

The Alphakids extending reading books

Text levels

Alphakids provides instructional support through carefully graded texts with levels slowly increasing in complexity. The texts work to create steady reading progress by drawing the reader's attention to increasingly complex print features.

In the emergent reading levels (1–5) students read for meaning while attending to directionality, word-to-word matching, reading known words and locating new words. They begin to pay close attention to print, noticing many features of words and letters.

The early reading levels (6–11) build on and extend the emergent levels by slowly increasing the complexity of concepts in the texts, syntax and vocabulary. In the early levels, the length of the sentences and the text increases and the placement of text on the page varies.

In the transitional levels (12–17), students build reading mileage with texts. Building mileage means having increased experience and reading practice with a variety of syntax, meanings and vocabulary at the student's learning level.

At the extending levels (18–23), there are multiple text types and the reader has to integrate a range of reading strategies to access the meaning of the text. Readers build fluency by reading a range of texts which the teacher scaffolds to the reader's learning level.

Alphakids difficulty levels are based on:

- complexity of concepts in the texts
- variety of text types
- complexity of syntax and vocabulary
- length of text
- size and placement of text on a page
- amount of contextual support in the illustrations

The books are organised into levels so that students get sufficient practice from several texts at their instructional level. Teachers can use the following features to select appropriate texts and a possible teaching focus for guided reading.

Key features of the extending reading books

COMPLEXITY OF CONCEPTS

- the conceptual complexity of fiction and factual texts increases
- topics extend the students' knowledge
- reading to learn increases



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Drag racing is a popular motor racing sport. In drag racing two cars called dragsters race each other on what is called a quarter-mile track.

At the start of the race the cars must be completely still. By the end of the race, they may have reached speeds of up to 540 kilometres (or 320 miles) per hour.

Young people between the ages of eight and sixteen race in the junior races. They race in smaller dragsters over half the distance of the adult events.

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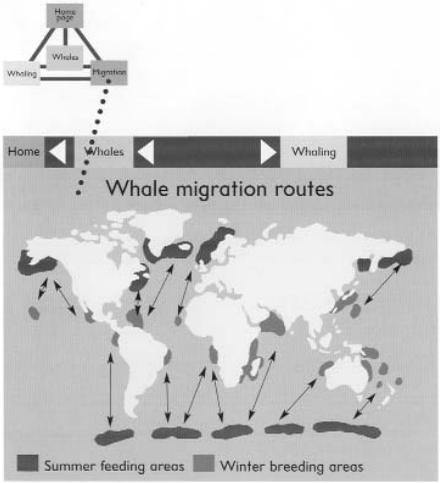
VARIETY OF TEXT TYPES

- information reports about historical, current and future events
- a variety of narrative texts are introduced
- the concept of multi-genres is introduced, where the text in a book might include a variety of text types

Zelda and I found out about how whales migrate. They travel very long distances each year. We designed the page on whale journeys.

We included a map that showed where the whales travelled.

We linked this map to information about where the whales would be at each stage of their journey.



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COMPLEXITY OF SYNTAX AND VOCABULARY

- there is increased variety in vocabulary and syntax
- the language associated with various topics increases; for example, scientific and technological terms are introduced in factual texts
- punctuation includes commas, full stops, exclamation marks, question marks, quotation marks, dashes and colons
- high-frequency words are extended and used often

Cover Story

Shooter Shrinker shrinks rubbish!



Exclusive!

A machine called the Shooter Shrinker has been invented by Professor P. Shooter.

It is a large machine that turns rubbish into a mash and then shrinks it to the size of a small pea.



Professor P. Shooter is a well-known inventor. His Shooter Shrinker looks set to be his greatest invention yet.



Rubbish

Into machine

Pea-size result

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LENGTH OF TEXT

- the amount of text on a page increases
- the amount of text on a page varies
- the text extent is longer when there is repetition of syntax
- the text is shorter when the conceptual load is more complex
- sentence length varies with longer and shorter sentences

If I were invisible...
I could get the best spot on the school bus.
I could be late for school.
I wouldn't have to do any tests.
I could be first in line for lunch every day.
I could finish first and then go out to play...
But who would I talk to?

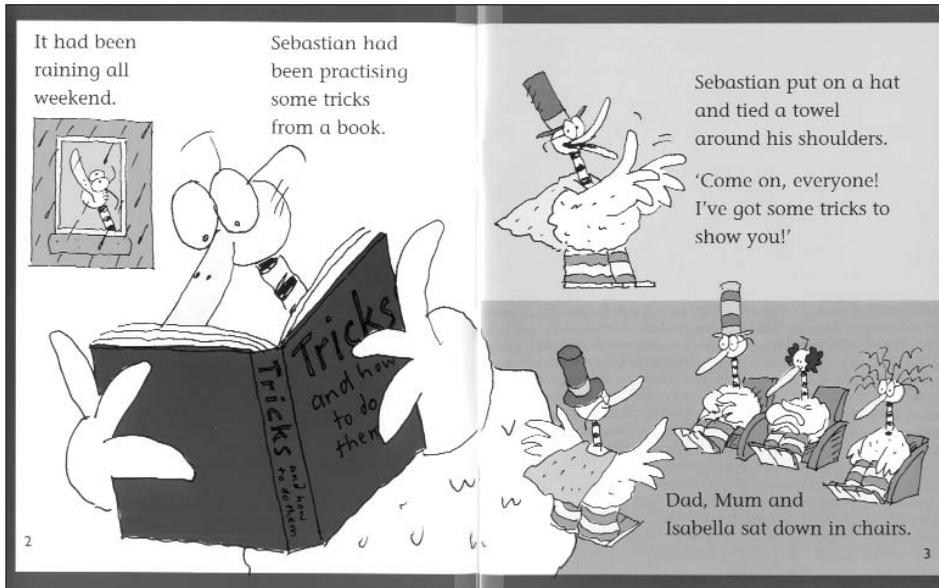


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SIZE AND PLACEMENT OF TEXT ON A PAGE

- print size remains constant
- there is more variety in text placement
- clear spacing between words and sentences
- print appears on both the left- and right-hand pages
- different fonts and font sizes are used for headings, captions and labels



AMOUNT OF CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS

- the illustrations support the text but more attention to the print is required
- there is increasing variety in the types of illustration
- there may be several illustrations on each page
- combinations of photographs and illustrations may be used
- diagrams and maps continue to be used to label and organise information