Do You Know
Your child’s present reading range?

Do you know your child reading range? Is she able to understand the content of her school textbooks and assigned readings? The answers to these questions are important. In the 21st century, reading skills are essential for success in school and future employment. Unfortunately, many children in grades four through twelve read “below basic” levels.

In Virginia, educators and parents are working together to strengthen and improve students’ reading abilities. When parents know their child’s reading range, or Lexile score, they can help their children find books, magazines and online resources that are a match to their child’s reading level and interests. With the right match, students are excited about reading. They do not get frustrated and bored by books that are beneath or above their reading range.

How can parents determine their child’s current reading range?

- **Observe.** Does your child look forward to or avoid reading assigned chapter books, blogs, newspaper or online articles? Does she read digital or printed materials for enjoyment? Depending on his age, can he read a recipe to you, follow instructions for connecting audio speakers or check out a movie review?

- **View the six minute video explaining more about Lexiles at www.lexiles.com.** Go to the About Lexiles drop-down menu. Once you know your child’s Lexile level, you can search the Lexile Measure Database to find books that are at or near his or her reading level. Use the “Find a Book” tool on this same website. In addition, the Virginia Department of Education website has information on The Lexile Framework for Reading through a web session at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/scoring/lexile/index.shtml

- **Use the informal five-finger method.** (elementary and middle school) Listen to your child read and use your five fingers to count down the number of unknown words on a single page. Any more than five unknown words means that the text is too hard.

- **Look at the reading level designation of your child’s favorite books.** Usually placed near the list price on the back cover of children's books you will see something like this: RL 3.2 indicating the book is a match to a typical child in the second month of the third grade.
Questions to ask your child’s teacher(s) or guidance counselor

- What is my child’s Lexile score?
- Have you conducted a comprehensive reading evaluation of my child?
- Have you assessed my child’s reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension?
- Does my child understand classroom reading materials?
- What are the reading goals for your classroom this year?
- Is my child on target to achieve them?
- Is there a reading specialist at school?
- What reading interventions are available for my child?
- Does this high school have a reading specialist and provide comprehension reading instruction in academic classes to target assessed needs?
- Should I enroll my child in a private reading program or get him/her a tutor?
- Do you suspect a reading disability with my child?

If you or the teachers suspect your child has a reading disability, write a brief letter to the Principal or Special Education Director requesting a comprehensive evaluation for your child.

Parents make the difference

Learning to read takes place at home as well as school.
- Avoid the ‘summer gap.’ Keep reading all summer long.
- Find fun ways to keep track of books your child has read. Regularly review and discuss these books.
- Graphic novels and comic books count! Good ones have real value in introducing children to literary devices like satire, irony, foreshadowing, flashbacks and parody.
- Read your child’s favorite stories as many times as she wants to hear them. (Remember: Adolescents also like to listen to you read!)
- Listen to your children read.
- Provide nonfiction books on topics that interest your child.
- Read online with your child.

 Predict, question, summarize and visualize as you read together.

Developing good readers happens when students:

- Read every day for at least 20 minutes
- Select materials within their Lexile range to provide the appropriate level of challenge
- Read a variety of materials and on topics that interest them
- Discuss what they’ve been reading with parents