

## **Elementary Reading Programs**

The Elementary DI reading program consists of six programs. Reading Mastery I and II reach children to read. Reading Mastery III and IV teach children to learn history, geography and science from text. Reading Mastery V and VI teach children to analyze Literature.

Some students are in **Fast Cycle** or **Horizons** reading programs. These are the same as the Reading Mastery programs, except that they move twice as fast. Students in Fast Cycle I complete all the material in Reading Mastery I in about half a year. Similarly, Fast Cycle II and Horizons III and IV cover all of the material in Reading Mastery II, III and IV, in about half the number of lessons. To understand what your child is learning in these programs, you will need to look at the description for the corresponding Reading Mastery program and double the lesson number for your child's group. For example, if your child is in Fast Cycle II, Lesson 30, you should look at Reading Mastery II, Lesson 60, to get an idea of what is being taught.

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**“What did you learn in school today?” Information for Parents**

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Reading Mastery VI  
Literature and Analysis

In RM VI, students read short stories, novels and poems. Some are classics, while others are new. The program teaches skills students will use for complex adult literature.. They continue to learn new words and improve their comprehension skills.

Usually, before students read a story, they are taught background information that will help them understand the story better. For example, in lesson 24, students learn about Irish immigrants. This information prepares them for the story that follows, “Mrs. Dunn’s Lovely, Lovely Farm,” a story about Irish immigrants in New York. Almost every story in the program has at least one factual article to go with it, because the stories are generally about topics students have not encountered before — Greek gods, Victorian London, and the Underground Railroad, for example. This means that as they study literature, students are still learning facts about the world. The information passages also help build skills they can use to read and study textbooks.

The daily vocabulary words are quite difficult at this level. For example, in Lesson 20, students read the words *obliged*, *schooner* and *Nova Scotia*, among others. They also complete a short writing assignment almost every day. In lesson 1, after reading about an automatic doughnut machine, students write a paragraph about labor-saving devices. Sometimes they are asked to write their own story or poem.

Students reach a new level of literary discussion. While all levels of the reading program include group discussions about character and plot, in RM VI the discussions become more advanced as students learn about literary devices, including irony, sarcasm, simile and metaphor. See if your child can tell you the difference between them.

Your child can tell you about the story he or she is reading in school, including the title, characters, and if it has a moral or lesson. Here are a few of the selections students read:

Lessons 5-13 *The Odyssey* (prose translation of Homer’s epic poem)  
 27-28 “The Last Leaf” (story, O. Henry)  
 37-49 *Sara Crewe* (novel, Frances Burnett)  
 59-70 *The Cruise of the Dazzler* (novel, Jack London)  
 71-72 “Casey at the Bat” (poem, Ernest Thayer)  
 86-88 “The Red Room” (story, H.G. Wells)  
 91-120 *Tom Sawyer* (novel, Mark Twain)

Most students enjoy reading the stories, so they are motivated to work hard. Another motivation comes from the program’s point system. Teachers award points for good work in reading out loud, doing workbook pages and other activities.