The Alphakids emergent reading books

Text levels

Alphakids provides instructional support through carefully graded texts, with the levels slowly increasing in complexity. At the early levels, children read for meaning attending to word matching, directionality, reading known words and locating new words. They begin to pay close attention to print, noticing many features of words and letters. The texts work to create steady reading progress by drawing the reader's attention to increasingly complex print features.

Alphakids difficulty levels are based on:
- complexity of concepts in the text
- length of text
- amount of text on a page
- size and placement of text on a page
- the amount of contextual support in the illustrations
- the complexity of syntax and vocabulary

The books are organised in levels so that children 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 at each level

I like to run.

EMERGENT LEVEL 1
- direct match between text and illustration
- high-frequency words used throughout the text.
- book language used but also some 'oral' vocabulary and syntax
- simple story line
- most books have one line of text per page
- consistent format
- easy-to-follow layout
- ample space between words so children can point and read
- print is regular and easy to see, and clearly separated from the pictures
- text always printed on a light background
- illustrations promote further discussion
- range of punctuation: upper case letters, full stop, exclamation mark, question mark

EMERGENT LEVEL 2

- sentence length begins to vary
- texts often have from one to three lines of print on a page – one sentence with a return sweep
- text is predictable and repetitive
- a new sentence structure or twist may be introduced on the last page
- illustrations support and extend the text
- high-frequency words continue to be introduced

plus many features from level 1

I make a sandwich
for my dad on Saturday.
12

EMERGENT LEVEL 3

- longer texts are introduced
- increasing variation in sentence structure, book format and layout
- increase in the number of repeated words to provide reading practice
- repetition, refrains and predictable patterns of text
- opportunities to attend to initial letters and word endings
- the core of high frequency words is increased
- direct speech is introduced
- illustrations still provide support for text, although picture format begins to vary
- illustrations may be one or two on a page
- illustrations are often designed to prompt further discussion

plus many features from levels 1 and 2

'Is it a card?'
asked Sam.

'No. It's not a card,'
said Mum.
5

EMERGENT LEVEL 4

- text extent increases – one to five lines of text may appear on a page
- print may appear on both left and right pages but is clearly separated from the illustrations
- phrasing is supported by print placement and line breaks
- frequently encountered words are used more often
- texts use rhyme, predictable sentence patterns and repetition, plus many features from earlier levels
- increasing variation in language patterns, requiring children to attend closely to print at several points
- longer sentences use simple and easy-to-understand syntax
- more of the story is carried in the text, but illustrations still support and add to the text

It rained on Tuesday.
I put on my raincoat.
I went outside.
My feet got wet.

EMERGENT LEVEL 5

- concepts continue to be within the children's experience and any challenging new ideas have both pictorial and text support (through repetition)
- between one and five lines of text on a page
- increasing variety in sentence length and structure
- new words introduced are often repeated, and words used in earlier texts reoccur
- use of complex high-frequency words: *under, over, on*
- frequent use of direct speech and the pattern of 'asked and said' in question-and-answer dialogue.
- contractions used often
- use of inflections: *-ing* and *-ed*
- maps or diagrams may be introduced

A tree is a plant.
It needs food and water.

The leaves make food
from sunlight.

The roots get water
from the ground.