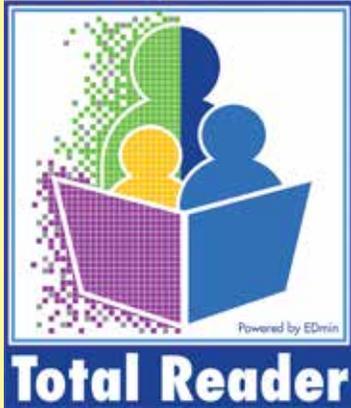


How learner-centered reading assessment engages and motivates students



As educators implement learner-centered initiatives, it provides an opportunity for students to take a more active role in monitoring their progress toward the skills they need for college and career readiness. The combination of personalized learning and meaningful progress monitoring can be a powerful motivator. Students are empowered to reach high standards when they are given measurable learning objectives and materials that support them in advancing at a flexible pace.

Progress monitoring should be an important focus of online and blended learning programs. Many agree that tracking and reporting student progress is an important attribute in successful outcomes. However, the assessment method must do more than compare scores. It must be designed to tell you and your students whether their performance is improving.

When it comes to advancing reading skills, a learner-centered approach needs to provide results that are more than a snapshot. Students should be able to understand their abilities in relation to grade level standards and their individual performance goals in preparing for college or a career. Students should be aware of their comprehension skills for different levels of text complexity. Educators and parents should be able to monitor the effect of interventions and enrichment activities.

Total Reader provides ideal support for learner-centered reading initiatives. It combines engaging, personalized reading practice with immediate, meaningful assessment results. Progress is measured by the Lexile® Framework for Reading, a widely used metric based on years of research. Total Reader uses the Lexile Framework to monitor growth of a student's reading skills from grades 3 to 12, treating each student as an individual whose ability might vary from others in his or her grade. Total Reader targets reading passages to each individual's real-time Lexile measure for practice that is just right for optimal growth.



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Total Reader provides three benefits to support a transition to a learner-centered approach:

1 Students can manage their targeted reading practice independently, yet they are still accountable to teachers and parents for their progress.

2 Students can set and monitor individual goals for short-term and long-term growth, using the Lexile Framework for Reading, an objective measure of progress over time.

3 If students are struggling, teachers can intervene by reviewing passages and vocabulary with them, as well as by using current Lexile measures as a basis for managing reading instruction.

Computer-adaptive Lexile assessment saves time for both teacher and student. Total Reader's dashboards and reports make it easy to monitor progress and identify individual needs, such as assistance with class reading or enrichment activities to keep students engaged.

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Learner-Centered Management of Reading Growth

Total Reader's independent reading practice engages students with a positive experience. It provides immediate feedback on their current Lexile measure after they complete short practice passages on topics they are interested in. The passage choices keep pace with reading growth, so they are always challenged, but not frustrated.

In the words of one teacher, the Lexile Framework for Reading, a developmental scale for measuring reading ability, gives students a "recipe for reading success" with:

- 1 Reading practice at the best level for reading growth
- 2 Awareness of the level of text they are reading
- 3 The effectiveness of their reading practice

Students report that it is very motivating to instantly see their Lexile measure increase. They like the independent aspects of Total Reader. They are free to choose a fiction or nonfiction topic and to review a short summary of the passage before they make a final selection. They appreciate the opportunity to rate how well they liked the passage. They like seeing their results immediately, without waiting for a teacher to grade them. They can see their own progress over time when they access their personal dashboard.

Students also like setting their own pace as they read a passage and "fill in the blank" for missing words (cloze items). As a low-stakes assessment tool, Total Reader does not time passages, but it does offer an average expected time for completion of each passage. The average expected time is about eight minutes.

Total Reader can be used from any Internet connection, so it is equally suited to use inside and outside the classroom. Because it can be used from any computer or portable device, it is an ideal component for a blended learning initiative.

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Goal-Setting and Accountability

Since its development in 1989, the Lexile Framework for Reading has given rise to a wealth of metrics that provide a scientific basis for benchmarking reading progress. The metrics are helpful both within a school year and in preparing for college and career readiness.

Ensuring Progress Every Year

We now know that college reading needs and the reading needs for most occupations are substantially beyond the current levels of high school graduates. To bridge the gap, Common Core reading standards provide “stretch” Lexile bands to ensure that students will be college and career ready when they graduate. Total Reader uses the stretch bands to show which students need intervention, are on track or are proficient.

Lexile Milestones and Gaps

High School

- Textbooks – 1165L
- ACT – 1210L
- AT – 1330L
- Average Graduate – **1150L**

Post-Graduation

- Military – 1180L
- Workplace – 1260L
- Community College – 1295L
- University – 1395L

Common Core “Stretch” Text Measures

Grade	2012 Common Core “Stretch” Text Measures
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 & 12	1185L to 1385L

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Two other metrics show typical *reader* measures and typical *text* measures by grade. By seeing where students typically are, and where they need to be, appropriate goals can be set for an individual, class and grade.

Typical Reader and Text Measures

Grade	Reader Measures, Mid-Year 25th - 75th percentile	Text Demand Study 2009 25th - 75th percentile
1	Up to 300L	230L to 420L
2	140L to 500L	450L to 570L
3	330L to 700L	600L to 730L
4	445L to 810L	640L to 780L
5	565L to 910L	730L to 850L
6	665L to 1000L	860L to 920L
7	735L to 1065L	880L to 960L
8	805L to 1100L	900L to 1010L
9	855L to 1165L	960L to 1110L
10	905L to 1195L	920L to 1120L
11 & 12	940L to 1210L	1070L to 1220L

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Goal-setting within a school year

Independent research by MetaMetrics®, the company that developed the Lexile Framework, shows the expected average yearly Lexile gain. The expected growth per year:

- Grade 2 – 95L
- Grade 3 – 83L
- Grade 4 – 75L
- Grade 5 – 60L
- Grade 6 – 55L
- Grade 7 – 50L
- Grade 8 – 45L
- Grade 9 – 35L
- Grade 10 – 35L
- Grade 11 – 30L
- Grade 12 – 30L

Students who use Total Reader show double the expected reading gains in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades, according to data we collected from 10,000 students. Students in grades 3-12 and in community college all showed significant gains.

The average Total Reader user experienced a Lexile gain of 107L. These results were achieved after the average user practiced reading at the correct level for approximately 50 minutes a month for just over a calendar year.

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Goal-setting for high stakes testing

Metrics for Lexile measures can also be analyzed in relation to high-stakes assessment. For example, the state of Georgia related the typical measures to the actual measures associated with cut scores for its high-stakes assessments.

Metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of reading instruction

Because Total Reader offers immediate online assessment of a student's Lexile measure, it is ideal for measuring the effectiveness of reading instruction using other programs for intervention, practice or enrichment.

Total Reader provides support for the six elements of accountability identified by MetaMetrics, the company that developed the Lexile Framework for Reading:

- Goals
- Indicators of progress toward meeting those goals
- Analysis of data
- Reporting procedures and consequences
- Use of assessment results and other data to determine program effectiveness
- Use of data to make decisions about resources, rewards and consequences

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Involving parents in goal-setting

One state's website says that Lexile measures enable educators "to personalize reading instruction, and to be able to better communicate the reading needs of students to parents" and provide "an excellent means of encouraging parental involvement by giving parents a clear idea of their child's progress, and a selection of books that the child should be reading. Time spent reading outside of school is a powerful predictor of future academic and workplace success."

Lexile measures and metrics provide an objective basis for communicating reading progress to parents, as well as providing guidance for fostering literacy at home. For example, readers don't have to stay within their Lexile range, from 100L below to 50L above their Lexile measure.

MetaMetrics says, "Higher-level books provide a great opportunity for reading growth. If a young person is highly motivated to read a particular book, he or she will attempt to read that book regardless of its difficulty level. Books above a reader's level can help to stimulate growth when its topic is of extreme interest to the reader."

Additionally, "Struggling and reluctant readers can use Lexile measures to find easier books to practice with on topics they're interested in or required to read about. Homework help might be as simple as finding the right level of reading material. If a required book or text is too hard, Lexile measures can help you find other books or texts on the same subject at a lower Lexile level."

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Intervention

Capturing the “teachable moment”

Total Reader is designed for independent use. However, when students are struggling, teachers have an ideal opportunity to assist them in the “teachable moment.”

As a student reads a passage and completes the cloze items, missed vocabulary words are flagged for review. The missed word is added to a student’s personal vocabulary list, as well as any cloze response item the student chooses to add for later review.

Teachers can re-open any passage with the student and review each missed item. The ability to do this type of review was added as a result of teacher requests.

Working with reading groups

Knowing every student’s current Lexile measure makes it easy to manage reading groups. Students are automatically placed in three groups:

- Need intervention
- On track
- Proficient

The Lexile Bookfinder is built into Total Reader to make it easier to select books at an optimum Lexile measure.

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In conclusion

The National Research Council famously observed that the more purposes a single assessment aims to serve, the more each purpose is compromised. Total Reader serves just one purpose: to assess how well a student is progressing in reading skills, while supporting many ways to put that information to work to support immediate and long-term goals for reading growth.

Total Reader creates an ideal transition to a learner-centered approach with its immediate return of a Lexile measure upon completion of a targeted reading passage and personal dashboard for students. In the words of reading specialist Nancy Coleman, the reports “provide a visual incentive for students to compete against themselves.”

Students are supported in taking ownership of their progress in multiple ways, from choosing a passage that interests them to the opportunity to review, on their own, the vocabulary they missed. In the words of one fourth grader, “I like to know what level I am on and where I am in the reading levels!”

To find out more about how Total Reader can help your students or your child take responsibility for making progress on reading skills, please:

- [Sign up for a free trial](#) for a class, school or district
- [Purchase an affordable single subscription](#) for an individual user

About Total Reader

Total Reader is an online reading assessment program that is specifically designed to encourage reading progress throughout a student’s education. The advantage of our adaptive diagnostic technology is that students only read content at the best level for reading growth. No wasted time! Students are engaged by the great stories and motivated as they watch their Lexile measure increase. To learn more, please visit www.totalreader.com.

