Overview of the Year for Second Grade Readers

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How happy we are to share with you the 2013-2014 Second Grade Reading Curricular Calendar. Those of you who receive new calendars every year may glance at this quickly and notice that in many ways it is similar to last year’s. It is true that we’ve tried to maintain most of the same units, but this does not mean there are not important changes woven throughout. We believe these changes will make all the difference in planning a curriculum that helps your students rise to the many challenges of this important transitional year.

This curriculum calendar has been designed for second-grade teachers and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). You will see references to both DOK and the Standards throughout the curricular calendars, and to the ways in which your teaching aligns with these important initiatives. We have also taken into account benchmark reading levels for second grade—you will find the chart below—or on our website www.readingandwritingproject.com. This chart has been developed based on data that we have collected over the years. To determine these levels,
we queried New York City schools, researched what other states were doing, learned the levels of passages used in New York State’s ELA exams, distributed tentative recommendations, received feedback, and finally settled on some expectations. We acknowledge from the start, however, that they are open to debate. Therefore, we are not necessarily advocating that a district adopt levels we propose.

You’ll notice the reading benchmarks at the top of each unit. These include ones for months when you may be formally assessing your students (September, November, January, March, and June), as well as approximate levels for interim months. This will give you a sense of how children will ideally progress across the entire year so that you can help pace your students. Please note that this is just a suggested path; it will not hold true for all children. You may find it helps to refer to these month-by-month benchmarks as you create your own big goals for each unit.

We've written this curricular plan imagining that your classroom contains a wide array of readers, as second-grade classrooms generally do. We also assume that many of your children will enter your class reading books that are around levels I–J or above. The calendar is designed with an eye toward helping your readers progress in a way that, by the end of the year, they’ll be in the proximity of levels M–N or above. If the majority of your readers enter second grade reading closer to levels D–G, it will be especially important for you to draw on this curricular calendar as well as the units of the first-grade reading calendar presented in the spring. On the other hand, if many of your readers enter second grade reading books like the Magic Treehouse series (level M), you’ll want to look at the third-grade curricular calendar for the way each of the units described here looks when it supports readers who are working at that level.

The second grade reading curriculum builds upon the spiral curriculum of kindergarten and first grade, continuing the work of moving students up levels of text complexity through independent and guided practice. Of course, the goal is to move all of your students up levels of text complexity with increasing focus on fluency and higher levels of comprehension—as is laid out in the Common Core. We know from years of research in classrooms around the world that the best way to meet this goal is to first match students to books that they read with 96% accuracy, fluency and comprehension. The progress grows out of lots of reading, strong reading behaviors and of course instruction with texts on and just above each student’s just right level. As always, students work with teacher-support to read mentor texts, working closely with selected short passages from those texts, and they learn to transfer close reading practices developed through that close study of shared texts to their independent reading.

Reading instruction happens moment to moment in the classroom as teachers establish the conditions under which children learn to read (and write), assess what children can do, and
then teach them to take steps forward as readers. Starting in kindergarten and continuing through higher education, teaching is always responsive; it is always assessment-based. But this doesn’t mean that teachers cannot imagine, beforehand, how the classroom work will likely evolve across the year.

As readers grow, their needs change fairly dramatically—and kids don’t all grow in sync! It is almost as if one teacher needs to simultaneously support a kindergarten, first-, and sometimes even a second-grade curriculum. Then too, readers always need to integrate sources of meaning, drawing on learning from across the year as they read. Throughout these calendars, we suggest ways to use the various components of balanced literacy so that children progress in all aspects of reading.

This curricular calendar, written with input from teachers, literacy coaches, staff developers, and reading experts, is one informed pathway for the upcoming year. There are hundreds of ways a teacher could plan. We expect that all of you will work with grade-level colleagues to determine your school’s own curricular plans for first grade, taking into account your particular areas of expertise, your children’s needs and interests, the Standards, DOK, the assessments to which you and your children are held accountable, the span of reading levels in your classroom, and your school’s larger curricular plans. We hope that you will, in fact, produce a written document that includes some of your own variations of these units—or new units altogether. Above all, we recommend that you and your colleagues agree upon a shared journey, through which you support one another.

**New Work for the Coming Year**

You will see that we have kept to the same timeline as last year but that we have made some substantial revisions to the units we’ve carried over and also added a new unit—Unit 4—which focuses on foundational reading skills such as solving longer words, dealing with more difficult vocabulary, and developing stronger fluency. This unit takes the place of one of last year’s three nonfiction units. This year, there are two nonfiction units—one in the fall and one in the spring. We encourage you to use your science curriculum books during the one in the spring, but it is not dependent on that to do the unit.

You will also notice that this year we suggest a first priority assessment or two for each unit of study as well as ways to conduct formative assessments throughout the unit. In some units, we suggest additional assessments that you may administer to more specifically assess particular skills—*if you have the time*. We are aware how much there is to assess in second grade, and that it is often hard to decide what to assess when. You will notice, too, that we kept some of the units as many as six weeks long, so that your assessments don’t take away from your teaching time. You may decide to structure your units in other ways. Always, our intent is that teachers adapt this curriculum in ways that
benefit their particular students. Knowing your students’ strengths and needs will position you to make a better matched instructional plan.

This year, we have also made it a priority to weave in specific books to use during each unit of study in read-aloud and minilessons. You may opt to use the same books or you could instead rely on our examples of how to do similar work using other books of your choice. In addition, you will find an appendix to the first few units of study that features a big book to use in shared reading, as well as an exemplar of how to create a week-long shared reading plan using this book. This plan is a complement to the unit of study as well as a reminder to help students orchestrate the sources of information as they jointly read more complex texts.

Finally, the word study section at the end of each unit has been revised to also complement the shared reading plan designated for the same time. Our intent was that you would use this plan as a template for reading other shared reading texts that follow the same structure. We hope that this will be a useful tool to strengthen the other components of balanced literacy on which workshop teaching relies, to support all readers in your classroom.

Our aim, through this calendar, is to give children a well-balanced reading curriculum in second grade and to prepare them for the word ahead in Grade Three.

**Reading Workshop**

Your reading workshop will follow the same structure day to day. Every day, you’ll provide direct and explicit instruction through a brief minilesson, followed by long stretches of time for children to read just-right books (and sometimes slightly challenging ones), punctuated by assessment-based conferences and coaching. Most of your children will enter the year reading level J books, so they should be reading silently the majority of the time, then meeting with a partner at the end of the reading workshop (and perhaps in the middle of it) to talk about their books, just as fifth graders do. Some of your children will not yet be reading level J books, and their partnership work will look more like that in first-grade classrooms, with partners spending some time each day sitting hip-to-hip, one copy of a book between them, reading aloud in unison or taking turns. You’ll also convene small groups within the reading workshop. Some schools provide additional time for small groups outside the workshop—this is most apt to be the case for strugglers.

Minilessons start the day’s reading workshop, and instruct children toward an essential skill. For example, you might teach all your children how to test whether a book feels “just right.” You’ll teach children ways to get ready to read and strategies to make meaning once they begin. You’ll also teach them how to work with a partner and what to do when they
encounter a challenge. Minilessons revolve around a clear teaching point that crystallizes the message of a lesson.

Each minilesson is designed to teach readers a skill that they can draw upon that day and any day—so that readers accrue a repertoire of strategies they will draw upon over and over. We suggest you create and post a chart of abbreviated teaching points so that children can continually review what they have learned from prior minilessons. You can then bring these anchor charts from one unit of study into subsequent ones. It is essential that you make new charts each year within the presence of new learners. These will also provide support as children learn to use not just a single strategy (DOK Level 1 work) as they read, but multiple ones (DOK Level 4 work).

The most important part of a reading workshop is the actual reading time. At the start of the year, you may need to remind children of routines and expectations for independent reading time versus whole-class or partner reading. Children’s stamina for maintaining reading may be a bit low early on in the year. The length of independent reading time will grow as children’s skills grow. Children might begin the year reading alone for fifteen minutes, then reading in partnerships for fifteen more. You will have to gauge what your students are ready and able to do. But by the time September is over, you should have coached readers who are reading level J books or above to read for an entire thirty-minute period, talking but not reading with partners for about five minutes at the end. By February, reading workshops are close to sixty minutes, with at least forty-five minutes reserved for independent reading. Keep this in mind as you set goals with your class.

Remember that in most cases, second graders are coming from classrooms in which they regularly sustained reading for forty minutes at a time (some of that time alone, some with partners). With coaching and with clear expectations, they can resume that sort of engagement—and they can achieve this, in a few weeks’ time, if they weren’t reading with that sort of sustainment last year.

As children read by themselves, teach them to use Post-its to mark parts in their books that capture their attention: funny parts, important pages, places where they grew a big idea or learned something surprising. They’ll later share these with partners. Across the year, you will vary their configurations so that children sometimes meet with just one partner, and sometimes with clubs consisting of foursomes.

During each unit of study, children will read a particular kind of text. They’ll read both books at their just-right level as well as ones at easier levels. Usually, children select five to eight books (depending on the level and thus the length of the book) a week to store in their book bin, sometimes reading these books a few times.
Although some children will move almost seamlessly from one level to the next, the majority will move more gradually. During the transition from one level to the next, students will begin to read books at the next level up. You'll give your students “transitional book baggies” that include mostly titles at the child’s just-right level in addition to a handful of books at the higher one. The latter can come from books you’ve shared through book introductions, or during guided reading, or it might include titles that the child has read with his or her partner. The idea is to scaffold readers as they move into a new level.

As children read, you’ll confer with individual students, lead small groups, and give book introductions—especially for children who are relatively new to a level. Your conferences in reading may follow the research-compliment-teach structure of many writing conferences, or you will use them to coach into children’s reading. Reading Recovery teachers are expert at the latter, so learn from them! Small group shared reading will help children who need help with fluency and integrating sources of information, while strategy lessons are ideal for children who need help attending to meaning while also considering multisyllabic words. Some small groups may need support moving to the next level, and you may do guided reading with them. Your small groups need to be flexible, need-based, and quick, lasting no more than approximately ten to twelve minutes a group.

Additional Components of Balanced Literacy

A full balanced reading program includes not only a reading workshop, but also a variety of other structures. Some of the most important for early elementary school-aged children are reading aloud, shared reading, phonics (also referred to as word study), and writing workshop.

Once children are in second grade, reading workshop, and its counterpart, writing workshop, last almost an hour each every day. In addition, you’ll want to read aloud every day—and at least a few times a week, you’ll support conversations about the read-aloud book. First graders have a lot to learn about spelling and phonics, which you will teach during a daily word study time. You’ll also draw on the other components of balanced literacy, sometimes weaving them into social studies, science work, or morning meetings. These will include additional small-group work, shared reading, and interactive writing.

Reading Aloud

We cannot stress enough the importance of reading aloud. You will read aloud to teach children discipline-based concepts that are integral to social studies and science, to create a sense of community, and to foster a love of reading. You’ll also read aloud to teach children vocabulary and higher-level comprehension skills, which are integral to their growth.
As you conduct a read-aloud session, be sure that it includes opportunities for accountable talk. In order to do this, plan the read-aloud to demonstrate a skill or a collection of skills. For example, you may decide to support your students’ effort to understand expository nonfiction text by teaching them to approach the text thinking, “What is this mostly about?” After reading just a bit, pause and create a subtitle for the text you’ve read so far. Then read on, revising that initial subtitle (and with it, your sense of what the text is mostly about). Your prompts could sound something like, “Turn and tell your partner what you think will happen next—it’s like writing a subtitle in the air!” or “Let’s think about what’s going on here. Turn and tell your neighbor what you think is happening in this part.” After a one- or two-minute interlude for partners to externalize their thoughts (that is, talk), you’ll read on, to maintain the thread of the text.

After pausing several times, either to demonstrate or to provide children with guided practice, and after reading the chapter or the section of the text, you might engage in a whole-class conversation. During these longer conversations, which will happen at least twice a week, it is important for children to direct their comments to each other. That is, rather than posing questions, calling on one child and then another to respond, instead, pose a question to the entire class—and then set children up to respond to it with one another. You might throw out prompts such as “I want to add on to what you said. . .” or “Another example of that is. . .” or “But I’m not sure you’re right because. . .” to keep children engaged in a back and forth dialogue.

As you consider the partnerships for your read aloud time, bear in mind that while it is organizationally easier for children to maintain the same partnerships across both independent reading and read-aloud, it is educationally preferable for read-aloud partnerships to be different so that these relationships are not ability-based. You may, in fact, opt to (quietly) group students so that one partner (Partner A) is the stronger reader and talker, and the other one (Partner B), less strong. Then, when you set children up to do challenging work, you can say, “Partner A, please tell Partner B...,” and if the task is one that you believe is perfect for Partner B, you can channel the work that way, instead.

Of course, you need not rely solely on the prompt for partners to “turn and talk” during a read-aloud. You may intersperse directions for children to also “stop and jot” or to “stop and sketch.” When children jot or sketch, provide them with a few moments to record their ideas before you continue reading, so that they don’t miss large chunks of the story.

Your read-aloud work will sometimes foreshadow work that the whole class will soon do. If your class will soon begin a unit on nonfiction reading, for example, you could read aloud nonfiction during the last week of the previous study. This way, by the time your children begin their own independent work, they will have a common resource to draw upon.
Shared Reading

Shared reading is the time in the day when teachers and children read in sync with one another, eyes on the same text. Usually shared reading revolves around big books, songs, or enlarged texts written on chart paper, with the teacher pointing under words as the class reads in sync. A classroom community spends some time rereading familiar texts and also some time, usually less, working together with a new text.

In many second grade classrooms, with a large number of students reading around levels J or K, many teachers begin the year with daily shared reading time (often no more than ten minutes), during which they work on fluency, as well as the print strategies they’ve determined many of their students still need to internalize and to use on the run as they read. Additionally, the act of gathering all students around a text in the beginning of the year helps build community and inspires enthusiasm for reading. This year, for the first unit of study, we’ve selected Mr. McDoodle and His Scooter (a big book available in Rigby Sales) by Jill Eggleton, and planned daily shared reading sessions each day with a focus on a specific skill/strategy. Of course, we want readers to orchestrate multiple skills and strategies, so our teaching during shared reading will be both explicit and implicit.

As your readers progress, you may focus more on fluency, phrasing, and prosody, as well as how to handle difficult vocabulary. You may also use whole-class shared reading to provide comprehension instruction, coaching readers to envision, infer, and synthesize.

Shared reading is particularly helpful when working with students who are English language learners (ELLs) or with students who need continued support with fluency. We’ll discuss fluency throughout this calendar, because transitional readers must make a gigantic jump in fluency and there are lots of strategies for helping children do so.

Word Study

As a school, you will need to decide upon an approach to phonics. The TCRWP does not try to make this decision for a school. Most schools that we work with draw upon a combination of Words Their Way, Phonics Lessons, (the Firsthand series by Fountas and Pinnell), Fundations, and Pat Cunningham’s work, Month-by-Month Phonics.

These reading units of study should not replace the work you do to grow students’ knowledge of phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics. The purpose of word study is to build students’ knowledge of features of words and high-frequency words to help children become efficient problem-solvers of words in reading and writing. You will want to devote fifteen to twenty minutes each day to explicit, direct phonics instruction. A school needs to decide on an approach to phonics.
Assess your students’ knowledge to determine what features you will focus on. Most teachers use the Words Their Way Spelling Inventory along with the Word Identification Task to determine their students’ stages of spelling development. Once you have assessed your students, you will want to organize your teaching. You may want to spend the first few weeks on whole-group instruction. Plan to focus on what most students are ready to learn next. Choose features to work on that most students are confusing. For example, if you notice that many students are spelling ee words with ea, you might work on long vowel patterns. If you do decide to divide your class into groups for word study, begin by teaching students the routines to several word study activities so that the rest of the class can work in partnerships as you are working with a group. Be sure you spend enough time studying each feature (e.g., blends, spelling patterns, etc.) in a variety of ways. Make sure to support students’ ability to read and write these features both in isolation and in context. Always, provide explicit teaching of phonics as part of your day. In some units, you will notice an emphasis on word solving. You will want to support children’s transfer of their word knowledge to their reading.

**Small-Group Instruction**

It is critically important that you lead small-group instruction as often as you can. Any teaching that you do in a whole group can also be done in a small group—you can do small-group shared reading, small-group interactive writing, small-group phonics, small-group read-aloud and accountable talk, and so forth. Your small-group work can reteach, enrich, or pre-teach. For example, to pre-teach, you might gather together a group of children who don’t tend to engage in accountable talk, read the upcoming section of the chapter book you are reading to the class, and engage them in a very active book talk. In this way, you will set them up for the next day, when you’ll read aloud that same section of the read-aloud text to the whole class. These children will thus have an easier time talking about ideas that you have already sanctioned, and you will be able to draw them into more active roles in the whole-class discussions.

You will want to run table conferences, strategy lessons and guided reading sessions for your students. You may decide to use your small group instruction time to work on an isolated skill or to orchestrate a set of skills to help students read more complex texts.

Your small-group work will be shaped especially by your assessments. For example, if you have some children whose writing is not readable, who do not yet represent every sound they hear in a word with a letter (correctly or incorrectly), those children will need extra help, which begins with extra assessments. For example, you might give extra help to children whose writing is hard to read or who do not yet use short vowels correctly. This extra help needs to begin with extra assessments. How many words do they know on sight? Do they know all of their letters and sounds? You’ll then offer that instruction intensely
over the first six weeks of the year, and will check that children are making rapid progress. Those who enter first grade as early emergent readers and who do not progress very rapidly when given high-quality classroom instruction will need specialized support.

The instruction that this group receives will be multifaceted. First and foremost, set them up with books they can read with 96% accuracy, and give them book introductions to these. They will need phonics support that is tailored to their level, which could mean work with inflectional endings, diagraphs, and beginning long vowel work. In small groups, these children can do the kind of picture Sorts and word hunts that are recommended in Words Their Way. These readers will also need intensive emphasis on their own writing, on words in word parts as they write, rereading their writing, and writing more. Aim to move these children up from one level of text to another as soon as you can, relying on guided reading to prepare them for the characteristics of the harder level of text. In guided reading, much of your teaching will involve setting children up for the features of the new level, especially the challenging ones such as using the parts of words (rather than the initial sound) to begin solving words. For example, in a guided reading group for readers moving into Level E texts, you may set students up for reading compound words.

Any children who come into your classroom reading level H or below may also need to receive special attention. If possible, meet more frequently with these readers, making sure they really can read their books with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Book introductions can always help. Keep an eye on their volume of reading and their levels of engagement.

Throughout the year, plan to pull together small groups of any children with similar needs. Based on your assessments, you might determine that certain children need help orchestrating the sources of information and drawing on multiple strategies to deal with harder words and longer texts. In a small group strategy lesson, you can build their “tool box” of print strategies.

**Assessment and Moving Students up Levels**

It has become increasingly clear that assessment based teaching is of paramount importance. We know that through assessing our readers and then giving them plenty of time to read, we will see quick growth in their accuracy, fluency and comprehension. We also believe that students should spend about thirty to forty minutes a day in school, and another thirty to forty minutes at home, reading these well-matched books, and that teachers need to assess children often—about once a month in levels A-J and sometimes even more frequently—and then move them up levels as soon as is appropriate.

In order to assess individual student reading progress we have developed the TC Fiction Reading Level Assessment. This assessment takes what works well from the DRA, the QRI, and Fountas and Pinnell assessments. Simply told, this is a running record assessment.
followed by multiple choice text-dependent questions designed to determine if a child is reading with a level of understanding that allows him to infer, synthesize, predict, and so forth. This system, available on the TCRWP website (www.readingandwritingproject.com), has been accepted by NYC’s Department of Education as an option for all NYC schools. This tool contains two books (levels A-K) or two passages at each text level, A-Z, ranging in length from 20 to 400-plus words, followed by literal and inferential comprehension questions for each passage. Through this assessment, a teacher can ascertain the general level of text difficulty that a child is able to read with ease and comprehension.

Following is a table of benchmark reading levels. These are derived from a study of data from AssessmentPro, the online database that allows Project schools to track their reading data, as well as the state and city benchmarks. The chart is updated and available always at www.readingandwritingproject.com. These levels are comparable to the bands recommended by the CCSS.

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<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>NOVEMBER</th>
<th>JANUARY</th>
<th>MARCH</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Emergent Story</td>
<td>Emergent Story</td>
<td>B/C (with book intro)</td>
<td>1=Early Emergent</td>
<td>1=B or below</td>
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<td>Books Shared Reading</td>
<td>Books Shared Reading A/B (with book intro)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2=A/B (with book intro)</td>
<td>2=C (with book intro)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=C (with book intro)</td>
<td>3=D/E</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4=D/E</td>
<td>4=F or above</td>
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<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
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<td>1=C or below</td>
<td>1=D or below</td>
<td>1=E or below</td>
<td>1=G or below</td>
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<td>2=C</td>
<td>2=D/E</td>
<td>2=E/F</td>
<td>2=F</td>
<td>2=H</td>
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<td>3=G/H</td>
<td>3=G/H</td>
<td>3=I/J/K</td>
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<td>4=F or above</td>
<td>4=H or above</td>
<td>4=I or above</td>
<td>4=I or above</td>
<td>4=L or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Grade 2:
- **1=** F or below
- **2=** G/H
- **3=** I/J/K
- **4=** L or above

### Grade 2:
- **1=** G or below
- **2=** H/I
- **3=** J/K/L
- **4=** M or above

### Grade 2:
- **1=** H or below
- **2=** I/J
- **3=** K/L
- **4=** N or above

### Grade 2:
- **1=** I or below
- **2=** J/K
- **3=** L/M
- **4=** N or above

### Grade 2:
- **1=** J or below
- **2=** K/L
- **3=** M
- **4=** N or above

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### Grade 3:
- **1=** K or below (avg. H)
- **2=** L
- **3=** M
- **4=** N or above

### Grade 3:
- **1=** K or below (avg. I)
- **2=** L/M (avg. L)
- **3=** N
- **4=** O or above

### Grade 3:
- **1=** L or below
- **2=** M/N
- **3=** O
- **4=** P or above

### Grade 3:
- **1=** M or below (avg. J)
- **2=** N
- **3=** O
- **4=** P or above

### Grade 3:
- **1=** N or below (avg. K)
- **2=** O
- **3=** P
- **4=** Q or above

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### Grade 4:
- **1=** M or below (avg. J)
- **2=** N/O (avg. N)
- **3=** P/Q (avg. P)
- **4=** R or above

### Grade 4:
- **1=** N or below (avg. L)
- **2=** O/P (avg. P)
- **3=** Q/R(avg. Q)
- **4=** S or above

### Grade 4:
- **1=** O or below
- **2=** P/Q
- **3=** R/S
- **4=** T or above

### Grade 4:
- **1=** O or below (avg. K)
- **2=** P/Q (avg. P)
- **3=** R/S (avg. R)
- **4=** T or above

### Grade 4:
- **1=** P or below (avg. L)
- **2=** Q/R (avg. Q)
- **3=** S/T (avg. S)
- **4=** U or above

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### Grade 5:
- **1=** P or below (avg. M)
- **2=** Q/R (avg. Q)
- **3=** S
- **4=** T or above

### Grade 5:
- **1=** P or below (avg. N)
- **2=** Q/R/S (avg. Q)
- **3=** T
- **4=** U or above

### Grade 5:
- **1=** Q or below
- **2=** R/S/T
- **3=** U
- **4=** V or above

### Grade 5:
- **1=** Q or below
- **2=** R/S/T (avg. O)
- **3=** U
- **4=** V or above

### Grade 5:
- **1=** R or below (avg. P)
- **2=** S/T/U (avg. S/T)
- **3=** V
- **4=** W or above
### Overview of the Year of Second-Grade Readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 6:</th>
<th>Grade 6:</th>
<th>Grade 6:</th>
<th>Grade 6:</th>
<th>Grade 6:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=R or below</td>
<td>1=S or below</td>
<td>1=T or below</td>
<td>1=T or below</td>
<td>1=U or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=S/T/U (avg. S)</td>
<td>2=T/U/V (avg. T)</td>
<td>2=U/V</td>
<td>2=U/V</td>
<td>2=V/W (avg. V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=X or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7:</th>
<th>Grade 7:</th>
<th>Grade 7:</th>
<th>Grade 7:</th>
<th>Grade 7:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=T or below</td>
<td>1=T or below</td>
<td>1=U or below</td>
<td>1=U or below</td>
<td>1=V or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=U/V (avg. U)</td>
<td>2=U/V/W (avg. U)</td>
<td>2=V/W</td>
<td>2=V/W</td>
<td>2=W/X (avg. W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=W/X (avg. W)</td>
<td>3=W/X</td>
<td>3=W/X</td>
<td>3=X</td>
<td>3=Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Y or above</td>
<td>4=Z or above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 8:</th>
<th>Grade 8:</th>
<th>Grade 8:</th>
<th>Grade 8:</th>
<th>Grade 8:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=V or below</td>
<td>1=V or below</td>
<td>1=W or below</td>
<td>1=W or below</td>
<td>1=Adult Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=W</td>
<td>2=W</td>
<td>2=X/Y</td>
<td>2=X/Y</td>
<td>2=X/Y/Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=X/Y/Z</td>
<td>3=X/Y</td>
<td>3=Z/Adult Lit</td>
<td>3=Adult Lit</td>
<td>3=Adult Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=Adult Lit</td>
<td>4=Adult Lit</td>
<td>4=Adult Lit</td>
<td>4=Adult Lit</td>
<td>4=Adult Lit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 in this table represent the NY ELA test scores that would predictably follow from a student reading at the text level named, at the grade level named. There is no text level that predicts a 4, because a score of 4 generally only allows for one or two errors—and is therefore unpredictable.*

A word of caution. As your second graders move past levels J and K, you will notice that the assessments we provide go from being based on the reading of a whole text to being based on the reading of a 200-word passage. Our data also suggest these running records on a 200-word passage give a teacher only a little window into what a child can do as a reader. The truth is that using a short passage and a handful of questions in order to ascertain whether a child can read, say, an M or an N level text is not perfect. Many of us find that at these higher levels, while this kind of quick assessment can give us some useful
information, it can also be misleading. While many children may be able to comprehend at a high level on a short text, when faced with a lengthier chapter book, the difficulty of accumulating text can make it harder to infer and synthesize across the text. For this reason, many of us like to supplement these running record assessments with book-length assessment tools, aligned to bands of text difficulty.

You'll also want to track each child's reading rate and note the way this changes across time. Here's a table that shows targeted oral reading rates (words per minute) by grade level:

**General Range of Adequate Reading Rates by Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>WPM</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>WPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>60–90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>195–220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>85–120</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>215–245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>115–140</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>235–270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>140–170</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>250–270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>170–195</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>250–300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Harris and Sipay (1990)*

The first assessment we suggest you give your students at the start of second grade is the writing assessment, described in the writing curricular calendar. The TCRWP also recommends that every teacher give the spelling inventory that has been designed by Donald Bear and is foundational to his Words Their Way program. Because this can be given as a whole-class, it is the quickest assessment you can deliver. Because this can be given as a whole-class spelling test, it is the quickest assessment you can deliver. You can consult Bear's book, *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction*, for more information on how to analyze this inventory. You'll need to follow directions to count features correct for each child (this will take longer than giving the test but still requires just minutes per child). Your calculations will quickly tell you whether a particular child is an early transitional reader (who will be reading H/I books and will need help to learn “within word” spelling patterns, such as those involving long vowels and silent es) or a beginning reader (who will be reading level E books, will need help with “late letter name stage” spelling features and patterns, and will benefit from support with digraphs and blends).
That is, the spelling inventory can proxy for the informal reading inventory. It can, for a few days, take the place of each child reading aloud a leveled text while you take running records to quickly determine the level of books each student is able to read with ease. You will want to conduct running records soon, but before doing so, you can use the spelling inventory to learn about the range of readers in your class, to identify those in need of immediate extra supports starting day one, to match readers to books they can handle with ease, and to begin tailoring your whole-class instruction—your shared reading, read-aloud, minilessons, and so forth—to the readers in your care. You will also want to begin phonics instruction soon, and your spelling inventory (plus a copy of *Words Their Way* or another book on assessment based phonics) can get you started.

Of course, you can also use your students’ book levels from the previous year, and in fact, last year's favorite books, as a place to start. It is ideal for each grade level to begin the year by borrowing a huge armload of familiar texts from the previous year—poems, big books, read-aloud picture books, and independent books. This is especially ideal for counteracting summer reading loss, as children will be familiar with these books. Don't for a minute think it will do children good to start this year reading books they cannot read with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Make sure they can read the books with 95% accuracy and can answer a couple of literal questions about them, as well as an inferential question.

A word about fluency. It is essential that children read books “like they’re talking”—that is, with speed as well as with expression and phrasing. The one year in which children especially need to accelerate their fluency is second grade. Hasbrook and Tindle did a study of children’s fluency development at various grade levels. They found that second graders in the fiftieth achievement percentile tend to progress from reading fifty-three accurate words per minute when reading new texts aloud to reading those texts at ninety-four words per minute. Second graders in the seventy-fifth achievement percentile typically go from reading aloud eighty-five accurate words per minute to reading 124 words per minute. The interesting thing is that children do not make this sort of a leap at any other grade. For example, second graders in the fiftieth percentile will have increased their rate by forty-one words. By the end of the year, third graders reading in the fiftieth percentile tend to read 114 words per minute—a twenty wpm increase. The next year, these same children’s fluency only increases ten wpm; fifth grade is just a bit more than that. That is, second grade is the year you especially need to monitor fluency, beginning by simply noting, at the start of the year, the number of accurate words per minute each child reads orally. Then monitor this score and make sure that it changes in ways that reflect progress as the year proceeds. We include ways to support this throughout the calendar and offer daylong calendar conferences to help you as well.

Take note of the sight words that your children can read with automaticity. If your children are on track, they may enter first grade with a sight word vocabulary of approximately
thirty to forty known words. By the end of first grade, they should have somewhere around 150 words. As they progress up levels of books and read with increasing fluency, their sight vocabulary will tend to grow. If a child does not have a sight vocabulary of roughly thirty words at this point, pay close attention to that child’s progress and asses and teach into this dimension of reading growth more often.

We suggest you vive each child a key-chain full of word cards representing the sight words he or she knows or almost knows. Children can then use a portion of every reading workshop to flip through these cards, reading the words aloud to themselves. Children may play “I spy a word that...” games with partners involving word wall words, and use the pointer to read aloud the words on the word wall. You could jazz this up by asking children to pull directions from a can. One day the directions will say, “Read the sight words in a witch’s voice” and another day, “Read the sight words like you are a cat—meow each word.” Do whatever you need to do to lure kids to develop automaticity in reading an increasing bank of sight words, and of course help children use these words as they read.

There is little that is more important than attending to your readers’ developing abilities to comprehend texts deeply. Listen closely to book talks, to what children say to partners, and to children’s retelling of their independent reading books. Each child could keep a reading portfolio that includes artifacts that represent the child’s growing abilities to comprehend. For example, you might read aloud a short story and, at preset places in the text, ask each child to stop and jot in response to the prompt, “What do you think will happen next?” You could date the child’s responses and keep these, along with the text, from September and from several subsequent months, perhaps also including a rubric that analyzes what that child does and does not do yet when asked to predict. You could keep similar records for any other comprehension skill.

It’s important also to plan for how you’ll continue to assess your students throughout the year. Many teachers institute a system for keeping track of children’s reading levels and growth (both individual and by class) and for moving readers along to more challenging texts when they are ready. That is, you may decide to devote the reading workshop on the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth of each month to a consideration of whether children are ready to progress to new levels. In general, your children need to make rapid progress this year, so you need to vigilantly watch for and seize opportunities.

You will find that the TCRWP has assessment tools on our website, www.readingandwritingproject.com. There are two sets of leveled texts used for the primary levels, A–I. One is a set of multicultural books from the BeBop Books series, and one is a set of books from Scholastic. On the website there is information telling you how to order both sets. For readers beyond level I, there are text passages that can be printed right from the website.
Performance Assessments and Assessing Comprehension Proficiency

In recent years, we developed a series of performance assessments that engage students in authentic, high-level work that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Many of you helped us pilot and refine these assessments, and found them useful for planning instruction that meets students where they are and moves them forward. The performance assessments, available on our website, were designed to align to particular standards in reading and writing, and to anchor specific units of study in data collection and close observation of student work. We recommend viewing these as both pre- and post-assessments; you may (as we suggest) conduct the assessment in whole or in part before teaching the relevant units, as a measure of what students are capable of prior to your instruction; you will then use the data from this assessment to tailor your units to students' specific strengths and needs, and then conduct the same assessment again at the end of the unit, to determine growth and to reflect on your instruction.

In each character and informational unit, we suggest a couple of standards to highlight and use to guide the instruction of the unit. We also suggest ways to construct your own performance assessment for some of the units so that you can adjust your curriculum to match what students need.

Asking students to perform in these ways will give you a clear sense of what they have internalized and what they still need. You will find teacher instructions as well as student-facing instructions and supports; you will also find rubrics that connect the task to the CCSS, and annotated and graded examples of student work. The texts for these tasks are included where we have obtained permissions; in some cases you will need to purchase the relevant texts.

Establishing Baselines

The Literature Reading Learning Progression and the Informational Reading Learning Progression are culminations of the Project’s work on inference, interpretation, summary and integration of information. They are closely aligned to the Common Core State Standards, with twelve levels (Levels 11-12 forthcoming) for grades K-8, and language designed to support teachers in assessing reading skill development and creating teaching points. In addition to these tools, you might also use our Building a Reading Life Learning Progression and our Assessment-Based Prompt for Reading Skills and Strategies. You’ll find detailed instructions about how to use these learning progressions in relevant curricular calendars, as well as information on how to collect data to assess.

Building and Refreshing Classroom Libraries

Once your students have each been assessed and you’ve matched them to just-right books, you will want to be sure that they know where to get their just-right books in your
classroom library. If you have lots of children reading levels H/I/J, for example, you will need lots of books at those levels. If you have no children reading levels O and P, there is little reason to have those books in your library at this time. Your library should reflect your readers. Students will need help, especially early in the year, as they learn to manage their independent book choices. You will establish a system for checking out and returning books that travel between home and school.

One of the key factors in making any unit of study successful is having a collection of excellent books that can be used as just-right books and as read-alouds. Take a careful look at your library and think about which units will require more leveled texts. One common example is nonfiction units. Many schools have taken to using “easy,” “medium” and “hard” baskets during informational reading units because these books can be tough to level. While we understand this, we feel strongly that children should be well matched to books, including informational texts, throughout the year. The need for well-leveled informational texts is all the more important because of the particular emphasis the Common Core has put on informational reading and writing. Through our work with students and educators across the country, we have begun developing lists of books to support particular units of study. The book lists include levels—Fountas and Pinnell’s levels when those exist, otherwise Scholastic’s. If neither source exists, we note the Lexile level, which you can convert to an approximation of Fountas and Pinnell levels (take them with a grain of salt, though). You may want to visit our website throughout the year for updated information.

As you well know as second-grade teachers, this is a transformative year for students, who are ready to be more in control of their reading lives, to plan in more sophisticated ways, and to set loftier goals. It is a year of huge growth, a time for children to meet high expectations as they ready themselves for the demands of third grade. Enjoy this wonderful work with your energetic readers!