

READING BENCHMARKS

What you need to know or be able to do.

Learn How To:

1. Select and use strategies to understand words and text, and make and confirm inferences from what is read, including interpreting, diagrams, graphs and statistical information.
 - Speaking in plain English, here is what this first benchmark means: First, you need a few good strategies, or methods, for reading any story or article. Second, you need to draw reasonable conclusions or inferences that go beyond what is actually stated by an author. Third, you need to interpret graphic kinds of information....diagrams, graphs, and tables.
2. Recognize the use of comparison and contrast in a text.
 - Authors of fiction often compare the characters in a story, showing how they are either alike or different. Authors of newspaper and magazine articles may explain how one idea differs from some other idea. As you read, you need to be aware when such comparisons are made.
3. Determine the main idea and identify relevant details.
 - Authors of magazine articles and essays often have one idea that is supported by several facts or details. Think of the author's main idea as a forest and the trees in a forest as supporting details. You need to know how the specific details in an article or story point to a larger idea – the main idea.
4. Determine methods of development and their effectiveness in a variety of types of written material.
 - Authors have various ways of presenting their ideas in a story or article. To be proficient at reading, you must quickly see which method of development an author has chosen to use.

5. Determine the author's purpose and point of view and their effects on the text.
 - Of course, every author does have a good reason for writing. But the purpose for writing a story, novel, or poem is completely different from the purpose for writing an informational article. Every author also looks at a subject from a personal point of view. He or she probably won't say: "I hate such and such" or "I love so and so". But a good reader can always tell whether an author feels positively or negatively by the way words and phrases are used.
6. Locate, gather, analyze and evaluate written information for a variety of purposes – including research projects, real-world tasks, and self-improvement. Also use appropriate study and research skills and tools.
 - This benchmark concerns only the nonfiction books and articles that you once checked out of the school library or downloaded from the Internet in order to complete a school assignment. Have you done your homework for school projects: Then you have learned how to match a particular type of article to a particular topic for research.
7. Analyze the validity and reliability of primary source information and use the information appropriately.
 - From history classes, you may remember how primary sources differ from your textbook.
8. Synthesize information from multiple sources to draw conclusions.
 - To synthesize is to look at two or more readings and find ideas in them that are related or connected.
9. Recognize cause-and-effect relationships in a literary text.
 - Authors of stories and biographies rarely tell the reader that event A causes event B. The reader needs to look for clues about a character's motives for acting and reacting in certain ways.

10. Analyze the effectiveness of complex elements of plot, such as setting, major events, problems, conflicts, and resolutions.
 - When reading any story, you need to look for the problem or conflict that motivates the characters and keeps the story's plot (or plan of action) moving toward a resolution.