

How to Choose a “Just Right” Book for Independent Reading

First, preview the book and ask yourself:

1. Does the book cover look interesting?
2. Read the summary on the back cover. Are you interested?



If yes, now use the Five Finger Test:

1. Open the book to a random page in the middle.
2. Hold up Five fingers on one hand.
3. Begin reading at the top of the page.
4. Put down a finger each time you stumble over a word or come to a word you don't know.
5. If you can get to the bottom of the page & still have at least one finger up, this book has passed the Five Finger Test!



Easy

- ✓ You can read the words fluently (smooth & with an interesting voice)
- ✓ You know how to pronounce all the words
- ✓ You have a lot of prior knowledge for the topic
- ✓ You totally understand what is going on in the story
- ✓ Your thinking comes easy as you read the words

Challenging

- ✓ Many of the words are too hard to decode (failed the Five Finger Test)
- ✓ You don't know what the TRICKY words mean
- ✓ Your reading becomes choppy
- ✓ You lose focus as you are reading
- ✓ Your thinking is confused
- ✓ You are not enjoying the book because you have to do too much word work
- ✓ Your reading rate slows way down

Just Right

- ✓ You can understand what you are reading
- ✓ You enjoy the book
- ✓ You can read the book with smooth fluency, but there are some choppy places
- ✓ You can figure out the TRICKY words & still get the meaning of the story
- ✓ Your reading rate is just right—not too slow & not too fast



Lastly, if you are reading the text and you...

- Understand & enjoy the topic
- Can tell a friend what's happening from each chapter
- Can read the sentences aloud smoothly & fluently (as fast as you speak in conversation)
- Find just a few places (less than 4 words per page) where you have to think about what the **meaning of a word** might be



Then you are reading a “JUST RIGHT” book!

Reading a “Just Right” book helps you become a better reader!