

ESL Grade 4 – 6 Reading Profiles

Step A1 (TDSB)

At the end of Step A1, students use pictures and images to make meaning from texts. They recognize a few letters of the English alphabet and their name. Students who have had some literacy instruction in their first language may rely on bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators and benefit from support on how to use these resources strategically. Depending on their first language, they may apply decoding skills from L1 and use them to decode English words. In these cases, teachers carefully monitor for reading comprehension. Students benefit from having texts read and reread to them, with frequent exposure to carefully selected, highly visual texts within a limited vocabulary range. They require many opportunities to explore very simple English texts as they begin to understand that print carries meaning and build their awareness of directionality of print. They can match some basic English words with pictures without the use of a bilingual dictionary.

Step 1

At the end of Step 1, students can read and understand simple, highly visual texts that relate to familiar and classroom experiences. They demonstrate understanding by using visuals, drawings, gestures and first language (L1). Students bring age-appropriate understanding of language concepts in their first language (L1) to reading in English. They read and understand high-frequency and pre-taught vocabulary and use cueing systems to decode unfamiliar words in context. They require small group instruction and guided practice.

Step 2

At the end of Step 2, students can read and understand high frequency words, pre-taught phrases and key academic vocabulary. They demonstrate understanding by responding to simple texts with strong visual support. They use cueing systems (e.g., pictures, phonics) to decode unfamiliar words in simple compound sentences. Students may use their first language (L1) to support and/or demonstrate their understanding of text. Students benefit from using bilingual dictionaries, the pre-teaching and modelling of multiple meaning words and key academic vocabulary in small group and guided practice.

Step 3

At the end of Step 3, students can read and understand an increasing variety of adapted and simple, age-appropriate, authentic texts with some visual support. They use pre-taught academic vocabulary and may attend to root words and affixes to determine meaning. Students can read and respond to instructions consisting of two or three steps. Students require support to understand the cultural aspects of text. Continued use of guided practice and descriptive feedback supports the learner.

Step 4

At the end of Step 4, students can read and understand authentic texts with linguistic complexity approaching grade level. With repeated exposure, they comprehend increasingly complex subject-specific vocabulary. Students can determine the meaning of unfamiliar words through the use of context. They can read and respond to instructions consisting of multiple steps. Students will benefit from explicit instruction and guided practice to understand how syntax and word choice help communicate meaning.

Step 5

At the end of Step 5, students can read and understand authentic, early-grade level texts in a variety of subject areas. They comprehend low frequency and academic vocabulary. Students use cueing systems to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. They can read and respond to complex instructions. Students require support to navigate culturally specific references. They require additional time to read a greater volume of material as well as ongoing opportunities to actively engage in group discussions.

Step 6

At the end of Step 6, students can read and understand a wide variety of grade level texts. They understand most vocabulary but may require support with culturally laden material, figurative language, idiomatic expressions, and word nuances. They are reading the same volume of material and at a similar rate as their peers. Students continue to require support with unfamiliar vocabulary and context.