



Use the Goldilocks Strategy to Choose Books

by REGIE ROUTMAN



Good readers spend time with easy, “just-right,” and hard books—but mostly “just-right” books. Here are some talking points for book-choosing conversations with your students, covering easy, just-right, and hard books.

Easy Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you answer yes, this book is probably an easy book for you. EASY books help you to read more smoothly and are fun to read aloud and silently.

1. Is it a favorite book that you have read before?
2. Do you understand the story (text) very well?
3. Do you know (can you understand and read) just about every word?
4. Can you read it easily and smoothly?

Just-Right Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you answer yes, this book is probably a “JUST-RIGHT” book for you. “Just-right” books help you learn the most because you can figure out most of the words and you understand what’s going on in the text.

1. Is this an interesting book that you want to read?
2. Are you familiar with the content, author, series, and genre?
3. Can you tell another person what is happening in the story and/or what you’re learning?
4. Do you sometimes need to reread a part to understand it?
5. Are there just a few words per page you don’t know?
6. When you read it aloud, are most places smooth and some choppy?

Hard Books

Ask yourself these questions. If you answer yes, this book is probably a HARD book for you. Spend a little time with it now and learn what you can. Perhaps, someone can read the book to you. Give it another try on your own later (perhaps in several months).

1. Are you interested in reading this book?
2. Are you confused about what is happening in most of this book?
3. Is it hard to understand even when you reread?
4. Do you need lots of help to read this book?

Brainstorm similar criteria with your students. Your own list in “kid friendly” language is always the most meaningful.

For more information:

Reading Essentials by Regie Routman (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH); © 2003. Regie Routman in Residence: Reading/Writing Connections, Session 4, Website. © 2008 by Regie Routman (Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH).

For full information on her work and resources, visit her website www.regieroutman.org and follow her on Twitter [@regieroutman](https://twitter.com/regieroutman)