



Selecting Books for Your Child: Finding 'Just Right' Books

By: Kathleen Rogers (2008)

How can parents help their children find books that are not "too hard" and not "too easy" but instead are "just right"? Here's some advice.

Five finger rule

1. Choose a book that you think you will enjoy.
2. Read the second page.
3. Hold up a finger for each word you are not sure of, or do not know.
4. If there are five or more words you did not know, you should choose an easier book.

Still think it may not be too difficult? Use the five finger rule on two more pages.

Choose a book that is a good fit for you!

Read two or three pages and ask yourself these questions:

Will it be an easy, fun book to read?

- Do I understand what I am reading?
- Do I know almost every word?
- When I read it aloud, can I read it smoothly?
- Do I think the topic will interest me?

If most of your answers were "yes", this will be an easy book to read independently by yourself.

Will this book be too hard for me?

- Are there five or more words on a page that I don't know, or am unsure of?
- Is this book confusing and hard to understand by myself?
- When I read it aloud, does it sound choppy and slow?

If most of your answers were "yes," this book is too hard. You should wait awhile before you read this book. Give the book another try later, or ask an adult to read the book to you.



Tips on reading with your child

When they can't read the word, say...

- Can you sound it out?
- Fingertap it.
- Can you think of the word or movement that helps you remember that vowel sound?
- What is the first and last sound? What word would make sense?
- Does it have a pattern that you have seen in other words? (ex-an, ack)
- How does the word begin?
- You said _____. Does that make sense?
- What word would make sense that would start with these sounds?
- Put your finger under the word as you say it.

When they want to read a book that is too hard, say...

- Let's read it together.
- This is a book you will enjoy more if you save it until you are older — or later in the year.
- [Be honest!] When people read books that are too hard for them, they often skip important parts. You will have more fun with this book if you wait until you can read it easily.

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