

One of the most important topics in teaching reading is **text selection**, the process by which teachers choose what their students will read.

What students read shapes how and how well they learn to read.



POWER OF TEXT SELECTION

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Checklist for reading text selection criteria

One of the most important topics in teaching reading is text selection, the process by which teachers choose what their students will read. What students read will also determine how well they read it.

Make sure you take the following things into consideration when choosing texts for your students:

- ❑ **What will resonate with your students?** Finding a text that speaks to your students on some level, either life experience or age of protagonist, will better help your students connect with the text. However, that doesn't mean that anything told from the point of view of a protagonist the same age as your students will resonate.
- ❑ **How does setting and context affect how your students understand text?** Texts written in the 19th century, such as *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, are often difficult for students to comprehend because not only is vocabulary challenging or occasionally obsolete, but context clues for students may be difficult to comprehend.
- ❑ **Consider diversity of text and genre.** However, if students read only one type of text or text written during a certain era (say, after 1980), it does not give them the necessary foundation to encounter more challenging texts later in their academic career.
- ❑ **Find the sweet spot between accessibility and difficult texts.** Balancing accessibility and challenge in texts has to be an ongoing consideration for teachers throughout the school year and syllabus. When the criterion is solely accessibility of the text and not greatness, the result is that students who start out as weak readers almost never study the same rigorous texts that imply our highest expectations, and are

almost never offered the opportunity to read and master what's truly considered great, and are rarely asked to push themselves and find that they are indeed capable of bringing great insight to even the most challenging situations.

Consider this common challenge and long-term solution for developing readers:

- ❑ **Archaic text.** Reading archaic text is necessary to a full education, but it is unrealistic to think that students will do so without having practiced reading older texts in a steady, intentional, and, especially, incremental way.
- ❑ **Pre-Complex texts.** A text that provides readers with practical experience with a simpler version of the ultimate challenges posed by complex texts. Pre-complex texts will ultimately prepare students to tackle more complicated books by the likes of Darwin and Dickens. Pre-complex texts can help prepare readers to be more familiar and comfortable with a variety of forms of complexity.

Find more resources about developing reading skills in your students, including our **TEXT SELECTION RUBRIC**, here:

<http://www.teachlikeachampion.com/championreaders/>