

Using the ABeCeDarian Storybooks for Level A

How to introduce the Storybooks

The Storybooks for Level A are a set of 10 short, illustrated stories that students can read as they move through Level A and the beginning of Level B. The books are designed so that students will know all of the letter/sound correspondences used in the book and will have the skills needed to sound out any unfamiliar words. Storybook 1 can be read after the student has completed Unit 4 of Level A, Storybook 2 can be read after the student has completed Unit 5, and so on. Storybook 10 can be read after the student has completed Unit 1 of Level B1.

The best way to introduce a Storybook to children is for an adult to read it out loud. During the very first reading the adult should read with great expression and point to each word as he goes along, making sure that the student can see the pictures and the words that are being read. In the first Storybook, *Did the Cat Sit?*, each sentence is a question referring to the picture on the page. After reading a question, the adult should have the student answer it. Ideally, the adult should model how the student can answer in a complete sentence. Two other storybooks (*Can the Cat Fit?* and *Will it Fit?*) are also written in this same question format, and students should answer the questions out loud in these books as well.

For the other storybooks, the adult should pause occasionally while reading to reflect on the story briefly with the student. These reflections can be initiated with simple comments such as: “*I wonder what will happen next,*” or “*Oh, no. The poor rat can’t find a place to nap.*” The best engagement between teacher and student at this point is conversational, with both parties making comments and responding to the other’s questions and observations.

After the adult reads the entire storybook to a student, they should reread the book on subsequent lessons. On each subsequent reading, the student should be given more responsibility for reading the book himself. Here is one possible sequence:

First rereading: The adult asks the student to find a couple of different words on a page before the adult reads the whole page (“*Please help me find cat on this page. How about pot?*”).

Second rereading: The adult and student read the story together alternating by word. That is, the adult reads the first word, the student the second, the adult the third, and so on.

Third rereading: The adult and student read the story together alternating by page.

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Fourth rereading: The student reads the story by herself.

During these rereadings, the teacher can provide additional support and practice reading some of the unfamiliar or longer words by performing a tap-and-say herself as she reads the words and having the student repeat the tap-and-say. This technique is generally more efficient than pre-teaching words from the unit because it usually requires less time and achieves the same result.

This sequence can be abbreviated as appropriate if a student has strong enough skills to read the storybook on his own with less support from the adult. There is certainly nothing wrong with having a student read the book himself on the first reading if he is ready to do so. The goal is to provide the right amount of enjoyable practice and support that the student eventually just rips the book out of the adult's hands and says, "*Let me read this by myself!*"

When working with a group of students, it is a good idea to present the book on an overhead projector or copied on large chart paper so that all students can be focused on the same source. During group work the teacher should conduct rereadings using this same general format suggested above with a mixture of choral reading. For example, when having students to help her find a particular word during a first rereading, the teacher should ask for help finding the word and then she should point to a word on the page and ask, "*Is this <word>?*" and the group can answer chorally *yes* or *no*. When doing reading every other word with the group, the teacher should read a word and the whole group should read the next word chorally, responding to the teacher's prompt as she points to each word in turn. It is very important for the teacher to take the time to train the group to wait to read their words until the teacher has touched them.

For Storybooks 1 through 5, it is appropriate to conduct a reading in which an individual student reads a single page by himself and then the group rereads the page out loud immediately after the individual student has read it. However, the amount of text on the page in Storybooks 6 through 10 is substantially more than in the earlier books, and reading that amount of text chorally would be quite tedious and hence counterproductive.

One good way to overcome this difficulty is to work with the whole group for just the first couple pages of one of these later storybooks, with an individual student reading a single sentence out loud, followed by the group rereading the same sentence chorally. After reading 2 or 3 pages in this manner, the teacher can pair up the students and have them read the rest of the story to each other, alternating by word, sentence, or page. The

Working with a group of students

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Pacing

teacher or classroom aide can circulate among the students to listen and provide assistance and error correction as necessary.

Clever classroom teachers also post pages of the story on chart paper in places in the room where the students can read them easily as they go about the day, such as by lockers or cubbies, or on the wall in a reading corner.

Children should also have the opportunity to read the Storybooks independently.

Students should continue reading a Storybook until they can read it easily, without overtly sounding out any words. It is appropriate for students to continue to the next unit in Level A, however, even if they cannot yet read a particular Storybook independently. In other words, the Storybooks do not have to be mastered in lock-step with the other material in the program. Indeed, many students continue finishing the Storybooks as they are working through the beginning units of Workbook B1. The checkouts for each unit in Level A remain the student's ability to read the isolated words and sentences presented in the unit, NOT their ability to read the Storybooks. It is however, generally a good idea to postpone working with a new Storybook until a student is able to read easily the one he is currently working on.

Teachers should use the basic ABeCeDarian error correction techniques when having students read the Storybooks. Please refer to the appropriate teacher manuals as well as the ABeCeDarian Error Correction Guide in the Free Support Materials on the ABCD website, and videos on the ABeCeDarian YouTube channel.

Once students have finished all ten storybooks, they will be reading sentences from the Level B1 workbook. A set of Fables and Fairy Tales suitable for students in Level B1 will be available from ABeCeDarian by June 2011 to provide more practice reading short stories.

When students have finished or are near the end of that workbook, students will no longer need to use decodable texts such as the Storybooks because they will have sufficient phonics knowledge to read any first grade level material. It is very important for students to start reading regular first grade level texts. Teachers should continue to use the same oral reading techniques described for the Storybooks with these first grade materials, as well as providing ample opportunity for independent silent reading. A suggested list of trade books to use can be found in the Level B1 Teacher Manual.

**After students
have read all of the
Storybooks**

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In addition, as students are developing their skills at reading storybooks, it is extremely important that adults continue to read books out loud to them daily, a mixture of both fiction and non-fiction material. Hearing books read to them provides students with critical general knowledge and vocabulary and helps tremendously with building comprehension skills. Indeed, most students are able to comprehend material orally better than they can reading it on their own until well into middle school, so it is advisable to extend the habit of reading aloud to children well beyond first grade.

ABeCeDarian Storybooks for Level A

written and illustrated by Andrea Hazard

www.ahazard.com

Storybook 1	Did the Cat Sit?	use after Unit 4
Storybook 2	Run, Rat, Run!	use after Unit 5
Storybook 3	The Dog Can Run	use after Unit 6
Storybook 4	Can the Cat Fit?	use after Unit 7
Storybook 5	The Jet	use after Unit 8
Storybook 6	The Trip	use after Unit 9
Storybook 7	To The Vet	use after Unit 10
Storybook 8	Will It Fit?	use after Unit 11
Storybook 9	The Best Gift	use after Unit 12
Storybook 10	The Quest	use after Unit 1, Level B1



ABeCeDarian Company • 127 Warren Road • Ithaca, NY 14850
www.abcdrp.com