



100 Book Challenge Frequently Asked Questions

Why is it called the "100 Book Challenge"?

This name was created when the founder of The American Reading Company challenged her students to start reading more books. Since not every book is the same, instead of counting books, we now count time in 15 minute increments called "Steps". It's truly the "100 **step** challenge." Each "step" is worth 15 minutes of fully engaged reading. Students have goals of reading up to 100 steps about every five weeks. The end-of-the-year goal is 800 steps.

How can I help at home?

The most important thing is to ensure that your child reads 30 minutes each night. If possible, listen to him or her for part of the time. Then, ask about what they have read at the end of each step or the end of the 30 minutes and sign their reading log.

If you want to help even more, look for their skills card in their folder. They will have sight words and/or specific strategies they are working on. For example, a student might be asked to look for certain sight words in the books they read. Or they may have a specific strategy highlighted, such as stopping and re-reading when things don't make sense. Older students may be working on words with Greek and Latin roots or characteristics of a new genre.

How do we fill out the reading log?

Each line represents one 15-minute step. For every 15 minutes a child reads, they should record **one** title on **one** line (even if they read multiple books) and get a parent or teacher signature. There is a box to check next to the signature for steps completed at home.

15 minutes = 1 step and 1 line

30 minutes = 2 steps and 2 lines.

45 minutes = 3 steps and three lines,

60 minutes (one hour) = 4 steps and 4 lines, etc.

What should my child read for 30 minutes?

Students should begin with the books they have brought from school. Each student will pick books from their reading range in the language or languages they are

working on. After that, your child may fill what is left of the 30 minutes with books of their choice.

What if we read chapter books together?

Keep doing it! Just make sure your child is reading the books they brought home from school first. Then go ahead and read for as long as you want from your favorite books. Every 15 minutes counts as one step. If you read the same book for two steps (30 minutes) just draw a line down from the title and sign two steps for that half hour.

What does reading at home look like for young students who are not reading yet, or just beginning?

For students in Kindergarten and other young students who are not yet independent readers, part of their daily reading will include having someone read **to** them. Begin home reading by having your child read the books they brought home from school. Since they will be short, have them read through them multiple times. Encourage them to find words they know or tell the story using the pictures. Reading syllables or sight words from their skills card also counts toward reading for these students. Then complete the rest of your 30 minutes reading and enjoying books of your choice.

Why do some of the books seem so easy?

One goal of this program is to make sure students are reading books that are fast and easy for them during independent reading. Another goal is to increase reading fluency. Each child's level was individually determined in part by finding the level at which s/he could read fluently- with expression, accuracy and as easily as they speak. Some students will work at their beginning level for a short time until they fill in a few gaps in their skills. Ask your child if they know what skills they need to demonstrate to move up to the next level.

Why spend so much time reading "easy" books? Shouldn't they work hard all the time?

A basketball player may spend hours on a court mastering a lay-up so that it comes automatically during the pressure of a game. If the coach wants to teach them a new technique, they don't start out in the middle of a championship game. The books we send home are at students' **independent** reading levels. Young readers need a chance to master new skills within books at their level. Then, they will be ready to apply those skills more easily when they need to handle more challenging materials.

What about weekends?

Students should read a total of 22 steps a week. At school we provide time to read for 30 minutes a day. That leaves 12 steps to be completed at home. If students

read 30 minutes a night during the week, and earn all of their steps at school, they will only need to read one step each day on Saturday and Sunday. If your student has fallen behind, they will need to use the week-end to catch up.

Can my child read more than 30 minutes a night?

Of course! Students can read as many additional steps as they would like. Just make sure they really were reading, ask them to fill out the log and sign off.

My child really wants to read a book that is above their level. What do we do?

In these cases we use the analogy of a “dessert book.” We can’t have dessert for every meal, but it is fine once and awhile. Make sure your child is reading first from their independent level books they bring home from school. Then, they can read some from a *dessert book*. Reading out-loud to your child can count for additional steps as well if there is a book they just aren’t ready to read on their own. Use your judgement in deciding what is appropriate for your child once they have read what comes home from school. Some teachers have more specific requirements limiting how many weekly steps can come from *dessert books*. Check with your child’s teacher if you have more questions.

My child wants to read a book from the library, but I don’t know what the level is. How do I know if it is a good fit for my child?

Since students will be bringing home books from school at their independent reading level, listen to him or her read those books first. This will give you a good idea of what types of books are a good fit for him or her. Even without an official level, remember that independent reading should be *fast, fun and easy*. Students should be able to read as fast as they speak, know nearly every word and understand what is happening easily. This means they understand the humor, notice subtle details and can easily retell what they have read.

My child usually reads books at a level well above average for their grade. Why do they have to read books at their grade level now?

Avid readers who read above grade level can continue to enjoy a wide range of books. They do however need to demonstrate mastery of their grade level standards and read from a range of genres. Their teacher will expect them to do some of their home reading at their grade level, but will also negotiate with students who have a larger range of books that are *fast, fun and easy* for them.

My child has activities some evenings. What if we don’t have time to read for 30 minutes?

Students have at least six hours between the time that school gets out and when they go to bed. Here are a few ideas to help you squeeze 30 minutes of reading into that time.

- Have kids read in the car on the way to and from other activities.
- Have your child read while you prepare dinner.
- Do not allow TV, video games or other electronic media until after reading and other homework is complete.
- Break the 30 minutes into two smaller chunks. One right after school and one after dinner.
- Encourage your child to use the quiet homework time at Amigos after school care to complete steps. The Amigos staff can sign off on steps as well. If you do this, you should still ask about what he or she read and look at their folder and reading log.
- If all else fails, set aside time to read ahead or catch up on the week-ends.