

Level 1 - Fiction – *Gary the Goose*

Gary the Goose lived with his family by a lake. He loved to play with Barry the Bear, who lived in the woods nearby. In November, Grandpa Goose came to talk with Gary. "It's winter, my little goose. Time for our family to fly south." Gary looked worried. He almost started to cry. "But I can't leave Barry," he said. "He's my best friend." Grandpa Goose was wise. "It's only for a visit," he said. "You must trust that Barry will be here when you get back." Gary told Barry the bad news. "Silly goose," said Barry, "Bears sleep all winter, anyway. My family has already prepared a cave." Gary felt better. "When I get back," he said, "I want to hear about the dreams you've had." "That's a deal," said Barry.

Level 1 - Fiction – *Charisse Writes a Story*

Charisse tells great stories. She speaks in a wonderful voice. Her friends gather around to listen. Sometimes they laugh, and sometimes they cry.

Charisse wants to write down her great stories. But she has a problem. She cannot use a pencil.

Everyone else in the class can use a pencil. Not Charisse. The pencil always feels too skinny and too long. Charisse looks at her hand. Those fingers don't work the way she wants them to. She feels so unhappy. Charisse keeps it a secret. But the teacher notices. "Charisse," she says. "Try putting the pencil in your other hand." Charisse had never thought of that. She tries the other hand. What a difference! "Finally," she thinks, "I will learn to write my stories down."

Level 1 - Fiction – *The Little Land* –

When at home alone I sit
And am very tired of it,
I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies –
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the Little People are;
Where the clover tops are trees,
And the rain pools are the seas,
And the leaves, like little ships,
Sail about on tiny trips;
And above the Daisy tree
Through the grasses, High overhead
the Bumble Bee Hums and passes.
In that forest to and from
I can wander, I can go;
See the spider and the fly,
And the ants go marching by,
Carrying parcels with their feet
Down the green and grassy street.

Level 1 - Fiction – *Foreign Lands* –

Up into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad in foreign lands.
I saw the next-door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.
I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking glass;
The dusty roads go up and down
With people tramping in to town.
If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,
To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairy land,
Where all the children dine at five,
And all the play things come alive.

Level 1 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

Imagine that you were alive one hundred years ago. It's dinner time, and Mom says, "Come and eat your meat!" But when you look at your plate, you see only rice and beans. "Where is the meat?" you wonder. One hundred years ago, the word "meat" had a different meaning. You could use it to talk about any kind of food, even rice or beans. Over time, the word changed. Its meaning became more narrow. Today, we only say "meat" when we talk about things like hamburgers or hot dogs. This is one way that English changed. Sometimes a word changes in a different way. Its meaning becomes more wide. The word "mouse" used to mean an animal. Now we can use it to talk about either an animal, or a part of a computer.

Level 1 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

When a baby is born, she has arms and legs. She has eyes and ears, and a nose. This baby will become a little girl. She will grow much bigger. Her arms and legs will get longer. People grow. But they do not really change shape. They keep their head, arms, and legs. Other animals grow differently. They change shape as they grow. Butterflies are like this. When a butterfly is born, it lives inside a tiny egg. The egg sits upon a plant leaf. Later, the butterfly comes out of the egg. It looks like a colorful worm. This baby butterfly is called a caterpillar. The caterpillar does not have any wings. It eats and eats. It grows bigger. Finally, it changes shape. It grows wings, and flies away.

Level 2 - Fiction – *Kijoo Wants to Play*

It's late afternoon, and Kijoo feels like playing. She taps on her brother's door. But he's playing loud music, and doesn't hear. Kijoo peeks in the door. Her brother pretends not to see her. He's working on his computer. Kijoo walks away, feeling lonely. Kijoo and her brother used to play a lot. They invented stories. They ran in the yard. Now, Kijoo's brother doesn't play much anymore. He has new friends from a different school. He's always busy. Kijoo's brother has just become a teenager. Kijoo's mom tried to explain that kids change when they get older. But Kijoo couldn't really understand why. But there is at least one good thing about having a teen-age brother, thinks Kijoo. He can reach the top shelf of the refrigerator.

Level 2 - Fiction – *The Moon - The Moon*, by Robert

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;

She shines on thieves on the garden wall,

On streets and fields and harbours and seas,

And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The yowling cat and the squeaking mouse,

The howling dog by the door of the house,

The bat that lies in bed at noon,

All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day

Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;

And flowers and children close their eyes

Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.

Level 2 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

The library is a place where kids and adults go to read books. With a card, you can borrow the books for free. To find a book, you need to know its Dewey Decimal number. This tells you which shelf the book is on. Books about the same subject start with the same number, and are placed near one another on the shelves. For example, books about dinosaurs all have the same number. And these books will be near other books about animals. A man named Melvil Dewey invented this system for giving books numbers. That's why we call the numbers Dewey Decimals. Before Dewey, books at the library were not kept in order. What a mess! It was almost impossible to find anything.

Level 2 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

Although computers sometimes seem magical, they aren't. Computers are built by people. And they do only what people tell them to do. Computers spend most of their time waiting for someone (like you) to send them a command. You send a command by clicking the mouse, or by typing something. As soon as you do this, the computer may respond. The computer responds to commands by following a code. A code is like a list of things to do, written in a different language. A person who works at a computer company wrote the code, long before you clicked the mouse or pressed a key. The computer can't decide anything for itself. So when the code doesn't tell it what to do, it simply crashes. There's no magic in that!

Level 2 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

Bread and rice are common foods around the world. Meat costs too much for many people to buy. But bread and rice are cheap. People in different countries like different types of bread. Some like flat bread, others like puffy bread. Some like bread with seeds. But the basic idea of bread is the same everywhere. To make it, you need flour. Flour can come from wheat or other crops. You also need yeast. Wild yeast floats in the air. But yeast for baking comes in a packet. When you mix flour, yeast, and water, you make dough. If you let it rest, the dough begins to rise. The yeast makes this happen. After the dough rises for a while, you put it in the oven to bake. Then the dough turns into bread.

Level 2 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

In 1990, a group of people went to South Dakota. They were looking for dinosaur bones. At the end of a long day of searching, the group had not found anything. The sun was setting, and they stopped working. But one explorer did not stop. Her name was Susan Hendrickson. She wanted to look at one more cliff. As she approached the cliff, Susan saw a few bones sticking out. What a sight! The bones were huge. Susan called the other people over. They began to dig. They found more bones. They realized that an entire dinosaur skeleton lay underground. The dinosaur was a T. Rex. It was named Sue after the person who discovered it. Today you can see Sue's bones at a museum in Chicago.

Level 3 - Fiction – *The Pie and the Patty-Pan*

Once upon a time there was a cat called Ribby, who invited a little dog called Duchess to tea. “Come in good time, my dear Duchess,” said Ribby’s letter, “and we will have something so very nice. I am baking it in a pie dish — a pie dish with a pink rim. You never tasted anything so good! And you shall eat it all! I will eat muffins, my dear Duchess!” wrote Ribby. “I will come right on time, my dear Ribby,” wrote Duchess; and then at the end she added -- “I hope it isn’t mouse?” And then she thought that did not look quite polite; so she scratched out “isn’t mouse” and changed it to “I hope it will be fine,” and she gave her letter to the postman. But she thought a great deal about Ribby’s pie, and she read Ribby’s letter over and over again. “I am dreadfully afraid it WILL be mouse pie!” said Duchess to herself — “I really couldn’t, COUL DN’T eat mouse pie. And I shall have to eat it, because it is a party.”

Level 3 - Fiction – *Squirrel Nutkin*

This is a Tale about a tail—a tail that belonged to a little red squirrel, and his name was Nutkin. He had a brother called Twinkleberry, and a great many cousins: they lived in a wood at the edge of a lake. In the middle of the lake there is an island covered with trees and nut bushes; and among those trees stands a hollow oak tree, the house of an owl called Old Brown. One fall when the nuts were ripe, and the leaves on the hazel bushes were golden and green—Nutkin and Twinkleberry and all the other little squirrels came out of the wood, and down to the edge of the lake. They made little rafts out of sticks, and they paddled away over the water to Owl Island to gather nuts. Each squirrel had a little sack and a large oar, and fanned out his tail for a sail. They also took with them three fat mice as a present for Old Brown, and put them down upon his door step.

Level 3 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

Art can make us see objects in a new way.

Sometimes art looks like the real world. The artist makes the picture look like it came from a camera. But it didn't. The artist draws in this manner for a reason. He wants us to discover something new. He wants to show us what he has seen. Sometimes, art does not look like the real world at all. We may see shapes. People are circles. Buildings are squares. Or we may see colors, like a big blue spot. Or yellow lines. You can play a game with your friends. Guess what each shape or color means. There is no right answer. It's just for fun. People have made art for thousands of years. When people lived in caves, they made art on the cave walls. They used animal blood as paint. The pictures showed scenes from their lives. Later, people painted their tents and boats with many colors. They used beads to make their clothes beautiful. This is a kind of art, too.

Level 3 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

When you read stories or watch a movie, you see all kinds of animals and people. Some are real, but some are not. Dragons breathe fire. Elves make magic. Ghosts float from place to place. But dragons, elves, and ghosts are not real. They do not live anywhere, except in stories and movies. Other weird things may happen in stories and movies. Scarecrows may talk. Dolphins may tell riddles. Princes and princesses may have secret powers. Of course, scarecrows, dolphins, and princes and princesses are all real. But in real life, they don't do these weird things. Scarecrows are stuffed with hay. They can't talk. Dolphins do make sounds, but they can't tell riddles. Another animal you will meet in stories is the whale . We know whales are real . These huge animals live deep in the ocean . long ago, people hunted whales . They used whale fat for oil, and whale bones for tools. But whales remain a mystery to us . That's why people like to imagine what they are like, and read about them in stories.

Level 4 - Fiction – *Peter Cottontail*

Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter. They lived with their Mother in a sand bank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree. „Now, my dears,” said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, “you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don’t go into Mr. McGregor’s garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.” “Now run along, and don’t get into trouble. I am going out.” Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, and went through the wood to the baker’s. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns. Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries; But Peter, who was very naughty, ran straight away to Mr. McGregor’s garden, and crawled under the gate!

Level 4 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

When you see a word that you do not know, look it up in the dictionary. You can find words starting with A at the beginning, and words starting with Z at the end. Once you find a word, you can read its definition. This tells you what the word means.

Often, a word has more than one meaning. In this case, you will see more than one definition. “Club” means a long stick. But it also means a group of people who do things together. A good dictionary will show each meaning in a sentence. Reading the sentences gives you an idea of how the meanings are different. Dictionaries are useful in other ways, too. For example, you can read about the history of a word. English often borrows words from other languages. Borrowing can happen when people from different lands talk with one another. English got the word “banana” from Spanish. And borrowing can go both ways. Spanish got the word “sandwich” from English.

Level 5 - Fiction – *Antonio Ant*

Antonio Ant stayed up late one night, writing in his diary. “Another day, another bread crumb,” he wrote. “I am tired of following other ants around, picking up yucky food that people spill on the floor. Why can’t the rest of the ant family see that I am an individual? I need to experiment with life!” Just then, Alfonso Ant cried out. “Mr. Harvey just spilled his midnight snack on the kitchen floor! Peanut butter on white bread! Everybody wake up!” Antonio sighed. He did not want to go. Then he had an idea. “Maybe this is a chance to escape the ant life,” thought Antonio. “No one will realize that I am gone.” By the next morning, Antonio had reached the Harveys’ backyard. He was hungry. “I don’t understand,” he said to himself. “Finding food used to be so easy.” Two hours later, Alfonso found Antonio. “Don’t you know that ants depend on one another?” he yelled. “Now come on, there’s a nice piece of cupcake on the floor inside, I’ll show you.”

Level 5 - Nonfiction – *Untitled*

During the day, there is lots of light. We can see many different colors. If we look outside, we can see green grass, brown tree trunks, and red and yellow flowers. But things seem to change at night. There is almost no light. And the colors go away! If we look outside, everything is black and white – even the flowers. Of course, the flowers do not really lose their colors at night. Neither do the tree trunks or the grass. They will be brown, or green, or red or yellow again the next day. The colors are still there. We just cannot see them, because our eyes work differently when it is dark. You can try an experiment. When you go from a sunny area into a dark room, something happens. Your eyes cannot see right away. Gradually, they come back alive, but it takes a few moments. Then you can see again, but without all the colors you saw outside. This is how you know that eyes work differently in the daylight and in the dark.