

# Reading Milestones

This is a general outline of the milestones on the road to reading and the ages at which most kids reach them. Keep in mind that kids develop at different paces and spend varying amounts of time at each stage. If you have concerns, talk to your child's doctor, teacher, or the reading specialist at school. Early intervention is key in helping kids who are struggling to read.

## Infancy (Up to Age 1)

Kids usually begin to:

- imitate sounds they hear in language
- respond when spoken to
- look at pictures
- reach for books and turn the pages with help
- respond to stories and pictures by vocalizing and patting the pictures

## Toddlers (Ages 1–3)

Kids usually begin to:

- answer questions about and identify objects in books—such as “Where’s the cow?” or “What does the cow say?”
- name familiar pictures
- use pointing to identify named objects
- pretend to read books
- finish sentences in books they know well
- scribble on paper
- know names of books and identify them by the picture on the cover
- turn pages of board books
- have a favorite book and request it to be read often

## Early Preschool (Age 3)

Kids usually begin to:

- explore books independently
- listen to longer books that are read aloud
- retell a familiar story
- recite the alphabet
- begin to sing the alphabet with prompting and cues
- make continuous symbols that resemble writing
- imitate the action of reading a book aloud

## Late Preschool (Age 4)

Kids usually begin to:

- recognize familiar signs and labels, especially on signs and containers
- make up rhymes or silly phrases
- recognize and write some of the letters of the alphabet
- read and write their names
- name letters or sounds that begin words
- match some letters to their sounds
- use familiar letters to try writing words

## Kindergarten (Age 5)

Kids usually begin to:

- understand rhyming and play rhyming games
- match some spoken and written words
- understand that print is read from left to right, top to bottom
- write some letters and numbers
- recognize some familiar words
- predict what will happen next in a story
- retell stories that have been read to them

## First and Second Grade (Ages 6–7)

Kids usually begin to:

- read familiar stories
- sound out or decode unfamiliar words
- use pictures and context to figure out unfamiliar words
- use some common punctuation and capitalization in writing
- self-correct when they make a mistake while reading aloud
- show comprehension of a story through drawings

## Second and Third Grade (Ages 7–8)

Kids usually begin to:

- read longer books independently
- read aloud with proper emphasis and expression
- use context and pictures to help identify unfamiliar words
- understand the concept of paragraphs and begin to apply it in writing
- correctly use punctuation
- correctly spell simple words
- write notes, like phone messages and email
- enjoy games like word searches
- use new words, phrases, or figures of speech that they've heard
- revise their own writing

## Fourth Through Eighth Grade (Ages 9–13)

Kids usually begin to:

- explore and understand different kinds of texts, like biographies, poetry, and fiction
- understand and explore expository, narrative, and persuasive text
- read to extract specific information, such as from a science book
- identify parts of speech and devices like similes and metaphors
- correctly identify major elements of stories, like time, place, plot, problem, and resolution
- read and write on a specific topic for fun, and understand what style is needed
- analyze texts for meaning

*Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.*

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