The Right Book
Your child has started to read on their own—WOO HOO! Now you just need to figure out which books are right for them. Sounds much easier than it actually is, right? With so many different types of books and leveling systems, choosing books for new readers to may be as difficult as learning how to read! Here are a few great tips when it comes to choosing the right book for your new reader and spark their love for reading!
Five Finger Rule

The Five Finger Rule is a great and easy strategy to teach kids how to pick the books that is compatible your children’s reading level yet can be challenging. Start by opening to a random page in the book your child choose. Point out 5 words on that page and if your child can read all the words, the book might be a bit too easy for him or her. However, if there are 2-3 words he/she does not know, then it is an appropriate difficulty. More than 4 unknown words will be too difficult.
Know the Goal of Independent Reading

When you are choosing a book for a new reader, you want to find one that is written at their “just right” independent reading level. This means that they can comprehend on their own and can decode all the words. This will usually not be on the same level that they read at during guided reading in school. At school, the teacher is working at an instructional level so the reading material is typically more difficult than their “just right” reading level.
Comprehension

For Independent reading there are three things a child should be able to do after reading to show that they comprehend the text:

1. Retell the beginning, middle, and end of the story
2. Answer questions (5 W’s: who, what, where, when, and why)
3. Make a connection between the text and themselves, another book, or the world.

The answers do not have to be perfect but if they are struggling to come up with them, then you might want to find an easier text.
Choose a Picture Book

When a child begins to read on their own it is natural to head toward the chapter book section of the library, but it’s important to still check out the picture books too! Picture books are written at a higher reading level than most kids and parents think which can be good practice for kids who are great decoders. Picture books provide a less overwhelming way to read challenging text. They have beautiful illustrations that help aid the reader with comprehension and decoding. Picture books can also be read in a short setting for kids who might not have the patience to read an entire chapter book on their own.
Try a Book Series

Book Series can be great motivators for reading and get more challenging as you get further into the series. As your child’s reading level increases the books get more difficult which is perfect for readers in elementary school. Ask teachers or librarians for recommendations and start with the earlier books in the series.
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What Children Like in Books

PRESCHOOLERS (3-5 years)

- Books that tell stories.
- Characters, events and settings that kids can relate to.
- Books about making friends
- Books with simple text they can memorize
- Counting books
- Alphabet books

Pre-K to Third Grade (5-8)

- Books about going to elementary school.
- Books with humor.
- Books with characters they can connect with.
- Books with mystery and adventure.
- Books with text they can decode, comprehend, and that challenges them.
P.I.C.K. is a simple acronym that is easy for your child to remember when picking books.

P = Purpose
• Are they reading for pleasure? • What do they want to learn?

I = Interest
• What is the topic? • Does the topic spark interest?

C = Comprehend
• Did I understand what I just read? • Do I remember what I read?

K = Know the Words (Five Finger Rule)
• 0-1 unknown words = book is too easy
• 2-3 unknown words = book is just right
• 4-5 unknown words = book is too difficult
Great for Grades K-2.
I Want My Hat Back is a marvelous book in the true dictionary sense of marvel: it is a wonderful and astonishing thing, the kind of book that makes a child laugh and an adult chuckle, and both smile in appreciation. --*The New York Times*

Great for Grades 3-5
In a magic kingdom where your name is your destiny, 12-year-old Rump is the butt of everyone's joke. But when he finds an old spinning wheel, his luck seems to change. Rump discovers he has a gift for spinning straw into gold. His best friend, Red Riding Hood, warns him that magic is dangerous, and she's right. With each thread he spins, he weaves himself deeper into a curse. This lighthearted and adventurous book draws young readers into Rumple's magical world and teaches a few life lessons along the way!