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A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



HELP YOUR STUDENTS BECOME READING STARS!

Do you have a classroom full of students at different reading levels? Are you looking for a quick and effective way to find books that will match their diverse needs? Simon & Schuster's new "Be a Reading Star!" leveling system makes it easy to determine which of the many wonderful Ready-to-Read books are best suited for each of your students.

This guide explains how to get the most out of the "Be a Reading Star!" levels. It also provides strategies for using Ready-to-Read books to teach reading and other subjects in your classroom, and project and activity ideas to use with your students. The Ready-to-Read books will help all of your students learn and grow as readers—whether they start out as Stellar Stars, Rising Stars, Stars, Superstars, or Megastars.



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How the “Be a Reading Star!” Leveling System Works

Each Ready-to-Read book has been assigned a level, from Pre-Level 1 (Rising Star) to Level 3 (Megastar). When you see the level on a book, you’ll know whether it’s likely to be appropriate for helping students develop basic decoding skills, more advanced comprehension strategies, or anything in between.

Tip: You can determine if a level is too high by having the child read the first page or paragraph. If they miss three to five words (depending on the length of the passage) the text is on a frustration level. Books need to be on a child’s “independent reading level” in order for them to move through the levels easily.

Beginning Reader: Ready-to-Go Reader

- ★ Phonics
- ★ Rhyming words and repetition
- ★ Choral reading

Are your students using pictures to understand what words mean? Are they exploring letter-sound relationships? Students will practice reading sight words and enjoy the fun, predictable language in the books on this level.

Pre-Level One: Rising Star Reader

- ★ Shared reading
- ★ Familiar characters
- ★ Simple words

Do your students enjoy listening to you read? Are they developing phonemic awareness and starting to connect letters with sounds? The books at this level—filled with characters that kids know and love, such as Puppy Mudge and Mouse—are just right for your students.

Level One: Star Reader

- ★ Easy sight words and words to sound out
- ★ Simple plot and dialogue
- ★ Familiar topics and themes

Are your students able to recognize lots of high-frequency words? Are they starting to decode words and read simple sentences? Olivia, Dora, Friday, and many more classic and new characters are waiting for your students at this level.

Level Two: Superstar Reader

- ★ Longer sentences
- ★ Simple chapters
- ★ High-interest vocabulary words

Are your students learning to read longer sentences fluently? Are their vocabulary and comprehension skills expanding? At this level, your students can learn and grow with Henry and Mudge, Annie and Snowball, and many more lovable characters.



Level Three: Megastar Reader

- ★ Longer, more complex story plots and character development
- ★ Variety of challenging vocabulary words
- ★ More difficult sentence structure

Can your students read and comprehend difficult books? Are they confident readers who are ready for a challenge? In the books at this level, many fun and exciting characters will take them on journeys they won't soon forget.

The following activities and discussion questions relate to a select group of Ready-To-Read titles. For a full list of available and upcoming Ready-To-Read titles, visit ReadytoRead.com.

General Tips for Making Your Classroom a Great Place for Reading

Try integrating the Ready-to-Read books into some of the approaches below:

- ★ Build a classroom library with a wide variety of books. Guide students to books at the appropriate reading level, and then let them choose topics, stories, and characters they find interesting.
- ★ If possible, turn a corner of your room into a cozy reading area. Pile up blankets, pillows, or even some comfortable old chairs. Make the area inviting so your students are eager to visit it when they have free time.
- ★ Every day, read aloud to your students, and give them time to read independently as well. Great reading takes practice!
- ★ Have an ongoing conversation about books. Tell your students about what you're reading. Explain why you like the book, how you chose it, or what it has taught you. Share your excitement about books, and let students do the same.
- ★ Create a classroom "book review" like you see in some Sunday newspapers. After students read a book, help them write the title in a log that you keep in your classroom library. Younger students can then give it a rating on a simple number scale; older students can write down more detailed reactions to the book.
- ★ Hang the "Reach for the Stars!" reading chart in your classroom. This chart allows you and your students to set a new reading goal each month and keep track of your progress toward meeting it. Use stars to note each book a student has completed. Aim for a "Wall of Stars" to represent all your reading stars. When your class reaches its goal, have a celebration!



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TEACHER GUIDE Beginning Reader: Ready-to-Go Readers

Teaching Ideas: Reading

- ★ Ready-to-Go books contain a lot of rhyming words and alliterative phrases that help increase students' phonemic awareness. Encourage students to play with language through rhyming games, tongue twisters, and onset and rhyme manipulation. Replacing the initial sounds in some words with alternative sounds gives students experience with rhyming word families and practice building new words. Students can clap out the syllables of words and character names as they explore rhythm with Ready-to-Go books.
- ★ Ready-to-Go readers are quickly expanding their vocabularies. As you read, point to new words and ask questions about their meanings. Act out and illustrate new words as you read them and add them to your word wall. Word walls can help students decode new words whose spellings are analogous to the words already placed there (e.g., using cat to read bat.)
- ★ To foster reading fluency, encourage students to engage in choral reading (where they read together, with you) as you reread familiar Ready-to-Go books with expression.
- ★ Make connections between the words read in the books, shared classroom experiences, and your students' personal experiences.

Teaching Ideas: Cross-curricular

- ★ *See Zip Zap* involves a full cast of colorful characters. Ask students to count all the different characters in the story.
 - ★ Demonstrate how to draw Zip. See if your students can copy what you draw and create a character that looks just like Zip!
 - ★ Birds save the day in *See Zip Zap*. Ask students to think of other flying animals that could have flown Zip to safety.
 - ★ Students learn about some of the things a cat can do in *Can a Cat Do That?* Ask students to generate a list of questions they have about cats, and use a nonfiction book or science reference website to extend their learning.
- *★ Many of the animals featured in *Can a Cat Do That?* are mammals. Talk with your students about the characteristics of mammals and see if they can name the other mammals in the book.

Teaching Ideas: Class Activities and Projects

Prereading:

- ★ *See Zip Zap* is filled with repetitive phrases and rhyming words. Introduce the characters and practice their names before you read. As you read aloud, encourage your students to read chorally along with you when they see a familiar word or phrase.

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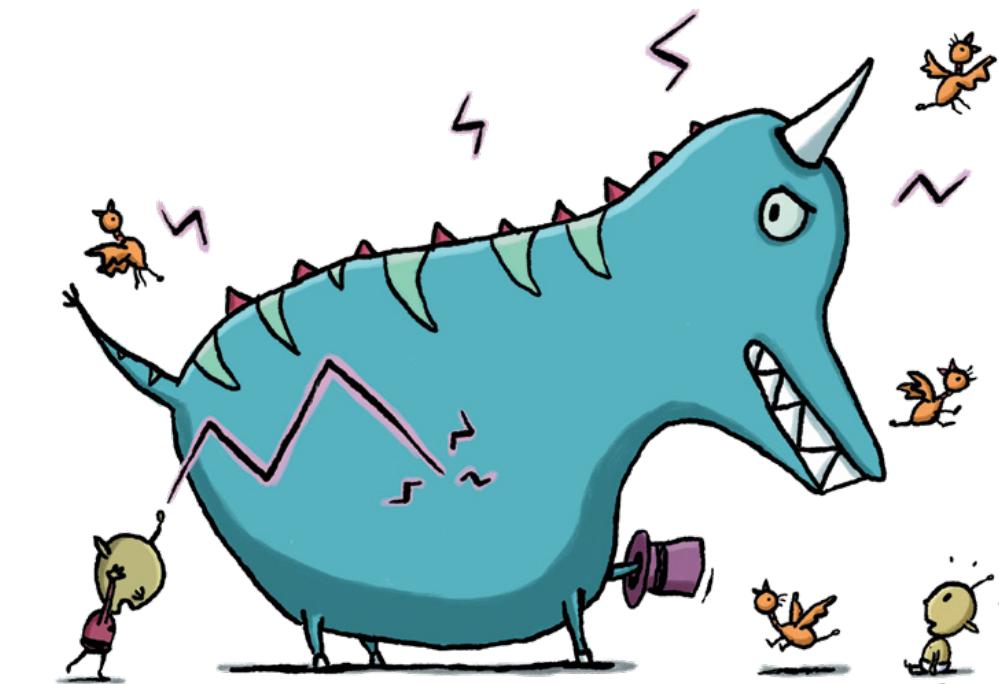
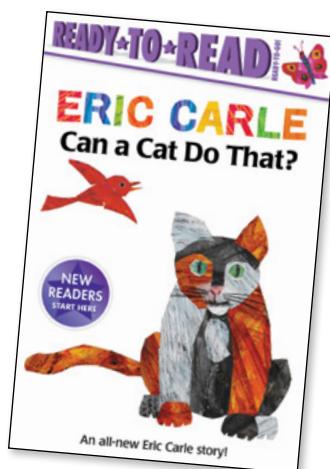
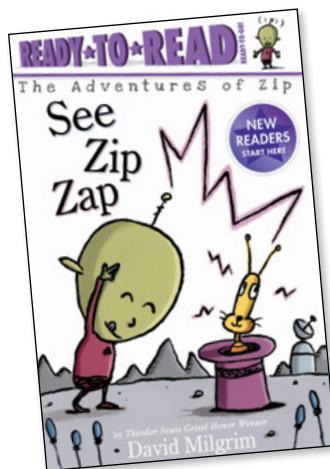
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Beginning Reader: Ready-to-Go Readers

- ★ Encourage students to make predictions by offering them a “preview” of *Can a Cat Do That?* before reading it together. Give each student one large-print line of text from the book. Ask them to walk around the classroom and read their lines to one another. Come back together and ask students to predict what the book will be about. You may want to introduce some of the vocabulary (climb, drink, meow) in advance.

After reading:

- ★ Students will be able to practice reading “-ap” words in *See Zip Zap*. With your students, generate a list of words that rhyme with zap. Students can experiment with words in this word family by forming the letters and words out of Play-Doh. (This activity can also be done for “-ip” words.)
- ★ The budding actors in your class can enhance their reading fluency by performing a puppet show of *Can a Cat Do That?* Creating puppets or finger puppets of the animals mentioned in the book will encourage their artistic creativity and develop their fine motor skills.



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Teaching Ideas: Reading

- ★ Pre-Level One books contain lots of simple words that are great for increasing students' comfort with written text. As you read, run your fingers under the text so students can see that it moves from left to right. Point out various letters and encourage students to identify other words that start with that letter. You may want to declare a "letter of the day" and focus on that letter during reading and other activities that day.
- ★ Rising Star readers are learning to match letters to sounds. Help them develop their phonics skills by pointing out words in a book that are similar, such as sit and sat. Talk about the different sounds in the two words and point out the letters that create the different sounds.
- ★ Before you begin reading a new book, help your Rising Star readers relate to it by connecting it to their own lives and knowledge. The Pre-Level One books have lots of familiar characters, so ask students to share what they already know about the book's main character. Or tell students about part of the plot and let them describe similar experiences they've had.
- ★ As you read, pause periodically to talk about the book. If your students are unclear about something, direct them to the pictures for information. In Pre-Level One books, there is almost always a direct correspondence between the pictures and the words. Help students see this relationship.

Teaching Ideas: Cross-Curricular

Prereading:

- ★ Explain fiction and nonfiction to your students before reading *Space Cows*. As you read the book, have students listen for elements in the story that could be real and elements that are made up. Discuss their ideas after reading.

After reading:

- ★ *Space Cows* is filled with rhyming words, which makes it a great choice for a phonics lesson. Ask students to listen for the rhyming words as you read and record their responses on chart paper. Talk about the words and point out why they rhyme or don't rhyme. Once the students are familiar with the words, add them to your word wall.
- ★ Test what your students know about cows and outer space travel! Show them images of animals who have actually traveled to outer space. Tardigrade water bears are real animals who can actually survive a trip to outer space, outside the spaceship.
- ★ Different sports are demonstrated in the *My First* series. After reading *My First Ballet Class*, *My First Swim Class*, and *My First Karate Class*, have the class vote on which sport they most enjoyed learning about. Work together to create a bar graph that displays the class results.
- ★ Teach your students a quick routine based on the moves explained in *My First Karate Class*. Use this routine to help students transition between classroom activities.

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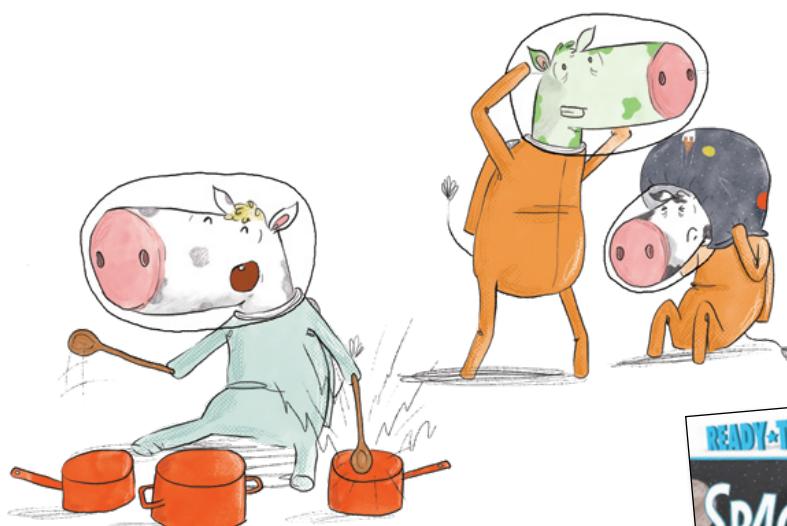


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Pre-Level One Rising Star Readers

Teaching Ideas: Class Activities and Projects

- ★ Send a letter home to student families inviting ballet, swimming, or karate experts to your classroom. Invite them to talk more about the sport, do a demonstration, and teach students some moves.
- ★ Enhance your students' reading experience of *My First Ballet Class* by showing them a video clip of a famous ballet. Introduce them to the music, which can be used periodically to help with transitions or during center time.
- ★ After reading *My First Swim Class*, discuss the importance of pool and beach safety. Invite a life-guard to your classroom to discuss swim safety. (If a lifeguard is not available, dress up as one and deliver the lesson yourself!)
- ★ *Space Cows* is filled with many different kinds of cows. Discuss the characteristics of the cows in the story, and review some of the shapes that the illustrator used to draw them. Ask students to create their own space cows. Offer construction paper, crayons, craft sticks, glue, and children's modeling clay.
- ★ *Space Cows* is a fun, fictional story about cows who have adventures in outer space. Ask students what they think the space cows might do when they land on a planet "near you," as the end of the story indicates. After generating some ideas, ask students to draw a picture of their prediction.



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Teaching Ideas: Reading

- ★ Level One books contain lots of simple words for students to sound out. Teach them strategies to use when they have trouble decoding a certain word. For example, help them recognize common prefixes, suffixes, and word roots. Encourage them to think about what word would make the most sense in the sentence. Draw their attention to the pictures, which often reflect what's happening in the text.
- ★ Level One books also have lots of high-frequency "sight" words. Build a "sight word wall" in your classroom. As students read more books and learn to recognize more words, write them on oak tag strips and add them to the word wall. You may want to devote sections of the wall to various books you read in class. For example, you can hang up a picture of Olivia, and around her, hang the words that the students learned while reading the Olivia books.
- ★ Although Star readers are learning to read words and simple sentences on their own, make sure you still read aloud to them as often as possible. Listening to a fluent reader helps developing readers to build fluency. Level One books often have dialogue, so consider asking guest readers to read different parts. The more models of fluent reading, the better.
- ★ Before your Star readers begin a new book, encourage them to make predictions about it based on the title and cover. Or, have them take a "picture walk" through the book. They should look at the pictures on each page and try to guess at the story line based on the pictures. Having these ideas in mind will give students clues to draw from as they work to decode new words.

Teaching Ideas: Cross-Curricular

- ★ In Robin Hill School's *Butterfly Garden*, Mrs. Connor's first-grade students learn about the life cycle of a butterfly as they watch caterpillars transform into butterflies in their classroom. Teach your students about the life cycle of a butterfly using the stages outlined in the book. Bring the experience to life with a time-lapse video showing actual metamorphosis.
- ★ Mrs. Connor's class butterflies in *Butterfly Garden* are one example of an animal that goes through a metamorphosis. Teach your students about another insect or animal that endures a significant change



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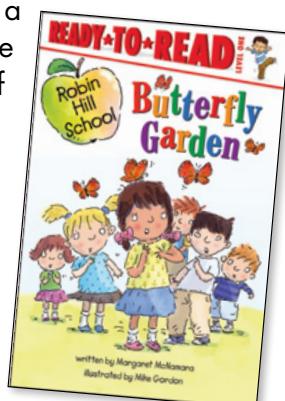
TEACHER GUIDE Level One Star Readers

with photographs, diagrams, and time lapse video clips. (Hint: frogs, ladybugs, and chickens are great examples! Or consider pairing this book with *Violet Fairy Gets Her Wings* by Elizabeth Dennis and illustrated by Natalie Smillie, which mentions silkworms that turn into silkworm moths). Discuss the differences and similarities between the animal you choose and butterflies.

- ★ The first graders in Robin Hill School's *The Garden Project* enjoy a salad from the vegetables they grow in their class garden. Encourage your students to learn more about fruits and vegetables by comparing the seeds of the following foods: oranges, apples (a few different types), strawberries, bananas, grapes, avocados, green beans, and tomatoes. As you cut open the fruits, encourage students to make observations about the seeds, such as where they are located, their texture, and their size. Work together with students to record and display each fruit and the number of seeds they counted.
- ★ After reading the books in the *Wonderful Weather Collector's Set*, create weather-themed paper manipulatives to practice counting and reading number words. Create construction paper clouds and number each from one to ten. Cut out paper raindrops. Students practice counting and number recognition by matching the number on the cloud to the appropriate number of raindrops.
- ★ After reading the books in the *Wonderful Weather Collector's Set*, enhance or introduce a daily weather routine to your students. As part of a morning routine, ask students what they think the weather will be like for the rest of the day. After the class votes, record the weather with the most votes on a monthly weather chart. At the end of each month, review which weather happened the most, the least, and an equal amount of times. Talk about the seasons and the kinds of weather to expect during each season.

Teaching Ideas: Class Activities and Projects

- ★ In Robin Hill School's *Butterfly Garden*, Mrs. Connor's first grade class experiences the metamorphosis of caterpillars into butterflies by watching it happen firsthand. Share a similar experience with your students. Adopt some caterpillars and document the butterfly life cycle with your students as the caterpillars change. Observe the caterpillars each day and use a calendar to mark important events, such as the day you first get them, when each creates a chrysalis, when they move into the butterfly house, and when they finally emerge as butterflies. Encourage your students to draw and write their observations as you add to the class diagram of the butterfly life cycle. Once the butterflies emerge, encourage students to create a final observation and organize their work into butterfly life cycle books.



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TEACHER GUIDE Level One Star Readers

- ★ The butterflies in Robin Hill School's *Butterfly Garden* are one example of a life cycle change. Teach your students about the plant life cycle by creating a labeled diagram with pictures of seeds, germination, roots, stems, and more; include pictures and definitions. Once students are familiar with the concepts, they can work together to create a bulletin board of construction paper seeds, plants, soil, water, and sunshine, with labels to explain the full plant life cycle. Consider pairing this lesson with Eric Carle's *The Tiny Seed*, a Level 2 Ready-to-Read title.
- ★ Experiment with growing vegetables just like Mrs. Connor's students in Robin Hill School's *The Garden Project*. Teach students about what plants need to grow. Use lima beans or another fast-growing seed to demonstrate how to grow a plant indoors. Students can work together to plant the lima beans in small peat pots by adding soil and creating small holes for their seeds. After the seeds are planted, water them and ask the students to select a variety of places in the classroom to put the plants to see where they grow the fastest (the shelf, in a closet, and on the windowsill are great places to try). After a week, visit the plants and ask for student observations and predictions about how the plants grew and why.
- ★ Encourage students to learn about different kinds of fruits and vegetables like the first graders in Robin Hill School's *The Garden Project*. Below are four fun options for engaging your students on this topic:
 - Cut out pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines, grocery store flyers, and seed catalogs. Create rainbow-colored accordion books out of construction paper and include white and brown colors. Students can work in small groups to sort the fruits and vegetables by color, and then glue the pictures to the corresponding color of their accordion book. Name and discuss all the fruits and vegetables. Teach students about the benefits of eating different-colored fruits and vegetables. Consider reading *Rah, Rah, Radishes!* with your class during this lesson.
 - Collect pictures of different fruits and vegetables along with their seeds, divided and stored in small plastic bags. Students can work in small groups to match the seeds with the fruit or vegetable it came from.
 - Create vocabulary cards with the names of different fruits and vegetables. Bring in samples of those fruits and vegetables and have students work in pairs to match the fruit or vegetable to its name on the card. Engage students' senses with this activity by having them close their eyes and identify the vegetable or fruit by touch and smell.
 - Set up a few observation trays with different fruits and vegetables, along with a magnifying glass. Encourage students to discuss their observations about each one.
- ★ After reading *Rain* in the *Wonderful Weather Collector's Set*, involve students in a classroom simulation of how the water cycle works. Using a permanent marker,



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draw a picture of a Sun and a cloud on a small, sealable plastic bag. Add a few drops of blue food coloring to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water, then pour the water into the bag and seal it tightly. Tape the bag to a window (ideally on a sunny day) to watch the water cycle in action! Be sure to point out that the water we have on Earth is the only water we'll ever have; we use it over and over again, which is why it is very important to keep our water sources clean.

- ★ Bring *Rainbow* from the *Wonderful Weather Collector's Set* to life by creating a rainbow in your classroom. Start by filling a jar of water about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Stand near a window and hold the jar above a plain white piece of paper. As the sunlight passes through the jar, it bends or refracts and forms rainbow colors on the paper. Shift your angle and encourage students to notice what happens to the rainbow. Explain to your students that rainbows form in the sky when sunlight refracts (bends) as it passes through water (raindrops). In this case, the water in your jar is like the raindrops in the sky. The sunlight refracts or bends, separating it into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.
- ★ Your students may be very curious about the sun after reading *Sun* in the *Wonderful Weather Collector's Set*. Here are two fun activities to help them explore this topic:
 - Remind them that looking at the sun directly could hurt their eyes, but there is a way to observe the Sun using a simple pinhole camera. Pinhole cameras can be made from common items around the home, such as potato chip canister tubes and aluminum foil. Make a few of these for your class and take your students outside at different times of the day to observe the sun. Considering pairing this lesson with parts of *The Science of Fun Stuff: Looking Up! The Science of Stargazing* by Joe Rao and illustrated by Mark Borgions, a Level 3 Ready-to-Read, which shares more sophisticated information about the sun along with information about eclipses and how to create a pinhole to view a solar eclipse safely.
 - Create a model to demonstrate the size difference between the Earth and the Sun by comparing an official NBA-sized basketball (the Sun) to a grain of sand (the Earth).



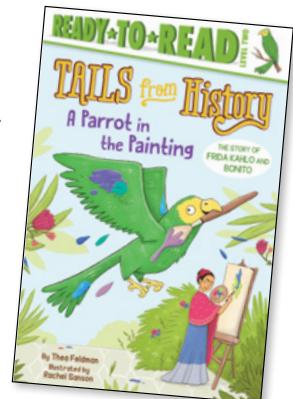


Teaching Ideas: Reading

- ★ Use the high-interest words in Level Two books to help SuperStar readers develop their vocabularies. Stop and talk about the interesting words that come up while students read. Discuss what each word means and have students name other words with similar meanings. Point out key parts of the word's spelling, such as common prefixes, suffixes, or roots. Challenge students to use the word in other contexts.
- ★ The longer sentences in Level Two books are great for teaching fluency. Choose a long sentence, write it on the board, and draw slash marks between the groups of words that should be read together as phrases. Then model reading with clear phrasing, speed, and tone. Let students participate by echo reading and then choral reading the sentence.
- ★ The books in Level Two are longer and sometimes contain simple chapters. At the end of a chapter, help monitor students' comprehension. Ask them which parts they found confusing or didn't understand. Model strategies for improving comprehension, such as re-reading, reading ahead, paraphrasing, or asking questions.

Teaching Ideas: Cross-Curricular

- ★ Translate the animal words in *A Parrot in the Painting* into Spanish, and practice saying and reading them with students.
- ★ After reading *A Parrot in the Painting*, show your students an image of Frida Kahlo's painting *Self-Portrait with Bonito*. Ask students to discuss the differences between the painting and the illustrations of Frida and Bonito in the book.
- ★ *Living in... Mexico* mentions artwork from the Aztecs as well as Diego Rivera. Show your students some examples of Aztec art and Rivera's paintings. Discuss the similarities and differences between them.
- ★ *Living in... Mexico* mentions the importance of the Día de los Muertos or Day of the Dead holiday in November. Share some additional information about this holiday with your students. Día de los Muertos is a time for remembering loved ones who have died and a celebration of death as a human experience. Discussing the use of the calavera (skull) can offer a different perspective on skeletons and the human body, especially for students who may be afraid of the more macabre images associated with Halloween.



Teaching Ideas: Class Activities and Projects

- ★ Encourage students to create their own self-portraits, just like Frida Kahlo in *A Parrot in the Painting*. Set up a station with a large mirror and different shades of skin-colored paper and crayons. Give students the option of posing with a prop or stuffed animal if they'd like to!
- ★ In the book *A Parrot in the Painting*, Frida Kahlo spent time painting what she saw every day. Show your students some images of Frida Kahlo's self-portraits such as *Self-Portrait with a Monkey*, *Itzcuintli Dog with Me*, and *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*. Encourage students to discuss the following questions with a partner. Why do you think she painted herself in different ways in her self-portraits?

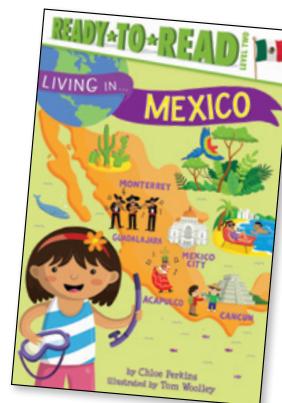
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TEACHER GUIDE Level Two Superstar Readers

Why do you think she included animals in some of her portraits? Would you include something extra in your self-portrait? What would it be?

- ★ In the book *A Parrot in the Painting*, Frida includes animals like a monkey, cat, and birds in her self-portraits. Encourage students to get to know one another by bringing in an artifact that represents some aspect of their identities. Create a display for the class.
- ★ Read *Living in... Mexico* and introduce students to map reading. Look at a map of Mexico and label the different regions with vocabulary such as rain forests, mountains, deserts, beaches, and plateaus. Show photographs of each of these landscapes in Mexico. Discuss the weather and animals that live in each region.
- ★ Rosa enjoys different kinds of food in *Living in... Mexico*. Discuss these and other Mexican foods with your students. Take a class vote on their favorite Mexican foods and bring in some samples for the class to share.
- ★ The Tails from History series shares stories about famous historical pets like monkeys, raccoons, and Akita puppies. In small groups, ask students to come up with an unconventional class pet. Then have them give a presentation to the class on why that particular animal would make a fitting pet for their classroom.
- ★ After reading the Living in... series, get your students thinking like historians by exploring the differences and similarities between the countries they read about. On large chart paper, draw a sketch of each country in the Living in... series and record what students learned about the geography, history, and culture of each country. Enhance student understanding of each nation by sharing artifacts from each country, like photographs of famous places, historical figures, and artwork. Show short videos of what school is like in each country and the sports they play. Record international holidays on your classroom calendar and prepare some traditional celebrations.
- ★ After reading the Living in... series, get your students thinking like historians by analyzing how aspects of life are connected to a country's geography. Use a large world map to show the geography of each country. For each country featured in the series, compare the jobs people have, the food they eat, recreation activities, and native wildlife. Use the information from the books to find similarities among the countries.



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TEACHER GUIDE Level Three Megastar Readers

Teaching Ideas: Reading

- ★ Level Three books challenge MegaStar readers with complicated plots and characters. Students reading at this level should begin monitoring their own comprehension. As they read, have them take simple notes about parts they don't understand. Then have them determine which comprehension strategy would best answer each of their questions: re-reading, reading ahead, paraphrasing, or asking questions.
- ★ Improve students' comprehension of Level Three books by having them respond to the books orally and in writing. Have students write down what they liked and didn't like about each book, and why. Then have them share their responses in small groups or as a whole class.
- ★ Books at Level Three expose students to a variety of challenging vocabulary words. Have students keep "vocabulary notebooks." In these notebooks, they should keep a list of new words they learn while reading new books. For each word, students can include a brief definition, the sentence in which it's used in the book, and an original sentence that uses it. Have students divide their lists into sections based on which book the words came from.
- ★ The sentences in Level Three books often have complex structures. If students are having trouble following a sentence, encourage them to divide it into phrases, or groups of related words, before reading it. Dividing a long sentence into short phrases will make it easier to manage.

Teaching Ideas: Cross-curricular

- ★ In *Secrets of American History: Fearless Flyers, Dazzle Painters, and Code Talkers!*, we read about how Choctaw Native Americans used "code talking" to help soldiers send and receive messages their enemies wouldn't understand during World War I. Challenge your students to use code to convey their own secret messages. Some codes to try: substituting numbers for letters, creating a cipher wheel, or a pigpen cypher.
- ★ After reading *Secrets of American History: Fearless Flyers, Dazzle Painters, and Code Talkers!* look at maps depicting the world both before and after World War I. Highlight the countries involved, and ask students to make observations about how the war affected the participating nations.
- ★ Students learn about Lin-Manuel Miranda in a volume of the You Should Meet series. Ask students to do basic research on Alexander Hamilton to compare and contrast Lin-Manuel Miranda's immigration story to Alexander Hamilton's.
- ★ After reading *You Should Meet: Lin-Manuel Miranda*, explain that Lin-Manuel Miranda used primary sources to write raps for the Broadway musical *Hamilton*. Share a primary source that connects to your social studies curricula. Ask students to work in pairs to write a short rhyme about the subject in the primary source. For an added challenge, ask students to leave out the name of the person or topic from the rap to see if their classmates can guess the topic based on the rap or poem they wrote.



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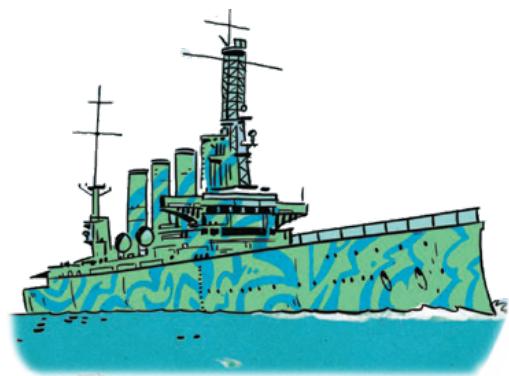
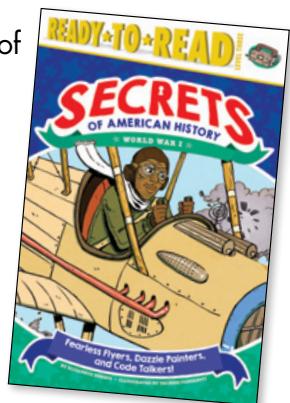


TEACHER GUIDE Level Three Megastar Readers

- ★ Lin-Manuel Miranda was so inspired after reading a biography of Alexander Hamilton that he began writing an entire musical about him. Ask your students if there is a person they've learned about who inspires them? (Consider prompting them with Mae Jemison, Jesse Owens, and the others highlighted in the You Should Meet Series). Have your students create a poem or song detailing events of that person's life. For more information about the Revolutionary War, read *Secrets of American History: The Founding Fathers Were Spies!* with your class, which includes a chapter involving Alexander Hamilton and invisible ink.

Teaching Ideas: Class Activities and Projects

- ★ One major theme in *Secrets of American History: Fearless Flyers, Dazzle Painters, and Code Talkers!* is acknowledging the people who did not get credit for their accomplishments because of discrimination. Below are two activities to help students discover and think about these people.
- ★ Give students the opportunity to learn more about the people and groups who have been overlooked in history books.
- ★ Ask students to work in small groups to discuss real life situations related to fairness. Assign roles to each student in the group so they are prepared to present their stories and viewpoints to the class. Suggested roles include: a recorder who writes down everyone's ideas, a leader who makes sure everyone participates, a presenter who shares the group's ideas with the whole class, and a timekeeper who keeps everyone on track.
- ★ One theme in *Fearless Flyers, Dazzle Painters, and Code Talkers!* is how wartime can help inspire new inventions such as the periscope and Dazzle painting. Ask students to think of a problem they currently face in their school or community and brainstorm some inventions that might solve it.
- ★ Students may be very curious to hear songs from the Broadway musical *Hamilton* after reading You Should Meet: Lin-Manuel Miranda. Below are four exercises involving components of the musical:
- Choose a song from *Hamilton*, such as "Right Hand Man," and do a close reading with your students. Ask students how the George Washington in the song compares to the version of George Washington they've heard about.
 - Show your students a video of the *Hamilton* cast performing at the White House. Be sure to review the songs first to make sure the language and topics are appropriate for your students.
 - Give your students the opportunity to perform a song from *Hamilton*. Choose a song from the musical and encourage student groups to work together to perform it. Be sure to review the songs to make sure the language and topics are appropriate for your students.
 - Encourage students to stay motivated to reach their academic goals by making a connection to Lin-Manuel Miranda's song "My Shot." Encourage students to think about what he means by saying "I'm not throwing away my shot." Ask students to make lists of things they will do to make sure they don't "throw away [their] shots."



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