



DISTRICT 90 FACT SHEET: Lexiles – What They Are, What They Mean

What is a Lexile?

- A Lexile measure is about either an individual's reading ability or the difficulty of a text, like a book or article. It is shown as a number with an "L" after it — 880L is 880 Lexile.
- A student gets a **Lexile reader measure** from a reading test or program. Higher Lexile measures represent a higher level of reading ability. Readers who score at or below 0L get a BR for Beginning Reader.
- A book, article or piece of text gets a **Lexile text measure** when it's analyzed by MetaMetrics. For example, the first Harry Potter book is an 880 Lexile book. A Lexile text measure is based on two predictors of how difficult a text is to comprehend: word frequency and sentence length. Text measures at or below 0L are BR for Beginning Reader.

What is the Purpose of Lexiles?

- If we know how well a student can read and how hard a specific book is to comprehend, we can predict how well that student will likely understand the book.
- Lexile measures help readers find books and articles at an appropriate level of difficulty, and determine how well they will likely comprehend a text. You also can use Lexile measures to monitor a reader's growth in reading ability over time.

What Can't a Lexile Do?

- Many other factors affect the relationship between a reader and a text, including its content, the age and interests of the reader, and the design of the material. Lexile measures don't take into account a reader's maturity level, interests or the appropriateness of the material for the reader's age. Teachers, librarians and parents can best serve a student's literacy needs when they help him or her select materials based on unique individual needs, rather than based solely on a Lexile score.
- A Lexile measure does not suggest grade level placement. It identifies material at the appropriate difficulty level regardless of the student's grade level.

How Can a Lexile Be Used?

- When you receive a Lexile measure, try not to focus on the exact number. Instead, consider a reading range around the number. A person's Lexile range, or reading comprehension "sweet spot," is from 100L below to 50L above his or her reported Lexile measure. Don't be afraid to look at books above and below a student's Lexile range, keeping in mind that a reader might find these books challenging or simple.
- Grade equivalent scores should never be interpreted literally, but rather as rough estimates of grade level performance. If a student scores a 7.9 on a fourth-grade reading test, it should not be assumed that she should be reading books appropriate for 7th- or 8th-grade students. All that is known for sure is that this student scored well above the average 4th-grade student in the norming group in reading.