

Learning Module #2

- **Getting Familiar with the ARB**
- **Assessing Reading Skills**

Learning Module #2: Assessing Reading

Resources needed for this module:

Go to www.arbforadults.ca where you will find the following under the Learn tab

- Alberta Reading Benchmarks for Adults (*will also be referred to as **ARB***)
- Level 1C video
- Level 2A video

Tasks:

- 1) Watch the Level 1C and 2A videos.
- 2) Read the Level 1C and Level 2A sections in the Alberta Reading Benchmarks for Adults, (2nd ed) - pages 16-23.
- 3) Complete the Learning and Response.

Objective:

Learning Module #2 is designed to help you become familiar with the descriptors at Levels 1C and 2A. You will also explore ways to assess learners reading skills using the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. Yes, we are starting in the middle! These are levels that we felt most of you would find useful because this is the level where many learners' abilities are in foundational learning programs.

LEARNING MODULE #2

Learning and Response:

Alberta Reading Benchmarks Levels 1C and 2A

Refer to Levels 1C and 2A videos and "Alberta Reading Benchmarks for Adults, (2nd ed)" (p. 16-23) for these questions...

Text Characteristics

Briefly describe the key points for each characteristic of text for level 1C and level 2A:

| | 1C | 2A |
|--|----|----|
| Sentence Structure | | |
| Text Length | | |
| Text Characteristics unique to this level | | |

Reading Vocabulary and Decoding Skills

Describe the types of words that are characteristic of Level 1C (*Note: look through all 4 categories - Text Characteristics, Reading Vocabulary, Decoding Skills, and Reading Tasks to find descriptions of words and vocabulary*).

How are words in 2A distinct from 1C?

Reading Tasks

LEVEL 1C - Aligning Reading Tasks to the ARB

The Wright Brothers Make the First Flight

Orville and Wilbur Wright made history when their airplane made its first flight in 1903. The Wright brothers built Flyer 1. Orville flew Flyer 1 on its first flight. He was the first man to ever fly an airplane. This was an important first flight. It took place near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 1903 at 10:35am. Flyer 1 flew for 12 seconds over 120 feet of ground.

Read "The Wright Brothers Make the First Flight". The questions below are examples of 1C level tasks. Have a look at level 1C in the ARB (p. 16-19) to identify the Reading Tasks needed to answer the following questions. The first one is done for you. Select as many tasks as you think apply.

1. What did the Wright brothers build?
 - **Find information that uses simple and common words**
 - **Rely on understanding meaning rather than text structure to find information**
2. How far did the plane fly?
3. Who flew the first airplane?

TIP #1

The **number** of items in a search task affects task difficulty.

Finding only one piece of information is the easiest type search and locate task (1B).

Finding an unspecified number of items is the most difficult (2C)

Reading Tasks

LEVEL 2A - Aligning Reading Tasks to the ARB

CART SMARTS: GROCERY SHOPPING FOR HEALTH

Healthy eating starts in the grocery store. What we buy affects how well we eat. Planning can help you make grocery shopping a pleasant experience that doesn't take a lot of time. Planning can also help you make the healthy choices you want to make. Try these simple tips when you head out on your next trip to the grocery store.



Smart Shopping Tips

Make a List, Check It Twice, and Stick to It

- Creating an organized list of the food you need will help you stay focused and on track.
- Consider the meals you've planned for the week as well as healthy snack choices.
- Arrange your list into categories, such as fruits, vegetables, cereals, canned goods, milk products, and meats or meat alternatives.

Have a Snack, a Nap, or a Break

- Eat something before you head off to the grocery store to prevent impulse buying.
- Avoid shopping when you're hungry, tired, or short of time.

Understand the Lay of the Land

- Shop the outer edges of the store first. Healthy choices from the four food groups tend to be on the outer edges of stores. See [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#) for more information about the four food groups.
- Avoid the high-fat and high-sugar foods on the shelves in the centre of the store.
- Shop during non-peak hours when the store is less busy. Avoid late afternoons and weekends.

Make the most of grocery shopping. Commit to making healthy choices, and develop a simple plan to make it happen.

Taken from: Healthy U, Alberta Health and Wellness website, August 17, 2014;
<http://www.healthyalberta.com/1782.htm>

LEVEL 2A - Aligning Reading Tasks to the ARB

Read " Cart Smarts: Grocery Shopping for Health " and then check in the ARB (p. 20-21) to identify the level 2A reading tasks needed to answer these questions? Select as many tasks as you think apply.

1. What type of food is found in the centre of the store?
2. When is a good time to shop?
3. Which part of the store should you shop first?

What makes these tasks too difficult for level 2A?

4. Why is shopping when tired, hungry or short on time a bad idea?
5. List all of the things you can do to prepare for shopping before you go to the store.

Rewrite question #5 so it aligns with level 2A.

NOTE: The sample questions for these 2 texts provide a model for level 1C and 2A appropriate questions. You can create your own questions by using them as a template.

TIP #2

The **proximity** of items in a search task affects task difficulty.

Observe how closely items are found together in a text.

If the items are side by side in the text then this is an easy search task(1C).

If the items are spread out in various parts of the text it is a much more difficult task (2B)

Check the At-A-Glance chart (p.7-9) in the ARB to compare the proximity of items in a search task at each level

TIP #3

Does the reader need to integrate their own knowledge with information from the text to complete the task?

If yes, then it is too difficult a task for Benchmark 1 (*Levels 1A, 1B, 1C*) and Benchmark 2 (*Levels 2A, 2B, 2C*)

Example: Why was Flyer 1's first flight important?

To answer this question, readers must integrate their own knowledge about transportation with information about Flyer 1 in this text . This is not a Benchmark 1 or Benchmark 2 task. It is a Benchmark 3 task.

Assessing Reading

Read the learner profile and answer the following question.

Learner Profile

David went to school until he was 12 years old but had to stop when his dad died. There were 4 kids in the family and David was the oldest so he went to work with his mother to support the family. When he was 17 he moved to the Northwest Territories and got a job working in a mine where he stayed until he retired. Gardening is his favourite past-time but he would also like to have a part-time job to keep him busy because his wife intends to continue working for another few years. His first part-time job, as a car wash attendant, was frustrating for him because he had difficulty reading the instructions for the maintenance and repair of the pay stations which needed regular attention. For someone who led a successful and profitable career as a miner it was demoralizing to have so much difficulty with a job he felt should have been easy.

Observations of Reading Skills:

- Good decoding skills but struggles with words with unpredictable spelling
- Did well with sight words
- Is able to pull out basic facts from the readings such as things, people, places, times and amounts
- Has trouble following an idea if it is explained over more than 1 sentence
- Enjoyed reading a short article about container gardening. Is able to decipher most words including some difficult words like *zucchini* and *fertilize*.
- Had a more difficult time with a short biography on a Canadian Olympic medalist and needed help with words like *skiing* and *physical*

Refer to levels 1C and 2A in the Alberta Reading Benchmarks, ed. 2 (p. 20-21) to answer the following question:

Based on the observations of David's reading performance, what ARB level would you assess David's reading skills? Explain.

Did you know that Read Forward is an informal reading assessment that is aligned to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks?

If you would like to use an already developed reading assessment check the ARB website to learn more about Read Forward.

ARB Learning Module #2

Answer Key

ARB Learning Module 2 - Answer Key

Text Characteristics

Briefly describe the key points for each characteristic of text for level 1C and level 2A:

| | 1C | 2A |
|---|---|--|
| Sentence Structure | Simple sentences | Short and long sentences Simple and complex sentences |
| Text Length | Up to several sentences in length | Up to several short paragraphs |
| Text Characteristics unique to this level | Clearly expressed using basic words Simple forms Simple lists | Contain longer and more complex vocabulary |

Reading Vocabulary and Decoding Skills

Describe the types of words that are characteristic of Level 1C (*Note: look through all 4 categories - Text Characteristics, Reading Vocabulary, Decoding Skills, and Reading Tasks to find descriptions of words and vocabulary*).

Basic words, familiar, common, every day, simple, easy to sound out, concrete, some 3-syllable words

How are words in 2A distinct from 1C?

Words are longer and more complex, with unusual spelling, made up of a root plus prefixes and suffixes, compound words

Reading Tasks

LEVEL 1C

1. What did the Wright brothers build?
 - Find information that uses simple and common words
 - Rely on understanding meaning rather than text structure to find information
2. How far did the plane fly?
 - Find information that uses simple and common words
 - Rely on understanding meaning rather than text structure to find information
3. Who flew the first airplane?
 - Find information that uses simple and common words
 - Rely on understanding meaning rather than text structure to find information
 - Select among choices in a short text
 - Interpret a short text

LEVEL 2A

1. What type of food is found in the centre of the store?
 - Relate information to other information further away in the text
2. When is a good time to shop?
 - Find complex information
 - Relate information to other information further away in the text
3. Which part of the store should you shop first?
 - Cycle to find more than one piece of information that is not side by side
 - Find complex information
 - Relate information to other information further away in the text
 - Select among items in a short text

What makes these tasks too difficult for level 2A?

4. Why is shopping when tired, hungry or short on time a bad idea?
 - Requires the reader to integrate their knowledge with information from the text to complete task - a 3A task

5. List all of the things you can do to prepare for shopping before you go to the store.
 - Requires the reader to find information from various locations in the text - too broad of a cycle task for this level - a 2B task
 - Search task does not specify the number of items so reader does not know how many items to search - a 2C task

Rewrite question #5 so it aligns with level 2A:

5. List 2 things to do when making a list.
 - The number of items is specified for levels below 2C
 - Cycle to find more than one piece of information that is not side by side. (2A)

Assessing Reading

Based on the observations of David's reading performance, what ARB level would you assess David's reading skills? Explain.

Level 1C

- David can decode words well if they have predictable spelling (1C)
- Finds concrete information (1C)
- Search tasks are limited to information within a single sentence. Cannot do 2A level locate tasks - cycle or connect information if they are further apart.
- Can understand text on familiar topics (1C) and can even decipher words at a higher (2A) level if they are familiar to him.