



Bebop Books

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Meeting the Criteria for Reading First Programs and Materials

Young readers need a strong, organized, and systematic approach to learning to read. The Reading First Initiative has identified the critical components of such a program and directed schools to use research-based “core reading” programs. The research tells us that learning to read is a complex process that requires teacher direction, materials that support the learning of the alphabetic principle, and a focus on reading for meaning. The core reading program is to be the primary instructional tool. Teachers must all focus on the five essential components. Research also tells us, all children can become fluent readers. The teacher’s job is to facilitate and nurture their progress.

The core reading programs that meet the criteria set by the Reading First Initiative provide teachers with materials for direct instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies. As these programs are implemented, however, teachers need materials that support and extend the skills of children who have individual differences. Some children will move quickly, some more slowly, and some will experience difficulty. Within the core program, there may be materials and directions for adjusting instruction. It is also advisable for teachers to have supplemental materials to support all children so that “No Child is Left Behind.”

Bebop Books Guided Reading books are high quality materials that are an excellent source to supplement and enrich core reading programs and give young readers opportunities to practice and master reading at a variety of levels. The stories were created with an attention to detail and reading research so that Bebop Books titles support beginning readers in a variety of ways. Individually and as a group, the books address the five essential components of reading and adhere to proven requirements for emerging reader materials. Additionally, Bebop Books titles are written from a multicultural perspective and contain

stories that learners from diverse backgrounds relate to and understand. The books add variety to the reading materials available and allow all children to read about characters and real people who resemble themselves and their families.

The five essential components of reading instruction are addressed in Bebop Books titles. The lowest level books use patterned sentences, a consistent placement of text, natural oral language structures, and a clear sequence of events. The high frequency words are presented repeatedly so the young reader masters them. New words are phonetically regular and can be decoded using phonics rules. New vocabulary is introduced in the text and supported with clear pictures and photographs. The beginning reader finds the books easy to read and is motivated to practice because of the engaging topics.

Features of Bebop Books for Guided Reading, Levels A–D:

- topics familiar to children
- concepts children can relate to easily
- large, well-spaced print
- consistent placement of text
- high-frequency words and familiar vocabulary
- natural oral language structures
- simple sentence patterns
- some variety in punctuation
- strong match between illustrations and text
- illustrations support the story line
- clear sequence of events
- stories have beginnings, middles, and endings
- some surprise endings

A variety of phonemic awareness and phonics skills are addressed in these books. Rhyming, sound segmentation, sound blending, and recognition of individual phonemes can be retaught, reinforced, and practiced as children are guided through the books. For example, *Best Friends* (Level A) can be used to reinforce the /i/ sound. The words *like*, *ride*, *slide*, and *climb* are used in a simple, repeated sentence.

Since the titles at Levels A, B, C, and D contain repeated sentence patterns, the books can be used to help children practice identifying words that begin with a specific sound. The strong picture-text match enables children to look at the pictures and find words in the text that begin with the matching sounds. The teacher can also read the sentence to children and ask them to listen for the number of words in the sentence. After telling how many words they hear, children can look in the book and count the number of words to check if what they heard and thought was correct.

Bebop Books titles can be matched to the reader and the skill and used in whatever sequence is necessary to meet the needs of an individual child. The teacher can identify a skill to practice and then pick a book at the appropriate level. This flexibility makes Bebop Books titles a valuable supplement to the materials in the core reading program. The books can also be used for paired reading practice, placed in book baskets, and used in small group instruction.

At the emergent reading level, teachers need many books to help children achieve fluency. Bebop Books titles give these new readers patterned sentences and strong picture-text match so they will take risks and read new books. This builds confidence and reading fluency. As fluency is achieved, children can be encouraged to respond to the books and demonstrate their comprehension and understanding. Since Bebop Books titles contain stories with strong story sequence and familiar concepts, early readers can apply their reading skills and focus on meaning.

For example, *Big or Little?* (Level B), presents the reader with familiar objects and a set of sentences that read:

A house is big.

I am little.

A truck is big.

I am little.

A tree is big.

I am little.

A bug is little.

I am big!

The repetition and the simple words allow children to practice reading left-to-right and the return sweep needed for reading two lines of text. The new vocabulary (*house, truck, tree, bug*) is all phonetically regular words supported by the pictures. The new, phonetically regular words and sentence patterns lead to comprehension and fluency. The story also presents comparisons of size and offers humor when the child reaches the last page and encounters a change in the sentence pattern. These elements make the book engaging and motivating.

In the book *Mom Is a Painter* (Level C), the reader is presented with a familiar relationship, mother and child. The text contains a patterned sentence, color words, and phonetically regular new vocabulary:

Mom is a painter.

She paints a red bug.

She paints a yellow sun.

She paints a green leaf.

She paints a blue balloon.

She paints a purple dragon.

She paints a rainbow face!

The repetitive nature of the story, the inclusion of color words, and the distinctive photographs support the young reader. Children can read the book for practice, building fluency and focusing on comprehension. Children can connect what they read in the story with their own experiences and can make connections to other stories they have read. They can retell the story or respond to it, thus building comprehension.

As children move beyond the first stages of reading, they continue to need supportive materials. They have learned many words by sight and are learning to use phonics skills to decode new words.

Features of *Bebop Books for Guided Reading, Levels E-G*

- familiar situations and topics with problem-solving situations
- a variety of typefaces and spacing of words
- high-frequency words and predictable vocabulary
- some multisyllabic and compound words
- natural oral language and literary “book” language
- variation in sentence structures, including direct speech

- dialogue mixed with prose
- wide range of punctuation
- illustrations moderately support the story line
- clear story line and sequence of events
- events that last over several pages
- illustrations that help develop characters, settings, and the sequence of events
- sometimes told from a particular view

Books like *Seven Cookies* (Level E), offer some challenges to these readers while still being highly supportive. The text uses several sentence patterns to tell the story:

Seven cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do!

Now that leaves . . .

six cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do?

Now that leaves . . .

five cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do!

Now that leaves . . .

four cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do!

Now that leaves . . .

three cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do!

Now that leaves . . .

two cookies all for me.

Do I share?

Yes I do!
Now that leaves . . .
one cookie all for me.
Do I share?
Yes I do!
I share with me.

The reader practices his or her reading skills, developing fluency and focusing on meaning. The simple story introduces dialogue without the punctuation so the teacher can call children's attention to how the story might sound if it were a conversation. In doing this, children learn the importance of reading with inflection to enhance the meaning of the story. A book like *Seven Cookies* builds children's self-confidence while it strengthens their comprehension.

In *I Need to Ask you Something* (also Level E), children read a conversation between a mother and a child. This time, the book contains quotation marks. It also uses a set of patterned sentences so children learn to use punctuation as a tool to comprehension while being supported with familiar words and a common experience.

Many *Bebop Books* titles can be used as partners, one title for teaching or reteaching a skill and other titles to practice the skills. For example, *Block Party* (Level E) also contains conversation with quotation marks and can be paired with *I Need to Ask You Something*.

Several *Bebop Books* titles provide directions for a specific activity. For example, *Time for Tacos* (Level C), *Make a Turkey* (Level D), *Go Go Gumbo* (Level E), and *Confetti Eggs* (Level F) can be used to practice reading verbs, following directions, and recalling sequences. The books contain many phonetically regular words, patterned sentences, and introduce new age-appropriate vocabulary. The books support a story or unit in the core reading program in which children are exploring verb forms or one which focuses on sequence. The books can also be used for practice or reteaching to build fluency.

Three books at Level G, *The Best Thing*, *Moving Day Surprise*, and *Tuti's Play*, present stories of common family situations. Although the main characters are from racially and culturally different backgrounds, the reader is supported with many familiar words and commonly occurring sentence and phrase

patterns. Children can decode the unfamiliar words and use the pictures to support their comprehension. As a set, the books support a unit on families or a lesson on descriptive words. The books support children's application of their skills and the building of fluency.

All Bebop Books titles have accompanying lesson plans which point out the teaching possibilities related to the five essential components of reading. Each book has many teaching points for the teacher to select from as she or he matches children and books, and the lesson plans focus on using the supportive features of each book to facilitate children's reading success.

Bebop Books titles provide opportunities for teachers to scaffold children's learning because skills, concepts, and themes are found across all book levels. Skills and concepts are integrated into the stories while natural language structures are maintained. The majority of words in the books are phonetically regular. Sentence patterns using the high-frequency words support children's application of phonics skills. The content of the stories also appears across levels. The books address age appropriate themes such as days of the week, families, colors, the five senses, friends, weather, number concepts, and classroom activities. The books can be used to scaffold learning connected to other subject areas and to explore a theme with children who read at different levels. In addition, the books contain stories that every child can relate to because they are common to the lives of young children.

As a supplement to a core reading program, Bebop Books Guided Reading books offer research-based reading materials that help build successful readers. The books offer flexibility in use and variety of skills and content to teachers using core reading programs based on the principles stated in the Reading First Initiative. ■

About the AUTHOR ●

Dr. Jeanne Clidas, Assistant Professor, State University of New York, College at Brockport, is the author of Bebop Books' lesson plans and the article "Guided Reading with Emergent Readers," taught in her own classroom for 25 years. During that time she was a firm believer in small group instruction, daily

creative writing, and the use of centers to build student responsibility. She completed her doctorate at Fordham University, where she studied the acquisition of language and the role language use plays in learning. After completing her degree, Dr. Clidas worked as an independent consultant for an educational publishing company. In that position, she traveled across the country to work in other teachers' classrooms and facilitate long term staff development. She also wrote literacy materials that drew on her experiences with children living in diverse communities and speaking both English and Spanish. In addition to her work at the State University of New York, Dr. Clidas spends time in classrooms, working with children and helping their teachers become better able to support reading and writing success.