

TABLE 4.2. Qualitative Descriptions of the Kindergarten and First-Grade Levels of the Fountas-Pinnell Levels

Level	Description of texts
Levels A and B	Books have a simple story line, and a direct correspondence between pictures and text. Children can relate to the topic. Language includes naturally occurring structures. Print appears at the same place on each page and is regular, clear, and easy to see. Print is clearly separated from pictures. There are clear separations between words so children can point and read. Several frequent words are repeated often. Most books have one to four lines of text per page. Many "caption books" (e.g., labeled pictures) are included in Level A. Level B may have more lines and a slightly broader range of vocabulary.
Level C	Books have simple story lines and reflect familiar topics, but tend to be longer (more words, somewhat longer sentences) than Level B books, even though there may be only two to five lines of text per page. Familiar oral language structures may be repeated, and phrasing may be supported by placement on the page. The story is carried by the text, however, and children must attend closely to print at some points because of variation in patterns. Even so, there is still a direct correspondence between pictures and text.
Level D	Stories are a bit more complex and longer than previous levels, but still reflective of children's experiences. More attention to the print is required, even though illustrations continue to support the reading. Most texts at this level have clear print and obvious spacing. Most frequently, there are two to six lines of print per page. There is a full range of punctuation. Words that were encountered in previous texts may be used many times. Vocabulary may contain inflectional endings.
Level E	Stories are slightly more complex and longer; some concepts may be more subtle and require interpretation. Even when patterns repeat, the patterns vary. There may be three to eight lines of text per page, but text placement varies. Although illustrations support the stories, the illustrations contain several ideas. Words are longer, may have inflectional endings, and may require analysis. A full variety of punctuation is evident.
Level F	Texts are slightly longer than the previous level, and the print is somewhat smaller. There are usually three to eight lines of text per page. Meaning is carried more by the text than the pictures. The syntax is more like written than oral language, but the pattern is mixed. The variety of frequent words expands. There are many opportunities for word analysis. Stories are characterized by more episodes, which follow chronologically. Dialogue has greater variety. Punctuation supports phrasing and meaning.
Levels G and H	Books contain more challenging ideas and vocabulary, with longer sentences. Content may not be within children's experiences. There are typically four to eight lines of text per page. As at Level F, literary language is integrated with more natural language patterns. Stories have more events. Occasionally, episodes repeat. Level H differs from Level G in that the language and vocabulary become more complex and there is less episodic repetition.
Level I	A variety of types of texts may be represented. They are longer, with more sentences per page. Story structure is more complex, with more elaborate episodes and varied themes. Illustrations provide less support, although they extend the texts. Specialized and more unusual vocabulary are included.

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