

Stages of Reading Development
 An Outline of the Major Qualitative Characteristics and How They Are Acquired

| 1 Stage Designation | 2 Grade Range (age) | 3 Major Qualitative Characteristics and Masteries by End of Stage | 4 How Acquired | 5 Relationship of Reading to Listening |
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| Stage 0: Prereading, Pseudo- reading | Preschool Ages 6 mo.- 6 years | Child "pretends" to read, retells story when looking at pages of book previously read to him; names letters of alphabet; recognizes some signs; prints own name; plays with books, pencils, and paper. | Being read to by adult (or older child) who responds to and warmly appreciates the child's interest in books and reading; being provided with books, paper, pencils, blocks and letters. | Most can understand the children's picture books and stories read to them. They understand thousands of words they hear by age 6 but can read few if any of them. |
| Stage 1: Initial reading & decoding | Grade 1 & beginning Grade 2 (ages 6 & 7) | Child learns relation between letters and sounds and between printed and spoken words; child is able to read simple text containing high frequency words and phonically regular words; uses skill and insight to "sound out" new one-syllable words. | Direct instruction in letter-sound relations (phonics) and practice in their use. Reading of simple stories using words with phonic elements taught and words of high frequency. Being read to on a level above what child can read independently to develop more advanced language patterns, knowledge of new words, and ideas. | The level of difficulty of language read by the child is much below the language understood when heard. At the end of Stage 1, most children can understand up to 4000 or more words when heard but can read only about 600. |
| Stage 2: Confirmation and fluency | Grades 2 & 3 (ages 7 & 8) | Child reads simple, familiar stories and selections with increasing fluency. This is done by consolidating the basic decoding elements, sight vocabulary, and meaning context in the reading of familiar stories and selections. | Direct instruction in advanced decoding skills; wide reading (with instruction and independently) of familiar, interesting materials which help promote fluent reading. Being read to at levels above their own independent reading level to develop language; vocabulary, and concepts. | At the end of Stage 2, about 3000 words can be read and can be read and understood and about 9000 are known when heard. Listening is still more effective than reading |
| Stage 3: Reading for learning the new | Grades 4-8 (ages 9-13) | Reading is used to learn new ideas, to gain new knowledge, to experience new feelings, to learn new attitudes; generally from one viewpoint. | Reading and study of textbooks, reference works, trade books, newspapers, and magazines that contain new ideas and values, unfamiliar vocabulary and syntax; systematic study of words and reacting to the text through discussion, answering questions, writing, etc. Reading of increasingly more complex fiction, biography, nonfiction, and the like. | At beginning of Stage 3 listening comprehension of the same material is still more effective than reading comprehension. By the end of Stage 3 reading and listening are about equal; for those who read very well, reading may be more efficient |
| Phase A | Inter- mediate, 4-6 | | | |
| Phase b | Junior high school, 7-9 | | | |
| Stage 4: Multiple viewpoints | High school, grades 10-12 (ages 15-17) | Reading widely from a broad range of complex materials, both expository and narrative, with a variety of viewpoints. | Wide reading & study of the physical, biological, and social sciences and the humanities; high quality and popular literature and magazines; systematic study of words and word parts. | Reading comprehension is better than listening comprehension of material of difficult content and readability. For poorer readers, listening comprehension may be equal to reading comprehension. |
| Stage 5: Construc- tion and recon struction | College and beyond (age 18+) | Reading is used for one's own needs and purposes (professional and personal); reading serves to integrate one's knowledge with that of others, to synthesize it and to create new knowledge. It is rapid and efficient | Wide reading of ever more difficult materials, reading beyond one's immediate needs; writing of papers, tests, essays, and other forms that call for integration of varied knowledge and points of view. | Reading is more efficient than listening. |

Source: Jeanne S. Chall, *Stages of Reading Development*, (New York: McCraw-Hill, 1983), table 5-1, pp. 85-87