

Choosing Just-Right Books

Use the HANDY RULE to choose books at the "just right" reading level.



Choosing Just-Right Books

Experts recommend that children "free read" for at least 20 minutes daily. Twenty minutes of daily reading can be life-changing for kids; see the next page for details. It also gives parents some precious quiet time!

The Handy Rule can help kids choose books that are both enjoyable and mind-growing.

If you don't have many books at home, try the Handy Rule at a library or bookshop. Sources for free books are at the Sudden Homeschool blog.

THE HANDY RULE

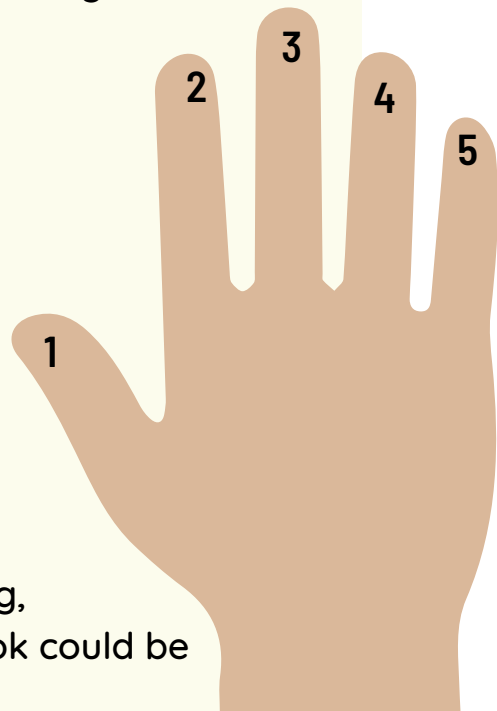
Choose a book of interest. Read a random page aloud. For each word you don't know, count a finger.

Scoring

- 0-1 The book is too easy.
- 1-2 It's just right!
- 3-4 Maybe try it.
- 5 The book is too hard.

If you want, try the rule with another page or two.

If you understand what you're reading, and you're reading smoothly, this book could be your match!



THE POWER OF 20 MINUTES

Statistics about Daily Reading

Why do teachers recommend reading for 20 minutes/day? Check out these stats about three groups of readers.



Starting in kindergarten...

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
reads for one minute/day	reads for five minutes/day	reads for 20 minutes/day

THEY READ FOR A TOTAL OF

42 hours	212 hours	851 hours
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which is approximately

112,000 words	3,948,000 words	25,200,000 words
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BY THE END OF 6TH GRADE

AND ARE LIKELY TO OUTPERFORM

10%	50%	90%
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OF THEIR PEERS ON STANDARDIZED TESTS

REFERENCE: NAGY, W., R. ANDERSON, AND HERMAN, P. (1987). LEARNING WORD MEANINGS FROM CONTEXT DURING NORMAL READING. AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL, 24, 237-270.



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