** *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum*

	<b>INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>BRIEF DEFINITION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTINUUM</b>
1	<b>Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion</b>	Students engage in discussion with one another about a text that they have heard read aloud or one they have read independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Genres appropriate to grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text</li> </ul>
2	<b>Shared and Performance Reading</b>	Students read together or take roles in reading a shared text. They reflect the meaning of the text with their voices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Genres appropriate to grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text</li> </ul>
3	<b>Writing About Reading</b>	Students extend their understanding of a text through a variety of writing genres and sometimes with illustrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Genres/forms for writing about reading appropriate to grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific evidence in the writing that reflects thinking within, beyond, and about the text</li> </ul>
4	<b>Writing</b>	Students compose and write their own examples of a variety of genres, written for varying purposes and audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Genres/forms for writing appropriate to grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Aspects of craft, conventions, and process that are evident in students' writing, grades PreK-8</li> </ul>
5	<b>Oral and Visual Communication</b>	Students present their ideas through oral discussion and presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings related to listening and speaking, presentation</li> </ul>
6	<b>Technological Communication</b>	Students learn effective ways of communicating and searching for information through technology; they learn to think critically about information and sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings related to effective and ethical uses of technology</li> </ul>
7	<b>Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study</b>	Students learn about the relationships of letters to sounds as well as the structure and meaning of words to help them in reading and spelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year by year, grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings related to nine areas of understanding related to letters, sounds, and words, and how they work in reading and spelling</li> </ul>
8	<b>Guided Reading</b>	Students read a teacher-selected text in a small group; the teacher provides explicit teaching and support for reading increasingly challenging texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level by level, A to Z</li> <li>• Genres appropriate to grades PreK-8</li> <li>• Specific behaviors and understandings that are evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about the text</li> <li>• Specific suggestions for word work (drawn from the phonics and word analysis continuum)</li> </ul>



## Reading Process: Systems of Strategic Actions

Four of the continua specifically address reading: interactive read-aloud and literature discussion, shared and performance reading, guided reading, and writing about reading. Here we focus on strategic actions for thinking:

- ***Within the text*** (literal understanding achieved through searching for and using information, monitoring and self-correcting, solving words, maintaining fluency, adjusting, and summarizing for purposes and genre of text)
- ***Beyond the text*** (predicting; making connections with personal experience, content knowledge, and other texts; synthesizing new information; and inferring what is implied but not stated)
- ***About the text*** (analyzing or critiquing the text)

You can refer to the Systems of Strategic Actions chart on the inside front cover. Notice that readers are expected to engage in all systems simultaneously as they process texts. You can gain evidence of their control of the behaviors and understandings through observing oral reading, talk, or writing about reading.

***Interactive read-aloud and literature discussion*** offer students an opportunity to extend their understandings through talk. In interactive read-aloud you have the opportunity to engage students with texts that are usually more complex than they can read for themselves. You can take strategic moments to stop for quick discussion during the reading and continue talking after the end. Students' talk provides evidence of their thinking.

***Shared and performance reading*** offer an authentic reason for reading aloud. As they read in unison or read parts in readers' theater, students need to read in phrases, notice punctuation and dialogue, and think about the meaning of the text. All of these actions provide evidence that they are understanding the text and processing it effectively. On these familiar texts, you have the opportunity to support and extend students' understandings.

***Guided reading*** offers small-group support and explicit teaching to help students take on more challenging texts. As they read texts that are organized along a gradient of difficulty, students expand their systems of strategic actions by meeting the demands of increasingly complex texts. They provide evidence of their thinking through oral reading and talk, and they extend understanding through writing. The Guided Reading continuum is related to text reading levels rather than grade levels because we envision continuous progress along these levels. In the introduction to the Guided Reading continuum, you will find a chart indicating a range of levels that approximately correlates with goals for each grade level.

In addition to specific evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about a text, each of these three continua lists genres of texts that are appropriate for use at each grade level or text level.

***Writing about reading***, which often includes drawing, is another way for students to extend their understanding and provide evidence of thinking. Writing about reading may be used in connection with interactive read-aloud and literature discussion or guided reading.



As you work with the continua related to reading, you will see a gradual increase in the complexity of the kinds of thinking that readers do. Most of the principles of learning cannot be pinpointed at one point in time or even one year. You will usually see the same kind of principle (behavior or understanding) repeated across grades or across levels of text; each time remember that the learner is applying the principle in a more complex way to read harder texts.

## Oral and Visual, Technological, and Written Communication

*Writing* is a way of experimenting with and deepening understanding of genres students have read. Although writing about reading is an excellent approach to help students extend their thinking and support discussion, it does not take the place of specific instruction devoted to helping students develop as writers. Through the writing workshop, teachers help writers continually expand their learning of the craft, conventions, and process of writing to communicate meaning to an audience. The Writing continuum in this book lists specific understandings for each grade level related to craft, conventions, and process. It also suggests purposes and genres for students to consider and choose as they write at each grade level. You can refer to the chart, A Processing System for Writing, on the inside back cover to notice the complex dimensions in a processing system for writing.

*Oral and visual communication* are integral to all literacy processes; you'll see their presence in all other continua. This continuum singles out particular behaviors and understandings for intentional instruction.

*Technological communication* is essential for citizens of today's society. This continuum describes specific goals for helping students find effective ways to use technology effectively for learning, communication, and research. With the burgeoning role of technology in all of the contexts for communication, students need to build complex ways of thinking that will allow them to think critically about technology and to use it in effective and ethical ways.

## Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study

As the eighth continuum, we include phonics, spelling, and word study. This grade-by-grade continuum is drawn from the longer continuum published in *The Fountas & Pinnell Comprehensive Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study Guide* (2017). For each grade, you will find specific principles related to the nine areas of learning that are important for grades PreK–8: early literacy concepts, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, letter-sound relationships, spelling patterns, high-frequency words, word meaning/vocabulary, word structure, and word-solving actions. Here you will find specific understandings related to spelling, which interface with the section on conventions provided in the Writing continuum.



## Some Cautions

In preparing these continua we considered the typical range of students that can be found in PreK through grade eight classrooms. We also consulted teachers about their expectations and vision as to appropriate instruction at each grade level. We examined the district and state standards. We need to have a vision of expected levels of learning because it helps in making effective instructional decisions; and even more important, it helps us to identify students who need intervention.

At the same time, we would not want to apply these expectations in an inflexible way. We need to recognize that students vary widely in their progress—sometimes moving quickly and sometimes getting bogged down. They may make faster progress in one area than another. The continua should help you intervene in more precise ways to help students. But it is also important to remember that learners may not necessarily meet *every* expectation at all points in time. Nor should any one of the understandings and behaviors included in this document be used as criteria for promotion to the next grade. Educators can look thoughtfully across the full range of grade-level expectations as they make decisions about individual students.

It is also important to recognize that just because grade-level expectations exist, not all teaching will be pitched at that level. Through assessment, you may learn that your class only partially matches the behaviors and understandings on the continuum. Almost all teachers find that they need to consult the material at lower and higher levels (one reason that the Guided Reading continuum is not graded).

## Ways to Use the Continuum

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We see many different uses for this continuum, including the following.

### Foundation for Teaching

As you think about, plan for, and reflect on the effectiveness of providing individual, small-group, and whole-group instruction, you may consult different areas of the continuum. For example, if you are working with students in guided reading at a particular level, use the lists of behaviors and understandings to plan text introductions, guide observations and interactions with individuals, and shape teaching decisions. The Word Work section gives you specific suggestions for principles to explore at the end of the guided reading lessons. You can plan specific teaching moves as you examine the section on interactive read-aloud and literature discussion. The interactive read-aloud as well as the Writing continuum and the Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study continuum will be useful in planning explicit minilessons. When you and your colleagues teach for the same behaviors and understandings, your students will benefit from the coherence.

### Guide for Curriculum Planning

The continuum can also be used by a grade-level team or school staff to plan the language and literacy curriculum. It offers a starting point for thinking very specifically about goals and expectations. Your team may adapt the continuum to meet your own goals and district expectations.



## Linking Assessment to Instruction

Sometimes assessment is administered and the results recorded, but then the process stops. Teachers are unsure what to do with the data or where to go next in their teaching. This continuum can be used as a bridge between assessment data and the specific teaching that students need. With assessment, you learn what students know; the continuum will help you think about what they need to know next.

## Evaluation and Grading

The continuum can also serve as a guide for evaluating student progress over time. You can evaluate whether students are meeting grade-level standards. Remember that no student would be expected to demonstrate every single competency to be considered on grade level. *Grade level* is always a term that encompasses a range of levels of understanding at any given time.

## Reporting to Parents

We would not recommend that you show parents such an overwhelming document as this continuum. It would get in the way of good conversation. However, you can use the continuum as a resource for the kind of specific information you need to provide to parents, but shape it into easy-to-understand language.

## Guide to Intervention

Many students will need extra support in order to achieve the school's goals for learning. Assessment and observation will help you identify the specific areas in which students need help. Use the continuum to find the specific understandings that can guide intervention.

## Organization of the Continuum

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Eight continua are included in this document. They are arranged in the following way.

### Grade-by-Grade

Seven of the continua are organized by grade level. Within each grade, you will find the continua for: (1) interactive read-aloud and literature discussion; (2) shared and performance reading; (3) writing about reading; (4) writing; (5) oral and visual communication; (6) technological communication; and (7) phonics, spelling, and word study. These seven continua are presented at each grade level, PreK through grade eight. You can turn to the section for your grade level and find all seven. If you have many students working below grade level, you can consult the next lower grade continuum in the area of interest; if you have students working above grade level, you can consult the continuum for the grade above for ideas.



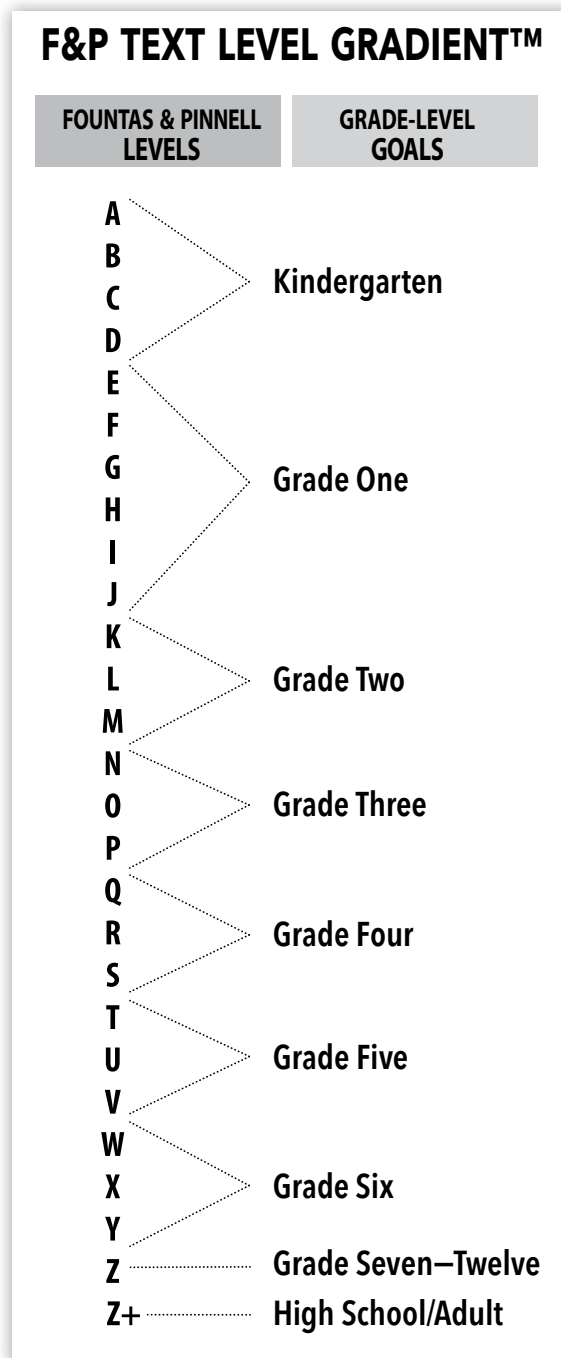
## Level-by-Level

The Guided Reading continuum is organized according to the Fountas & Pinnell text gradient levels A to Z (see Figure I-2). These levels typically correlate to grades K–8, but students may vary along them in their instructional levels. It is important for all students to receive guided reading instruction at a level that allows them to process texts successfully with teacher support.

## Additional Resources

As an appendix for your reference, we have included a chart detailing standard “rules” for grammar and usage. This chart provides behaviors, principles, and examples that, in general, describe the kind of “standard” English that is expected in formal communication. As a speaker of this kind of English, sometimes called “media English,” you follow almost all of these rules in your workplace without being able to state them explicitly, and that is how it should be. Language users have internalized these rules, and so they use them in an unconscious way, giving direct attention only when unsure. You will want to immerse students in language through hearing written language read aloud and through talk that is grounded in texts. Because you will be presenting them daily with many models of formal language and will also be creating a safe talking place for students, you may need to refer to this chart from time to time. We include it not so you can “correct” students or spend a great deal of time engaging them in exercises related to grammar; those actions don’t really work. But as you observe students as they talk and write over time, you will want to look for evidence that they are expanding in their ability to use formal English. More information is provided at the beginning of the appendix.

FIGURE I-2 Text Gradient



## Ways Administrators or Staff Developers Can Use the Continuum

As a staff developer or an administrator, this document will give you a comprehensive view of language and literacy learning and how it changes and develops over time. The continuum is intended to provide teachers with a conceptual tool that they can use to



think constructively about their work. We want to support them in crafting instruction that will link their observations and deep knowledge of their own students with learning over time. Administrators and staff developers are the key to teachers' support systems as they grow in conceptual understanding of their work.

## Foundation for Setting School and/or District Goals

Since this continuum is a detailed description of every aspect of the language arts, you may want to adopt the continuum as your goals for instruction. Alternatively, you may want to review the document to select goals for your school or district. Remember, too, that these grade-level expectations are consistent with state and national standards in general. Depending on local priorities, you may want to adjust them lower or higher.

## Link to State and National Standards

This continuum was checked against numerous examples of state and national standards to assure consistency and comprehensiveness. In general, you will find *The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum* to be much more detailed and in many cases more rigorous than state standards; so, it offers a way to make your state goals more specific as a basis for instruction. What really matters is for educators in each school to take ownership of the goals, share them with colleagues, and make them an integral part of teaching.

## Helping Administrators and Teachers Achieve a Common Vision

Examining the continuum together, administrators and teachers can discuss their common expectations for students' achievement in each curriculum area, grade by grade. They can compare current expectations with the document and focus on goals that they want their students to achieve. For example, a principal and teachers in an elementary school or middle school can work together over a few weeks or months. In grade-level groups they can examine one instructional area at a time and then share their perspectives with teachers of other grades. Looking across the grades will help them to understand a long continuum of learning, as well as to work more effectively with students who are below or above their own grade levels. Working intensively with the continuum at their own grade levels (and perhaps the level below), they can make specific plans for instruction in the particular area.

## A Basis for Instructional Coaching

An instructional coach (often called a literacy coach) can use the continuum as a foundation for coaching conversations. It will be useful for coaches to help teachers become able to access information quickly in their copies of the continuum as part of their reflection on lessons they have taught and on their planning. In other words, the coach can help teachers really get to know the continuum as a tool so that they can access information easily on their own. Typically, the coach and teacher would use the continuum as a reference before, during, and after the observation of a lesson. The continuum enables the coach to focus the conversation on critical areas of teaching and learning—behaviors to notice, teach, and support to help students read, write, and talk proficiently. It is also an excellent tool for discussing and analyzing texts in a variety of genres and at



a variety of levels. The continuum will add specificity to the conversation that will extend teachers' understandings of learning processes and development over time.

### Pre-Observation Conference

- ▶ The coach and teacher think about and analyze students' strengths, as well as their learning needs, referring to the continuum as appropriate.
- ▶ They may examine data from student assessment or the teacher's ongoing observation, again, using the continuum expectations as a reference.
- ▶ They may look at lesson artifacts—texts they are using or student writing—and consider them in the light of text characteristics for the particular area, thinking about the learning opportunities for students.

### Observation of Lessons

- ▶ The continuum is not designed to be used as a checklist. Rather it is a foundation for discussing critical areas of development.
- ▶ The continuum offers a way of sharpening observation. During observation, coaches can keep in mind the evidence of student understanding and shifts in learning. This foundational knowledge will help the coach gather specific evidence of student learning that can be discussed later with the teacher.

### Post-Observation Conference

- ▶ The continuum will provide a guide as to the appropriateness of texts or tasks in terms of students' current understandings and what they need to learn next.
- ▶ The coach and teacher can use the continuum to analyze the teaching and its effectiveness in meeting the goals discussed in the pre-observation conference.
- ▶ They can discuss examples of behaviors that provide evidence of student understanding or lack of understanding.
- ▶ They can also discuss teaching interactions that supported or extended student understanding, as well as potential interactions for working with the students in the next lesson.
- ▶ Together the coach and teacher can use the continuum to help set new learning goals for the students and to begin to plan for teaching.

The ultimate goals of every coaching interaction are to help the teacher expand knowledge of language and literacy learning and to analyze the effectiveness of the teaching. By talking about the ideas in the continuum and observing students carefully, teachers will come to understand more about the processes of learning language, reading, writing, and technology. The continuum serves as a guide that becomes internalized through its consistent use. Teachers who use it over time find that the understandings recorded in the continuum become part of their thinking and their teaching decisions.



# Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion



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## Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion Continuum

In selecting curriculum goals for an interactive read-aloud, consider the text and opportunities for new learning. At all grade levels, students need to listen to and comprehend age-appropriate texts in a variety of genres and increasingly complex texts within those genres. Story problems, characters, content, and topics should be matched to the particular age group, with consideration of students' background, language, culture, experience, and interests. Also consider a variety of text formats and types of texts.

Beyond text selection, it is important to think about how to support readers' thinking within, beyond, and about a text. Before, during, and after listening to a text read-aloud, notice evidence of students' literal understanding. Did they pick up important information? Could they follow the plot? Could they remember important details? Students need to think beyond the text, making predictions and important connections. Look for evidence that they can notice and incorporate new information into their own understandings, as well as make inferences based on the available information. Finally, students need to form opinions about their reading and develop their own reading preferences. Look for evidence that they can think analytically about texts, noticing the writer's craft and style. It is also important for them to think critically about the quality, content, and accuracy of texts.

Interactive read-aloud is a powerful setting for teaching students to use academic language to talk about texts. The ability to use academic language is acquired over time—from talking about the book's title, author, and illustrator to using the highly sophisticated language that we expect in higher education, like *plot structure*, *character development*, and *expository text structures*. Daily, students experience high quality texts and are guided in rich discussion. You introduce and demonstrate academic language, and it becomes integral to the process of talking about texts.

Interactive read-aloud also offers you an opportunity to draw students' attention to significant features of the *peritext* (a space outside the body of the text). The peritext may include titles and subtitles, authors' names, prefaces, forewords, introductions, acknowledgments, epigraphs, glossaries, notes, illustrations, and design features that add to the aesthetic appeal and may have cultural significance or symbolic meaning. Elements of the peritext add meaning, communicate mood, and help readers interpret the text. It is part of the whole artistic creation that is the text. As you read aloud, you can point out these features and prompt students to notice them in the books they read independently and in guided reading lessons.

When students are actively listening to and discussing a text, all of the strategic actions for comprehending are in operation. (See Guided Reading continuum, pp. 399–630 and the inside front cover of this book.) In an interactive read-aloud, the listener is freed from decoding and is supported by the oral reader's fluency, phrasing, and stress—all elements of what we sometimes call *expression*. The scene is set for a high level of comprehending and engaging in thinking and talking about texts.



## Selecting Texts Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### GENRE

##### ► Fiction

- Realistic fiction
- Folktale
- Simple animal fantasy

##### ► Nonfiction

- Simple factual texts
- Memoir (personal memory story)
- Simple procedural texts

#### FORMS

- Picture books
- Wordless picture books
- Label books
- Short poems
- Nursery rhymes, rhymes, and songs
- Concept books
- ABC books
- Counting books
- Books with texture, padding, pop-ups, unusual features that promote interaction

#### TEXT STRUCTURE

- Simple narrative with beginning, series of episodes, and ending
- Many texts with repeating episodes
- Some texts with nonnarrative structure
- Most texts focusing on a single topic, usually one idea per page
- Underlying structural patterns: simple description, some temporal sequence, some question and answer

#### CONTENT

- Content that is appropriate for children's cognitive development, social and emotional maturity, and life experience
- Content that engages children's intellectual curiosity and emotions
- Language and word play: e.g., rhymes, nonsense, alliteration, and alphabet
- Content that reflects early conceptual understandings: e.g., colors, shapes, counting, sorting, size, alphabet, position
- Everyday actions familiar to young children: e.g., playing, making things, eating, getting dressed, bathing, cooking, shopping

- Familiar topics that are authentic and relevant: e.g., animals, pets, families, friends, growing and health, school, neighborhood, weather and seasons, food, plants
- Humor that is easy to grasp: e.g., silly characters, funny situations
- Content that reinforces and expands a child's experience and knowledge of self and the world
- A few topics that may be beyond children's immediate experiences
- Content that reflects a wide range of settings and cultures
- Realistic characters, settings, and events that occur in realistic fiction
- Imaginary characters, events (some nonsensical and funny), and settings that occur in fantasy
- Content that reflects beginning understanding of the physical and social world
- Characters with one or two simple traits: e.g., kind, generous, sly, brave, silly, wise, greedy
- Characters that do not change or that change in simple ways for clear reasons
- Characters' actions related to clear consequences: e.g., reward for trying hard
- Predictable sequence of events
- Language used to make comparisons
- Some poetic language, often using notable sound devices: e.g., rhythm, rhyme, repetition, refrain, onomatopoeia
- Simple dialogue and dialogue with pronouns (assigned by *said* in many texts) easily attributed to characters
- Some repetitive dialogue
- Some literary language typical of traditional literature: e.g., *once upon a time*, *long ago* and *far away*, *happily ever after*

#### SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Sentences that are easy for children to follow, though more complex than children generally use in oral language
- Simple sentences with subject and predicate
- Variety of language structures
- Sentences with clauses and phrases
- Sentences that are questions
- Sentences with adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases

#### VOCABULARY

- A few interesting words that are new to children but easy to understand in context
- Some memorable words that children can take on as language play
- All words that are in common oral vocabulary for young children (Tier 1)
- Many simple adjectives describing people, places, or things
- A few simple adverbs that describe action
- Common (simple) connectives that are frequently used in oral language (words, phrases that clarify relationships ideas): e.g., *and*, *but*, *so*, *because*, *before*, *after*

#### THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes reflecting everyday life: e.g., self, family relationships, home, friendship, community, diversity, first responsibilities, imagination, fears, courage, nature
- Clear, simple ideas easy to identify
- Ideas close to children's experience: e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, helping your family, going to school, caring for your world, valuing differences, being part of a community

#### LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- A few simple elements of fantasy: e.g., talking animals
- Predictable story outcomes typical of traditional literature: e.g., cleverness overcomes physical strength, good defeats evil
- Familiar settings close to children's experience
- Both realistic and fantastic settings, events, and characters
- Memorable characters that are straightforward, uncomplicated, and predictable



## Selecting Texts Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion *(cont.)*

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

- Large, clear, colorful illustrations in a variety of media that fully support meaning
- Illustrations that add meaning to the text
- Very simple illustrations with no distracting detail
- Some illustrations with labels

#### BOOK AND PRINT FEATURES

##### LENGTH

- Short picture books that can be read in one sitting

##### PRINT AND LAYOUT

- Some picture books with print large enough for children to see during read-aloud
- Some print in speech bubbles
- Some books with special features that engage interest and make texts interactive: e.g., pop-ups, pop-outs, flaps, pull-tabs, see-through holes, sound effects
- Some books with decorative or informative illustrations, engaging designs that catch the attention, and/or print or illustrations outside the body of the text (peritext)

##### PUNCTUATION

- Simple punctuation: e.g., period, question mark, exclamation mark

##### ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

- Title, author, and illustrator listed on cover and on title page

##### TEXT RESOURCES

- Some books with dedication, author's note, about the author and/or illustrator



# Selecting Goals Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

## Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

### FICTION TEXTS

#### General

- Ask questions to deepen understanding of a text
- Notice and ask questions when meaning is lost or understanding is interrupted
- Refer to important information and details
- Understand that the teacher reads the print, not the pictures
- Understand that the teacher must hold the book right side up
- Mimic the teacher's expression and word stress when reenacting a text or joining in
- Use hand and body movements to show understanding of the meaning or meanings of pictures and words in a text
- Join in on refrains or repeated words, phrases, and sentences after hearing them several times
- ◆ Gain new information from both pictures and print
- ◆ Recognize simple problems that occur in everyday life
- ◆ Give reasons (either text-based or from personal experience) to support thinking
- ◆ Relate texts to their own lives
- ◆ Use background knowledge to understand settings, problems, and characters
- ◆ Recognize and understand that stories may be about different kinds of people and different places
- ◆ Make connections (e.g., content, topic, theme) across texts that are read aloud
- Recognize that an author or illustrator may write or illustrate several books
- Express opinions about a text: e.g., interesting, funny, exciting
- Articulate why they like a text

#### Genre

- Understand that there are different types of books and that you can notice different things about them
- Understand when a story could happen in real life (realistic fiction) and when it could not happen in real life (folktales, animal fantasy)
- Notice story outcomes typical of traditional literature: e.g., cleverness overcomes physical strength, good defeats evil

#### Messages and Themes

- ◆ Infer the "lesson" in traditional literature
- ◆ Infer meanings in a story using understandings and experiences from their own lives: e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, helping your family, going to school, caring for your world, valuing differences
- ◆ Understand that a fiction text can have different meanings for different people
- Understand that a book can have more than one message or big idea
- Notice when a writer or storyteller is "teaching a lesson"

#### Setting

- ◆ Recognize and understand that texts may have settings related to different places and different people

#### Plot

- Follow the events in simple narratives
- Notice and understand a simple plot with problem and solution
- Check on understanding of the plot of the story and ask questions if meaning is lost
- Tell the important events of a story using the pictures (after hearing the text read several times)
- Tell the problem in a story and how it is resolved
- ◆ Predict what will happen next in a story
- ◆ Predict story outcomes

#### Character

- Notice and remember characters in simple narratives
- ◆ Infer a character's feelings using text and pictures
- ◆ Notice when a character changes or learns a lesson
- ◆ Express opinions about characters in a story: e.g., funny, bad, silly, nice, friendly
- ◆ Learn from vicarious experiences with characters in stories
- ◆ Understand that animals in stories sometimes act like people (animal fantasy)
- Understand that the same type of characters may appear over and over again in traditional literature: e.g., sly, brave, silly, wise, greedy

● Thinking **Within** the Text◆ Thinking **Beyond** the Text■ Thinking **About** the Text



## Selecting Goals Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support *(cont.)*

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### FICTION TEXTS *(continued)*

##### Style and Language

- Play with words or language orally: e.g., nonsense words or refrains from texts that are read aloud
- Understand sentences that are simple but may be different from oral language
- Follow and understand simple dialogue with a clear idea about who is speaking
- Notice a writer's use of repetition, refrains, and rhythm
- Notice a writer's use of playful or poetic language: e.g., nonsense words, rhythm, rhyme, repetition, onomatopoeia, alliteration
- Recognize a writer's use of humor
- Understand the meaning of some literary language (the language of books in contrast to typical oral language)
- Notice and remember literary language patterns that are characteristic of traditional literature: e.g., *once upon a time*, *long ago and far away*, *happily ever after*

##### Vocabulary

- Notice and acquire understanding of new vocabulary from read-aloud content
- Understand the meaning of simple nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and simple connectives (when listening to a story)
- Use new vocabulary in discussion of a text
- Use some academic language to talk about texts: e.g., *ABC book, poem, song, cover, title, author, illustrator, page, text, illustration, photograph, beginning, ending, problem*

##### Illustrations

- Tell the important events of a story using the pictures (after hearing the text read several times)
- Tell stories in response to pictures
- ◆ Understand that illustrations can have different meanings for different people
- Understand that an illustrator created the pictures in the book

##### Book and Print Features

- Notice letters, words, simple phrases, or sentences that are large enough to see, especially when they are repeated
- Enjoy special features such as pop-ups, pop-outs, flaps, pull-tabs, see-through holes, sound effects

● Thinking **Within** the Text◆ Thinking **Beyond** the Text■ Thinking **About** the Text



## Selecting Goals Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support (cont.)

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### NONFICTION TEXTS

##### General

- Ask questions to deepen understanding of a text
- Notice and ask questions when meaning is lost or understanding is interrupted
- Refer to important information and details
- Use hand and body movements to show understanding of the meaning or meanings of pictures and words in a text
- Understand and talk about everyday activities: e.g., playing, making things, eating, getting dressed, bathing, cooking, shopping
- Understand content that reflects beginning understanding of physical world and social world: e.g., mathematics, social studies, science, health, arts
- Understand that the teacher reads the print, not the pictures
- Understand that the teacher must hold the book right side up
- Mimic the teacher's expression and word stress when reenacting a text or joining in
- Use hand and body movements to show understanding of the meaning or meanings of pictures and words in a text
- Join in on refrains or repeated words, phrases, and sentences after hearing them several times
- ◆ Gain new information from both pictures and print
- ◆ Understand simple problems that occur in everyday life
- ◆ Give reasons (either text-based or from personal experience) to support thinking
- ◆ Use background knowledge to understand texts that are read aloud
- ◆ Relate texts to their own lives
- ◆ Recognize and understand that texts may be about different kinds of people and different places
- Recognize that an author or illustrator may write or illustrate several books
- Identify and discuss interesting information in a text
- Express opinions about a text: e.g., interesting, funny, exciting
- Articulate why they like a text

##### Genre

- Understand that there are different types of books and that you can notice different things about them
- Notice when a book is nonfiction (true information)
- Notice characteristics of some specific nonfiction genres: e.g., simple factual text, memoir (personal memory story)

##### Organization

- Understand that some nonfiction texts are like a story (narrative structure)
- Understand that some nonfiction texts tell information and are not like a story (nonnarrative structure)
- Notice simple text organization in nonnarrative texts: e.g., ABC, bigger to smaller, smaller to bigger
- Understand that a writer can tell about something that usually happens in the same order (temporal sequence)
- Notice when a writer is telling information in order (a sequence)
- Notice when a writer uses structural patterns such as simple description, temporal sequence, question and answer
- Identify a nonfiction writer's use of time order or other established sequences such as numbers, time of day, days of the week, seasons

##### Topic

- Understand and talk about familiar topics: e.g., animals, pets, families, friends, the five senses, growing and health, school, neighborhood, weather and seasons, food, plants
- ◆ Show curiosity about a topic
- ◆ Infer the importance of a topic
- Understand that a writer is presenting facts about a single topic
- Understand that a writer has a purpose in writing about a topic

● Thinking **Within** the Text◆ Thinking **Beyond** the Text■ Thinking **About** the Text



## Selecting Goals Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support *(cont.)*

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### NONFICTION TEXTS *(continued)*

##### Messages and Main Ideas

- ◆ Understand that a nonfiction text can have different meanings for different people
- ◆ Make connections among the content and ideas (e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, helping your family, going to school, caring for your world, valuing differences) across texts that are read aloud
- Understand that a writer can have more than one message or big idea

##### Style and Language

- Understand sentences that are simple but may be different from oral language
- Understand sentences with phrases and clauses when they are read aloud
- Notice a writer's use of rhythm, refrain, and repetition
- Notice a writer's use of playful or poetic language: e.g., nonsense words, onomatopoeia, alliteration, rhythm, rhyme

##### Vocabulary

- Notice and acquire understanding of new vocabulary from read-aloud content
- Use new vocabulary in discussion of a text
- Understand the meaning of simple nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and simple connectives when listening to a nonfiction text read aloud
- Use some academic language to talk about texts: e.g., *ABC book, poem, song, cover, title, author, illustrator, page, text, illustration, photograph, beginning, ending, problem*

##### Illustrations/Graphics

- Gain new understanding from illustrations
- ◆ Understand that illustrations can have different meanings for different people
- Understand that an illustrator created the pictures in the book

##### Book and Print Features

- Notice letters, words, simple phrases, or sentences that are large enough to see, especially when they are repeated
- Enjoy special features such as pop-ups, pop-outs, flaps, pull-tabs, see-through holes, sound effects

● Thinking **Within** the Text◆ Thinking **Beyond** the Text■ Thinking **About** the Text



## Selecting Texts Characteristics of Texts for Reading Aloud and Discussion

### Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion

#### GENRE

##### ► Fiction

- Realistic fiction
- Folktale
- Simple animal fantasy

##### ► Nonfiction

- Simple factual texts
- Memoir (personal memory story)
- Procedural texts

#### FORMS

- Picture books
- Wordless picture books
- Label books
- Short poems
- Nursery rhymes, rhymes, and songs
- Poetry collections
- Concept books
- ABC books
- Counting books

#### TEXT STRUCTURE

- Simple narrative with beginning, middle, several episodes, and ending
- Many texts with repeating episodes or patterns
- Some texts with nonnarrative structure
- Stories with simple plot (problem and solution)
- Most informational texts focusing on a single topic, usually one idea per page
- Underlying structural patterns: description, temporal sequence, question and answer

#### CONTENT

- Content that is appropriate for children's cognitive development, social and emotional maturity, and life experience
- Content that engages children's intellectual curiosity and emotions
- Language and word play: e.g., rhymes, nonsense, alliteration, and alphabet
- Content that reflects early conceptual understandings: e.g., colors, shapes, counting, sorting, size, alphabet, position

- Everyday actions familiar to young children: e.g., playing, making things, eating, getting dressed, bathing, cooking, shopping
- Familiar topics that are authentic and relevant: e.g., animals, pets, families, friends, the five senses, growing and health, school, neighborhood, weather and seasons, food, plants
- Humor that is easy to grasp: e.g., silly characters, funny situations
- Content that reinforces and expands a child's experience and knowledge of self and the world
- A few topics that may be beyond children's immediate experiences
- Content that reflects a wide range of settings, languages, and cultures
- Some content linked to specific areas of study as described by the school curriculum or standards
- Realistic characters, settings, and events that occur in realistic fiction
- Imaginary characters, events (some nonsensical and funny), and settings that occur in fantasy
- Content that reflects beginning understanding of the physical and social world
- Familiar settings close to children's experience
- Both realistic and fantastic settings, events, and characters
- Memorable characters that are straightforward, uncomplicated, and predictable
- Characters with one or two simple traits: e.g., kind, generous, sly, brave, silly, wise, greedy
- Characters that do not change or that change in simple ways for clear reasons
- Characters' actions related to clear consequences: e.g., reward for trying hard
- Predictable sequence of events
- Simple plot with problem and solution
- Language used to make comparisons
- Descriptive language, including made-up words and other playful forms
- Some poetic language, often using notable sound devices: e.g., rhythm, rhyme, repetition, refrain, onomatopoeia
- Simple dialogue and dialogue with pronouns (assigned by *said* in many texts) easily attributed to characters
- Some repetitive dialogue
- Some simple procedural language
- Some literary language typical of traditional literature: e.g., *once upon a time*, *long ago and far away*, *happily ever after*

#### THEMES AND IDEAS

- Themes reflecting everyday life: e.g., self, family relationships, home, friendship, community, diversity, first responsibilities, imagination, fears, courage, nature
- Clear, simple ideas easy to identify
- Ideas close to children's experience: e.g., taking care of self, staying healthy, expressing feelings, sharing with others, caring for others, helping your family, going to school, caring for your world, valuing differences, being part of a community

#### LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FEATURES

- A few simple elements of fantasy: e.g., talking animals
- Predictable story outcomes typical of traditional literature: e.g., cleverness overcomes physical strength, good defeats evil

#### SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- Sentences that are easy for children to follow, though more complex than children generally use in oral language
- Simple sentences with subject and predicate
- Variety of language structures
- Sentences with clauses and phrases
- Sentences that are questions
- Sentences with adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases

#### VOCABULARY

- A few interesting words that are new to children but easy to understand in context
- A few new content words related to concepts that are easy to understand
- Some memorable words that children can take on as language play