Children’s Self-Selection of Books: What Reasons do Children Give for Their Choices?

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CHILDREN'S SELF-SELECTION OF BOOKS:
WHAT REASONS DO CHILDREN GIVE FOR THEIR CHOICES?

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by
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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to discover the reasons why children choose the books they do, and to see if there was a difference in responses among first, third, and fifth grade students.

Ninety first, third, and fifth grade students participated in the task of choosing one book from several others displayed on a table. The students were asked why they chose that book. Responses were tabulated and descriptively analyzed. Results indicated familiarity with the book as the most popular reason for book choice across all three grade levels. All three grade levels had four common categories noted in the top five reasons for choosing a book. These included: familiar, animals, appearance, and humor.

Out of 142 total responses given by all three grade levels, 116 came from within these five common categories: familiar, animals, appearance, sports, and humor. Only 26 responses differed among the three grade levels.
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CHAPTER I
Statement of the Problem

Purposes

The purposes of this study were to discover the reasons why children choose the books they do, and to detect any differences in responses among grade levels one, three, and five.

Questions

(1) Why do children choose the books they do?
(2) Is there a difference in responses among first, third, and fifth grade students?

Need for the Study

"Evidence is being accumulated of the intangible value connected with allowing the child to select his own reading materials. This is the concept of self-selection" (Barbie, 1953, p. 488). Kellerman (1991) mentions how important 'self-selection' is for children. Allowing children to choose their own reading material, regardless of the difficulty of the material, permits and encourages an everlasting interest in reading.
Barbie (1963) agrees that, "Children should be allowed to read materials for a variety of reasons, regardless of the level of the material" (p. 488).

Anderson, Higgins, and Wurster (1985) mention, "Two factors may be critical to the development and continuance of recreational reading behavior--interest in content, and the difficulty of the text. Youngsters are unlikely to continue reading if the book is of little interest or requires too much effort. Conversely, books which fill an interest need and can be read easily are likely to start children on the reading habit. Thus, the book selection decisions each child makes, or is helped to make, are crucial" (p. 326).

Children will be impassioned to read if they are equipped with inviting materials in many reading levels from which they can make their own book selections (Smith and Becher, 1950). Other benefits of self-selection include: growth in reading skills, immersion in a great number and variety of virtuous books, and the fact that children's "...individual differences are provided for with its wide range of interesting books at different levels of difficulty" (Smith and Becher, 1950, p. 88).

Morrow and Weinstein (1960) conducted a study to determine if children's voluntary use of library centers and their reading attitudes could be affected positively
by embracing a literature program emphasizing the pleasure and enjoyment of books. Findings showed that voluntary use of the library center, among all students regardless of reading ability, significantly increased especially during free-choice time. “Although previous research has shown that voluntary readers tend to be those who can read well, the results of this study demonstrate that a supportive literary environment can attract even poor readers to literature” (p. 342).

It, therefore, becomes of utmost importance for teachers to encourage children to select books in areas of their interests, thus “creating situations conducive to effective reading” (Bernstein, 1955, p. 288).

Teacher's knowledge of reading interests are of significant importance for instruction of reading to children of all grade levels. “One of the most sensible assumptions of reading teachers is that students are more likely to learn to read and enjoy it if what they read interests them and excites them. Determining what interests children requires serious, ongoing research” (Leibowicz, 1983, p. 184).

Bruneau (1985); Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988); Martinez and Teale (1988); Messina (1979); and Witty, Coomer, and McBean (1946) all emphasize the great importance of teachers' knowledge about their students' reading interests. Messina (1979) tells us
that "fitting the book to the child cannot be done unless interests and dislikes are known" (p. 3). This knowledge can be acquired easily through an informal instraument called a reading interest category inventory. The results of the inventory might enlighten teachers to the many book categories in which students are interested.

Teachers tend to know and to understand the various reading materials available for youngsters. If teachers know what their students' interests are, then "positive attitudes, amount of reading, and reading achievement" (Campbell, Griswold, and Smith, 1988, p. 166) can be utilized. Teachers may need to illustrate for students the many ways in which reading can serve them in order to peak their interest (Bruneau, 1986). Teachers can help create new interests in their students by having a library of books right in the classroom (Martinez and Teale, 1988).

Once a library is incorporated into the classroom, children will learn to develop their own interests, "preferences, tastes, and methods of selection" (King, 1967, p. 320). Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988) and Porter (1974) remind us that children need to learn to love reading. This can be done by saturating the child's environment with a variety of reading materials at different reading levels as well as
several categories of interest.

"It is contended that the challenge 'to get the right book to the right person at the right time' can be met only if educators know children's reading interests or preferences" (Chiu, 1973, p. 369).

When we observe the selection of books students make, we are gaining important information regarding the interests of these children (Wolfson, 1960). There is, however, one final piece of information teachers need after detecting their students' reading interests. This very important piece of knowledge is the question, WHY? Teachers should question why a particular book was chosen so that future enrichment can be realized.

**Definition of Terms**

**Preference:** A preference is a readiness to receive one object as against another; it does not induce us to seek out that object (King, 1967, p. 313)

**Interest:** An interest is a characteristic disposition, organized through experience, which impels an individual to seek out particular objects, activities, understandings, skills, or goals for attention or acquisition (Witty, 1960, p. 469).

**Self-Selection Reading Program:** Children choose their own books to read. Skills are taught on an
individualized basis using that particular piece of literature. Olson (1984) remarks that, "as long as the freedom to return the book selected is presented, self-selection is fine for those choosing more difficult books" (p. 4).

Individualized Reading Program: This is a reading program where children learn to evaluate their own growth and also learn to recognize the skills in which they need help (Smith and Becher, 1960).

Limitations of the Study

(1) The fact that the students were forced to choose a book from researcher-selected variables may have been a restraint.

(2) Since students came from different classes and grade levels, their previous immersion with literature in the classroom may have given some students an advantage in their knowledge of different books.

(3) The presence of a tape recorder may have inhibited some responses.
Summary

This study investigated reasons why children choose the books they do. It also attempted to acknowledge any differences in responses among students in first, third, and fifth grade.

Teachers can learn about their students' interests by observing their self selection of reading materials. However, much more valuable information can be gained about students' reading interests if teachers would just ask one question, Why did you choose this book?
CHAPTER 11
Review of the Literature

Identifying Reading Interests in Children:

It is often assumed that a person's reading interests will be controlled by the kind of person he is, activities in which he engages, and topics about which he thinks and talks. A topic preferred by one person may very well be expelled by another. "Readers' preferences will change as new interests, reflecting increased maturation, are developed" (King, 1957, p. 314).

Educators need a general understanding of children's interests. King (1957) refers to this general understanding as a "knowledge of trends" (p. 324) in children's preferences toward books. Weintraub (1959) suggests that teachers attempt to learn the reading interests of every child in their classrooms and then strain to locate a gross accumulation of reading materials to fulfill those distinctive yearnings. Knowledge of children's interests may aid teachers in meeting the need "to get the right books to the right person" (Chiu, 1973, p. 372).

There are many ways to go about understanding what those reading interests are. Messina (1979) proposes several methods. "Among them are forced
choice, personal interviews and questionnaires, written logs, diaries, inventories, records of library choices, requests for lists of favorites and recall of favorite story titles" (p. 2). King (1957) also suggests studying attitudes of children, "reasoning that a child's attitude toward reading is of prime importance in learning to read and in establishing habits of reading" (p. 312).

Once interests are established, in many ways it becomes the teacher's responsibility to broaden those interests. The foresight of children's interests offers a fruitful opportunity for teachers in creating reading experiences and employing a strong impulse for learning (Howes, 1963). Barbie (1953) offers, "This may be done either through the use of materials on related topics, by reading books by the same author, or by assignments to groups" (p. 490). Blair (1974) stresses that we must plant the seed of reading interests in children as soon as instruction of reading begins.

A teacher's fervent passion toward literature is a crucial element in the evolution of students' reading preferences (King, 1957). Teachers need to model their own interest and love of reading in order for children to learn to develop theirs (Barbie, 1963). In agreement, King (1967) points out that, "The reading interests with which children come to school are our
opportunity, but the reading interests with which they leave school are our responsibility” (p. 324).

Teachers who can instill everlasting interest in reading have definitely done their job. “The child may then continue learning, even without the help of the teacher, and his education will continue throughout his life” (Barbie, 1963, p. 490).

Interest or Preference? They are not the same:

Whitty (1950) summarized interests in the following statement: “As interest is a learned motive which drives the individual to act in accordance with that interest. It is defined as preoccupation with an activity when the individual is free to choose. When the child finds an activity satisfying, it continues to be an interest” (p. 459).

Kopel (1963) cited Getzels who made the following helpful distinctions between interests and preferences. He used the following analogy:

I have a preference for broccoli over asparagus. I have no interest in either. The difference between a preference and an interest is that the preference is relatively passive, while the interest is inevitably dynamic. A preference is a readiness to receive one object as against another; it does not induce us to seek out particular objects and activities (p. 500).
Spangler (1983) relates these definitions to reading. An interest in reading is directly related to behavior, while preference is just an expression of attitude. "Preferences are not active in the sense that interests are; rather they simply indicate a willingness to look at one type of book as opposed to another" (Weintraub, 1959, p. 555).

Researchers strive to conduct interest, preference, and attitude studies in an attempt to formulate criteria by which choices are made. Interest studies "assess and describe actual reading behavior" (Spangler, 1983, p. 877). When estimating attitudes, subjects do not necessarily need to read the books. Information can be accumulated when subjects express their opinions based on controlled variables. Methods used in gaining data include: interviews, forced choices, semantic differentials, questionnaires involving ranking, and observations of behaviors, such as pointing to a picture (Spangler, 1983). Preference studies are theoretical in nature. "They use experimental controls to explore causes of interest patterns. Responses elicited in a preference study are generally hypothetical choices children make between controlled stimuli that are inferred to be indicative of
potential behavior” (Spangler, 1983, p. 877).

Regardless of which view is being examined, attitudes, interests, or preferences, it is of critical importance to utilize that information in the classroom.

An Explanation of the Individualized Reading Program:

Reading, taught through an individualized approach, reaps many rewards both in and out of the classroom. Such a program allows children to evaluate their own growth as well as to learn to recognize the skills they need help in (Smith and Becher, 1950). Porter (1974) suggests that children who learn to read from an individualized reading program tend to have a much more extensive range of reading interests. “This could be due, in part, to the fact that they have experienced a greater variety of reading material and found it enjoyable, whereas the children in a basal reading program are exposed to editor-selected stories which does not appear to broaden their reading interests” (p. 1004). Howes (1953) suggests:

Teachers and pupils who have tried the individualized approach are enthusiastic about results. Teachers note increased pupil interest in reading. Children want to read regardless of how they rank in reading level. There is more self-initiated reading and children make increasingly better selections of reading materials.
Teachers rarely have to remind them to read, and parents, too, soon notice the difference in their children's attitudes toward reading (p. 494).

Research Studies and Findings:

Several studies have been conducted in an attempt to determine children's reading interests (Bernstein, 1955; Blair, 1974; Bruneau, 1986; Chiu, 1973; Gallo, 1984; Olson, 1984; and Watson, 1985). Major findings include:

(1) interests change as new ones develop
(2) T. V., movies, and so on, may play a role in changing reading interests
(3) primary age children prefer fairy tales, realistic stories based on everyday activities, and animal stories
(4) older children prefer mystery, adventure, animal stories, family life stories, and sports
(5) there are few sex differences in reading interests before age nine
(6) differences in reading interests after age nine:
   (a) boys read more non-fiction
   (b) girls read more poetry
   (c) boys have a wider range of interest
   (d) girls will read books of interest to boys but the reverse is seldom true
(7) personal recommendation ranks high in book selection
(8) children prefer stories with a good plot, much action, and humor
(9) there is a strong correlation between reading
interest and reading comprehension

All studies allude to the wide range of preferences and interests of children. "No single category will supply all the pupils with what they want to read about or what they will read about. Indeed, within one given category, the interests may be as diverse as any other measurable factor in a particular classroom" (Weintraub, 1969, p. 659).

Leibowitz (1983) did an extensive review of research surrounding children's reading interests. He found the following trends in children's preferences:

(1) Books in which main characters confront a problem and seek a solution
(2) Plots that are episodic, revealing the stories incident by incident
(3) Plots that focus on characters with different points of view or characters who experience the same thing in contrasting ways
(4) The genre of fantasy, followed by realistic fiction, and folktales
(5) Books that give animals human qualities
(6) Books that contain humorous characters and situations
(7) Books by author/illustrator Tomie De Paola (p. 185).

Messina (1979) conducted a study to determine the relationship of the expressed reading interests of
fourth grade students to their free selection library book choices. This was accomplished by using a reading interest category inventory, indicating likes and dislikes, and tabulating library book choices. Analysis of data disclosed a moderately positive correlation of .54, significant at the .01 level of confidence, between free selection of books and expressed reading interests.

Kellerman (1991) conducted a study to determine why students were rejecting books recommended by their teachers for independent reading assignments. Results indicated students were rejecting teachers' recommendations because students' interests were being ignored.

Weiss (1982) observed 145 third and sixth grade children’s preferences in three different areas of format related to the printed page: page size, type size, and the illustration’s position on the page. The results concluded that type size was most important (51%), page size was considered second most important (43%), and position of the illustration was the least important (36%). King (1967) also found that children, “prefer larger type and a page which is uncluttered” (p. 319).

Bruneau (1986); Kellerman (1991); King (1967); Leibowicz (1983); and Wolfson, Manning, and Manning
(1984) are all in complete agreement with the fact that reading interest is highly correlated with increased comprehension. "High interest materials will be more pleasurable to students and they will engage in reading for longer periods of time. Students will more fully comprehend materials of high interest to them than materials of low interest" (Wolfson, Manning, and Manning, 1984, p. 4).

Bernstein (1955) conducted a study to determine if there was a difference in the comprehension of students when reading selections were both interesting and uninteresting and were of comparable difficulty. It was concluded that students read the more interesting material with superior comprehension.

It does appear that interest is significantly related to increased achievement particularly in reading comprehension. "It has been shown that the interest which the child has in the material read will influence his or her ability to read it" (Watson, 1985, p. 2). Therefore, teachers should provide a wide range of books at different reading levels in all interest areas. Wolfson, Manning, and Manning (1984) remind us that, "Teachers should not constrain children's choices of books to read. Through peer-interaction activities and other procedures, teachers can encourage children to read and to extend their reading interests and thus to
broaden their world” (p. 10).

Morrow and Weinstein (1985) completed a study to determine if children’s voluntary use of library centers and their attitudes toward reading could be positively affected by implementing a literature program accentuating the pleasure and enjoyment of books. Questionnaires and observations were used to appraise students’ attitudes and behavior before, during, and after involvement in the program. Results indicated there was a significant increase in the voluntary use of the library center during free-choice time. However, the intervention had no effect on students attitudes toward reading.

**Reasons Why Children Select Books:**

Little is known about how children appraise the books they read. Less is known about why they make those choices to begin with (Dysart, 1984). Norvell (1958) feels that children have definite likes and dislikes, but they can’t explain why. Schlager (1978) agrees, “Children’s choices in literature are not made on a conscious level. No child can verbalize the reasons for his or her selection” (p. 137). Hiebert, Mervar, and Person (1990) noted children usually browse until they find something that looks interesting and exciting. The illustrations were mentioned as the
Many researchers disagree with the findings of Norvell and Schlager. Samuels (1989) found that children could in fact vocalize their preferences in reference to book selections. McGrath (1990) found disagreement with Schlager’s comments about “book selection taking place on an unconscious level and that no child can verbalize the reason for his or her selection” (p. 2). This statement insinuates that children go visionlessly to the shelves and select books with no contemplation or reflective thoughts. Porter (1974) agrees with the belief that children can in fact vocalize the kinds of stories they prefer.

Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988); Gallo (1983); Hiebert, Mervar, and Person (1990); and King (1967) all found that recommendations from peers, friends, adults, and librarians were stated most frequently as reasons for book selections.

Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988); Gallo (1983); McGrath (1990); and Porter (1974) suggest students select books because of a favorite author or familiar illustrator. Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988) and Samuels (1989) suggest students often choose books because of particular subjects or genres.

‘Elementary-age children’s reasons for selecting books are based on personal likes and dislikes of certain
types of books, of authors, of previous experience with a book, or the appearance and appeal of a book, revealing strong influence of previously internalized values” (Campbell, Griswold, and Smith, 1988, p. 177).

Campbell, Griswold, and Smith (1988); Kellerman (1991); McGrath (1990); and Morris (1973) found many reasons for children's book selections:

- interests dominate selections
- had a specific type of book or topic in mind
- had previous experience or interaction with the book
- were familiar with the book
- illustrations were appealing
- physical appearance (cover, title, or length) or general impression with book (it looks good)
- knowledge of author and/or illustrator
- influence of movie or T.V.
- recommendations from peers, adults, or librarians
- series books were also known to influence selection positively

Morris (1973) witnessed second grade children making book selections. It was observed that the title of the book was foremost in selection. The children like a title that tells what the story might be about and hints toward humor or action.

If the student is captured by the title, he will take the book in hand and begin looking at the cover, illustrations, and words. At this point if the words
appear too difficult, the student will reject the book. If the words are acceptable, the child will look for character liveliness and involvement in action. Humor is also a topic of decided interest.

All previous criteria being acceptable, the student selects the book. If, however, the child should lose interest in the book, there is no hesitation to stop reading and to return the book for another selection, repeating the same process until a suitable book is chosen.

Weintraub (1959) and Wolsfon (1960) both elicit requests for further research into the reasons why children select books. "It would be worthwhile to study children's reactions to the books they choose. Selection and real liking for a book may not be identical. The question of why the book was selected may be important to raise" (Weintraub, 1969, p. 657).

Helping Children Make Good Choices:

Norvell (1958) claims teachers need to make frequent inspections into the literature that children enjoy and record this information in cumulative records for future utilization. Kellerman (1991) agrees that teachers should conduct studies or surveys to determine their students' likes and dislikes. This can be accomplished through, "informal student conferences,
interest inventories (published as well as teacher made), conferences with parents, checklists of favorite activities and books, and class discussions” (p. 13-14).

Teachers need to forego the impulse to choose reading materials that concur with their own reading interests and instead make their students' interests the primary requirement in the expansion and endorsement of classroom reading materials.

This is not to suggest that teachers never interject their own interests or their knowledge of good literature in an attempt to spark interest in their students. Kellerman (1991) suggests, “the best chance of encouraging good reading habits lies in-and-before grade four” (p. 12) since most reading tastes are discovered and verified by this age.

Kellerman (1991) cited Shankman who recommends several ways to entice and expand children's interests in reading:

- provide suitable reading matter that is attractive
- provide pleasurable surroundings
- read parts of a book and show pictures
- dramatize parts of stories
- form a book club
- take trips to the library
- make interesting scenes from a story (shadow boxes)
- make pictures to represent scenes of a movie
- review books
- read and have choral reading of poems
- use audio-visual aids (p. 19)

One of the most important things to remember is to provide materials for children on different reading levels and let children make their own choices in selecting those materials. It is hard for teachers to watch a child choose a book which is known to be too difficult. Teachers and librarians can teach what Anderson, Higgins, and Wurster (1985) call the five-finger method. The idea is to “read a page in the book, putting a finger up each time you meet a word you can’t read. If more than five fingers go up on a page, try a different book” (p. 330). However, children should still be free to choose any book regardless of grade level or reading ability.

Summary:
Teachers must observe, question, and survey students continuously to discover what their interests are. It often then becomes the teachers’ responsibility to broaden those interests in order to stretch their students’ knowledge and permit future growth in reading.

Teachers should keep in mind that children may show an interest in a topic but their preferences may
be entirely different. A key suggestion found in the research is to know your students and what their likes and dislikes are.

One way to account for many different interests as well as varied reading levels is to implement an individualized reading program in the classroom. Students are free to choose any book regardless of reading level and are taught the necessary reading skills from that piece of literature.

It has been demonstrated by many researchers (Bruneau, 1986; Kellerman, 1991; King, 1967; Leibowicz, 1983; and Wolfson, Manning, and Manning, 1984) that reading comprehension is greatly increased when the reading material is interesting to the student.

Researchers are torn when asked the question, "Can children tell you why they select books?" It does appear that children have definite likes and dislikes and most can verbalize why a particular book was selected. Recommendations from peers, adults, or librarians was the most popular reason given by children. Having a previous experience with a book, author, or illustrator was also a frequent response given.

The best way to acquaint children with books is for teachers to create a classroom library with varied interest categories in several reading levels.
Children should be free to choose any book without concern for reading ability.

Above all, teachers should question why students select the books they do. This information will reveal very important and much needed clues necessary for the future teaching of reading to our children.
CHAPTER III
Design of the Study

Purposes

The purposes of this study were to discover the reasons why children choose the books they do, and to see if there was a difference in responses among grade levels one, three and five.

Questions

The questions investigated in this study were:
(1) Why do children choose the books they do?
(2) Is there a difference in responses among first, third and fifth grade students?

Methodology

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to obtain the categories (variables) used in the research study to select books.

Subjects for pilot study

The subjects (N=168) for the pilot study consisted of 38 first grade, 63 third grade, and 67 fifth grade students attending an elementary school from a
suburban school district in upstate New York.

Materials for pilot study

The materials for this pilot study included:
- a tape recorder, which was used to record student responses
- self-selected library books.

Procedure for pilot study

The school secretary wrote a brief description of the researcher’s purpose in the teachers' daily newsletter. The teachers were to have notified their students of the researcher's presence and purpose in the school library.

The researcher stood at the checkout counter of the library. As students were checking books out they were asked what grade they were in. If they were in kindergarten, second, or fourth grade the researcher politely said thank you and sat down in an out of the way chair. If the student was in first, third, or fifth grade, the researcher turned on the tape recorder and verbalized the title and author of the book. The researcher then asked, "Why did you choose this book?"

There were an insufficient number of fifth grade students interviewed in the library during the two days it took to complete this pilot study. The researcher had to solicit responses from the fifth graders in their
classrooms. The researcher used the same procedure as that used in the library, with the following additional question, "What was the title and author of the last (or present) book you have read from the library?" The researcher continued with the next question, "Why did you choose this book?" These responses were recorded on the tape recorder.

Analysis for pilot study

The responses collected from the pilot study were tabulated and a comparative analysis was made. From this data the categories (variables) for the research study were chosen.

Research Study

Subjects

The subjects for this study (N=90) were first (N=30), third (N=30), and fifth (N=30) grade students from two elementary schools located in a suburban school district in upstate New York.

Materials

- a tape recorder
- an observation checklist (See Appendix A)
- a variety of books falling into five different categories (See Appendix B)
* The categories used in this study were generated from the pilot study:
(1) animals (fiction and nonfiction)
(2) sports (nonfiction)
(3) series books (fiction)
(4) familiar story (these books changed for each class)
(5) interesting topics (variety of different topics that children may find interesting).

Procedure

The researcher asked three teachers of first grade students, three teachers of third grade students, and three teachers of fifth grade students (N=9) to select the subjects. The selections came from the class list. Every other name was chosen until ten students were picked. The researcher asked the teacher if any of those ten students might be intimidated during the study. The reason being that if a child was to clam up and not talk during the inquiry, then his or her lack of response would slant the results, especially since the students were to be recorded on audio tape.

This criterion was not to include a bias toward (poor) reading ability. No students were rejected because of possible intimidation. In two classrooms an alternate name was added to the list, using the same procedure, because of possible student absence.
Prior to this study the researcher conducted a pilot study in an attempt to discover the categories to be used as for selecting the books that would be provided during the study. The following categories were generated:
- sports, animals, series books, familiar stories, and interesting topics.

After these categories were developed, the researcher asked experienced teachers for opinions on book titles that would fit these categories. This provided reliability for the study. The researcher then asked three experienced teachers in each grade level (first, third, and fifth) their opinions as to whether the books chosen for each category were representative of both the category and the grade level. Thus, interrater reliability was ascertained.

For the familiar story category, five books were selected by each classroom teacher (N=9). These were to be books that have been previously read in class so that each student would recognize the book as being a familiar story. (See Appendix B)

Beginning with the fifth grade students, followed by the third grade students, the researcher walked each student, one at a time, to a room where twenty-six books were set up on a table. (First grade students were observed on a different day because they
attended a different school)

On the way to the room, the researcher and subject got acquainted. The researcher showed the subject a completed thesis and explained that by helping out, the subject was participating in the researcher's thesis and that it would eventually look like the one shown.

The researcher also explained what was going to happen and why. The researcher announced, "We will be walking to the cafeteria. There are several books set up on a table. I want you to take your time and look at all of the books. Feel free to pick up and look through them. After you have had time to browse through all of the books I would like you to answer this question: If you could pick only one of these books, which one would you choose?" The researcher explained that a tape recorder would then be turned on and the following question would be asked, "Why did you choose this book?" The researcher justified, "The only reason I am tape recording your response is so that when I go to analyze the results, I will be able to remember what all the students have told me."

By this time the researcher and subject reached the cafeteria. Upon entering, the researcher said, "Here are all of the books. Remember, take your time and look at all of them. If you could pick just one of
these books to take and read, which one would you choose? Take your time." For a list of all the children's books used in this study see Appendix B.

During this time, the researcher used a checklist to record observed behaviors such as: (1) Did subject look at and read the title and author of the books? yes or no (2) Did subject give equal time to each book or was the choice instantaneous? E or I (3) Did subject appear to be looking at the illustrations? yes or no, and so on. For complete checklist see Appendix A.

Once the subject chose a book, the researcher turned the tape recorder on and noted the book's title and author. The researcher asked the subject, "Why did you choose this book?" Depending upon individual responses some prompting was necessary. The researcher thanked the subject for their input and then continued on with the next student, repeating the previous procedure until all the students completed the task. (First grade students participated in the same task on a different day. The same procedure was used.)

Analysis

The researcher compiled the results from the responses given by using a descriptive analysis of the children's choices. It was the researcher's objective
to discover what variables the subjects used in selecting books and why. The researcher also analyzed the findings to see if there was a difference in responses among grade levels one, three and five.
CHAPTER IV

Findings and Interpretations

Purposes

The purposes of this study were to discover the reasons children choose the books they do, and to see if there was a difference in responses among grade levels one, three, and five.

Results of the Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to obtain the categories (variables) used in the research study. The pilot involved 158 first, third, and fifth grade students. After choosing a book from the library the students were asked why they chose that book. The results for each grade level were tabulated and the following most popular categories emerged: sports, familiar stories, series books, animals, and liked the topic. It was these categories which in turn became the variables used for the research study.
Results of the Research Study

I. First Grade Responses

After choosing the book, thirty first grade children responded to the question, "Why did you choose this book?" Thirteen children (43%) gave only one reason for choosing the book, while seventeen (57%) gave two or more reasons for their choice. The responses were analyzed for similarities and tabulated. The comparable responses were divided into eight different categories (see Table 1).

Table 1
First Grade Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>familiarity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes animals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appearance of book</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes sports</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous/funny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiction story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fantasy story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fourteen children (47%) made their choice very quickly. Eight of these students made their quick choice after briefly browsing the covers of most of the books. The remaining six children immediately picked up the book they wanted without much heed for the rest of the displayed books.

Sixteen children (53%) appeared to give equal time to the majority of the books before making their choice. Most of the children were silent during the task itself, however the following are verbal responses observed from seven students during the task:

* "Do I have to read it to you?"
* "It's pretty hard (to choose)."
* "It's hard to choose. I like all of these books."
* "I like *Reflections* and *The Elephant Tree*. Does it have to be one we know?"
* "I would hate that one (spiders) and that one (snakes) because my mom hated spiders."
* This child immediately chose *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. The researcher asked him if he wanted to look at the rest of the books. He said, "Yes, I would." He then began looking through others. He was very verbal about the books. He picked up a chapter book and said, "oooh a chapter book. It must be a new book." (It was a brand new book)
* This child picked up *Pee Wee Scouts* and looked through it then said, "I certainly don't think
I would pick this one.” He was asked why? In reply he said, “It might be hard to read.” (This child eventually chose *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. His recorded reason for choosing the book was, “I think it would be easy to read.”

The following are some other behaviors observed during the browsing task of the research study:

One student looked through several books. She picked up *My Puppy Is Born* and looked through it. She picked up *The Elephant Tree* and silently read the entire book. She picked up *My Puppy Is Born* once again and finally chose it as her book of choice.

One student was particularly interested in sports books. She would browse the covers until she came to a book about sports. She would pick up the sports book and look through it. She finally picked the book *Soccer* as her book of choice.

After choosing *Arthur’s Tooth*, this student was prepared to start reading it to the researcher. She thought that was part of the task.

Included forthwith are examples of some of the children’s responses to their book choices:

* **Playing With Paper** “It has a nice color.”
* **Football** “It’s my best sport. These are my
best books."

* Nate the Great and the Lost List  "I like Nate the Great books. They are good books."

* Soccer  "When I'm in third grade I'm going to play soccer."

* Sharks  "I got All Abord Books at home and I like to read them. I like sharks."

* Bubble Bubble  "The bubbles turn into animals. I read it in class before."

* Amazing Snakes  "I like to study snakes."

* Sharks  "I like sharks. I like fake stories. It looks like one that I would choose because I like the cover."

* Animal Tracks  "It looks like a good book. I like animals. I looked at the title page."

* Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch  "I like the illustrations. I have read it in class."

* Animal Tracks  "At the end it showed all of the animal footprints. I like to see all different animal footprints."

* My Puppy Is Born  "I think it's cute. I like dogs a lot. I have seen it over my friends house because she has it."

II. Third Grade Responses

After choosing the book, thirty third grade students responded to the question, "Why did you choose this book?" Fifteen students (50%) gave only one reason for choosing a book. The remaining fifteen students (50%) gave two or more reasons for choosing the book. The responses were analyzed and tabulated.
Similarities were noted and the responses were divided into nine different categories (see Table 2).

Table 2

Third Grade Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>familiarity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appearance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes topic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous/funny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes animals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gains information</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>media related</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes sports</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning in school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twelve children (40%) made their choices very quickly. Five of these students made their choice after briefly browsing all of the covers. The remaining seven children made their choices immediately upon entering the room. Eighteen children (60%) appeared to give equal time to the majority of the displayed books before making a choice. Five of these children read the backs of many of the books. Six children briefly looked through every book before
making their choice.

Seven children spoke during the task. The following are the verbal responses observed during the selection process:

* "I don’t know (which to choose)." After choosing Submarines, "I wish I could keep this book."
* "I’m between that one (Babysitter Club Little Sister) and that one (Mouse and the Motorcycle)." She ended up picking the Babysitter Club book.
* (Pointing to a book) "No - because we read this book."
* "I’m having a tough time choosing."
* This student kept pointing to several books and saying, "I like that one."
* "I’ve read this book before (Bunnicula). I’ve read this one" (The Terrible Thing About Third Grade).
* "Can I read the back?"

Included here are examples of some of the responses given by third grade students:

* Submarines "I like to read about how they build them."
* The Buck Stops Here "Tells about President’s history. I like the illustrations. I read it in class."
* Amazing Snakes "Snakes are my favorite animal."
* Disasters "It looks like something I’d be
interested in.”

* **Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs** “We’re learning about weather. I have read it before.”

* **Amazing Snakes** “I like to learn about science. I like interesting stuff.”

* **All About Football** “I like watching football with my Dad. I want to find out about football.”

* **Babysitter Club #2 Super Special-Babysitter’s Summer Vacation** “I am interested in Babysitter Club books. I like the author.”

* **Haunted Houses** “I am interested in haunted things and ghosts.”

* **Amazing Snakes** “I like to learn about snakes.”

* **George Washington Was Not The First President** “It looks interesting.”

* **Babysitter Club Little Sister # 4 Karen's Kittycat Club** “I like kittycats. I watched Babysitter Club on T.V. I am familiar with the author.”

### III. Fifth Grade Responses

After making their choice, thirty fifth grade students responded to the question, “Why did you choose this book?” Fifteen students (50%) gave only one reason for choosing the book. The remaining fifteen (50%) gave two or more reasons for their book choice. The responses were analyzed and tabulated. Similarities were noted and the responses were divided
into ten different categories (see Table 3).

Table 3
Fifth Grade Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>familiarity</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes sports</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appearance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous/funny</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes animals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favorite book/author</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes characters/events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes adventure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes topic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven children (23%) made their choice very quickly. Five of these students browsed over the covers of the books briefly before making their choice.

Twenty three children (77%) appeared to give all of the books equal time before making their choice.

Of the thirty fifth grade children, only eight were verbal during the task. The following verbal statements were observed:

* "Do I have to look through all of them?"
* "Some we have already read in class."
* "We read this in class" (He said this after pointing to several books on the table).
* "Does it matter if it’s one I’ve read?"
* "I’ve read four of these. No five."
* This boy took a long time to choose because he was reading the backs of all the books. He pointed to four different books and said, "I read that."
* One student showed me all of the books he read in class and said, "We read that in class."

Shown here are examples of some fifth grade responses to book choice:

* Babysitter Club #34 Maryanne and Too Many Boys "I like the series. It looked interesting."
* The Twits "It is my favorite author. It was a funny book. We read it in class."
* George Washington Was Not the First President "It looks funny from the cover. I read the back."
* The Kid in the Red Jacket "It looks like a good book. I read it in class."
* Skiing and Snow Sports "I like to ski and I like snow sports."
* Choose Your Own Adventure #70 Invaders of Planet Earth "Looks interesting from the cover."
* Bridge To Terabithia "It is my favorite book I ever read. I like it. I read it in class before."
* Ralph S. Mouse "It is an exciting adventure. I
read it before.”

* Bridge To Terabithia “I like the events and characters. You know, the things that happen. I read it in class.”

* Skinny Bones “I thought it was really funny. I read it in class.”

* Babysitter Club #34 Maryanne and Too Many Boys “I like Babysitter Club books. I read a lot of the series.”

* Charlotte’s Web “I like the spider and Wilbur. I always liked spiders. I read this before on my own.”

IV. Comparing First, Third, and Fifth Grade Responses

After the results of the students’ responses were tabulated a comparative analysis was made (see Table 4).

Table 4
Comparing First, Third, and Fifth Grade Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fifth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like topic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn/school</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like topic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn/school</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like topic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All three grade levels picked familiarity as the most popular reason for choosing a book. First graders (25%) chose a liking for animals as the second most popular reason for choosing a book. Both third (11%) and fifth (8%) graders also choose animals in the top five reasons for book choice.

Four common categories among all three grade levels were noted in the top five reasons for choosing books. Included were: familiarity of a book, a liking for animals, appearance of the book, and humor (funny).

Another common category in the top five reasons for book choice between first and fifth grade students was sports. Third grade students only chose sports twice as the reason for choosing a book.

Third and fifth grade students had gaining information and liked the topic as common reasons although, third graders chose these topics more often than fifth graders.

Summary

Ninety first, third and fifth grade students participated in the task of choosing one book from several others displayed on a table. The students were asked why they chose that book. Results
indicated familiarity with the book as the most popular reason for book choice across all three grade levels. All three grade levels had four common categories noted in the top five reasons for choosing a book. These included: familiar, animals, appearance, and humor.

All the students who participated in this study had definite reasons for why they chose a particular book. These results are in direct conflict with the research of Norvell (1958) and Schlager (1978) who claim children cannot verbalize reasons for their book selections.
CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Purposes

The purposes of this study were to discover the reasons children choose the books they do, and to see if there was a difference in responses among grade levels one, three, and five.

Conclusions

Why do children choose the books they do? The results of this study suggest that children overwhelmingly chose books with which they were familiar. This was noted as the most popular reason given at all three grade levels.

The overall appearance of the book also tended to be of significant importance to book selection. This response was noted among the top five reasons given for book selection by all three grade levels. Some characteristics of a book's appearance that many children found essential were: interesting looking cover, reading the back of the book to see if it sounds like a good book, reading the title page, looking at the
text to see if it is too difficult, and looking at the illustrations.

Another prominent quality found repeatedly among grades one, three, and five was in the category, humor. Many children referred to the book as being a funny story. Others thought the book looked funny from the cover. Most of the children who mentioned humor in their response also said they had read the book previously.

The topic of animals was a popular response and noted in the top five reasons for book choice among all three grades. Books about sports were chosen by all three grade levels although, third grade students chose sports only twice.

Some other reasons for selecting books that were not as popular but just as important included:

* readability of the book
* fiction stories
* fantasy stories
* books that have been seen on television
* books containing content learned in school
* books by a favorite author
* adventure stories
* books where information is gained
* books with engaging characters and events
* books that have an interesting topic

The results noted in this study tend to be similar
to the results of research conducted by Campbell, Griswald, and Smith (1988); Kellerman (1991); Mc Grath (1990); and Morris (1973). The following is a list of the most common reasons for book selection given by children according to Campbell, Griswald, and Smith (1988) and Mc Grath (1990):

- specific type of book or topic preferred
- previous direct experience with book
- physical appearance (title, cover, length)
- movie or television influence
- general impression of book (likes it, looks good)
- knowledge of author and/or illustrator
- recommendation from peers or adults

Responses given in the present study tended to be in agreement with those found by other researchers.

Was there a difference in responses among first, third, and fifth grade students? Results indicated all three grade levels chose books because of familiarity, a liking for animals, appearance of the book, humor and sports. Other common categories between third, and fifth grade students included: like the topic and gaining information from the book.

Differences in responses included: readability, fiction, fantasy (first grade); media, learning in school (third grade); favorite author, like characters and
events, and adventure (fifth grade).

Out of 142 total responses given by all three grade levels, 115 came from within these five common categories: familiar, animals, appearance, sports, and humor. Only 25 responses differed among the three grade levels.

Therefore, it may be assumed that children of all ages and grade levels tend to like books that are familiar, interesting in appearance, about animals, about sports, and/or humorous.

**Implications for Future Research**

Further investigation is needed when it comes to children's book selection. In the present study the subjects were forced to choose a book from researcher-selected variables. Further studies should be conducted using a variety of methods in an attempt to obtain a more genuine and sincere conception of why children choose the books they do.

The results of this study were based on the responses given by 90 first, third, and fifth grade students. Future research should include a larger sample as well as other grade levels. It would be interesting to observe the similarities and differences of responses among children attending school in rural
and urban districts.

According to Porter (1974), future research is needed to determine children’s reading habits as well as the role teachers and librarians have in developing these routines.

**Implications for the Classroom**

The results of this study suggest that children enjoy books with which they are familiar. Teachers can build on this information by obtaining other books written by familiar authors in an attempt to raise interests.

Reading materials should include, but not be limited to books about: animals, sports, humor, books for skill development, for enjoyment, for gathering information, and for satisfying personal needs. These books should include a variety of genres and be available at several different reading levels.

Once reading materials are collected they should be attractively displayed in the classroom. The books should be arranged appropriately so children can browse easily.

It has been demonstrated by many researchers (Bruneau, 1986; Kellerman, 1991; King, 1967; Leibowicz, 1983; and Wolfson, Manning, & Manning,
1984) that reading comprehension is greatly increased when the reading material is interesting to the student.

Teachers of all grade levels should constantly question students as to why they choose the books they do. This information can be enlightening and open many doors within the classroom. Knowing why children choose books can enable teachers to prepare enrichment activities which can extend and amplify reading interests already present.

It is the goal of the classroom teacher to attempt to build and to expand children’s sometimes dormant interests. Teachers can accomplish this by allowing the students to share reading materials with classmates. This can be done through book talks, puppet shows, skits, paintings, sculptures, and dioramas.

Knowing why children choose books is an important step toward building a reading curriculum that will be beneficial for all.
REFERENCES


67, 758-763.


Wolfson, B. J. (1960). What do children say their reading interests are? *The Reading Teacher, 81-82.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A
OBSERVATION CHECK LIST

Grade level  1  3  5

* Did subject appear to look at and/or read the title
  and author of the book?  Yes or  No

* Did subject give equal time to each book or was
  the choice instantaneous?  E  or  I

* Did subject appear to be looking at the
  illustrations?  Yes or  No

* Did subject just browse the covers?  Yes or  No

* Did subject open books and appear to read any of
  the pages?  Yes or  No

* Did subject appear enthusiastic during the task?
  Yes or  No

* Did subject appear apprehensive in making a choice?
  Yes or  No

* Did subject refuse to make a choice?  Yes or  No

* Was subject verbal during the task itself?  Yes or  No

What was said______________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
First Grade Books

**Sports**

- **Baseball** - Broekel
- **Football** - Broekel
- **Basketball** - Rosenthal
- **Soccer** - Rosenthal
- **Skiing and Snow Sports** - Gaff & Jefferis

**Animals**

- **Animal Tracks** - Dorros
- **Sharks** - Wilson
- **Frog and Toad Together** - Lobel
- **The Kid's Cat Book** - De Paola
- **My Puppy Is Born** - Cole

**Series**

- **Lazy Lions, Lucky Lambs** - Giff
- **Nate the Great and the Lost List** - Sharmat
- **Pee Wee Scouts: Spring Sprouts** - Delton
- **Babysitter Club Little Sister #14: Karen's Kittycat Club** - Martin
- **The Great Easter Bunny Adventure** - Packard
Interesting Topics

Science Fun: Simple Experiments and Projects - Nevins
Fire - Patterson
The Planets In Our Solar System - Branley
Digging Up Dinosaurs - Aliki
Playing With Paper - Lynn & James
Earthquakes - Branley

Familiar Books

Class 1
The Chalk Box Kid - Bulla
The Boy Who Was Followed Home - Mahy & Kellogg
Arthur's Tooth - Brown
The Elephant Tree - Dale
Old MacDonald Had A Farm - Cauley

Class 2
Bubble Bubble - Mayer
The Popcorn Dragon - Thayer
Fin M'coul: The Giant of Knockmany Hill - De Paola
Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch - Spinelli
Where the Wild Things Are - Sendack

Class 3
The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Carle
Owl Moon - Yolen
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom - Martin, Jr. & Archambault
Reflections - Jonas
The Elephant Tree - Dale
Third Grade Books

Sports

All About Football - Sullivan
Skiing and Snow Sports - Gaff & Jefferis
Trailbikes and Motorcross - Jefferis
The Picture Story of Wayne Gretzky - Benagh
Kareem Abdul Jabbar: The Story of Lew Alcindor - Buchard
Baseball Basics - Lang

Animals

The Mouse and the Motorcycle - Cleary
Bunnicula - Howe & Howe
Why a Frog Is Not a Toad: Discovering the Differences Between Animal Look Alikes - Pearce
Amazing Snakes - Parsons
Amazing Spiders - Parsons

Series

The Great Easter Bunny Adventure - Packard
Choose Your Own Adventure #51: You Can Make A Difference: The Story Of Martin Luther King Jr. - Bailey
Babysitter Club Little Sister #8: Karen’s Haircut - Martin
Babysitter Club Little Sister #14: Karen’s Kittycat Club - Martin
Babysitter Club Super Special #2: Babysitter’s Summer Vacation - Martin
Interesting Topics

Haunted Houses - Friedman
Disasters - de Mauro
How Do Ants Know When You’re Having A Picnic? - Settel & Baggatt
George Washington Was Not the First President! And Other Crazy Facts About Our Presidents - Waricha
Bomber Planes That Made History - Cooke
Submarines - Gibbons

Familiar Books

Class 1
Ira Sleeps Over - Waber
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - Viorst
Jumanji - Van Allsburg
The Terrible Truth About Third Grade - McGuire
The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs - Scieszka

Class 2
Ox-Cart Man - Hall
Pigs - Munsch
Miss Nelson Is Missing! - Allard & Marshall
The Buck Stops Here - Provenson
The Relatives Came - Rylant

Class 3
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - Viorst
The Pain and the Great One - Blume
Cloudy With a Chance Of Meatballs - Barrett
Thanksgiving at the Tapleton’s - Spinelli
Cranberry Valentine - Devlin
Fifth Grade Books

Sports

All About Football - Sullivan
Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron: The Home Run Kings - Haskins
Isiah Thomas & Charles Barkley - Deutsch
Skiing and Snow Sports - Gaff & Jefferis
Trailbikes and Motorcross - Jefferis

Animals

Harry Cat's Pet Puppy - Selden
Ralph S. Mouse - Cleary
Why Is A Frog Not A Toad? Discovering the Differences Between Animal Look Alikes - Pearce
Amazing Spiders - Parsons
Amazing Snakes - Parsons

Series

Choose Your Own Adventure # 12: Inside UFO 54-40 - Packard
Choose Your Own Adventure # 70: Invaders of the Planet Earth - Brightfield
The Saddle Club #14: Sea Horse - Bryant
Babysitter Club #10: Logan Likes Maryanne - Martin
Babysitter Club # 34: Maryanne and Too Many Boys - Martin
Interesting Topics

Haunted Houses - Friedman
Disasters - de Mauro
How Do Ants Know When You're Having A Picnic? - Settel & Baggatt
George Washington Was Not the First President! And Other Crazy Facts About Our Presidents - Waricha
Bomber Planes That Made History - Cooke
Submarines - Gibbons

Familiar Books

Class 1
J.J. - Wagner
Skinny Bones - Park
The Kid In the Red Jacket - Park
The Great Gilly Hopkins - Paterson
The Twits - Dahl

Class 2
Bridge To Terabithia - Paterson
How To Eat Fried Worms - Rockwell
Babe the Gallant Pig - Smith
The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe - Lewis
Charlotte's Web - White

Class 3
J.J. - Wagner
Skinny Bones - Park
Bridge To Terabithia - Paterson
Babe the Gallant Pig - Smith
The Kid In the Red Jacket - Park