

Ways to Determine Text Difficulty

Goldilocks' Rules

Lori Carter, author of the Book Nuts Reading Club Web site (www.booknutsreadingclub.com), uses the parallel to Goldilocks to provide questions your students can ask themselves to determine if a book is too easy, too hard, or just right!

<i>Too Easy Books</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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 the book smoothly and fluently without much practice or effort?
<i>Just Right Books</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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?
<i>Too Hard Books</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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 you struggling and does it sound choppy?4. Is everyone busy and unable to help you if you hit a tough spot?

Source: www.booknutsreadingclub.com/goldilocksrule.html

Five Finger Test

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 up one finger.
5. If you have all five fingers up before you get to the end of the page, wave the book goodbye. 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.