

## **How to help your child with the different reading bands**

### **LILAC BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 1)**

These books help children to develop speaking and listening skills through telling visual stories. They are wordless books that tell the story through pictures alone.

Look at the pages, in order, and talk about what is happening on the left-hand side of the page before looking at the right-hand side.

- Can your child talk about what is happening on each page?
- Who can they see?
- What is the book about?

### **PINK BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 2)**

These books are for children just starting to read. Your child will now be getting used to reading from left to right. There are usually no more than 10 pages with up to 5 words on each page. The text will be short and highly predictable. There will be repetitive sentence structures, including high frequency words. Illustrations will fully support the text. The text will be fully punctuated and in the same position on each page.

- Can your child locate the title on the front cover?
- Help your child to open the book and turn the pages.
- They now need to understand that we read from left to right.
- Can your child read the simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words by sounding them out and blending?
- Parents can support the reading of tricky words (words that are not decodable).

### **RED BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 3)**

Your child will move up to red level when they have gained more confidence and know some high frequency words by sight. There are usually no more than 12 pages in these books, with one sentence per page. They are slightly longer than pink books, but still have highly predictable text. They have repetitive sentence structures, including many high frequency words. There is a simple story development. Non-fiction texts may have more than one type of print format. The print is reasonably large and there is a full range of punctuation.

- Can your child locate and recall the title?
- Can your child read the simple CVC words by sounding them out and blending?
- Is your child starting to read more rhythmically and keep track of the text whilst reading? They should be using their finger to move from word to word.
- Can your child self-correct if they make a mistake?

### **YELLOW BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 4)**

Your child is now beginning to read more varied sentence structures and is taking note of some punctuation. There are usually no more than 15 pages in yellow books, with one or two sentences per page. The books use some repetition of phrase patterns, ideas and vocabulary. There is more variation in sentence structure, including sentences with more than one clause. Illustrations continue to support the text. Story lines are more detailed.

- Your child should now be following the print with her eyes, finger pointing only at points of difficulty.
- They should now be taking note of punctuation. Do they know the name and purpose of the punctuation marks that they are coming across?

- Can your child sound out unknown words and blend to decode? These words may contain digraphs.
- Can your child search for information in print to confirm or predict unknown words?
- Your child should now be able to predict what may happen in greater detail.
- Can your child discuss what is happening? Encourage your child to make links to events on previous pages.

#### **BLUE BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phases 4/5)**

Your child is becoming more confident at reading longer and more varied sentences. There are usually no more than 15 pages in these books, with two to three sentences per page. They have greater variation in sentence pattern and content. Any repeated language patterns are now longer, or act as refrains. These stories contain more events. The pictures now support the storyline rather than conveying the precise meaning. Non-fiction books build on children's interests and encourage discussion around high quality photographs.

- Your child should be recognising key words by sight to support their reading fluency.
- Can your child sound out words independently using their phonic knowledge?
- They will come across a number of digraphs and trigraphs in these books.
- They should self-correct more rapidly.
- It might be helpful to re-read sentences after decoding to help enhance phrasing and meaning.
- Can your child tell you about the characters in the story, what they are doing and why they are acting in a particular way?
- Can your child recognise parts of longer words to help them when decoding?
- Model to your child how they can find particular information that interests them in non-fiction books.

#### **GREEN BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 5)**

Your child is now starting to read with increasing fluency and take note of punctuation. These books usually contain about 20 pages. There are three or four sentences per page. They have varied and longer sentences. There is little or no repetition of phrases. There are a larger number of characters involved. Events may be sustained over several pages. There will now be a larger number of words on each page. Some less familiar vocabulary will be used. Illustrations now provide only moderate support for the reader.

- Can your child read the sentences fluently?
- Can your child respond to punctuation marks and read with expression?
- These books will contain more split digraphs or alternative pronunciations.
- Can they discuss the characters or plot in greater detail?
- Can your child use the contents page and glossary of a non-fiction book and locate information?

#### **ORANGE BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 5)**

Your child is starting to read longer and more complex sentences and can understand a range of punctuation. There are usually about 20 pages in these books, with four or five sentences per page. These stories are now longer. An increased proportion of space will be allocated to print, rather than pictures. Sentence structures become more complex. Non-fiction texts contain more formal sentences and a widening range of unfamiliar terms.

- Can your child use their phonic knowledge and word recognition to read with fluency?
- Encourage your child not to rely on illustrations.

- There is an increased amount of dialogue to practise reading with expression. Model reading aloud to your child and get them to copy, or record your child on a device, so that they can listen and improve.
- Can they discuss the meaning of a wider range of punctuation and respond to it when reading? For example, stopping at a full stop or pausing at a comma.
- Can they infer meaning from the text and check for information?
- Can they discuss their feelings about the text? Did they enjoy the book and why?

### **PURPLE BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phases 5/6)**

Your child can now read complex sentences fairly fluently, taking note of punctuation. They use expression and do not rely on illustrations to help them. There are usually about 20 pages with four or five sentences per page. These books contain more elaborate episodes and events. There are extended descriptions, using a wide range of adjectives. Some books may have pages full of print. There will be more unusual and challenging vocabulary. Words will now be chosen for impact, rather than how easy they are to decode. Non-fiction texts contain more formal sentences and a widening range of unfamiliar terms.

- Can your child approach different genres with confidence?
- Can they use punctuation to read with a greater range of expression and control?
- Can they sustain reading through longer sentences and small paragraphs?
- They should be tackling a higher ratio of complex words using known vocabulary, phonic knowledge and syllables.
- Can they use an index, or glossary in a non-fiction book?

### **BLACK BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 6)**

Your child can now read silently or quietly at a rapid pace, taking note of punctuation. There are usually about 25 pages in a book, with five to ten sentences per page. The sentence structures are becoming longer and more complex. The story plot may involve the feelings of the writer. There is a wider range of text, but some illustrations still exist. There is widening vocabulary and range of terminology. Non-fiction texts cover an increasing curriculum range and different text formats. Some texts are longer to encourage reading stamina.

- Can your child predict the content of the story?
- Can your child use a dictionary to help discover the meaning of unknown words that they encounter within the text?
- After reading silently, can your child answer comprehension questions about the text to ensure reading for meaning?
- Can they comment upon fiction, non-fiction and poetry, discussing meaning and personal preferences?
- Can your child begin to use words that they come across in reading in their spoken and written language?

### **BROWN BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 6)**

Your child can read silently, taking note of punctuation. There are usually about 25 pages with five to ten sentences per page. The sentences in these books are longer, varied and more complex. There are sometimes fewer illustrations at this level, so children continue to need help to ensure full meaning and enjoyment. The story plot will involve the feelings and views of the writer.

Characters are more fully developed. There is a wider range and amount of text, but it is still illustrated. These books are more challenging. Children will be introduced to more unfamiliar vocabulary that will need to be discussed. Non-fiction texts cover an increasing range of subjects and different text formats.

- Can your child predict the content of the story?
- Can your child use a dictionary to help discover the meaning of unknown words that they encounter within the text?
- After reading silently, can your child answer comprehension questions about the text to ensure reading for meaning?
- Can they comment upon fiction, non-fiction and poetry, discussing meaning and preference?
- Can your child begin to use words that they come across in their speech & writing?
- Can your child read aloud with expression and intonation taking account of punctuation?
- Encourage your child to look for more books of the type they enjoy at the library or in bookshops or at school.

#### WHITE BOOKS (Letters & Sounds Phase 6+)

These books may have chapters. Your child will be interested in longer texts which they can return to after a break. There are usually no more than 30 pages and about ten sentences per page. These books contain a widening range of stylistic features. The storyline may be sustained over a longer period of time, with chapters or sub-sections of text. More than one view point may be expressed within the text. Information or action may be implied, rather than spelt out. Your child will need to use some inference to establish meaning. Texts may contain more metaphorical language. Non-fiction texts include more detailed information.

- Can your child read silently most of the time and summarise chapters at the end?
- Are they sustaining interest in texts and returning to them?
- Can they search for and find information in non-fiction books independently?
- They should now be able to use a simple dictionary independently.
- Do they show an increased awareness of vocabulary?
- They should now be able to express reasoned opinions and compare texts that they have read.
- Can they discuss interpretations of a text and different viewpoints?
- Are they able to discuss alternatives or extensions to events and actions?
- The retelling of a story should now be balanced and clear.
- Ask your child to read some pages aloud so that they can read with expression and pace.