

THE FAITHFUL READER

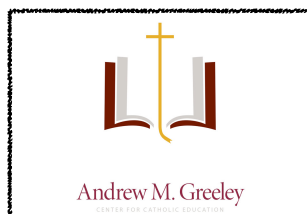
FAQ: I only have access to a basal/anthology and a few novel sets. How do I plan reading instruction?

The difference between reading and all other subjects is that you **must** have texts in order to teach reading. Students **MUST** read in reading. But what if I don't have interesting, engaging, leveled texts for them to read?

Your first step is to **audit what you have**. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Does the basal or an anthology's scope and sequence of skills and strategies align with your (arch) diocese's standards? If yes, then use this as your curriculum plan for skills and strategies. (This is only one part of the curriculum map.)
2. Does the basal/anthology have real texts, texts that I could find in real life in the library? Or are they all made up stories written by the basal authors? If they are actual texts that can be found in real life, use them for your shared reading.
3. Does the basal/anthology have leveled guided readers? If yes, then use these for guided reading. If not, use www.readinga-z.com, www.readworks.org, www.newsela.com, www.themeasuredmom.com, or any other site that provides leveled texts. (See page 3 of this newsletter for levels.)
4. Does the basal/anthology have a phonics and phonemic awareness component that can be differentiated? If yes, use it. If not (likely not) use Heggerty Phonemic Awareness and Words Their Way to create your own scope and sequence for these two very important components of balanced literacy.
5. Does the basal/anthology have spelling words in a pattern that can be differentiated? If yes, use it. If not - very likely not - use Words Their Way or Word Journeys to create your own. Students need patterns and direct instruction to learn how to spell, which directly impacts their ability to read and write. Memorizing and regurgitating (and then forgetting) is not learning. It is coping to get a good test grade.
6. The next step will be to audit your writing curriculum plan. When you look at the standards and what you teach in all subjects, how can you integrate writing into everything?

Coming in July, What is Balanced Literacy?



Michelle P. Lia, EdD
Assistant Director for Professional Learning
Andrew M. Greeley Center for Catholic Education
School of Education - Loyola University Chicago

FAQ

How might I use short stories in my ELA block?

Short stories can act as a 'palate cleanser' after a long meal of a novel. Students need to gain the stamina to read whole novels/ longer texts, but they also need shorter texts. Why?

- students feel a sense of accomplishment reading a short text; that can be motivating
- a short text means that students can reread it several times for a close read
- short stories tend to be extremely well written, with great thought to vocabulary, craft and structure, and key ideas and details so they work as great mentor texts for writing
- short stories are great for comparing and contrasting because you can read more than one in a short amount of time
- as a bonus, the full texts of many short stories are available online for free.

Short Story Recommendations

Thank You, Ma'am by Langston Hughes

My students read this short story when I used the Junior Great Books format, and I keep coming back to this great, timely short story. Roger tries to steal the pocketbook of Ms. Luella Bates Washington Jones to buy some blue suede shoes, but he has no idea who he has messed with! Ms. Jones invites Roger in to her home, feeds him, and talks to him. The economy of writing is incredible. A great mentor text and a great text with many great lessons, including you need know what people are going through, and the kindness of strangers is always a blessing.

Lexile Level Lexile 670

Interest Level 4th-8th grades

Genre realistic fiction short story

The Vendetta by Guy Maupassant

A stark contrast to the kindness of Ms. Jones in *Thank You, Ma'am*, Widow Severino wants revenge. Her husband has died, and then her son is delivered to her dead. She 'cooks' up a way to get revenge.

How could you read these two stories and compare and contrast them?

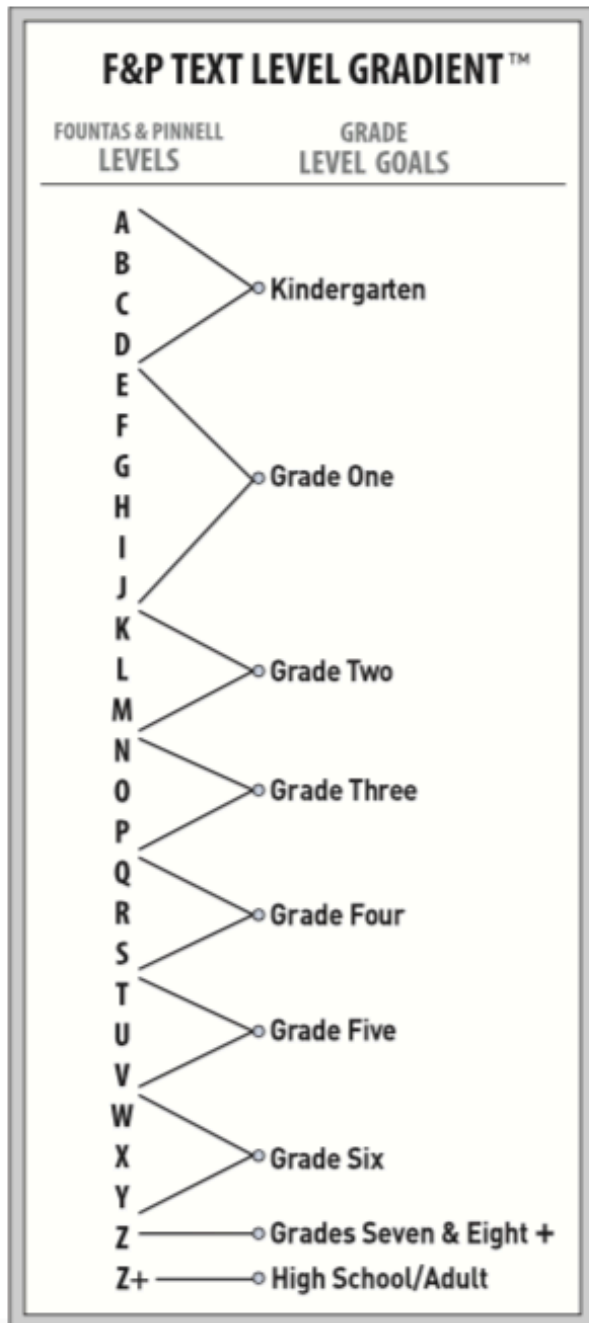
Reading Level Lexile 1030

Appropriate for ages 6+

Genre realistic fiction short story

Greeley Center Mission

We are Catholic educators who challenge Catholic schools to be excellent because they are essential in preparing students for the future.



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Figure 1.