

# Independent (“Just Right”) Reading Descriptions Level R

## Characteristics of Level R Books

- Wide range of genre and forms - including historical fiction & short stories - *some collections that have interrelated themes or build a single plot across the book*
- In information texts, texts with multiple topics and categories within them; prior knowledge often required
- Fiction texts contain settings requiring knowledge of content (history, geography); address important problems & social issues; some more challenging themes; complex ideas on many different topics requiring real or vicarious (reading) experiences
- Various ways of showing characters' attributes; multiple characters to understand; factors related to their change are less explicit and obvious; memorable characters have both good and bad traits that change over time
- Complex plots with numerous episodes & time passing; many stories have moral lessons close to the end of the story & some have parallel or circular plots
- Some texts - abstract themes & lessons requiring inferential thinking to derive; many ideas and themes require an understanding of cultural diversity
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors
- *Long strings of unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred; long stretches of descriptive language important to understanding setting, characters*
- Extensive use of figurative language important to understand plot
- Some words that are seldom used in oral language and are difficult to decode
- New vocabulary in fiction largely unexplained, while content-specific words are mostly defined in text, illustrations or glossary
- Vocabulary words are used figuratively/to show an abstract idea and/or must be figured out from context in order to fully understand the story

## Characteristics of Readers at Level R

- *Can remember information in summary form over chapters, a series of short stories, or sequels in order to understand larger themes* (& report in organized way)
- *Make connections between characters in different texts (setting, problem, person)*
- *Can explain how an author supports particular points in a text*
- Will vary the pace of reading, as needed; will form questions & search for answers
- Can read and understand the connotative meaning of words, and when words are used figuratively; can add new and interesting words to his/her vocabulary
- Can process texts with dense print
- Can solve complex multisyllable (3+) words (vowels, phonograms, affixes, etc)
- Can identify and use words with multiple meanings, or difficult proper nouns
- Can infer characters' feelings/motivations, using cause/effect, dialogue, or what other characters say about them; can manage multidimensional characters
- Can take unfamiliar perspectives when interpreting about characters

## Sample Texts - Level R

**All-Star Examples:** *Because of Winn-Dixie, Charlie & the Chocolate Factory, The Midnight Fox, Sadako & the Thousand Paper Cranes, Sarah, Plain and Tall, The Trouble with Tuck, Hatchet, Shiloh, Strider*

**Books titles at my level include:**

TITLE	AUTHOR
<b>On The Run (Series)</b>	Korman, Gordon
<b>Shredderman (series)</b>	Van Draanen, Wendelin
The Backyard Animal Show	Draper, Sharon M
Caddie Woodlawn	Brink, Carol Ryrie
Charlotte's Web/Stuart Little/Trumpet of the Swan	White, E.B.
Frindle/Landry News/Report Card/The Jacket/School Story/Lunch Money	Clements, Andrew
Otherwise Known As Sheila The Great	Blume, Judy
The Journey	Lasky, Kathryn
<b>Hank Zipzer (series)</b>	Winkler, Henry
Hatchet	Paulsen, Gary
How To Eat Fried Worms	Rockwell, Thomas
Iggie's House	Blume, Judy
Misty Of Chincoteague	Henry, Marguerite
Our Only May Amelia	Holm, Jennifer L.
Secret Identity	Van Draanen, Wendelin
Snow Treasure	McSwigan, Marie
<b>The 39 Clues (series)</b>	Riordan, Rick
The Castle In The Attic	Winthrop, Elizabeth
<b>The Edge Chronicles (series)</b>	Stewart, Paul and Riddell, Chris
<b>Spiderwick Chronicles (series - some)</b>	DiTerlizzi, Tony and Black, Holly
How Tia Lola Came To Stay	Alvarez, Julia
A Dog Called Kitty/Danger on Panther Peak	Wallace, Bill
Every Living Thing	Rylant, Cynthia
Fig Pudding	Fletcher, Ralph
Freaky Friday	Rodgers, Mary
Mystery Stories	Cresswell, Helen, Ed.
Nasty Stinky Sneakers	Bunting, Eve
Rules	Lord, Cynthia
Sun And Spoon	Henkes, Kevin
The Celery Stalks At Midnight	Howe, James
The Computer Nut	Byars, Betsy
The Doll's House	Godden, Rumer
The Island	Paulsen, Gary
The Library Card	Spinelli, Jerry
The Stray	King-Smith, Dick
The Whipping Boy	Fleischman, Sid
They Came From Center Field	Gutman, Dan
A Dime A Dozen	Grimes, Nikki
Chocolate By Hershey: A Story About Milton S. Hershey	Burford, Betty
Desert Giant	Bash, Barbara
Owen And Mzee: The True Story Of A Remarkable Friendship	Hatkoff, Isabella/Craig w. Kahumbu
Crocodiles/Killer Whales/Lions/Polar Bears/Wolves	Markle, Sandra

\*Bold titles are Series books.

**REMEMBER:** You can sometimes find titles at your level or check the level of a book you already have on Scholastic's Book Wizard site. Look for the initials GRL (meaning Guided Reading Level) - this is the level we use at school. [www.scholastic.com/bookwizard](http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard)

Nancy Giansante is a librarian who keeps a leveled book list at her website: <http://home.comcast.net/~ngiansante>  
This site is searchable by grade level suggestions, titles, and author names.