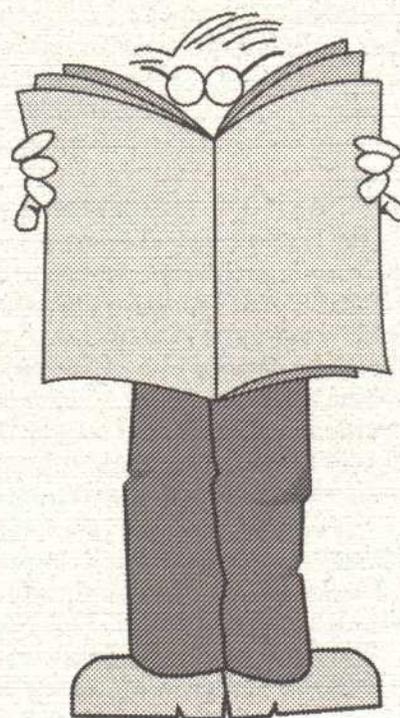


THE LEXILE FRAMEWORK FOR READING

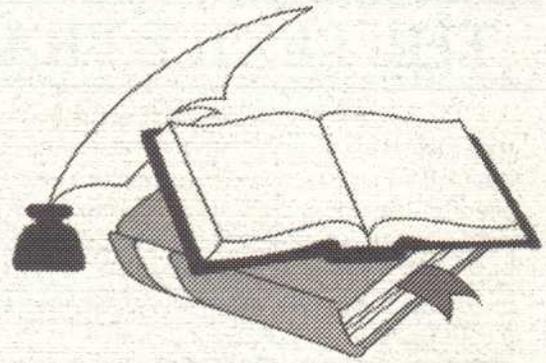
This Lexile Framework for Reading helps you to match your Lexile measure to literature titles and everyday world texts such as USA Today. Your reading measure is determined by locating the text measure in Lexiles you can read with 75% comprehension. In other words, if you can read *The Old Man and the Sea* measured at 900 Lexiles, and answer correctly 75 out of 100 questions about it, you can read at 900L. Each entry on this map has been measured to determine its location.

200	Ronald Morgan Goes to Bat	First Grade
260	One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish	
300	Mog - The Forgetful Cat	Second Grade
350	Little Rabbit	
380	Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing	Third Grade
430	Yonder	
480	Curious George	Fourth Grade
530	There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom	
560	Madeline's Rescue	Fifth Grade
620	Jack and Jill	
640	The Hardy Boys: The Submarine Caper	Sixth Grade
690	How to Eat Fried Worms	
730	Harriet the Spy	Seventh Grade
780	The Boy Scout Manual	
810	Johnny Appleseed	Eighth Grade
830	Souder	
880	The Red Pony	Ninth Grade
920	To Kill a Mockingbird	
960	The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	Tenth Grade
990	Jonathan Livingston Seagull	
1040	The Pearl	Eleventh Grade
1060	Dr. Zhivago	
1080	USA Today	Twelfth Grade
1100	Treasure Island	
1120	National Geographic	College Junior-Senior
1160	Trivial Pursuit Game Instruction	
1200	Gulliver's Travels	College Freshman-Sophomore
1220	The Call of the Wild	
1240	1040 Tax Instructions	Graduate School
1300	U.S. News and World Report	
1340	A Brief History of Time	
1360	The Odyssey	
1400	The Wall Street Journal	
1450	The Complete Works of Homer	
1480	The Gettysburg Address	
1540	The U.S. Constitution	
1570	The Declaration of Independence	
1630	The New England Journal of Medicine	
1670	The Age of Empire	
1690	Antiseptic Principles of the Practice of Surgery	



A Map To Higher Levels Of Achievement

A. Jackson Stenner, Ph.D.



Student testing is a sensitive topic, one that often generates more heat than light among educators, parents, community groups, and other interested parties. By measuring students' skill levels, teachers and administrators hope to gain information that can help them to improve student performance. Unfortunately, current testing methods interpret results in terms of how the test-taker compares with other students, rather than assessing achievement against meaningful standards. Students, along with their parents and teachers, are left with the knowledge that "Johnny is at the eightieth percentile of comparison group," instead of understanding that "Johnny has achieved a desirable goal, such as being able to read USA Today."

As a result, teachers lack an objective assessment of what their students can read, and parents have only a frustratingly vague sense of whether or not their children are progressing satisfactorily.

To combat this problem, several researchers under the auspices of the National Institutes of Health have developed a unique tool that provides a clear measure of a student's reading assessment. Called the Lexile Framework, this tool assesses students according to an absolute, invariant standard, rather than merely comparing their reading performance to that of their peers. Teachers and parents receive the information they need to help students take the necessary steps to improve their reading.

WHAT IS THE LEXILE FRAMEWORK?

The Lexile Framework is an assessment system that enables educators to determine precisely a student's level of reading comprehension. The system is based on research conducted over a 15-year period by Drs. A. Jackson Stenner and Malbert Smith of MetaMetrics, Inc., Dr. Donald S. Burdick of Duke University, and faculty from the University of North Carolina, the University of Chicago, and Stanford University, with funding from the National Institutes of Health. This research, in turn, was based on more than 40 years of study by various specialists in the field of reading comprehension. In 1994, the Lexile Framework was made commercially available by MetaMetrics, Inc., an educational research and development firm based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

The Lexile Framework applies well-established analytic methods to the definition of "reading comprehension." At

the heart of this system is the Lexile Analyzer, a Windows-based software program that can evaluate the reading challenge of any text — books, articles, test items — by analyzing its syntactic complexity and semantic difficulty. The analyzer calibrates the text by carefully dissecting it and studying its characteristics, such as sentence length and word frequency. Unlike other readability formulas, the Lexile Framework enables you to place people and text on the same scale.

One outcome of co-calibrating text and people is a measure of reading difficulty expressed as a Lexile, a unit of measurement for reading comprehension. Longer sentence lengths and words of lower frequency lead to higher Lexile measures, since words that are unfamiliar to the reader contribute more to a text's difficulty than do familiar words. Word frequency information is derived from the five-million word corpus American Heritage Word Frequency Book by John B. Carroll, Peter Davies, and Barry Richman.

Text samples from any source — books, newspapers, standardized test items — can be calibrated simply by being scanned into a computer and imported into the Analyzer. For example, the Lexile Analyzer could be used to calibrate the contents of an entire school library. With each book's Lexile calibration included in the card catalog, librarians, teachers, and students could select materials appropriate for readers at different levels more easily and accurately.

In addition to calibrating the reading difficulty of specific text, the Framework also can be used to measure a student's reading ability. When standardized test items are calibrated, the Analyzer generates a table, called a correspondence table, that acts as a yardstick for measuring a student's level of reading comprehension. Such a correspondence table can be generated for any test, thereby providing a corresponding Lexile measure to each number correct on the test. If a student's Lexile measure is already known, the table can be used to predict a student's count correct on the test.

Students' Lexile measurements can also be determined by the Lexile Test of Reading Comprehension, which uses authentic text from published sources to assess students' reading abilities. Alternately, school systems can construct their own tests using the Lexile Analyzer.

"The Lexile Framework standards are literature-based, making the Framework uniquely useful to educators and par-

ents," says Dr. William J. Brown, Jr., an assessment specialist and former director of testing with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. "All other reading tests require you to interpret results in terms of how the test-taker compares to others. Because the frame of reference is the normative group, the ruler by which you're measuring is made of rubber — it bends as the cohort changes."

In contrast, notes Brown, the Lexile Framework creates an absolute standard that is embedded in the ability to read the text, and measures the ability of the test-taker by his performance against those reading standards.

"You might compare it to the President's Physical Fitness Test," says Brown. "A child is expected to do so many push-ups and pull-ups or run a certain distance in a certain time, and that tells you how fit he is and what he needs to do to increase his level of fitness. In the same way, if you know that a student is reading at 700 Lexiles, you understand what level of material he's mastered and what books you could recommend that would help him to improve his academic skills."

The production of recommended reading lists is another unique benefit of the Lexile Framework. Through a component of the system called the Lexile Report Generator, parents and teachers receive students' Lexile measures with examples of what they can read, along with student-specific lists of books whose Lexile measurements are appropriate for readers at that level. These recommended materials are an ideal match for a student's current ability — neither so easy as to bore nor so difficult as to frustrate the student. Students and their parents and teachers are presented with a clear path to improved reading comprehension.

In addition, a richly annotated Lexile Map provides an extensive list of texts, from novels and nonfiction books to newspapers and magazines, at various levels of Lexile measurement. This color-coded poster-sized graphic makes it easy to "see" how reading develops and to select other reading materials as students progress in their reading comprehension.

"The Lexile Framework manifests what good teachers try to do anyway, which is to judge where a student is and find material that will challenge him adequately without being so difficult that he loses his motivation," says Brown. "The problem is that as children get into the latter stages of elementary school, the variance in texts and among students increases dramatically. The choice of material expands and the range of reading skills widens, so it becomes much harder for teachers to make accurate judgments about where children are and what materials are good choices for them. By using the Lexile Framework, schools can take the guesswork out of this equation, and operationalize the selection of developmentally appropriate material for their students."

The benefits for families are no less important. By giving parents an accurate assessment of their children's achievements and recommending specific materials to enhance their skills, the Lexile Framework can relieve parents' frustration

and confusion and make them active partners with the teacher in students' academic progress.

"Most teachers will tell you that trying to explain to parents a child's test results in percentiles is their worst nightmare," says Brown. "Saying that little Julie is in the sixty-fifth percentile for her grade is too vague for a lot of parents. It's the kind of 'eduspeak' that can confuse and possibly alienate families instead of bringing them into the educational process. What parents want to know is, 'How is my child doing? Is she learning what she needs to learn and moving forward at a steady pace? And what can I do to help her?' With the Lexile Framework, parents get firm answers to these questions and concrete suggestions for helping their child."

In addition, Lexile measurements can help students themselves to take a more active role in their own learning, by giving them a clear picture of their abilities and a map they can follow to increase their reading comprehension.

"If you can say to a student, 'You are reading at 900 Lexiles, so a good choice for you now would be Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. When you master that, you'll be ready for *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* or *The Hobbit*,' it gives him the idea that he has an important role to play in his own progress. Having a clear-cut path to follow encourages him to move forward and succeed."

Using score-to-measure correspondence tables, the Report Generator can forecast a student's performance on standardized tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (or SAT). This "advance warning" can give students the information and incentive to achieve the levels of mastery needed for optimal performance on critical tests like the SAT.

"'Empowerment' has become a hackneyed word, but that's the key advantage of the Lexile Framework — it gives students, parents teachers and administrators accurate information that empowers them," says Brown. "With a Lexile measure, you know precisely where a student stands in terms of an absolute scale of reading comprehension, and you know exactly what steps that student needs to take to reach higher levels of performance."

A. Jackson Stenner, Ph.D.

Jack Stenner is co-founder and Chairman of MetaMetrics, Inc.

MetaMetrics is a privately held corporation that specializes in research and development in the field of education. He has been Principal Investigator on five grants from the National Institute of Health, (1984-1996) dealing with the measurement of literacy.

Jack Stenner is also former Chairman and co-founder of National Technology Group, a 700-person firm specializing in computer networking and systems integration which was sold to VanStar Corporation in December 1996.

He holds a Ph.D degree from Duke University and Bachelor degrees in Psychology and Education from the University of Missouri.

Jack is President of the Institute for Objective Measurement in Chicago, Illinois. He serves as a board member for The National Institute for Statistical Sciences (NISS) and is Immediate Past President of the Professional Billiard Tour Association (PBTA).

Jack resides in Chapel Hill, North Carolina with his wife, Jennifer, and their four sons.

