

Willingboro Public Schools:
FAQ for Parents of Elementary Students on
Fountas & Pinnell Assessments & Reading Levels

What do teachers use to assess the reading levels of students?

The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is used in grades K through 4. This one-on-one assessment involves the teacher listening to a student read followed by a discussion about the text.

What information does this assessment provide?

This test provides information on the reader's accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. It allows teachers to determine both a student's independent and instructional reading level. Fountas & Pinnell levels (also known as guided reading levels) are rated on an A to Z gradient. Each grade level has a range of levels that you would expect a reader to proceed through during the year, with A as the starting kindergarten level and reaching Z in the middle school grade levels.

Why was this assessment selected?

The Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System was adopted district-wide after a careful review of reading assessments available. F&P Benchmark Assessment Systems is one of the most reliable resources to accurately determine student's independent and instructional reading levels, while observing a students' reading behaviors.

What's the difference between independent and instructional reading levels?

An independent reading level is when the reader knows most of the words and can comprehend the text without too much difficulty. A book at the independent level is often referred to as a "**just right**" book. These books help students become better readers through ample practice. An independent level book should sound smooth when read aloud and feel comfortable to read.

A book at **an instructional reading** level is more challenging for the reader, but is not too hard. A book at this level is right on the edge of the child's learning. Teachers use sets of guided reading books to support small groups of students in reading at their instructional level. This is the level we use to instruct students during reading intervention.

Is it important for parents to check the reading level of each book a child reads?

No. The A to Z guided reading level is a useful tool that teachers use to assess, instruct, and evaluate students. It is not essential that parents verify the level of a book when supporting readers at home.

The “I-PICK” method (see below) can be used to help support children and parents in choosing a “Just -Right” book. A “Just Right” book is one you are interested in and that you can read accurately, fluently, and with good comprehension.

I-PICK METHOD

Purpose – I have a reason to read this book.

Interest – I am really interested in this topic, story, or author!

Comprehension – I understand the text and can retell it (story elements, big ideas, and supporting details).

Know – I know almost every word and I can read it smoothly and with expression.

Sometimes a student might be very interested in reading a book but it is too difficult. That book might be a good one to read aloud to the child or a parent/teacher can provide an alternative way to access the book, such as through an audio recording or interactive read aloud online. With continued progress, a book that was too hard at one time will eventually become one that the student can read independently!

F&P TEXT LEVEL GRADIENT™

FOUNTAS & PINNELL
LEVELS

GRADE-LEVEL
GOALS

A	Kindergarten
B	
C	
D	
E	Grade One
F	
G	
H	
I	Grade Two
J	
K	
L	
M	Grade Three
N	
O	
P	
Q	Grade Four
R	
S	
T	
U	Grade Five
V	
W	
X	
Y	Grade Six
Z	
Z+	Grade Seven—Eight
	High School/Adult

The grade-level goals on the F&P Text Level Gradient™ are intended to provide general guidelines, which should be adjusted based on school/district requirements and professional teacher judgement.