

## Free and Low Cost Online Resources for EBRI

### Grade Leveled Passages

#### **Awesome Stories**

[www.awesomestories.com](http://www.awesomestories.com)

This free multimedia site provides an enormous array of short and long articles, videos, audio files, and links on adult-interest topics. Readability of the text sections is not provided, but teachers will find plenty of pieces that are within an intermediate or low-advanced readability range. Pieces are organized into topical collections. Links within text passages lead to photos or additional information. Free membership enables access to everything on the site.

#### ***The Change Agent***

[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)

*The Change Agent* is a newspaper published twice a year by the New England Literacy Resource Center. The articles are written by students, teachers, and professional writers. Readability levels are provided for each article. Each edition centers on a topic such as the environment, the economy, health, etc., so students can read articles to practice comprehension strategies at an appropriate level, and the whole class can discuss the topic. Subscriptions are very low cost and provide access to the new and archived editions. Newer editions also feature an audio which might be applicable for fluency instruction.

#### **English for Everyone**

[www.englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Reading-Comprehension.htm](http://www.englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Reading-Comprehension.htm)

Click on “Reading Comprehension” at the left. This free site offers several collections of reading passages from grade levels 1-12. Some passages are fiction, others are nonfiction. All passages are followed by comprehension questions and answer sheets with detailed explanations that teachers may find helpful to use as resources for themselves as they plan for explanation, modeling and guided practices. The comprehension questions can also be used to assess comprehension when students are in the application phase of learning.

#### **E Reading Worksheets**

<http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/>

This free site provides teachers, parents, and motivated students with high-quality reading worksheets, activities, and resources aligned with Common Core State Standards. The resources on this website cover a broad range of reading, writing, and language arts skills. Worksheets are given a range for reading levels, most often from level 5-9/10, but with a few modifications these activities can be adapted for any grade level. Many of the worksheets are .rtf files which allows you to edit and modify materials for your particular use. Resources include a section on text structures which provides practice paragraphs reflecting the six most commonly used structures. Combining some of the paragraphs can produce a short passage for additional, more difficult practice exercises. <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/text-structure/>.

#### **Marshall Adult Education Reading Skills for Today’s Adult**

<http://www.marshalladulthoodeducation.org/index.php/reading-skills-for-todays-adult>

This free site offers hundreds of grade-leveled short nonfiction reading passages that can be used for repeated reading, echo reading, and marked phrase boundary work. The passages are provided in a printable version as well as online, along with audio which students can listen to for a model or while reading. Note that many passages contain bulleted lists rather than paragraphs of text, and as such will not be as suitable for fluency practice as passages that have full paragraphs.

## **Newsela**

[www.newsela.com](http://www.newsela.com)

News articles from major media sources are added daily on a variety of topics, and each article is available at 5 different Lexile levels. Teachers can print the articles at the level(s) needed so that all students can read the same article at the appropriate level. Users must register (free). Hundreds of articles are available. An amazing site!

## **The Times in Plain English**

[www.thetimesinplainenglish.com](http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com)

This free site provides simplified articles drawn from sources such as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and other reputable newspapers. Readability levels are not provided, but generally fall between 4.0 and 8.9. Articles are up to date and ongoing, so an extensive array of pieces is available. Everything is printable and reproducible. Users can also subscribe for free to receive it by email.

## **ReadWorks**

<http://www.readworks.org/>

This free site contains a long list of grade-leveled and Lexiled expository reading passages. Passages are divided into subsections that may also be suitable for alphabetic or fluency practice. Each passage is followed by comprehension questions which can be used to assess comprehension when students are in the application phase of learning.

## **Vocabulary Lesson Resources**

### **Adult Learning Resource Center Academic Vocabulary Units**

<http://thecenterweb.org/alrc/reading-pub.html>

The Adult Learning Resource Center has developed full vocabulary units for teachers who do not have vocabulary textbooks available. Each 10-word unit is designed to be taught over several class periods using direct and explicit instruction (explanation, modeling, practice and application). Units include words, meanings, matching, fill-ins, sentence completion, Yes/No Why?, and a variety of other practice activities. The units are downloadable Word documents so that teachers can personalize them.

### **Appalachian State University Vocabulary Lessons**

<http://abspd.appstate.edu/vocabulary-lessons>

The Adult Basic Skills Professional Development Project at Appalachian State University, NC has developed 25 vocabulary lessons for five academic (Tier 2) words to be used over multiple class sessions. If you prefer to present 10 words, combining two word lists will not be difficult. Activity sheets are for fill-in-the-blank, sentence completion, Yes/No Why? and Read and Respond (a leveled passage is included). The units are downloadable Word documents.

## Sources of Academic (Tier 2) Words and Simplified Meanings:

**Words to Study for the GED® Test** <http://farrellink.com/2013/10/08/words-to-study-for-the-ged-test/>

This web page has links to four sources of academic vocabulary words. The link to the Academic Word List will bring you to a page where you can download a handy list of key words (“headwords”).

**Merriam-Webster Learner’s Dictionary** <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/>

The Learner’s Dictionary is useful for finding simple word meanings for Tier 2 words and examples of words used in context.

**Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary** <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>

If you click on the Wordlists tab, you can choose the Oxford 3000 or the Academic Word List. Neither list is strictly Tier 2 words, but it is a valid place to go when preparing lessons to look at word meanings.

## Determining Readability Levels for Grade Level Equivalency (GLE)

**Readability levels** can be determined by using many formulas. Results will be different depending on the formula used. Online, teachers can copy and paste samples of text into the website <http://www.readabilityformulas.com/>. Teachers should always pre-read grade-leveled passages to determine suitability for classroom use. Consider issues such as grammar complexity, length of sentences, use of proper nouns, vocabulary level, etc.

Another kind of readability is a **Lexile** text measure, which is based on two strong predictors of how difficult a text is to comprehend: word frequency and sentence length. Lexile ratings are available for most books. To find more information go to <http://www.lexile.com>. A Lexile Grade Level Conversion Chart can be found at: <http://languageartsreading.dadeschools.net/pdf/FAIR/LexileConversionChart.pdf>