

Referencing Resources to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks

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This resource-referencing project is one part of a multi-year, multi-segmented, and multi-partnered undertaking called “Establishing Alberta Adult Literacy Benchmarks.” The entire enterprise involves the creation of a provincial set of adult literacy benchmarks and key resources to aid in their implementation. The Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB) is

a tool to effectively describe a person’s reading skill ... It provides information for policy development and consistent ways to report on literacy activity and needs. Having a consistent province-wide reference that identifies reading-skill levels also makes it easier for learners to move from one literacy program to another (in different cities and colleges) and between program levels. The benchmarks are meant to provide a system of standards for identifying reading levels so that people’s skills can be recognized by others. (Roberts 2013, 1)

The umbrella project also includes developing practical teaching strategies for instructors and practitioners and piloting the use of ARB in programs across Alberta.¹

These resource-referencing guidelines will provide practitioners with a “starter list” of instructional resources that can be used at the various benchmarks. They are also a guide for how to determine the benchmark level of other resources. This will allow practitioners to choose various types of resources at appropriate levels for their learners and plan for smooth transitions between levels.

Our aim was to

- produce a list of twenty suitable instructional resources for each reading benchmark level from 1a through 2b. (These will not include assessment resources because those are addressed by a separate project).
- create a guide for practitioners on how to determine which benchmark level other resources correspond to so they can reference other resources on their own.

Project Activities

Four team members represented each of the key stakeholder groups (i.e., community literacy, Aboriginal literacy, family literacy, and college basic education). One of the

¹ Partners in this initiative include Bow Valley College, Literacy Alberta, Community Learning Network, Centre for Family Literacy, Northern Lakes College, Advanced Education and Technology, and Employment and Immigration. The initiative is funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology and will carry out some of the key priority actions of the Government of Alberta’s plan for foundational learning called “Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta’s Next-Generation Economy.”

team members opted to organize a workshop for us instead of participating in the project team. Her position on the team was then filled by another participant from the same category. The participants:

- reviewed the literature for referencing methodologies and presented them to us;
- reviewed and gave feedback on the list of resources;
- reviewed and gave feedback on the outlined process for referencing resources to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks; and
- ranked four resources each from the list of resources we created.

Because the Alberta Reading Benchmarks are based on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) complexity levels, we analyzed many of the benchmarks and frameworks for reading levels throughout Canada and internationally. None of the other reviewed frameworks were referenced to IALS nor did any of them provide guidelines for referencing materials to their own levels or benchmarks.

While it is possible to provide a range of resources that can be used at specific benchmarks, the instructors using this guide will also have to know what tasks, competencies, skills, and strategies a reader will employ at each benchmark. They should keep in mind that many resources can apply at a range of benchmarks, depending on the tasks that learners are doing. As well, skills and strategies with varying complexities from varying levels can be used with resources from several different levels. The literacy practitioner's skill will ultimately decide the success of the tools.

Literature Review

The initial stage of the resource-referencing project was a literature review to examine methodologies for referencing instructional resources to reading levels. The resources for this review were chosen because of their Canadian content, their applicability to adult literacy, their reference to the IALS scales of complexity, their use of a benchmark or levels framework, or their discussion of the cognitive development levels in learning to read. We reviewed the following resources:

- Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) (Australian Dept. of Education 2012)
- Alberta Reading Benchmarks
- Writing @ CSU (Colorado State University) (Walker, Kiefer, and Reid 1994-2012)
- *Companion Tables to the Canadian Language Benchmarks* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks 2006)
- *Community Literacy Benchmarks: Reading Benchmarks* (Literacy BC 2008)

- *Learning a Living: First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey* (OECD and Statistics Canada 2005)
- *Living Literacy: A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next-Generation Economy* (Alberta Advanced Education and technology, n.d.)
- *Monitoring and Assessment in Community-Based Adult Literacy Programs in British Columbia* (Hunter and Trethewey 2009)
- *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (Readers' Guide Essential Skills Research Unit, n.d.)
- *Record of Achievement Manual—Certificate in Literacy and Learning* (Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy 2009)
- "Searching Informational Texts: Texts and Text Characteristics that Affect Performance" (Brown 2003)
- *The Circle of Learning: Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2* (Saskatchewan Literacy Network 2006)
- *The Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read: A Framework* (SEDL, n.d.)
- *The Level Descriptions Manual* (Ontario Literacy Coalition, n.d.)

To develop a methodology to reference resources to a framework, one must understand the basis of the framework. Literacy programs develop benchmarks because they want to have a common language when describing and evaluating learners' progress with other instructors, program developers, funders, and the learners themselves. These reference points support and facilitate policy, program, and resource development.

Each organization that has developed a benchmark framework has its own unique purpose, audience, and existing reference structure to consider. Many are based on a wide view of literacy that includes reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication, and even learning and self-management skills. Some are referenced to the IALS complexity levels and some to other pre-existing frameworks.

Any scale the benchmarks reference usually measures either skill development, cognitive development, or the ability to perform reading tasks. If the benchmarks are based upon skill development, they measure the learners' acquisition of skills like decoding, comprehension and prediction, fluency, critical reading for analysis, evaluation, and comparison. Often these skills are "taught in isolation of texts, or texts may be contrived to focus on particular skills" (Norton, n.d., 3).

If the benchmarks are based on cognitive development they look at "analyzing, integrating and monitoring. In a cognitive process view, learning to read and reading to learn are interwoven as learners use processes and strategies with increasingly complex texts, in different contexts and for various purposes." In addition, "learners draw on their knowledge and experience to construct new knowledge. Literacy learners are

encouraged to learn and practice cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in the context of authentic (or at least realistic) texts related to their goals and purposes, and to apply what they learn in one context (e.g., a literacy program) in another one (e.g., at work)” (Norton, 3).

If the benchmarks are based upon progressively more complex reading tasks, the tasks themselves are benchmarked and the learners are evaluated by which tasks they can successfully demonstrate. Complexity levels are based upon the length, purpose, style, structure, and content of the material or document as well as what skill the learner needs to access it. This is the framework used in the International Adult Learning Survey and the HRSDC Essential Skills Framework.

In each of these methods, the reading documents themselves are secondary to the reading process. Skills, cognitive abilities, and tasks can be performed at various levels on similar types of documents. This will be a difficult consideration when developing a resource-referencing guide. Benchmarks cannot be based on text or document characteristics alone –they must also take into consideration the skills, strategies, or tasks that are accomplished *with* the text.

Most of the documents we reviewed give a general description of resources. For example, *The Readers’ Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* cites “relatively short texts” but this is also tied to the task “to locate a single piece of information.”

The Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF) gives very descriptive phrases that can help identify resources as having “highly familiar contexts,” a “very restricted range of contexts,” “limited, highly familiar vocabulary,” or for being “short and simple” or “concrete and immediate.” It also offers information on the types of support, context, text, and task complexity at each benchmark level.

The Companion Tables to the Canadian Language Benchmarks give detailed information about the text such as “tolerated length,” “text features,” and “visual support.” However, they also include categories of “vocabulary” and “idioms” that do not apply to English-speaking adult-literacy learners. These categories refer to ESL learners only.

The Circle of Learning resource from Saskatchewan was concrete in its suggestions for text: letters of the alphabet, sentences and short paragraphs, menus, simple timetables, maps and road signs, street and shop signs, newspaper headlines and short news items, simple instructions, and public service messages.

The *Alberta Reading Benchmarks* offer very comprehensive suggestions for text at specific benchmarks. For example, at benchmark 1b a reader can read telephone numbers, addresses, prices, and short lengths of text about something familiar that is usually a few words long but can be up to one short simple sentence in length such as simple lists, shopping lists, menus, and simple flyers. The Bow Valley College “Academic Preparation Reading: Scope and Sequence for Reading” also gives good information on

the types of texts and the types of reading tasks and decoding skills for readers at various levels (Jager and Scott-Baier).

The University of Colorado open-access learning environment called the Writing Studio highlights the fact that it is not just the content but also the physical dimensions of a document that affect a learners' ability to use it.

When we read a text, we pick up visual cues based on font size and clarity, the presence or absence of “pictures,” spelling, syntax, discourse cues, and topic. In other words, we integrate data from a text including its smallest and most discrete features as well as its largest, most abstract features. Usually, we don't even know we're integrating data from all these levels. In addition, data from the text is being integrated with what we already know from our experience in the world about all fonts, pictures, spelling, syntax, discourse, and the topic more generally. (Walker, Kiefer, & Reid 1994–2013, 3)

While these descriptions and suggestions help an instructor choose an appropriate resource to use with a learner, they still don't give the whole picture for how to benchmark materials. It seems that none of the existing benchmark frameworks that we reviewed have developed a deliberate methodology for referencing materials to them.

Annotated List of Resources Referenced to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks

The resource-referencing project's goals were to:

- choose twenty resources to reference to Alberta Reading Benchmark levels 1a – 2b;
- choose some resources from Pamila Crosby's report *Reading Benchmarks Support Resources Consultation* (Crosby 2011);
- choose at least four series; and
- choose four Aboriginal resources that are culturally appropriate.

The search for suitable resources for Alberta Reading Benchmark Levels 1a – 2a began with Pamila Crosby's *Reading Benchmarks Support Resources Consultation*. We examined all of the resources mentioned in her report. Unfortunately, many of them were not suitable for our project because they were:

- assessment resources,
- ESL assessment resources,

- ESL-specific resources,
- grammar resources,
- spelling resources,
- children’s resources,
- math resources, or
- software programs.

However, some of the resources Crosby mentioned have been included in our final list of twenty, including:

- *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* (Canadian ed.)
- *Canada’s Food Guide*
- English Express
- Grass Roots Press Easy Readers
- NWT Literacy Council resources
- Vocabulary Boosters 1 and 2
- The ABCs of Practical Literacy

These items are identified in the annotated list with an asterisk (*).

Crosby’s work was invaluable for identifying topics of practical use for Aboriginal literacy learners and native-English-speaking literacy learners. These topics were:

- apprenticeship
- GED
- getting a driver’s licence
- filling out forms
- computers
- life skills
- financial literacy

Our initial search for resources on these topics produced two lengthy annotated resource lists:

- ARB Resources List – Aboriginal Resources Draft
- ARB Resources List –Draft

(These lists are currently available to the pilot sites for the ARB project only.) Through consultation with the project team and feedback from participants in piloting

workshops, we recognized that some of the resources should not be referenced to the ARB and other resources should be added to the list. Each resource on the list was benchmarked by the consultants and by at least one member of the project team.

In selecting the final resources we looked for material that:

- had Canadian content (preferably Albertan if possible)
- came in different formats
- was adult appropriate
- was current
- was relevant
- was available at reasonable cost
- was accessible
- was culturally appropriate (Aboriginal resources).

How Resources Were Evaluated

The sample in appendix 2 represents our analysis of one resource each from benchmarks 1a through 2c. It demonstrates the characteristics to look for at each benchmark level. (See appendix 2: “Samples of How We Benchmarked Six Different Resources” for more details.)

We delivered two workshops, one in Edmonton to the participants in the Piloting Benchmarks Project and one in Lethbridge to tutors from the Lethbridge Public Library’s Read On program. In total, the workshops involved nineteen literacy providers throughout Alberta and met several purposes. They spread the word about the benchmarks and the benchmarking process; they enabled us to fine tune the training document around benchmarking resources; and they verified the resources’ benchmark levels. They also provided feedback on practitioners’ reactions, concerns, and objectives for the benchmarks.

The process of working with the benchmarks taught us a lot about the benchmarks themselves, practitioners’ reactions to them, and the current adult literacy resources that are available for benchmarking.

The Benchmarks

While referencing different materials to the benchmarks, we found that the benchmarks’ wording was sometimes vague. For example, phrases such as *moderate decoding skills*, *sentences that are more complex*, *more complex vocabulary*, and *texts*

that are not as straightforward were difficult to define and resulted in practitioners feeling insecure in the benchmarking process. More precise terminology and examples would give better guidance. In spite of this occasional uncertainty, we were generally able to assign resources to appropriate benchmarks. This was verified by the project team and in the workshops with other practitioners. The most problematic point in the benchmarks is the transition between level 1c and 2a. There was often discussion about the correct placement of a resource between these two benchmarks. Part of the ambiguity arose from the lack of distinction between the two benchmarks, but also the resources themselves seemed to get “muddy” around this level. Resources fell into place easily enough for levels 1a, 1b, and 2b but were difficult to differentiate between 1c and 2a. Because the majority of the resources had not been created with referencing to IALS in mind, they did not follow the guidelines of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. The ESL Literacy Readers, however, were developed according to the benchmarks and they provide very good examples at each level.

Practitioners need to use their common sense in making benchmarking decisions. In Level 2b, for example, the benchmarks state that texts may be up to 500 words in length. However, many resources that are appropriate for this level are, in fact, longer than 500 words but they are formatted so the reader needs to deal with only a small section at a time. An example of this would be a so-called chapter book or a newspaper. The text can be longer but the reader should have to deal with only 500 words at a time. This needs to be clarified.

There is a constant interplay between the reading text and the reader’s tasks. When using the benchmarks to assess a reader, practitioners will find that the reading tasks are as important or more important than the actual document being used. However, when benchmarking the documents there is no way of knowing what tasks the readers will be performing. Readers can use very simple tasks on complex documents. For example, adult literacy readers are constantly using authentic materials in their communities and at their workplace. Often, these documents are complex – perhaps at a 2b or even 2c level. Yet the readers may be using them to search for specific information only, which is a level 1b or 1c task. Without knowing the reader’s skill or that of the practitioner working with the reader, and also knowing that the complexity of the tasks is not necessarily bound to the complexity of the text, it is more logical to benchmark the resource according to other features. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that documents or texts should be benchmarked according to characteristics such as organization, formatting, length, visual support, vocabulary, and sentence structure. When we used these guidelines for benchmarking, it became apparent that as texts increased in complexity, they did support the more complex tasks.

Practitioners' Reactions

From Alberta literacy practitioners, we heard that significant pre-training around the benchmarks is necessary before practitioners can benchmark resources. They need to understand the how, why, and what of benchmarks before they can wholeheartedly engage in relating resources to them. Often practitioners have their own frame of reference that they've been using and they need time and information before accepting the validity of another one. Many practitioners also had a preconceived idea of what a level 1 or level 2 learner "looks" like. It took time for some participants to align their current framework with the Alberta Reading Benchmarks.

Another area of discussion involved the benchmarks providing a common language for discussing resources and learners. However, as the pilots have demonstrated, different types of learners (Canadian-born literacy, ESL, ESL literacy, Aboriginal, workplace, family literacy) will interact with the benchmarks and the resources differently. For example, practitioners involved in family literacy often use children's literature in their programs. It is questionable whether this type of resource should be benchmarked according to adult benchmark guidelines.

Current Adult Literacy Resources

The majority of current adult literacy resources have not been developed to align with the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. They may align along certain characteristics (formatting, vocabulary, sentence structure, visuals) but then will end up being a different benchmark because of a single characteristic being at a different level. Some series are organized by letters per word or number of syllables in a word. The levels organized around these features do not correlate with the benchmarks at all.

Many series have their own level system and often several levels will fit within a single level of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. For example, English Express has three levels of readings. Most of these fit within ARB level 1b. This is not necessarily a problem because it allows practitioners to even further align resources for their learners, but it does require the practitioner having prior knowledge about the ARB. Similarly, the entire Grass Roots Press's Easy Reader series is generally at ARB 1c. However, added insets, maps, and some visuals can bump some of the resources up to ARB Level 2a.

Pamila Crosby's report gave us an overview of what is currently being used in adult literacy programs. Many of these resources have been benchmarked and are in the annotated list provided at the end of our report (appendix 1). In addition to these, we found many excellent resources in several different contexts and formats for adult

literacy. These also have been benchmarked and will enhance practitioners' resource collections.

Recommendations

Ranking a resource to a reading benchmark requires significant familiarity with the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. In order for literacy practitioners to be able to do this, they need:

- more descriptive information at each benchmark level that will allow definitive referencing of resources;
- terminology used in the benchmarks to be clarified with unambiguous examples provided. For example, what constitutes “more complex sentences”?
- benchmarks 1c and 2a to be analyzed so that the problems in the transition between the two levels are sorted out;
- adequate training so they understand the interplay between a learner's benchmark level and a resource's benchmark level. They are not necessarily the same thing. The benchmark level of the learners depends upon how they can use their skills to manipulate information and make it meaningful to them. By contrast, the benchmark of a resource is a static measurement.
- a list of resources at each benchmark level in several different contexts or topics so practitioners will have easy access to appropriate resources for the participants in their programs; and
- new resources at benchmark levels 1c and 2a.

Conclusion

When referencing resources to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks, the following points will need to be considered:

- the characteristics of the text
 - length
 - visual support (diagrams, photos, pictures)
 - layout/organization (title, table of contents, index, glossary, headings, subheadings, titles, chapters)
 - typography (fonts, boldface, italic, capitalization, colours)
- the contexts/topic/style of the text (abstract/concrete, genre)
- the simplicity/complexity of the vocabulary and syntax

- distractors: correspondence between visuals and text
- the types of tasks to be completed at each benchmark
- the type of strategies to be used at each benchmark.

While it is possible to provide a range of resources that can be used at a specific benchmark, the instructors using this guide will also have to know what tasks, competencies, skills, and strategies will be employed at each benchmark. They should keep in mind that many resources will be useful at a range of benchmarks, depending on the learner's task. As well, skills and strategies with varying complexities from varying levels can also be used with resources from several different levels. As always, the literacy practitioner's skill will ultimately decide the success of the tools. This will have to be made explicit as an integral part of any resource-referencing process.

Appendix 1: Annotated List of Aboriginal-Specific and General Resources

As we mentioned, our search for suitable resources for Alberta Reading Benchmark levels 1a – 2a began with Pamila Crosby’s report *Reading Benchmarks Support Resources Consultation* (2011). Although we examined all of the resources she mentioned in her report, many were unsuitable for this project.

The resources Crosby mentioned that did make it into the following annotated list are marked with an asterisk (*).

Annotated List of Aboriginal Resources

This list is organized by Alberta Reading Benchmark (ARB) level in ascending order.

The Best of the Reader offers authentic Aboriginal material that is culturally appropriate, relevant, and interesting. It also has adult Canadian content.	
ARB Level	1b – 1c
Series	Best of the Reader
Source	Acosta, Joan. <i>Canada’s Aboriginal People</i> . 2011. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/best_reader/aboriginal_people/aboriginal_people.pdf
	“National Aboriginal Day” (p. 9) ARB level 1b
	“Scientists Study Frozen Body” (p. 25) ARB level 1c
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	e-book
Description	This e-book is part of a series called Best of the Reader. http://bestofthereader.ca/ The Best of the Reader is a series of e-books intended for use by literacy-level adult learners. The stories are from past issues of <i>The Westcoast Reader</i> , a newspaper for adults who are improving their English reading skills. This particular e-book contains stories about Canada’s Aboriginal people.
Comments	There are three reading levels in this book but no explanation of how the readability levels were determined. ARB benchmark levels 1b –1c generally seem appropriate for the stories in this e-reader. Please keep in mind that the inclusion of maps, charts, and graphs make even simple text more difficult for the learner to read.

<p>The Healthy Aboriginal Network publishes comic books on health and social issues for youth. Many of these are also suitable for adults. The comic books are based on relevant and contemporary issues and the comic book format appeals to reluctant and beginning readers. The Healthy Aboriginal Network designates the comic books as culturally appropriate.</p>	
ARB Level	2a
Series	Healthy Aboriginal Network (Vancouver). Comic book series.
Source	<p>All of these titles are published by Healthy Aboriginal Network (Vancouver).</p> <p>Hopkins, Zoe. <i>It Takes a Village</i>. 2012.</p> <p>Mitchell, B. and T. Audibert. <i>River Run</i>. 2010.</p> <p>Sanderson, Steven Keewatin. <i>An Invited Threat</i>. 2008.</p> <p>———. <i>Darkness Calls</i>. 2009.</p> <p>———. <i>Droppin' the Flag</i>. 2011.</p> <p>———. <i>Lighting up the Darkness</i>. 2011.</p> <p>Van Camp, Richard. <i>Path of the Warrior</i>. 2009.</p>
Genre	Fiction
Format	<p>Comic book (some are available as a free download)</p> <p>www.thehealthyaboriginal.net</p>
Description	<p><i>It Takes a Village</i> is a maternal health book about a young pregnant woman. It emphasizes the importance of eating healthy foods, avoiding alcohol, breastfeeding, keeping dad involved, and bonding with your baby.</p> <p><i>River Run</i> is about smoking prevention. It explains the difference between traditional and nontraditional tobacco use.</p> <p><i>An Invited Threat</i> is about diabetes prevention.</p> <p><i>Darkness Calls</i> is about a young man who gets picked on at school and doesn't have many friends. A family friend convinces him that suicide is not the answer.</p> <p><i>Droppin' the Flag</i> is about a young man who agrees to attend a youth program instead of going to jail.</p> <p><i>Lighting up the Darkness</i> is about a young woman who returns to her home community, which brings back some difficult memories.</p> <p><i>Path of the Warrior</i> is about both physical activity and gang prevention. The leader of a gang realizes it's time to change his life.</p>
Comments	Readers must be able to navigate a comic book format.

<p>While this novel is based on an Alaskan legend, it would be appropriate for all First Nations people. It is a story about survival in the wild, aging, and relationships. It is easy to read. There is a study guide, developed by the NWT Literacy Council, to accompany the novel.</p>	
ARB Level	2a
Source	Wallis, Velma. <i>Two Old Women: An Alaskan Legend of Betrayal, Courage and</i>

	<i>Survival</i> . New York: Harper Perennial, 1994.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	<p>This story of survival and isolation is based on a legend from central Alaska. Two elderly women are abandoned by their migrating tribe. The two women demonstrate their strength of will and determination to live.</p> <p>There is a study guide for <i>Two Old Women</i> developed by NWT Literacy Council. The guide provides learners with a variety of learning activities and handouts. It includes a pre-reading and post-reading section, and each chapter contains vocabulary lists, comprehension questions with answers, journal writing and reflection ideas, discussion questions, and extended activities.</p> <p>Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/nwt/tow120/en120.pdf</p>

While health literacy is an important issue for all Canadians, this text is specific to Canadian First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. The brochure is free to order from the Canadian government or as a free download. This brochure is authentic material.	
ARB Level	2b
Source	<p>Health Canada. <i>Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis</i>. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 2007.</p> <p>This publication may be reproduced without permission. No changes permitted. HC Pub.: 3426 Cat.: H34-159/2007E ISBN: 0662-44562-7</p>
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	<p>Pamphlet</p> <p>Free download from http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/fnim-pnim/index-eng.php</p>
Description	<p><i>Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis</i> was developed for individuals, families, and communities to learn about and share ways of eating well that include both traditional and store-bought foods. The food guide is now available in four Aboriginal languages – Woods Cree, Plains Cree, Ojibwe, and Inuktitut – in addition to English and French.</p>
Comments	The vocabulary and organization of this resource is quite complex.

This Calgary-based magazine is authentic Aboriginal material that is culturally appropriate, current, fiction and nonfiction, adult content, relevant, and interesting. It is available free on the street and as a free download.	
ARB Level	2b – 2c
Source	<i>New Tribe</i> . Calgary: Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY).
Genre	Nonfiction, fiction, artwork, poetry, journalism

Format	Magazine
Description	<p><i>New Tribe</i> is a monthly magazine published in Calgary since February 2010 by the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth and distributed throughout the city and surrounding communities. The publisher's mission is to promote a positive outlook on Aboriginal people who live in an urban setting by promoting and sharing information within the community. "<i>New Tribe</i> aims to provide Aboriginal youth with stories of inspiration, and invites them to share their own stories and get involved in the community. Youth are encouraged to contribute to the magazine, whether it be artwork, fiction, poetry or journalism."</p> <p>http://www.usay.ca/services/new_tribe</p> <p>Past issues</p> <p>http://www.usay.ca/services/new_tribe_past</p>
Comments	<p>Artwork, poetry, fiction, and journalism are presented in the magazine. Each issue includes a very wide range of materials: recipes, community-events calendars, and in-depth articles on topics such as graphic novels for youth, drug use, and other relevant issues.</p>

Annotated List of General Resources

This list is organized according to content. Under each content heading, resources are organized by Alberta Reading Benchmark (ARB) level in ascending order.

Please keep in mind that overlap is a constant between levels.

Resources identified in Pamila Crosby's report *Reading Benchmarks Support Resources Consultation* are identified with an asterisk (*).

Series information is included.

COMMUNITY

➤ Driver's licence

Literacy Alberta is in the process of writing and piloting a plain-language version of the Alberta Driving Manual.

➤ Filling out forms

Filling out forms is a need for many learners. The contents are Canadian. This resource contains a wide variety of forms that a learner may be required to fill out in their daily life. While this resource was developed for ESL learners, it is useful for native-English-speaking literacy learners as well.		
ARB Level	1a – 2a	
Source	Bow Valley College. <i>ABCs of Practical Literacy</i> . * Calgary: Bow Valley College, 2002.	
Individual titles	<p><i>Personal Management</i>. http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-personal%20management_0.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Understanding signs in the library” – picture signs and words (pp. 120 – 130) • Simple rental listing – “Rental Accommodations Listing” (p. 77) • Simple list – “Category headings” (p. 135) • Simple classified ads – “Classified ads” (pp. 142 – 147) <p><i>Employment Literacy</i>. Calgary: Bow Valley College. http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-employment%20literacy_0.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Days of the week flashcards” (pp. 3 – 6) • “Employee Information Form Worksheet” (p. 10) • Looking for employment (p. 63) • “Application form” (p. 65) <p><i>Economic Literacy</i>. Calgary: Bow Valley College. http://www.esl-literacy.com/sites/default/files/ABC-economic%20literacy.pdf</p>	<p>ARB Level</p> <p>1a</p> <p>1b</p> <p>1a</p> <p>1c</p> <p>1c</p> <p>2a</p> <p>1a</p> <p>1a</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Number flashcards” (pp. 26 – 31) • “Number word flashcards” (pp. 32 – 34) • “Canadian coin flashcards” (pp. 59 – 64) • Simple flyer ads: “Reading flyer ads” (p. 110) • Simple coupons: “Coupon diagrams” (pp.81 – 82) • “Using a bank machine” (pp. 123 – 124) • “Utilities statement” (p. 115) • WestCan Bank Pamphlet” (p. 129) 	1a 1b 1b 1b 2a 1c 1c 1c
Genre	Nonfiction	
Format	Free download from ESL Literacy Network website http://www.esl-literacy.com/ under “toolbox”	
Description	This resource book, developed by Bow Valley College, contains content-based literacy activities based on <i>Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners</i> . The book has three sections: personal management activities, employment literacy activities, and economic literacy activities. Personal information forms, registration forms, and employment application forms are included.	

The contents are Canadian and some authentic forms are included in the workbook.	
ARB Level	2c
Source	Allaby, Joan. <i>Canadian Forms Made Easy</i> . Ottawa: Laubach Literacy of Canada, 2006.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	This workbook contains a variety of forms to give students practice with commonly used forms for work and home. <i>Canadian Forms Made Easy</i> addresses difficulties in understanding and completing commonly used forms for work and home. Students can practise a variety of exercises such as filling in surname, previous address, and date of birth. This resource includes forms for change of address and applications for social insurance and birth certificates. It also uses authentic documents and includes information about common vocabulary and abbreviations found on many forms.
Comments	Complex vocabulary and organization of authentic forms.

➤ **Newspapers**

Even though the <i>English Express</i> newspaper is no longer being published, except for special editions, it is still available on-line and is very popular with literacy practitioners. The Canadian (often Alberta) content is relevant and interesting to learners and covers a wide range of topics.		
ARB Level	1b – 2a	
Source	<p><i>English Express</i>. Alberta Advanced Education and Technology http://aet.alberta.ca/englishexpress/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Saved Owl. <i>English Express</i>. February 2010. • Income Taxes. <i>English Express</i>. April 2010. • Talking about Family Violence. <i>English Express</i>. Special Issue April 2009. 	ARB Level 1b 1c 2a
Genre	Nonfiction	
Format	Newspaper downloadable from http://aet.alberta.ca/englishexpress/	
Description	This website for adult learners has articles from the <i>English Express</i> newspaper. Learners can read or listen and read along. Learners can read about people, animals, and holidays, or they can read news stories. It also has a section for teachers and tutors.	
Comments	<p><i>English Express</i> has three levels of readings. There is no explanation about how these levels were determined. Most of the articles are at ARB 1b but there are some at levels 1c and 2a.</p> <p>1b – Photos directly related to the text. Short length of texts about something familiar. Short simple sentences. Simple vocabulary of concrete nouns and simple action verbs, generally one or two syllables in length.</p> <p>1c – Texts with simple sentences, up to several sentences long. Text topics are familiar. Vocabulary is limited to common words and may include some three-syllable words.</p> <p>2a – Texts with sentences that are longer and more complex than those in 1c and that may contain more than one clause. Texts may be several short paragraphs in length. Vocabulary more complex and longer words, some abstract words.</p>	

<i>Calgary Metro</i> and <i>Edmonton Metro</i> are free newspapers available in Calgary and Edmonton in boxes on the street. They are authentic resources with current news.	
ARB Level	2c
Source	<i>Metro</i> http://metronews.ca/news/edmonton/ and http://metronews.ca/news/calgary/
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Newspaper
Description	Free community newspapers
Comments	Newspaper articles on relatively complex subjects with complex sentence structures and more complex vocabulary.

➤ **Environmental print**

Environmental print is the text found in everyday life: labels on food, traffic signs, or the logo of a restaurant chain. It is usually the first print we recognize and it plays a role in helping us learn that letters and symbols have meaning.	
This resource could also be listed in Aboriginal resources and under the heading “Family Literacy.” (Although this resource was not specifically mentioned in Pamila Crosby’s report [2011], NWT Literacy Council resources were mentioned.)	
ARB Level	1a
Source	NWT Literacy Council. <i>How to Kit – Environmental Print Games</i> .* 2003. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/enviro/cover.htm
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Free download
Description	This kit contains many examples of environmental print and includes instructions and templates for a variety of games.
Comments	Recognizing environmental print makes learners feel successful at “reading” and motivates them to read more.

HOME

- **Financial literacy**
See above under “Community” – Filling Out Forms.
- **Health**

Health literacy is an important issue for all Canadians. This Canadian content uses simple language, provides tips for pronouncing difficult words, and includes many illustrations. Each item is available in a newspaper-style format or as a free download.	
ARB Level	2a

Series	Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI) Simply Health series
Source	<p>VRRI. <i>Simply Health: Dental – Learn About Teeth and Gum Problems</i>. 2009. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/dental/dental.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Simply Health: Eyesight – See with Healthy Eyes</i>. 2009. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/vision_health/vision_health.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Simply Health: Hearing – What Is Hearing Loss?</i> 2009. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/hearing_health/hearing_health.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Simply Health: Podiatry – Healthy Feet Need a Podiatrist!</i> 2004. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/healthy_feet/healthy_feet.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Simply Health: Prostate – Health for Men</i>. 2004. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/prostate_health/prostate_health.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Simply Health: The Breast – Health for Women</i>. 2009. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/breast_health/breast_health.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>SmokeTalk Workbook</i>. 2003. Available at http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/vrri/smoketalk_workbook/smoketalk_workbook.pdf</p>
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Booklet or free download
Description	<p>A series of booklets prepared by the Calgary-based Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute (VRRI), an agency that helps people with disabilities as well as the community at large. The booklets use simple language, provide tips for pronouncing difficult words, and include many illustrations.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: Dental – Learn About Teeth and Gum Problems</i> The authors explain the structure of the tooth, roles of the dentist and dental hygienist, and what happens at a dental check-up. They provide tips for brushing and flossing, choosing healthy foods, and dealing with fear of the dentist.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: Eyesight – See with Healthy Eyes</i> The authors discuss how to keep the eyes healthy, list reasons for consulting a health-care professional about eyesight, explain the difference between an optometrist and an ophthalmologist, and describe a number of vision tests the doctor may carry out.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: Hearing – What Is Hearing Loss?</i> The authors explain how the ear works and describe the signs of hearing loss. They also describe basic and advanced hearing tests and discuss the devices available to assist people in coping with hearing loss.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: Podiatry – Healthy Feet Need a Podiatrist!</i> The authors discuss how to take care of the feet and describe a variety of common foot ailments. They also explain the role of a podiatrist (a foot specialist who can treat problems) and provide advice for keeping feet healthy.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: Prostate – Health for Men</i> The authors explain the structure and role of the prostate; describe a number of prostate problems; and provide tips for prostate health. They also explain what</p>

	<p>happens during a prostate examination.</p> <p><i>Simply Health: The Breast – Health for Women</i> The authors describe the parts of the breast, offer tips for keeping breasts healthy, explain how to do a breast self-examination, and outline what is involved in a mammogram, ultrasound, and biopsy.</p> <p><i>SmokeTalk Workbook</i> The SmokeTalk program was designed to increase awareness of the negative effects of tobacco use. The SmokeTalk student workbook includes information on tobacco’s chemical makeup, the respiratory system, passive smoking, and the cost of smoking. The workbook contains both individual and group activities. The authors use simple language and explain difficult terms.</p>
Comments	The sentence structure is primarily simple sentences with some compound and complex sentences. The vocabulary has more complex and longer words, and the subjects may not be familiar to the reader.

Health Literacy is an important issue for all Canadians. This Canadian-content brochure is free to order from the Canadian government or as a free download. Another consideration in choosing this brochure is that it’s an authentic material.	
ARB Level	2b
Source	Health Canada. <i>Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*</i> (HC Pub.: 4651). Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 2007. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Pamphlet or free download
Description	<i>Canada’s Food Guide</i> provides recommendations on how many servings of each food group you should eat each day, including vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meat and alternatives.
Comments	Complex vocabulary and organization.

➤ **Life skills**

Many learners face problems in their personal lives that can interfere with their learning. This series deals with some of these issues. The content is Canadian.	
ARB Level	2c
Series	Easy to Read Health Series
Source	Murphy, Judy. <i>Living with Grief and Loss</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2006. ———. <i>Living with Healthy Relationships</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2009. ———. <i>Living with Stress</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2005.
Genre	Book
Format	Nonfiction
Description	<i>Living with Grief and Loss</i> focuses on the loss of a loved one. <i>Living with Healthy Relationships</i> focuses on our relationships with ourselves and others. <i>Living with Stress</i> . The author provides activities for identifying stressors in our lives, strategies for calming ourselves, and tips on how to identify and deal with panic, anxiety, burnout, and PTSD.
Comments	Multiple pieces of information. Complex sentence structure, more complex vocabulary including many abstract words and relatively complex subjects.

➤ **Family Literacy**

This book is for parents and caregivers of young children.	
ARB Level	2a
Source	Mayer, Gloria, and Ann Kuklierus. <i>What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick</i> . La Habre, CA: Institute for Health Advancement, 2010.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	This book is written for parents and caregivers of young children. The illustrations are simple but explicit and add to understanding of the text. The book contains information for managing more than fifty common childhood illnesses and health problems, including earaches, fever, vomiting, and nosebleeds. The book describes the conditions, what can be done at home, and when to call a healthcare provider.
Comments	Sentences are longer and include simple, compound, and complex sentences. Vocabulary is more complex and there are longer words.

Note: There is a lot of family literacy material included in Further Education Society of Alberta's (FESA) Facilitator Manuals: *LAPS (Literacy and Parenting Skills)*, *A-LAPS (Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills)*, *Aboriginal Workplace Learning Circles*,

and *Workplace Learning Circles*. Within these manuals are learner handouts that could possibly be benchmarked.

WORKPLACE

- **Computer skills**
No resource referenced.
- **Employment and workplace literacy**

Workplace literacy is a need for many learners. The Easy Reading Career Planning Series was developed to help adults with low literacy skills or ESL expand their knowledge of occupations and choose an occupational goal. These are Alberta resources.	
ARB Level	1c
Series	Easy Reading Career Planning Series
Source	Alberta Employment and Immigration. <i>Easy Reading Job Profiles</i> . Edmonton: Government of Alberta, Employment and Immigration, 2011. Available at http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/cp/oi/EasyReading.html
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Free download
Description	These twenty-four job profiles are adapted from existing Alberta occupational profiles. Each job includes a story of someone on the job as well as information about duties, working conditions, personal characteristics, hourly wages, and related jobs.
Comments	The text has simple sentences, mostly common words, and some three-syllable words. Text topics are somewhat familiar to the reader.

ARB Level	1c
Series	Easy Reading Career Planning Series
Source	Alberta Employment and Immigration. <i>Easy Reading Job Profiles Dictionary</i> . 2011. Available at http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/cp/oi/EasyReading.html
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Free download
Description	This publication is a supplementary tool for use with the <i>Easy Reading Job Profiles</i> and the <i>Work and You</i> books. The dictionary provides definitions of workplace terms that clients can use to look up the difficult words and phrases in the profiles.

Workplace literacy is a need for many learners. These Easy Reading Work-Related Guides are Alberta resources and were developed for adults with low literacy skills or ESL.	
ARB Level	2a – 2b
Series	Easy Reading Work-Related Guides
Source	<p>Alberta Employment and Immigration. <i>Easy Reading: Be Safe at Work</i>. Edmonton: Alberta Employment and Immigration, 2011. http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/engexpsafework.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Easy Reading: Employment Law Protects Workers</i>. http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/ERemploylaws.pdf</p> <p>———. <i>Easy Reading: Looking for a Job</i>. http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/ERlookforjobs.pdf</p>
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Free download
Description	<p><i>Be Safe at Work</i> provides easy-to-read information about how to stay healthy and safe on the job. It illustrates how to spot danger, use safety equipment, report injuries, and share health and safety concerns with employers.</p> <p><i>Employment Law Protects Workers</i> provides basic employment standards information about minimum wage, vacations, rest breaks, overtime, statutory holidays, and how to read a pay stub.</p> <p><i>Looking for a Job</i> helps people learn important job-search skills such as identifying skills and interests, setting goals, preparing a resumé, developing a back-up plan, and preparing for a job interview.</p>
Comments	Sentences are longer and more complex. The reading vocabulary is more complex and there are longer words. The text has more complex organization with headings and subheadings.

➤ Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship information is a need for many learners. This is an Alberta publication.	
ARB Level	2a
Source	Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. <i>Trades in Alberta</i> . 2012. http://www.alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/aaet/tradesinalberta.pdf
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Free download
Description	This easy-to-read guide, published by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, is for low-literacy individuals who are interested in learning about the trades or working within the trades as a career choice. Teaching notes are available to accompany the publication.
Comments	Sentences are longer and more complex. The reading vocabulary is more complex and there are longer words. The text involves more complex organization with headings and subheadings.

ACADEMIC

➤ Flash cards

Flash cards offer a visual, tactile resource to practise the alphabet, phonics, and sight words. This is a Canadian resource that has adult-appropriate visuals.	
ARB Level	1a
Source	<i>Canadian Skill Builder Flash Cards</i> . Toronto: Canadian Curriculum Press, 2012.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Flash cards
Description	This boxed set of flash cards includes: alphabet, phonics, 102 sight words, French-English vocabulary, counting, and addition.
Comments	These adult-appropriate flash cards – letters, sounds, sight words, word pattern cards – encourage developing ARB Level 1a skills.

➤ GED

No resource referenced.

➤ Pre-GED

This book is part of a series. The other books are listed under the Workbooks heading on the next page.	
ARB Level	2c
Series	The Active Reader Series
Source	Kita-Bradley, Linda. <i>The Active Reader – Book 5. Active Reader Series</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2011.
Genre	Nonfiction

Format	Workbook
Description	Active Reader 5 has ten units of reading passages and practical literacy activities. The workbook is organized around five themes: people, relationships, health, the environment, and history. Each theme consists of two units that provide the following activities: pre-reading, main reading passages, post-reading, summary, vocabulary, mini lesson, literacy practice, and dictionary use.

➤ **Dictionary**

This book is a first dictionary for literacy learners.	
ARB Level	1c
Source	Adelson-Goldstein, Jayme, and Norma Shapiro. <i>The Oxford Picture Dictionary</i> .* 2nd Canadian ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	<i>The Oxford Picture Dictionary</i> was written to meet the needs of beginning and low-intermediate-level ESL students. While it was written for ESL students, it is useful for native-English-speaking literacy learners as well. It is an illustrated, theme-based dictionary that presents 4,000 words and phrases within meaningful, real-life contexts. The themes include food, clothing, health, housing, community, transportation, and work. On each page, coloured illustrations convey the meaning of the words. Each unit closes with an illustrated story that presents vocabulary in context, followed by discussion questions.

➤ **Software**

No software was referenced.

➤ **Workbooks**

This resource with Canadian content provides many reading strategies for learners.		
ARB Level	1b – 2c	
Series	The Active Reader Series	
Source	All readers by Linda Kita-Bradley. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2011. <i>The Active Reader – Foundation.</i> <i>The Active Reader – Book 1.</i> <i>The Active Reader – Book 2.</i> <i>The Active Reader – Book 3.</i> <i>The Active Reader – Book 4.</i> <i>The Active Reader – Book 5.</i>	ARB Level 1b 1b 1c 2a 2b 2c
Genre	Nonfiction	

Format	Workbook	
Description	<p>The Active Reader Series is based on the premise that fluent readers actively engage with a text, using a variety of strategies. Each workbook provides ten levels of reading passages relating to five popular themes: people, relationships, health and safety, environment, and history.</p> <p>The foundation-level Active Reader has photo stories and activities that develop foundational skills and strategies. It includes letter names and sounds, word prediction, assisted reading, and assisted writing.</p> <p>Active Reader 1 has twelve units that develop skills and strategies and includes letter names and sounds, word prediction, assisted reading, and assisted writing.</p> <p>Active Reader 2 has ten units that develop skills and strategies including pre-reading, post-reading, a mini lesson, literacy practice, and “word attack.”</p> <p>Active Reader 3 has ten units that develop skills and strategies that include pre-reading, post-reading, vocabulary, dictionary use, a mini lesson, literacy practice, and “word attack.”</p> <p>Active Reader 4 has ten units that develop skills and strategies that include pre-reading, a main reading passage, post-reading, vocabulary, dictionary use, a mini lesson, literacy practice, and “word attack.”</p> <p>Active Reader 5 has ten units that develop skills and strategies that include pre-reading, main reading passages, post-reading, summary, vocabulary, a mini lesson, literacy practice, and dictionary use.</p>	

	Illustrated Canadian newspaper stories with a variety of reading exercises focusing on skimming, scanning, finding the main idea, inference, and evaluation. Includes literacy practice with authentic application forms, menus, etc.	
ARB Level	1c – 2b	
Source	<p>Bates, Susan. <i>Amazing! Canadian Newspaper Stories</i>. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1991.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Surprise” • “Life of a Mountain Climber” 	<p>ARB Level</p> <p>1c 2a</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rick Hansen: A Canadian Hero” <p>Bates, Susan. <i>Amazing 2! Canadian Newspaper Stories</i>. 2nd ed. Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1997.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Waitress Gets Big Tip!” • “Cycling for Air – With Love” • “The Edible Cup” 	2b
Genre	Fiction and Nonfiction	
Format	Book	
Description	While these resources were specifically designed for mid-beginner to low-intermediate ESL students, their emphasis on reading skills makes this a very useful resource for native-English-speaking literacy learners.	
Comments	As the ARB level goes up, the length of the text increases, sentence structure and vocabulary become more complex, more three-syllable words appear, and unfamiliar topics and more abstract vocabulary are apparent.	

A Canadian resource with Canadian content.		
ARB Level	2a – 2c	
Series	Vocabulary Boosters	
Source	<p>Rogers, Susan. <i>Vocabulary Boosters 1</i>. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2005.</p> <p>———. <i>Vocabulary Boosters 2</i>. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2005.</p> <p>———. <i>Vocabulary Boosters 3</i>. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2010.</p>	ARB Level 2a 2b 2c
Genre	Nonfiction	
Format	Workbook	
Description	These workbooks help adult learners develop their vocabulary. Each workbook is organized around four themes: health, wildlife, the environment, and popular culture. Each lesson presents a nonfiction passage that relates to one of the four themes and a set of activities. The workbook activities can be completed independently, with a tutor, or with a group.	
Comments	Sentence structure and vocabulary become more complex with each level. The topics may not be familiar to the learner and vocabulary becomes more abstract.	

ENJOYMENT/LEISURE

➤ Easy readers

Grass Roots Press Easy Readers: Photo Stories

These books are photo stories with high interest, low vocabulary, and relevant content. Each page includes a photograph and one or two short sentences. The photographs reflect the text, making the words easier to decode. The titles are organized under six themed series:

- Humour
- Animal
- Health
- How To
- Romance
- Be the Judge

An audio of each story and activities are available on-line.

ARB Level	1b
Series	Humour Series
SOURCE	All titles by Linda Kita-Bradley. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>A Bad Car Day</i> . 2008. <i>Late Again!</i> 2008. <i>The Coffee Lover</i> . 2012. <i>The Hike</i> . 2000. <i>The Map</i> . 2012. <i>The Mix-up</i> . 2012. <i>The New Shoes</i> . 2012. <i>Where Is My Man?</i> 2000.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Amusing, very easy-to-read photo stories. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text. The text consists of simple sentences and vocabulary.

ARB Level	1b – 1c
Series	Animal Series
SOURCE	Campbell, Pat. <i>Bears</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2000.

	Kita-Bradley, Linda. <i>Bald Eagles</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008. ———. <i>Grey Seals</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008. ———. <i>Grey Wolves</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	The animal series contains photographs and information about animals. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text which consists of simple sentences and simple vocabulary. However, some of these books (<i>Bears</i>) contain maps and other visuals and insets that bump the resource up to ARB 1c.

ARB Level	1b
Series	Health Series
Source	Gould, Laurie. <i>Stress</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2000. Kita-Bradley, Linda. <i>Fad Diets</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008. ———. <i>A Good Night's Sleep</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008. ———. <i>Saying No</i> . Edmonton: Grass Roots Press, 2008.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	The Health Series is for adults trying to cope with the day-to-day challenges of life. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text which consists of simple sentences and vocabulary.

ARB Level	1b
Series	How-to Series
Source	All of the books are by Linda Kita-Bradley, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>How to Be Good to Yourself</i> . 2012. <i>How to Build Community</i> . 2008. <i>How to Buy a Good Used Car</i> . 2000. <i>How to Check an Apartment</i> . 2012. <i>How to Clean Green</i> . 2012. <i>How to Live Green</i> . 2008. <i>How to Save Time</i> . 2012. <i>How to Stop Hiccups</i> . 2008.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book

Description	Relevant topics and practical instruction are included in each book. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text which consists of simple sentences and vocabulary.

Level	1b
Series	Romance series
Source	All books by Linda Kita-Bradley, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Cake Date</i> . 2012. <i>Inside Out</i> . 2012. <i>Love of My Life</i> . 2012. <i>The Big Goof</i> . 2000. <i>The Big Question</i> . 2003. <i>The Big Snore</i> . 2003. <i>The Big Surprise</i> . 2003. <i>The Perfect Man</i> . 2012.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Stories about love. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text which consists of simple sentences and vocabulary.

ARB Level	1b
Series	Be the judge series
Source	All books by Linda Kita-Bradley, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Fran's Story</i> . 2000. <i>Just Good Friends</i> . 2003. <i>Mandy's Garage Sale</i> . 2003. <i>Potluck</i> . 2012. <i>The Change</i> . <i>The E-mail</i> . 2012. <i>The Test</i> . 2012. <i>Tony's Deal</i> . 2003.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Open-ended stories that invite the reader to assess the characters' situations. An audio of each story is available on-line.
Comments	The pictures in the photo stories relate directly to the text which consists of simple sentences and vocabulary.

Grass Roots Press Easy Readers: Biographies

These easy-to-read biographies portray the lives of famous Canadian, American, and international figures. Download free workbook activities for each biography.

The titles are organized under five themed series, all available from Grass Roots Press in Edmonton:

- Maple Leaf Series
- Acts-of-Courage Series
- Activist Series
- Famous Firsts Series
- Sports Series

ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Maple Leaf Series
Source	All books by Terry Barber, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Emily Carr</i> . 2011. <i>Lucy Maud Montgomery</i> . 2011. <i>Michaëlle Jean</i> . 2012. <i>Norman Bethune</i> . 2011. <i>Poundmaker</i> . 2011. <i>Terry Fox</i> . 2012.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	These easy-to-read biographies portray the lives of famous Canadians.
Comments	The text has simple sentences, up to several sentences long. The text topics may or may not be familiar to the reader. Vocabulary involves common words and includes some three-syllable words. The text is generally at ARB 1c. However, added insets, maps, and some visuals may bump the resource to ARB Level 2a.

ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Acts-of-Courage series
Source	All books by Terry Barber, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Fannie Lou Hamer</i> . 2008. <i>Laura Secord</i> . 2008. <i>Oskar Schindler</i> . 2008. <i>Rick Hansen</i> . 2008.
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book

Description	This series features four people who have changed the world through their acts of courage.
Comments	The text has simple sentences, up to several sentences long. The topics may or may not be familiar to the reader. Vocabulary involves common words and includes some three-syllable words. The text is generally at ARB 1c. However, added insets, maps, and some visuals may bump the resource to ARB Level 2a.

ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Terry Barber (author). Activist series. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press.
Source	<i>Cesar Chavez</i> . 2006. <i>Dalai Lama</i> . 2008. <i>Eleanor Roosevelt</i> . 2008. <i>Elizabeth Fry</i> . 2008. <i>Harriet Tubman</i> . 2006. <i>Jane Goodall</i> . 2006 <i>Jean Vanier</i> . 2008. <i>June Callwood</i> . 2008. <i>Louis Riel</i> . 2006. <i>Mahatma Ghandi</i> . 2008. <i>Martin Luther King Jr.</i> 2006. <i>Mother Teresa</i> . 2006. <i>Nelson Mandela</i> . 2006. <i>Rosa Parks</i> . 2006. <i>The Famous Five</i> . 2006
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	Learners become familiar with concepts such as apartheid, segregation, boycott, and nonviolence as they engage in discussions related to freedom, human dignity, social justice, and reform. Free workbooks are available to download.
Comments	The texts have simple sentences, up to several sentences long. The topics may or may not be familiar to the reader. The vocabulary usually involves common words and includes some three-syllable words. The text is generally at ARB 1c. However, added insets, maps, and some visuals may bump the resource to ARB level 2a.

ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Famous firsts series
Source	All books by Terry Barber. Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Amelia Earhart. 2007.</i> <i>Charles Lindbergh. 2007.</i> <i>Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. 2007.</i> <i>First Women in Space. 2007.</i> <i>Matthew Henson and Robert Peary. 2007.</i>
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	Learners read about people who risked their lives to achieve their dreams.
Comments	The text has simple sentences, up to several sentences long. The topics may or may not be familiar to the reader. The vocabulary involves mostly common words and includes some three-syllable words. The text is generally at ARB 1c though added insets, maps, and some visuals may bump the resource to ARB level 2a.

ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Sports Series
Source	All books by Terry Barber, Edmonton: Grass Roots Press. <i>Althea Gibson. 2007.</i> <i>Muhammad Ali. 2007.</i> <i>Nancy Greene. 2007.</i> <i>Tom Longboat. 2007.</i> <i>Wayne Gretzky. 2007.</i>
Genre	Nonfiction
Format	Book
Description	Learners gain insight into the lives of these five sports figures.
Comments	The text has simple sentences, up to several sentences long. The topics may or may not be familiar to the reader. Vocabulary includes common words and some three-syllable words. The text is generally at ARB 1c but added insets, maps, and some visuals may bump the resource to ARB level 2a.

➤ Chapter books

Oxford Bookworms Library Series – Chapter Books

This series is from the UK. They are available in a range of language levels and there are both fiction and nonfiction books. They are high-interest, low-vocabulary books for beginning readers.	
ARB Level	1c – 2a
Series	Oxford Bookworms Library Starter Series from Oxford University Press distributed by Grass Roots Press and New Readers Bookstore
Source	Burrows, Phillip, and Mark Foster. <i>Escape</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Lindop, Christine. <i>Sally's Phone</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. ———. <i>The Girl with the Red Hair</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	There are about forty Oxford Bookworms Library Starter Stage titles. Each title includes an introduction, glossary, author information, and before-, while-, and after-reading activities. For each stage there are tests, a teacher's handbook, and activity worksheets.
Comments	The starter-level fiction books are chapter books for literacy learners. Many of the starter books are at ARB level 1c. However, the comic book format used in some of the books may be difficult for new readers and bumps the ARB level up to 2a. Since the books are not Canadian, the British telephone number format is used in <i>Sally's Phone</i> .

➤ E-books

These e-books cover a wide range of interesting, relevant topics for adults. The books are available as a free download and are Canadian.		
ARB Level	1b – 1c	
Series	Best of the Reader	

➤ **ESL literacy readers**

The readers were written for adult ESL literacy learners at Canadian Language Benchmark ESL Literacy Phases I-III. They are based on authentic situations that are of interest and relevance not only to ESL literacy learners, but native-English-speaking literacy learners as well.																									
ARB Level	1b – 2a																								
Series	ESL Literacy Readers (ESL Literacy Network)																								
Source	Each title comes from Bow Valley College. The ESL Literacy Network. 2010. Available at http://www.esl-literacy.com/readers/																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Title</th> <th>ARB Level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Inge Cuts Hair</i></td> <td>1b</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Andres Needs Gas</i></td> <td>1b</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Mark Goes to the Dentist</i></td> <td>1b</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Andre's Speeding Ticket</i></td> <td>1b</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>A Relaxing Weekend</i></td> <td>1c</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>A Terrible Toothache</i></td> <td>1c</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>A Woman's Rights at Work</i></td> <td>2a</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>An Expensive Lesson</i></td> <td>2a</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>A Trip to the Dentist</i></td> <td>2a</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Fun on the Weekend</i></td> <td>2a</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>A Home of their Own</i></td> <td>2a</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Title	ARB Level	<i>Inge Cuts Hair</i>	1b	<i>Andres Needs Gas</i>	1b	<i>Mark Goes to the Dentist</i>	1b	<i>Andre's Speeding Ticket</i>	1b	<i>A Relaxing Weekend</i>	1c	<i>A Terrible Toothache</i>	1c	<i>A Woman's Rights at Work</i>	2a	<i>An Expensive Lesson</i>	2a	<i>A Trip to the Dentist</i>	2a	<i>Fun on the Weekend</i>	2a	<i>A Home of their Own</i>	2a
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Format	Free download – Google ESL Literacy Readers http://www.esl-literacy.com/readers/																								
Description	These theme-based readers come with an instructor's guide. The themes are of high interest and relevance to learners. Photographs in the stories are directly related to the text.																								
Comments	<p>ESL Literacy Readers were developed for CLB Phase I (Initial, Developing, and Adequate), Phase II (Initial, Developing, and Adequate) and Phase III (Initial, Developing, and Adequate). Here is how the ARB levels line up with the resources developed for CLB Phase I, II, and III.</p> <p>CLB Phase I: Initial, Developing, and Adequate – ARB 1b</p> <p>CLB Phase II: Initial and Developing – ARB 1b</p> <p>CLB Phase II: Adequate – ARB 1c</p> <p>CLB Phase III: Initial, Developing, and Adequate – ARB 2a</p>																								

Appendix 2: Samples of How We Benchmarked Six Different Resources

What follows are six different items with notes on their features that we examined in order to evaluate and correlate them with a reading benchmark.

ARB Levels 1a–2c

ARB level	1a
Title	<i>How to Kit: Environmental Print Games</i>
Format	Free downloadable kit
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, single very common words – <i>stop, exit, closed</i> • Sight words
Sentence length and structure	Not applicable
Organizing features and visuals	Simple signage Supporting visuals

ARB level	1b
Title	<i>Inge Cuts Hair</i> ESL Literacy Readers
Format	Free downloadable booklet
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common, concrete nouns and simple action verbs – <i>hair, cuts</i> • Familiar topics
Sentence length and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One short simple sentence per page • Short lengths of text about something familiar
Organizing features and visuals	One photo per page that relates directly to the text
Reading tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve simple comparisons • Locate one piece of information

ARB level	1c
Title	<i>Easy Reading Job Profiles – Baker</i> Easy Reading Career Planning Series
Format	Free download
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading vocabulary is limited to simple and common words, concrete nouns, simple action verbs – <i>baker, bread, cookies, washes, orders, works</i> • Includes some three-syllable words – <i>restaurant, ingredients, appliance, decorates</i> • Familiar topics
Sentence length and structure	Simple sentences up to several sentences long
Organizing features and visuals	Headings and lists
Reading tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve comparisons – difference in jobs between kitchen helpers and cooks • Require searching for information that asks for simple and common words

ARB level	2a
Title	<i>What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick</i>
Format	Book
Vocabulary	Reading vocabulary has more complex and longer words – <i>diarrhea, eczema, constipation, immunization</i>
Sentence length and structure	Text is up to several short paragraphs in length. Texts have sentences that are longer and more complex than those in 1c and that may contain more than one clause. For example, “Children can go to school if clothes cover the sores and the sores have been treated for more than two days.”
Organizing features and visuals	Headings and subheadings are used
Reading tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require cycling to find multiple pieces of information that are not side by side • Involve more complex comparisons

ARB level	2b
Title	<i>Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide</i> , Health Canada
Format	Pamphlet
Vocabulary	More complex vocabulary – <i>trans fats, saturated fats, folic acid, nutritious, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, osteoporosis</i>
Sentence length and structure	Complex sentence structure
Organizing features and visuals	Complex organization
Reading tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require the reader to figure out which information is relevant and which is irrelevant. • Complex searches for information that involves several criteria and requires putting together information from several parts of the text • Require using text format to find information: using headings and subtitles to find relevant information rather than reading every word

ARB level	2c
Title	<i>Calgary Metro</i> and <i>Edmonton Metro</i>
Format	Newspaper
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of topics that contain more difficult and less common vocabulary • Many abstract words – <i>perception, success, appropriate, consequence</i> • complex words that relate to a broader knowledge • general knowledge such as terms relating to climate change, ecology, and carbon footprint
Sentence length and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex sentence structure • 500- to 700-word articles on relatively complex subjects
Organizing features and visuals	Complex organization, subject headings, and subheadings
Reading tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require identifying and choosing many pieces of information from one part of a text and reorganizing or summarizing them • Require finding all of the relevant information without being given specifics such as how many pieces of information to find • Require integrating information from various parts of the text or two related texts

Appendix 3: Workshop Participants

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Sally Listener	Ermineskin Trust Fund	sallymary53@gmail.com
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