What do Book Band levels mean?

Reading books are graded by difficulty by reading levels known as Book Bands. Each Book Band has its own colour. The chart below gives an indication of the range of Book Band levels at which most children will be reading as they progress through primary school.

The chart shows the progress of an 'average' band of children- but no individual child is 'average', so no child makes smooth progress precisely in this way. Children tend to learn in fits and starts – periods of growth followed by periods of consolidation when their progress seems to halt for a while. The periods where you don't see rapid progress may be worrying, especially after a 'growth spurt', but they are important as your child develops confidence in using and applying their newly acquired skills.

If you are ever worried about your child's progress, talk to their teacher.

Book Band Colour	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Lilac							
Pink							
Red							
Yellow							
Blue							
Green							
Orange							
Turquoise							
Purple							
Gold							
White							
Lime							
Brown							
Grey							
Blue (KS2)							
Red (KS2)							

Lilac level	2
Pink level	2
Red level	3
Yellow level	3
Blue level	4
Green level	5
Orange level	5
Turquoise level	6
Purple level	7
Gold level	7
White level	8
Lime level	9
Brown level	9
Grey level	10
Blue level	10
Red level	11

Lilac level

Lilac level books are wordless books that tell a story through pictures alone. They help children to develop speaking and listening skills through creating and telling stories.

How to support your child reading Lilac level books

Your child is just beginning to discover the excitement of books. Although these books have no words, they are an important introduction to reading. Please encourage your child to:

- Look at the pages in order, and talk about what is happening on the left hand page before the right hand page.
- Talk about what is happening on each page, rather than just talking about what they see in each picture.
- Tell you who or what the book is about.

Pink level

Pink level is the very first level of reading books which has words. The number of words increases slightly as your child progresses through the reading level. If your child has read the Bug Club Lilac books, he or she will be delighted to find that Pink level books follow many of the same characters. This means that children are motivated to read the book because they are already familiar with the characters and interested in their adventures.

How to support your child reading Pink level books

Your child is beginning to learn to read. As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word. Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory', and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Tell you about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.

Red level

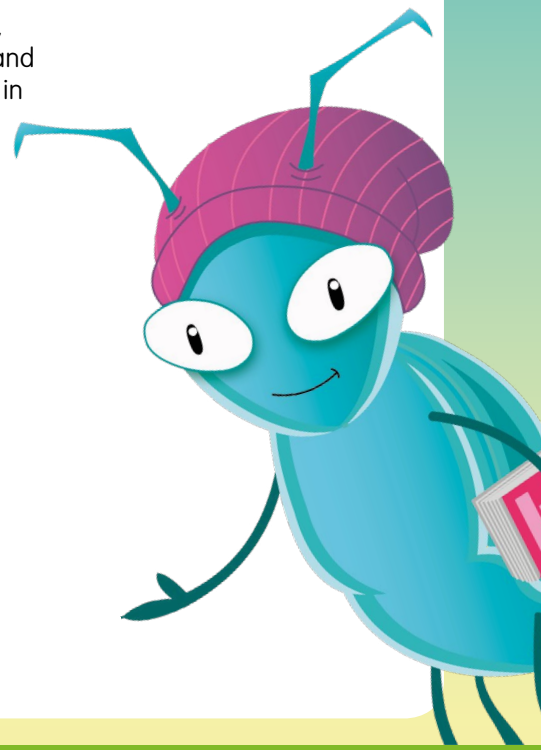
All levels in Bug Club consolidate learning from previous levels. Red level books have a slightly increased number of words, an increase from eight to twelve pages and slightly more complex story lines.

The growing complexity in the story lines is reinforced through the development of inference and prediction using visual literacy. All of the books introduce new sets of characters which are revisited throughout the level. Characters at this level include Angelina Ballerina, the irrepressible Rat and Cat as well as the eco-friendly Eco Apes.

How to support your child reading Red level books:

Your child is beginning to learn how to read. As they read, please help them to:

- Read the words carefully. Most of the words can be recognised or sounded out. Ask your child to sound out and blend only the words they can't read yet, not every word. Eventually almost all words will become part of your child's 'sight memory', and they won't have to sound out at all.
- On second and third readings of the book, encourage them to read with more pace and with less focus on sounding out the letters in each word.
- Make a story out of a whole book, rather than focusing just on what is happening on each page.
- Tell you about something that happened in the book, or about something they found out in the book.



Yellow level

Books at this level include the popular character Shaun the Sheep, as well as Zip and Zap and Bug Boy. Non-fiction titles at this level build on children's interests and encourage discussion around the high-quality photographs. New learning in Yellow level books includes a slightly increased number of words and a move away from familiar experiences.

Yellow books require some inferencing skills from the reader, e.g. for humour, and have more variation in sentence structure, including sentences with more than one clause.

How to support your child reading Yellow level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more confidence. As they read aloud, you can help them by:

- Giving them time to sound out words they don't know. If they still struggle, encourage them to try sounding out the whole word first, rather than guessing from the pictures or from the first letter.
- Giving them time to recognise and correct their own mistakes.
- Asking them to talk about what's happening in the book, encouraging them to make links to events on previous pages.

Blue level

Blue level books have a slightly increased number of words and some variation in sentence beginnings. They may use ellipses and other punctuation. The story lines are more complex, including more than one event, and the stories are less dependent on picture cues.

How to support your child reading Blue level books

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. Encourage them to select from books at the library or bookshop as well as those from school. As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly – and silently – inside their heads, if they need to sound out words.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full-stops and question marks.
- Tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.
- Show you how they can find particular things that interest them in non-fiction books.

Green level

The number of words increases slightly in Green level books. Stories have a wider variety of characters and events which develop over a number of pages. Sentences may include lists of things or actions, and adverbs are used frequently to begin sentences. The books begin to use capital letters to support reading with expression.

The growing complexity in the story lines is reinforced through the development of inference and prediction using visual literacy. All of the books introduce new sets of characters which are revisited throughout the level. Characters at this level include Wallace and Gromit, the clumsy Horribilly and the very silly Silly Jack.

How to support your child reading Green level books

Your child is now developing into a more confident reader. Encourage them to select from books at the library or bookshop as well as those from school. As they read, you can help by encouraging them to:

- Sound out quickly – and silently – inside their heads, if they need to sound out words.
- Look at the punctuation marks. You may want to model how to read a page of writing, paying attention to punctuation, such as full-stops and question marks.
- Tell you about what the characters in the story are doing and why they are acting in that way.
- Show you how they can find particular things that interest them in non-fiction books.

Orange level

At Orange level, the page count increases from 16 pages to 24 pages to challenge and encourage reading stamina. There is an increased use of dialogue to encourage reading with expression.

Orange Level books introduce some complex sentences (use of 'if', 'so' and 'because') and include italics to show emphasis. Slightly more literary language is used. Children are increasingly encouraged to infer meaning from the text in order to gain full enjoyment from the story.

How to support your child reading Orange level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence. They should be feeling more confident and will rarely need to sound out words. You can help them by:

- Listening to them when they read aloud. If they make mistakes, but they keep the sense of the text, don't interrupt. You can revisit that page at the end of the session to check certain words.
- Reminding them of useful strategies if they can't read a word, for example:

1. Sounding the word out silently, under their breath
2. Dividing a longer word into syllables, or looking at the word without an –ing or an –ed ending

- Don't allow them to worry about a word. Tell them what it says and revisit the word once you have completed the book.
- Encouraging some use of expression, especially for character-speech in fiction books. You may wish to model reading some pages aloud for your child to copy.
- Talking about how characters are feeling.

Turquoise level

Turquoise level books include an increasing range of adjectives and more descriptive verbs to replace 'said'. There is an increased proportion of space allocated to print rather than pictures.

Turquoise level books include words chosen for appropriateness and impact rather than decodability, with more extended descriptions. Paragraphs begin to develop and more unusual and challenging vocabulary is included.

How to support your child reading Turquoise level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer. You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to some pages read aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and showing you where the information is in the book.

Purple level

Purple level books include an increased proportion of longer sentences, with a more challenging vocabulary. Some Purple books have short chapters to challenge and encourage reading stamina.

Purple level books include longer and more complex sentences with the inclusion of complex (i.e. 'when') and simple (i.e. 'and') connectives. Story features such as plot, character and setting are developed in more detail, and the text in the non-fiction books is presented in a variety of ways.

How to support your child reading Purple level books

Your child is now beginning to read with more independence and their books are getting longer. You can help them by:

- Encouraging them to read some pages silently, inside their heads.
- Listening to some pages read aloud, encouraging the use of expression and paying attention to punctuation marks.
- Talking about how events in the book relate to each other and helping your child to understand how the story builds up in a longer book.
- Asking them to tell you about interesting things they found out and showing you where the information is in the book.

Gold level

Gold level books include more sophisticated and challenging vocabulary, including word play and the introduction of figurative language. Some Gold books have longer chapters for more sustained reading.

Children reading at this level are confident independent readers who can tackle increasingly complex language, story structures and text layout. However, Bug Club books have been carefully levelled to ensure success, even at this level, and include motivating texts with just the right level of challenge to encourage children to maintain their progress.

How to support your child reading Gold level books

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations, so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session. You can support them by:

- Asking them to read some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them reading with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.
- Asking for regular updates as to what is happening in the book, so that you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book. Encourage them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.

White level

In White level books there is a more sophisticated use of narrative voice. Clauses in longer sentences are separated by commas to encourage developing intonation. Some books have longer chapters for more sustained reading.

The stories included at White level encourage children to empathise with the characters and consider why they behave as they do, and how they change during the course of the story. The non-fiction books are divided into sections that require more sustained reading and there is increased challenge in the layout of the information.

How to support your child reading White level books

Your child is now reading longer books with fewer illustrations, so they continue to need your help to ensure they are getting the full meaning and enjoyment from the text. They may prefer to read one chapter or section at a time, rather than reading the whole book in one session. You can support them by:

- Asking them to read some pages of the book aloud to you so that you can enjoy hearing them reading with expression and pace.
- Asking them to find parts of the text which describe a character or place and talking about the words used in the description.
- Asking for regular updates as to what is happening in the book, so that you know how the different chapters or sections link.
- Talking about how much they enjoy a book, or a type of book. Encourage them to look for more books of the type they enjoy.

Lime level

Lime level books include a widening range of writing styles and an increased variation in sentence structure, including –ing clauses and longer sentences with more than two clauses

Children reading at Lime level are able to interpret more sophisticated word plays and puns. The narrator's voice in a fiction story may be distinguished from the characters' voice through figurative, idiomatic and literary language. The story is often told through dialogue and action to 'show' instead of 'tell' as the plot develops.

How to support your child reading Lime level books

Although your child is now taking off as a reader, it is still important that you read with them and talk to them about their reading. This reassures them that their reading is still important to you, as well as giving you an opportunity to share an enjoyment of books. You can still help them by:

- Asking them to read aloud some parts of the text which they particularly enjoy. This may include action or description. Talk about how the writer made those parts so enjoyable.
- Talking about how characters develop or how they react to different people, places or events.
- Reading the book yourself so that you can talk together about the smaller details of the book.

Brown level

Children reading at Brown level will be reading between National Curriculum level 3C and 3B. At this level, they should be able to:

- interpret more sophisticated word-play and puns
- distinguish the narrator's voice in a fiction story from the characters' voices through figurative, idiomatic and literary language
- understand a story that is told through dialogue and action to 'show' instead of 'tell' the plot

How to support your child reading Brown level books

Your child may well not want to read aloud to you any more because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as you child continues to read actively and not just pass their eyes over the words. You can help them by:

- continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Establishing an expectation of a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Ask questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers. Support your child as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Continuing to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.

Grey level

Children reading at Grey level will be reading between National Curriculum level 3A and 4C and are able to interpret more sophisticated word-play and puns. At this level, they should be able to:

- explain a character's motivations
- discuss the points of view of the character and the narrator
- better understand a range of narration styles

How to support your child reading Grey level books

Your child may well not want to read aloud to you any more because they probably enjoy silent reading more. This is fine as long as you child continues to read actively and not just pass their eyes over the words. You can help them by:

- continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Establishing an expectation of a conversation at the end of each reading session: can they tell you what's happening in their book?
- Ask questions which make your child go back to the book to find answers. Support your child as they develop skills in skimming and scanning to find the information to answer your question.
- Continuing to read aloud to your child at bedtime. This shows them the importance you place on reading as well as developing their language, vocabulary and love of story.

Blue level (KS2)

Children reading at Blue level will be reading between National Curriculum level 4B and 4A. They will be able to gather information from more than one place in the text and use inference based on what is shown rather than being told. This allows for greater complexity in building character and setting.

How to support your child reading Blue level books

The books at this level are written in a much more subtle way than in previous levels which means that it is important that the reader is fully engaged with the process of reading and alert to the language and vocabulary the writer is using. This level is more advanced than many books that are sold to adults but these stories are not intended to be just 'leisure reads'. Although your child should enjoy them, the books need the reader to be fully alert and willing to learn.

You can help them by:

- continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Suggest that your child invites friends who are also reading the book to a 'Book Group'. If you skim-read the book first – or ask your child's teacher – you can prepare some questions for the book group to discuss.
- Before a reading session, ask your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character's reaction to another shows their relationship … There are lots of questions you can ask which don't mean you have to know the book yourself, but just serve to alert your child to its possibilities.

Red level (KS2)

Children reading at Red level will be reading between National Curriculum level 5C and 5B. They will be able to synthesise information from different places in a text. They are beginning to recognise how layers of meaning allow for the build-up of humour or tension and are able to discuss how the author has achieved the effects.

How to support your child reading Red level books

The books at this level are written in a much more subtle way than in previous levels which means that it is important that the reader is fully engaged with the process of reading and alert to the language and vocabulary the writer is using. This level is more advanced than many books that are sold to adults but these stories are not intended to be just 'leisure reads'. Although your child should enjoy them, the books need the reader to be fully alert and willing to learn.

You can help them by:

- continuing to make a time available for regular quiet reading sessions, and reading your book while your child reads.
- Suggest that your child invites friends who are also reading the book to a 'Book Group'. If you skim-read the book first – or ask your child's teacher – you can prepare some questions for the book group to discuss.
- Before a reading session, ask your child to find and note down some particular information. It could relate to the plot or it could be something like: a really good descriptive passage; three words which are adventurous; two words you want to use in your next piece of writing; an example of something typical a character does or says; how one character's reaction to another shows their relationship … There are lots of questions you can ask which don't mean you have to know the book yourself, but just serve to alert your child to its possibilities.

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