

# Just Right Books

Thanks to Mrs. Melisi, <http://teacherweb.com/MA/PeasleeElementary/Melisi/ap4.stm>

Do you remember Goldilocks' quest in the fairy tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" to find the porridge, chair, and bed that were "just right"? Selecting a book can sometimes feel the same way. Just as Goldilocks found that some of the bowls of porridge were too hot or too cold and others were just right, beginning readers often have difficulty finding books that are "just right" and not too hard or too easy.

When you are reading a book you can try asking yourself these questions to help you find a book that is "just right" for you.

## Too Easy Books

As you read, ask yourself these questions. If you answer "yes" to most of the questions then the book is probably too easy for you. You can still have fun reading it, but next time, try to choose a book that is a little more challenging.

1. Have you read this book many times before?
2. Do you understand the story very well without much effort?
3. Do you know and understand almost every word?
4. Can you read it smoothly and fluently without much practice or effort?

## Just Right Books

As you read ask yourself these questions. If you answer "yes" to most of them then the book you are reading is probably "just right" for you. These are the books that will help you make the most progress in your reading. Read, enjoy and learn from the experience!

1. Is this book new to you?
2. Do you understand most of the book?
3. Are there a few words per page that you don't recognize or know the meaning of instantly? Remember to use the "five finger" test.
4. Can someone help you with the book if you hit a tough spot?

## Too Hard Books

As you read ask yourself these questions, if you find that your answer "yes" to most of these questions, then the book is probably too hard for you. Don't forget about the book, try it again later. As you gain experience in choosing "just right" books, you may find when you pick the book up again that it is "just right".

1. Are there more than a few words on a page that you don't recognize or know the meaning of? Remember the "five finger" test.
2. Are you confused about what is happening in most of the book?
3. When you read are struggling and does it sound choppy?
4. Is everyone busy and unable to help you if you hit a tough spot?

## Five Finger Test

Sometimes it is difficult to know if a book is going to be too easy or too hard by just looking at it. The "Five Finger" test is one way to "test" a book before you spend too much time with it and get frustrated.

1. First choose the book you think you would like to read.
2. Find a page of text somewhere in the middle of the book. Find a page with lots of text (words) and few or no pictures.
3. Begin to read the page. It is best to read the page aloud or in a whisper if possible while doing the test so you can hear the places where you have difficulty.
4. Each time you come to a word you don't know, hold one finger up.
5. If you have all fingers up before you get to the end of the page, wave the book "good-bye." It is probably too difficult for you right now. Try it again later in the year. If you need help finding a book, ask your teacher or librarian.
6. If you have no fingers up when you finish the page, then the book may be an easy read for you. Use the Goldilocks' method as you read to see if the book is too easy or "just right." Enjoy!
7. If you have less than five fingers but more than one or two fingers up when you finish reading the page, the book may be just what you need to grow as a reader. Use the Goldilocks' method as you read to see if the book is a "just right" book. Enjoy!