

Grade Three Independent Reading Level Improvement Process

*That Students Complete Third Grade,
Able To Read Fourth Grade Textbooks
- Assessment Tools Included -*

Steven D. Bell
4SuccessInSchools.org

Grade Three Independent Reading Level Improvement Process

Reading at Grade Level is absolutely essential, for success in school.

It's necessary for using textbooks to learn in all subject areas.

It's necessary for learners to perceive themselves as competent in school.

Students' success, and the quality of their lives as adults,
depends upon their learning to read at, or above grade level.

That so many young people currently are not reading at grade level, demands that they be provided a means of accomplishing what their capabilities will allow.¹

We must believe that most students have the capability to learn to read at or above grade level,
regardless of race, or the economic status of their family and community.

Traditional Reading Instruction isn't meeting most students' needs.

65% of Fourth Graders scoring below proficient in Reading,
on the National Assessment of Educational Progress,
calls for quickly doing something different in our methods for teaching Reading.

The Grade Three Independent Reading Level Improvement Process

assures that students who began Third Graders reading below grade level
will pleasantly complete Third Grade, able to read at or above grade level,
without experiencing additional embarrassment among their peers.

***The average progress of Third Graders who have used
the Grade Three Independent Reading Level Improvement Process
was two years in six months.***

¹ Students need more time to practice reading:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/staggering-statistics-about-struggling-readers-and-reading-growth/>
65% of U.S. fourth graders scored below proficient in reading on the NAEP in 2019:

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cnb.pdf

Only 48% White, 22% Hispanic, 14% Native American, & 11% of Black test takers are successful on the ACT:
<https://educationdata.org/k12-enrollment-statistics/>

Grade Three Independent Reading Level Improvement Process Steps

Step One – Assembling An Independent Reading Classroom Library

Gather two or three copies of currently and previously adopted leveled basal and supplementary reading books, from pre-primer and primer, through grade five, from at least three publishers. These books will be a library providing young readers with an easy place to begin independent reading, and a sequence of books for easy, step by step independent reading level progress.

Books without a leveled and controlled vocabulary, aren't included in this library.

A one-shelf bookcase is sufficient for a Third Grade classroom's leveled independent reading library.

Step Two – Assessing Each Student's Beginning Independent Reading Level

- a. Using the included Independent Reading Level Pre-Assessment, identify each learner's starting point.
(The learner's starting point is the level where almost no help is needed to identify words.)
- b. Allow learners to point and say as many words as they feel confident in identifying on the assessment list.
- c. Readers may move across the list horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, and need not identify every word on the pre-assessment to begin independent reading at that level.

Step Three – Assigning The Learner's First Independent Reading Book

- a. Place each student in the "easiest" of the books at their assessed beginning level, so they will complete their first book rapidly. All books at a given level, in your library, are not equally challenging to read.
- b. As learners progress, provide them the next slightly more challenging book, at the same level.

Step Four – Providing Time For Independent Reading

- a. Provide twenty minutes in the daily reading period for individualized independent reading.
- b. During independent reading time students read their assigned book, alone, or in self-selected groups of two or three where they read orally to each other, or read silently together so they can ask each other for help with a word.
- c. During independent reading time teachers listen to children who want to read to them, offer assistance as requested by readers, and conference readers out of completed independent reading books.

Readers also are permitted to read their assigned independent reading books at home.

Step Five – The Directed Reading Group

Readers who aren't proficient or confident, should not be embarrassed in front of peers by being asked to read orally, or to answer questions. Public correction of below grade level readers should be avoided.

Teachers reading to below grade level readers, in a directed group, offers an opportunity for a sentence from what was read aloud to be charted and then read again by all children in the group, for children to discuss the meaning of a word in a charted sentence, or to answer a questions about what was read to them.

While a teacher works with a directed group, below grade level readers are permitted to work at centers, complete appropriately leveled follow-up activities about a story that has been read to them, illustrate a story they are reading independently, or dictate sentences about a story they are reading or writing independently.

Step Six – Conferencing The Learner From One Independent Reading Book Into Their Next Book

Use a sign-up sheet for an "I Finished My Book Conference".

Conference children, out of one book, and into another, during the independent reading period.

- a. What part of the book was the most interesting to you?
Allow the child read part of that section to demonstrate fluency.
- b. Did something happen in the book that was funny, or silly, or strange? Tell me about it.
- c. Help the child select another book, at the same level, if the one that the child finished is not the second one at that level.
- d. On a 3" x 5" card, for each child, record the name of the book that the child finished, the date, and the name of the book selected to read next.

Independent Reading Level Pre-Assessment

The following sight word Pre-Assessment is adapted from the Dolch Word List. It may be used to approximate a student's independent reading level, so that an easy to read book may be assigned for independent reading.

A book at a student's independent reading level is one that can be read, and comprehended easily.

- b. At an independent level, the child should be able to read with nearly no errors, and with need for almost no help in identifying unknown words.
- c. After reading at an independent level, the child should be able to explain what the book was about, and answer simple questions about it.
- d. To assess students individually, let them see two or three word lists that you believe are near the level where they may recognize several words. Then allow them to pick the assessment page they'd like to begin with. (The levels are printed at the bottom of each list). Fold the bottom of the page so the level is not seen.
- e. Students scan the list, point to and say the words they know in any order. (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally). Students should feel no pressure to get a word right.
Teachers say: "Choose the words you know. You don't have to know all the words."

The child's independent reading level will be the one where the child can read most of the words readily.

- f. After young readers have completed several independent reading books, and have improved their independent reading levels significantly, the teacher may re-administer the Pre-Assessment so that students may see the progress they have made, in the number of words they can recognize.
- g. A space for the child's name and date are provided on each of the following assessment pages. Keeping this record for each child, makes it a data collection tool that will be appreciated by students and their parents.

Keeping this Assessment as an individual, permanent record is optional.

If used as a permanent record, the beginning and near end-of-year assessment dates might have different color-coded check marks, indicating the words that the student knew on each of those dates.

**The objective of the Independent Reading Level Improvement Process
is to enable Third Graders to complete their year reading at or above grade level,
so that their textbooks may be easily used as learning tools, in the Fourth Grade and ensuing years.**

The following Assessment pages are not for teaching or for studying.

It is not an objective of the Independent Reading Level Improvement Process
that students master, know, or memorize the words in these lists.

The Assessment pages help teachers and students identify where,
in the classroom's Independent Reading Library,
each student should begin reading.

The beginning Independent Reading Level should be "**very e a s y**" for the student to read.

Which Words Do You Know?

Name: _____

Date: _____

___I	___can	___a	___little
___me	___you	___one	___two
___see	___look	___red	___blue
___the	___big	___help	___jump
___here	___we	___run	___where
___and	___it	___is	___in
___funny	___not	___to	___play
___find	___go	___make	___up
___down	___yellow	___for	___my
___three	___said	___come	___away

----- fold -----
Fold the bottom of this pre-primer page so the child does not see its level.

Which Words Do You Know?

Name: _____

Date: _____

___on

___new

___good

___saw

___do

___what

___this

___was

___be

___soon

___pretty

___so

___she

___who

___came

___went

___he

___too

___ate

___no

___did

___yes

___please

___at

___they

___say

___must

___like

___get

___out

___but

___eat

___with

___four

___brown

___white

___all

___black

___well

___are

___will

___now

___have

___there

___our

___ride

___under

___that

___am

___want

___into

___ran

fold

Fold the bottom of this primer page so the child does not see the level.

Which Words Do You Know?

Name: _____

Date: _____

___open

___then

___as

___some

___had

___live

___when

___every

___of

___her

___let

___his

___give

___once

___take

___again

___how

___an

___over

___may

___could

___them

___giving

___round

___were

___just

___any

___old

___thank

___him

___from

___stop

___know

___by

___think

___ask

___walk

___after

___fly

___has

___put

fold

Fold the bottom of this first level page so the child does not see the level.

Which Words Do You Know?

Name: _____

Date: _____

___sit	___or	___don't	___use
___tell	___wish	___read	___why
___made	___us	___both	___cold
___its	___your	___pull	___first
___call	___off	___very	___fast
___buy	___those	___before	___five
___been	___green	___found	___sleep
___does	___wash	___goes	___right
___upon	___which	___these	
___would	___sing	___their	___work
___many	___always	___write	___best
___gave	___around	___because	

----- fold -----

Fold the bottom of this second level page so the child does not see the level.

Which Words Do You Know?

Name: _____

Date: _____

___only	___ten	___got	___clean
___light	___shall	___hot	___warm
___try	___laugh	___never	___hurt
___about	___eight	___if	___full
___own	___seven	___carry	___far
___draw	___myself	___show	___done
___start	___small	___keep	___kind
___bring	___fall	___pick	___six
___cut	___drink	___grow	___long
___much	___better	___today	
___hold	___together		

----- fold -----

Fold the bottom of this third level page so the child does not see the level.