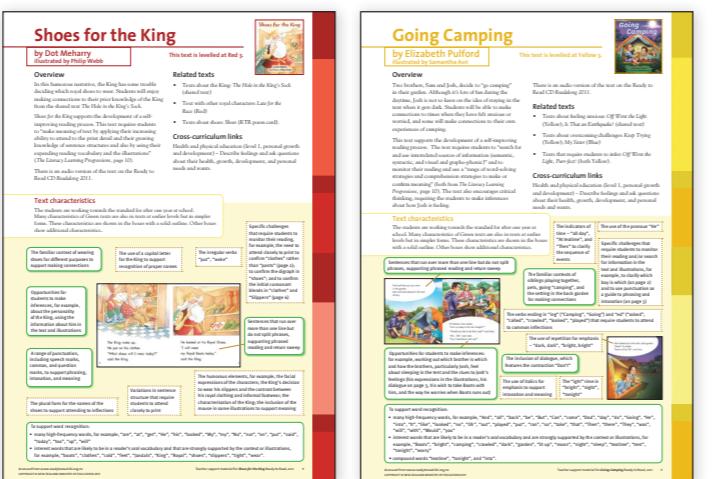


**Teacher Support Materials**

The teacher support materials (TSM) for both the *Junior Journal* and *Ready to Read* provide additional support for teachers to match texts with students. The TSM describe important text characteristics and provide guidance about how teachers can use the text to maximise students' learning. They suggest ways to introduce the texts and to monitor and support students as they build their reading processing systems and think critically about what they are reading. The TSM also provide information about related texts within the series, including links between texts for shared reading and guided reading, and between instructional reading and the wider classroom literacy programme.

**Guiding questions He pātai**

- How familiar am I with the materials in the *Ready to Read* and *Junior Journal* series?
- How familiar am I with *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* and *Guided Reading: Years 1 to 4*?
- When selecting texts for my students, to what extent do I consider the text criteria listed on pages 2 and 3 (familiarity and explicitness of content, and so on)?

**> Further reading**

*Ready to Read:* [www.readytoread.tki.org.nz](http://www.readytoread.tki.org.nz)

*Junior Journal:* [www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz)

*Literacy Online:* [www.literacyonline.tki.org.nz](http://www.literacyonline.tki.org.nz)

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Guided Reading: Years 1 to 4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2010a). *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2010b). *The New Zealand Curriculum Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2011). "Shared Reading: Meeting The Diverse Needs Of Students". *Education Gazette*. 21 November 2011 <http://www.edgazette.govt.nz/Articles/Article.aspx?ArticleId=8492>

Ministry of Education. (2014). "Ready to Read turns 50". *Education Gazette*. 24 February 2014 <http://www.edgazette.govt.nz/Articles/Article.aspx?ArticleId=8903>

**The New Zealand Curriculum****Update**

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**The New Zealand Curriculum****Update****Teaching and Learning****In this issue:**

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## Welcome to The New Zealand Curriculum Update

Curriculum Updates support school leaders and teachers as they work to design and review their school curriculum in line with the New Zealand Curriculum and with current knowledge and understandings about effective classroom teaching.

Curriculum Updates are published in the *Education Gazette* and are available online.

This Update describes some outcomes of the review of *Ready to Read* and the *Junior Journal*, including the text-levelling process. Learn about the thinking behind the series and how it supports your teaching and the needs of your students.

**Ready to Read Series**

In their first three years at school, students need to build a strong foundation in literacy to enable them to become confident, competent, lifelong readers and writers. *Ready to Read* and the *Junior Journal* (the two core instructional series for students in years 1–3) help them to do this. They support students to develop "effective reading processing systems"<sup>1</sup> as they learn to respond to and think critically about increasingly complex texts.

**Shared and guided reading**

Shared and guided reading are two of the instructional approaches that lead to independence in reading. *Ready to Read* shared reading texts have memorable language and literary content that is above the level that students can initially access by themselves. However, after multiple shared readings of a big book, students become able to read the accompanying small book independently. (See the 21 November 2011 issue of the *Education Gazette* for a full discussion of shared reading.)

<sup>1</sup> The Literacy Learning Progressions, page 10

Guided reading texts are introduced after students have developed some understanding about books and print, developed through activities such as listening to engaging texts read aloud, shared reading, language experience, and writing. *Ready to Read* and *Junior Journal* texts for guided reading are designed so that, after a careful introduction by the teacher, students can read and problem-solve their way through them, largely by themselves.

# Reviewing and improving the series

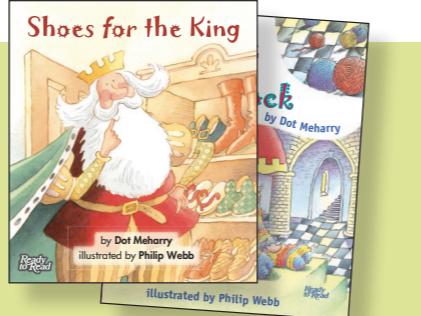
Ready to Read and the *Junior Journal* provide New Zealand material for New Zealand students, reflecting their experiences and interests. Ongoing review ensures that these series are current and continue to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Recent outcomes of the review process have been:

- Texts that were available in both big book and small book format have been designated as being either for shared reading or guided reading.
- Magenta has become one level (rather than two sub-levels) with fewer texts. This change supports a relatively quick transition for students into Red, where texts provide more opportunity to develop their reading processing system.
- New levelling criteria have been developed and as a result some texts have been assigned to different colour levels (e.g., from Blue to Green) or to different sub-levels (e.g., from Blue 3 to Blue 1). A full list of the levelling changes will be sent to schools in September 2014 and can also be downloaded at: [readytoread@tki.org.nz](mailto:readytoread@tki.org.nz)

## Example: Determining the colour level of *Shoes for the King*

*Shoes for the King*, levelled at Red 3, was written by Dot Meharry and illustrated by Philip Webb. Note that there is a deliberate planned link between this guided reading book and the shared book *The Hole in the King's Sock*.



Minimal shifts in time and place (one setting and a closely linked sequence of events)

Many high-frequency words, several of which ("are", "get", "I", "My", "my", "not", "on", "said", "the", "will") are repeated often

The familiar context (the King as a familiar character; the concept of choosing shoes)

A clear focus on one character and one main idea (the King choosing shoes)

Some variations in sentence structure that require students to attend closely to print



115 words, most of which are repeated at least once



The King woke up.  
He put on his clothes.  
"What shoes will I wear today?"  
said the King.



He looked at his Royal Shoes.  
"I will wear  
my Royal Boots today,"  
said the King.

Text consistently placed at the bottom of the page, two to six lines per page

Some sentences that run over more than one line

Interest words ("boots", "clothes", "cold", "feet", "jandals", "King", "shoes", "slippers", "tight", "wear") that are likely to be in a reader's oral vocabulary (especially if they are familiar with the shared book *The Hole in the King's Sock*) and that are strongly supported by the context, sentence structure, and the illustrations

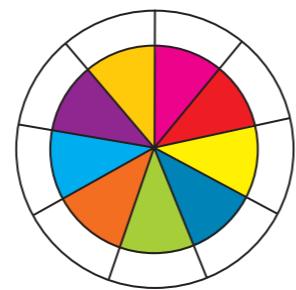
Content explicitly conveyed through the text and the illustrations but with opportunities for students to make inferences and predictions, for example, what shoes will the King choose and why

A range of punctuation, including speech marks, commas, and question marks to support phrasing, intonation, and meaning

The reading levels of texts in Ready to Read and the *Junior Journal* are indicated by the colour wheel, which shows instructional reading levels across the first three years at school.

## Why level texts for years 1–3 students?

Accurate levelling establishes an appropriate gradient of difficulty. It ensures that the level of difficulty "increases gradually in such aspects as vocabulary, text length, complexity of text structure, students' familiarity with the content, and how explicitly the content is stated".<sup>2</sup> This presents students with continual and appropriate challenges that will advance their learning.



## Criteria for colour wheel levels

Ready to Read and *Junior Journal* texts are carefully crafted according to levelling criteria. These criteria are closely linked to *The Reading and Writing Standards* and *The Literacy Learning Progressions* for students in years 1–3.

The criteria cover such aspects as:

- *familiarity and explicitness of content* – including the amount of support from illustrations
- *sentence structure* – the length, complexity, and variety of sentences; the use of verb tenses, verb forms, and punctuation
- *word-level considerations* – for example, the use of high-frequency words; that topic and interest words are well supported

- *text length and layout* – for example, the number of lines, sentences, and paragraphs per page; sentence and phrase breaks; font size and word spacing; the overall word count.

For texts at Orange and above, the Spache readability formula is used as a further levelling guide.

All Ready to Read and *Junior Journal* texts are trialled in classrooms. Teachers give feedback about the effectiveness of the texts and their levelling, and they provide suggestions for the teacher support materials.

The decision about the final colour-wheel level of a text is an "on-balance" judgment, taking into account the overall text criteria (for example, a text may be slightly more or less complex in some respects), feedback from trialling, and the fit with existing texts.

Individual students may find particular books more or less difficult than the recommended levels, according to their interests, culture, language experiences, and background knowledge.

This Curriculum Update provides examples of the levelling criteria as applied to two texts, one at Red and one at Yellow, in order to demonstrate some aspects of the gradient of difficulty.

## Example: Determining the colour level of *Going Camping*

*Going Camping*, levelled at Yellow 3, was written by Elizabeth Pulford and illustrated by Samantha Asri.

A story with several characters, a series of linked events, and an underlying theme of Josh's fear of the dark

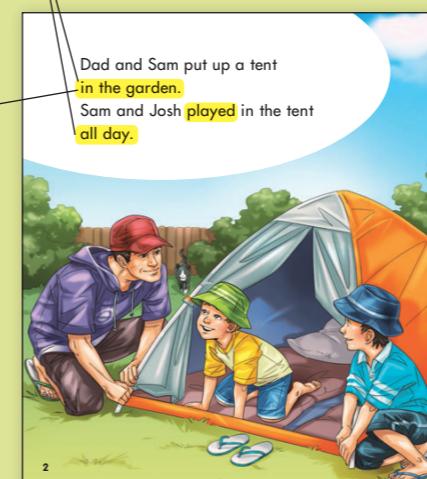
Some use of contractions within dialogue

Many variations in sentence structure and several sentences beginning or ending with a short phrase

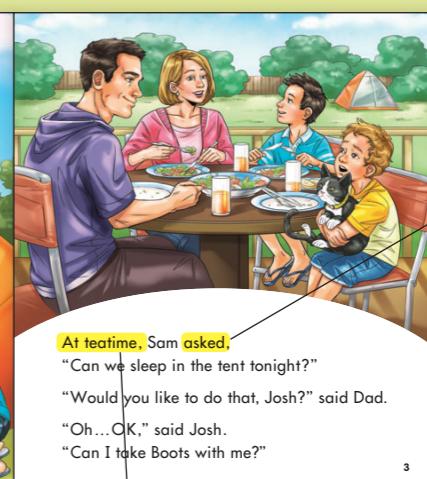
160 words, with some variation in text placement

A wide range of punctuation to support phrasing, intonation, and meaning

Several sentences per page; some running over more than one line but not splitting phrases



Familiar contexts and settings



At teatime, Sam asked,  
"Can we sleep in the tent tonight?"  
"Would you like to do that, Josh?" said Dad.  
"Oh...OK," said Josh.  
"Can I take Boots with me?"

Sometimes words other than "said" used to assign dialogue

Generally four to seven lines per page

Interest words ("Boots", "bright", "camping", "crawled", "dark", "garden", "moon", "night", "sleep", "teatime", "tent", "worry") that are likely to be in the reader's oral vocabulary and are supported by the context and the illustrations

Many high-frequency words

Several shifts in time and place

Most content explicitly stated and supported by illustrations, providing opportunities for students to make simple inferences (e.g., Why does Sam want to take Boots with him?)