

RESEARCH &  
VALIDATION

FOUNDATION  
PAPER

MAY 2021

# Scholastic Literacy Pro<sup>®</sup>

The Essential Management Tool for  
Independent and Instructional Reading

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# **Scholastic Literacy Pro<sup>®</sup>**

**The Essential Management Tool for  
Independent and Instructional Reading**

 **SCHOLASTIC**

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# INTRODUCTION

*If I can't bring my book, I'm not going.* That ultimatum, printed on the child's T-shirt, would make literacy experts cheer. After all, research clearly establishes the link between time spent reading independently and reading achievement (Foorman, Schatschneider, Eakin, Fletcher, Moats, & Francis, 2006; Swan, Coddington, & Guthrie, 2010). The more students read books that they can and want to read, the more proficient they become at reading. Avid independent reading not only benefits a student's academic performance but also fosters a deep love for books that will continue into adulthood. "If we want students to embrace reading now and always, then we need to keep at the forefront of our attention the rich, complex, and profound pleasures of reading" (Wilhelm & Smith, 2013).

Research suggests that student choice is one of the two most powerful factors for improving reading motivation and comprehension (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). When students choose what they read—the authors they follow, the topics they learn about, the genres that excite them—they read. They take ownership of their literacy development and gain confidence in their abilities as readers. Students themselves see the value of book choice, with nine out of ten agreeing that their favorite books are the ones they pick out themselves (Scholastic & YouGov, 2019). Choice positively affects students' motivation and engagement, which in turn fuels reading gains. In fact, reading engagement connects more strongly to achievement than family background. Students with high reading engagement but lower parental education and income have higher reading achievement than their peers with low engagement and a similar socioeconomic background (Guthrie, 2008).

For students to have choice, they need access to many books—the other key factor driving reading growth. "Children must have easy—literally fingertip—access to books that provide engaging, successful reading experiences throughout the calendar year if we want them to read in volume," note literacy experts Allington and McGill-Franzen (2003, p. 74). In fact, students who have access to a well-stocked classroom library read 50% more than students who do not (Catapano, Fleming, & Elias, 2009). Sadly, many children lack such school-based resources. Research suggests that students attending schools in the most economically disadvantaged communities have the fewest school library resources to draw from (Pribesh, Gavigan, & Dickinson, 2011). They also are missing books in their neighborhood: a study that examined access to children's books in high-poverty areas found that in one Washington, D.C. neighborhood, 830 children would have to share a single age-appropriate book. "When there are no books, or when there are so few that choice is not an option, book reading becomes an occasion and not a routine. This has enormous consequence for children's reading development and school success" (Neuman & Moland, 2019, p. 143–433).

A high-quality independent reading program ensures that all children have the opportunity to connect with stories they love, from fiction to nonfiction, chapter books to graphic novels, ebooks to paperbacks. It supports early readers as they develop their budding literacy skills and challenges more-experienced readers with texts that make them stretch and grow. It lets students choose their own reading path and enjoy discovering books that connect with their interests and backgrounds. These considerations are at the heart of Scholastic Literacy Pro®, a digital classroom-management tool for independent reading. Based on decades of research, Literacy Pro is a blended-learning solution that curates a personalized bookshelf for each student in Grades K–8 and captures all of their reading activity, both online and off. With a library of more than 2,800 popular ebooks and connections to thousands of paperback titles, Literacy Pro ensures that every student experiences the joy of reading independently—and becomes a reader for life.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

This report reviews critical research about the many ways that independent reading benefits literacy development and the key qualities of an effective independent reading program. It then describes how this research informed the design and user experience of Scholastic Literacy Pro.

## OVERVIEW OF SCHOLASTIC LITERACY PRO

Scholastic Literacy Pro® is a comprehensive, web-based program that empowers students in Grades K–8 to take charge of their independent reading, both online and in print, by offering simultaneous access to more than 2,800 authentic, high-quality fiction and nonfiction ebooks, as well as connections to thousands of engaging paperback titles that are hard copies and read offline. Using Literacy Pro, students can track every book they are reading in any format, allowing them to log all of their independent reading in one place and monitor their reading growth over time. This capability gives educators a complete picture of each student’s reading activities, online and off, which can be used to enhance whole- and small-group instruction. Teachers can also use Literacy Pro as an instructional reading tool for in-person or online instruction. As a blended-learning solution, Literacy Pro has several key features.

### Key Features

- **Is accessible 24/7 on any device with a high-speed internet connection**
- **Provides simultaneous access to ebooks**  
Literacy Pro provides simultaneous access to more than 2,800 ebooks, supporting equitable reading experiences, shared reading, student book clubs, and remote reading instruction.
- **Aligns with both Guided Reading and Lexile® classrooms**  
Literacy Pro uses student reading measures to indicate books that are appropriately challenging, although students are free to read any book at their grade level.<sup>1</sup> Teachers already using the Guided Reading or Lexile leveling system in their classrooms can input each student’s reading measure or level into Literacy Pro. Alternatively, they can assign the Scholastic Reading Measure within Literacy Pro to generate valid and reliable Lexile measures for their students. For teachers who use Next Step Guided Reading Assessment (NSGRA), Guided Reading levels will automatically sync to Literacy Pro.
- **Generates personalized book recommendations**  
Sometimes the hardest part of reading is finding a book that grabs you. Literacy Pro helps students along, presenting collections of ebooks that match their grade level and self-identified interests. Books within a student’s independent reading level are noted with a check mark, but students can read any grade-level book that catches their eye. Teachers can also expand students’ libraries to include books from higher and lower grade levels.
- **Fosters a goal-oriented mindset**

<sup>1</sup>Teachers may assign a range of grade levels for individual students or an entire class through the settings within Literacy Pro.

Literacy Pro encourages students to make reading a habit. Within their online profiles, students set weekly goals for the number of days they will read and the length of time spent reading each day. Literacy Pro automatically logs all of the students' digital reading, and students can also add time spent reading print books offline to achieve their weekly goals. As students monitor their progress against their goals, they gain confidence in their reading abilities and a sense of ownership in their reading journeys. Their self-efficacy flourishes, which can lead them to set even more challenging personal goals.

- **Supports comprehension**

Several tools within Literacy Pro help make independent reading a rewarding experience for all readers. Students can use a built-in dictionary to look up unknown words and hear their pronunciations, take digital notes while they are reading, and, for more than 500 ebooks, listen to the book read aloud. Every ebook and thousands of print titles on Literacy Pro also include a Think More comprehension check, an optional quiz tied to 10 core English Language Arts (ELA) skills that students can take to gauge their understanding of the text. In addition, teachers have access to over 900 Teaching Tip cards to support reading instruction with Literacy Pro ebooks.

- **Values student input**

Literacy Pro allows students to share their opinions with their classmates and teacher about books they have read. Students can rate a book on a scale of one to five stars, with a book's average rating appearing alongside its cover in the digital library for other students to see. Students can also write book reviews and share them with their teacher, giving further insight into their reading experience.

- **Meets the needs of emerging readers and English Learners**



Students who have not yet mastered foundational reading skills can benefit by reading ebooks with accompanying audio on Literacy Pro. The program also includes Scholastic Reading Readiness, an assessment that teachers can assign to measure students' reading readiness and their grasp of foundational literacy skills. Teachers can expand grade-level libraries at the class and individual-student levels to ensure that all students have access to books that are appropriate for their reading ability. In addition, Literacy Pro features more than 300 Spanish-language titles, with many also available in English. Think More comprehension checks are available in Spanish for all Spanish-language ebooks.

- **Offers real-time reporting of actionable data**

Literacy Pro provides detailed reports for both students and educators. In their online profiles, students can check their progress against their weekly reading goals, view all of the books they are reading and have completed, and track other reading-related data. They also receive instant feedback after completing Think More comprehension checks. Educators, meanwhile, can generate in-depth, real-time reports at the individual, class, school, and district levels to understand how students are using Literacy Pro. The reports track key indicators, such as what students are reading, how many minutes per week they are reading, and how they are performing on Think More comprehension checks, which can be used to inform instruction and conversations with students about their progress.

# THE BENEFITS OF INDEPENDENT READING

The National Reading Panel, a group of leading literacy educators and scientists, noted that in the case of reading proficiency, numerous studies have found that the best readers read the most and striving readers read the least. The more that you read, the better your vocabulary, your knowledge of the world, and your ability to read (National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 3–21). Independent reading is the culmination: the practice and application of foundational skills acquired. Indeed, research examining the relationship between various instructional practices and the reading achievements of first graders suggests that time spent reading significantly explains gains in achievement (Foorman et al., 2006). Additionally, as students progress through the second and third grades, reading instruction “reinforces the basic principles...with the goal of encouraging [children] to read more and to read increasingly more complex books independently” (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2020, p. 230). Over the past several decades, research has demonstrated the many ways that avid reading supports students in becoming confident, proficient readers.

## IMPROVES COMPREHENSION

Giving students the opportunity to read independently clearly aids their literacy growth, including their comprehension skills. In a review of studies that examined the efficacy of in-school independent free-choice reading programs, Krashen (2004) found that in 51 out of 54 comparisons, free readers did as well or better on comprehension tests than students who received only direct instruction and assigned readings. Another meta-analysis reached a similar conclusion after examining 25 years of research on in-school independent reading programs (Block & Mangieri, 2002). They found that students who read more recreationally scored higher on comprehension tests in Grades 2, 4, and 8 and earned better grades.

Reading for pleasure outside of school has a positive effect on comprehension as well. In one of the most extensive studies of independent reading, researchers asked fifth graders to record their daily activities outside of school. Among all the ways that the students spent their time, reading books was the best predictor of several measures of reading achievement, including gains in reading comprehension, from Grade 2 to Grade 5 (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988).

## INCREASES FLUENCY

Fluent readers recognize words quickly and accurately, which allows them to focus on “comprehending the text, criticizing it, elaborating on it, and reflecting on it—in short, doing all the things we know good readers do” (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991, p. 176). Reading aloud is a common way to practice fluency, but studies suggest that silent independent reading can play a meaningful role as well. Researchers measured the effectiveness with third graders of an instructional method called scaffolded silent reading. In scaffolded silent reading, teachers guide students’ selection of appropriately challenging books, encourage wide reading of different genres, provide regular feedback about their progress, and hold students accountable for time spent reading silently. The researchers randomly assigned students to one of two groups. One group engaged in guided repeated oral reading all year, while the other participated in scaffolded silent reading. The study found that scaffolded silent reading is just as effective as guided oral reading in improving fluency and comprehension (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008).

## EXPANDS VOCABULARY

Leading literacy researchers analyzed 10,000 digitized texts written for students and identified a “core vocabulary” that accounts for more than 90% of the words in school materials (Hiebert, Goodwin, & Cervetti, 2018). The list consists of roughly 11,000 words, an untenable number for classroom instruction; but through avid independent reading, students can grow their vocabularies immensely. Research suggests that reading volume is the prime contributor to differences in children’s vocabularies (Hayes, 1988; Nagy & Anderson, 1984). The average child at the 90th percentile in reading volume reads almost two million words per year outside of school, over 46 times more words than a child at the 10th percentile (Anderson et al., 1988). “Even the child with limited reading and comprehension skills will build vocabulary and cognitive structures by being encouraged to read” (Cunningham, 2005, p. 64).

Another study analyzed the role of pleasure reading in learning academic words. The study defined academic vocabulary as both technical terms specific to a given discipline, such as *photosynthesis*, and words that appear across many subject areas, such as *influence*. It found that free reading of popular young adult fiction is between two and six times more efficient for learning academic words than direct teaching of the words. While the research does not suggest that students can learn all academic words by reading fiction, the activity can “serve as a bridge or ‘conduit’ to academic language” (McQuillan, 2019, p. 134). Reading nonfiction can also boost vocabulary, exposing students to academic words they must master in order to be successful readers across a range of content areas (Young, Moss, & Cornwell, 2007).

## DEVELOPS BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students who read more in their free time develop not only richer vocabularies but also a deeper understanding of the world (Nagy, 2005). Research on sustained silent reading programs supports the positive impact that wide, extensive reading can have on academic background knowledge (Marzano, 2004). Reading authentic texts or trade books, both fiction and nonfiction, complements what students learn from textbooks. By reading books about a topic that interests them, students integrate the content into what they already know and become more engaged (Fuhler, 1991). Other research has confirmed the close connection between reading volume, reading achievement, and background knowledge: researchers established that wide reading develops background knowledge, a finding replicated in a 2014 longitudinal study that followed 54 students from Grade 1 to Grade 10. In that study, researchers found that reading volume is more important than cognitive ability in developing general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014).

## SUPPORTS LITERACY GROWTH OF ENGLISH LEARNERS

One in 10 students in K–12 public schools today is an English learner, according to the U.S. Department of Education (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2019). Independent reading is “one of the best things a second language acquirer can do to bridge the gap from the beginning level to truly advanced levels of second language proficiency” (Krashen, 2004, p. x). In three meta-analyses of studies that involved students learning English as a foreign language, Krashen (2018) found that students who participated in sustained silent reading programs performed better on vocabulary and reading comprehension tests than students who spent the same amount of time in traditional classes.

The benefits of independent choice reading for English learners extend beyond a larger vocabulary and higher reading proficiency. Independent choice reading can also lead to positive changes in students’ reading habits and attitudes. In one example, researchers focused on a bilingual Grade 5 classroom in a low-income community. There, many of the students scored below grade level on English reading tests, and many also spoke Spanish at home. The researchers supplied the classroom with a library of books carefully selected to reflect students’ interests, languages, instructional needs, and more. Every day for 30 minutes, students were instructed to silently read a book they had chosen from the classroom library. By the end of the school year, students’ attitudes toward reading had transformed. Once apathetic readers, the students started visiting the library more often, trading books with one another, and seeking out other ways to access books. On days when silent reading time was cut short due to a change in the school schedule, students requested makeup time. “Through the ready access to books that were relevant to their lives and a ‘reading culture’ that included time to read, book talk, and value of literacy, students’ reading interests were strengthened, awakened, and extended” (Worthy & Roser, 2010, p. 254).

## MOTIVATES AND ENGAGES

When students are free to choose what they read and have ready access to a wide assortment of interesting books, they become more engaged and motivated readers (Allington & Gabriel, 2012; Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013). Reading becomes an activity they want to do, setting in motion an upward spiral in which avid reading leads to higher achievement and even more reading (Guthrie, 2008). In fact, the most motivated readers spend nearly three times as long with a book every day than the least motivated (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Motivation matters more than family background when it comes to reading achievement; students with high reading engagement but lower parental education and income are better readers than students with low reading motivation and the same socioeconomic background (Guthrie, 2008).

Intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on achievement. Using a sample of more than 4,000 rising fourth and fifth graders in high-poverty U.S. schools, researchers measured the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation on comprehension and the amount of leisure reading done outside school. They found that intrinsic reading motivation positively predicted both reading volume and comprehension. Extrinsic motivations, such as the desire to earn good grades or win a competition, had a statistically significant negative effect on both reading volume and achievement (Troyer, Kim, Hale, Wantchekon, & Armstrong, 2019).

# QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT READING PROGRAM

What makes an independent reading program successful? Literacy experts and researchers examined programs to determine which ones boosted reading achievement and student motivation to read (Pilgreen, 2000) and identified several features and practices that are particularly critical:

## AVAILABLE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Students must have opportunities to read for pleasure, whenever and wherever the mood strikes. Fully 96% of teachers, principals, and school librarians say that providing year-round access to books at home is critical to enhancing student achievement (Scholastic & YouGov, 2017). That viewpoint is strongly supported by research. One study examined the effect that book access in and out of school had on the reading scores of fourth graders. They found that access significantly predicted reading achievement and mitigated the effects of poverty. Book access was also a significant predictor of the difference between Grade 4 and Grade 8 reading scores, suggesting “that ‘late intervention’ in the form of recreational reading is not only possible but can be effective” (Krashen, Lee, & McQuillan, 2012, p. 28).

Access to high-quality books outside of school is even more critical for striving readers. In reviewing dozens of studies, researchers found that when students with low reading abilities have access to books at home, they practice more, and as a result, their reading skills improve more than those of their peers with less exposure to books at home (Mol & Bus, 2011).

Technology can help provide equitable access to books outside of school. In 2014, a nationally representative survey of over 1,500 U.S. parents found that nearly two out of three children age 10 and under had either a tablet or a dedicated ereader at home. About half of those children regularly read books on their devices (Rideout, 2014). In addition, nearly three out of four low- to moderate-income U.S. families had a laptop or desktop computer connected to the internet at home, providing a means to access digital books for students living in communities that lack adequate resources like bookstores and libraries (Rideout & Katz, 2016). Digital books address equity by providing many students with simultaneous access to the same book, solving the conundrum faced by many school librarians that there are never enough paper copies of a popular title to go around. As one student lamented to a researcher investigating school libraries in high-poverty communities, “I know I won’t ever get a Star Wars book. My class comes to the library too late in the day, and someone else has it” (Constantino, 2008, p. 61).

The current generation of school-age children has grown up with technology and appears poised to adapt to digital reading. One small case study that observed second graders using a digital reading device found that they valued the tools and features of ebooks. They accessed the built-in dictionary to look up words, activated the text-to-speech feature to listen to words they found difficult, and jotted digital notes as they read. The teacher later reviewed students' notes to gain insight into their reading behaviors and comprehension skills to better support their individual needs as emerging readers. Ebooks, the researcher concluded, "have the potential to unveil an array of new teaching and learning possibilities as traditional and new literacy skills are integrated in meaningful ways" (Larson, 2010, p. 21).

## **WIDE ASSORTMENT OF HIGH-INTEREST, HIGH-QUALITY BOOKS**

"Because students will not read if they are uninspired by the materials provided; because they must read for their own purposes in order to sustain their motivation; and because they must have materials available that they *can* read when they decide to read, appeal is a crucial element of a free reading program" (Pilgreen, 2000, p. 10). An independent reading library program should appeal to a broad range of interests and feature both fiction and nonfiction titles in a variety of genres to expose emerging readers to different types of text, from mysteries to memoirs, biographies to science fiction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). By interacting with an array of genres, students learn the unique characteristics of each and improve their literacy skills.

An independent reading library should also be culturally responsive, reflecting the diverse backgrounds and experiences that students bring to school. "Students' experiences, cultural backgrounds, and interests should be represented as well as books that positively depict many cultural and ethnic groups" (Worthy & Roser, 2010, p. 244). In their research with a bilingual Grade 5 class, they found that students enjoyed reading the same books in both English and their native Spanish to compare the versions and check their understanding.

## MEETS STUDENTS AT THEIR READING LEVEL

Good readers read with accuracy nearly all the time. Reading at 98% or higher accuracy is essential for reading acceleration. Anything less slows the rate of improvement, and anything below 90% accuracy does not improve reading ability at all (Allington, 2012; Ehri, Dreyer, Flugman, & Gross, 2007). In fact, a child is twice as likely to learn an unfamiliar word when reading a narrative text at their just-right reading level than when the text is too difficult (Anderson & Nagy, 1992).

Reading books at an appropriate level of difficulty also boosts a student's self-efficacy. When students regularly read texts that are too hard for them, they grow frustrated and disengage from reading (Reutzel & Juth, 2014; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003). Students who are guided to select books that match their ability level and appeal to their interests are more likely to sustain their silent independent reading (Stanovich, 1986). For this reason, an effective independent reading program should offer books with a wide range of reading levels so that every student "has access to materials that they not only want to read—but *can* read" (Pilgreen, 2000, p. 9).

## STUDENT-DIRECTED BUT WITH TEACHER GUIDANCE

Reading books with the right level of text difficulty matters both to improving students' reading skills and supporting their self-efficacy. In addition, an independent reading library program must also recognize the powerful role of student choice. Students read more, understand more, and are more likely to continue reading when they are free to read what they like. When striving readers select more challenging texts, it affords them exposure to more complex concepts and vocabulary that they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to read (Shanahan, 2019; 2020). As students engage with these more difficult texts, it is important that teachers provide instructional scaffolding or supports in decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and in other skills to support students' reading comprehension (Shanahan, 2019). In a meta-analysis, the two most powerful instructional design factors for improving reading motivation and comprehension are student access to many books and self-selection (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004).

When students choose their own books, they take ownership of their reading and gain confidence in their ability to pick appropriate materials (Johnson & Blair, 2003). In a study of fourth graders who selected their own books for independent reading, researchers found that the process led to students developing an awareness of themselves as readers (Kragler & Nolley, 1996). Self-selecting books lets students become "deeply involved with the learning process, thus fostering an interest in, as well as developing an ownership of, the reading process" (Kragler, 2000, p. 133).



Students gravitate to books that most interest them, and sometimes their selections are in sync with their reading abilities. In a study, 62% of the books chosen by students were at their independent reading level. The rest were a mix of easier and more challenging texts—and according to research, this is not uncommon (Kragler & Nolley, 1996). Students tend to move across reading levels in a “yo-yo” pattern (Kragler, 2000). If, however, students are consistently choosing books above or below their reading level, guidance from a teacher is necessary (Willingham, 2015; Hairrell, Edmonds, Vaughn, & Simmons, 2010). Emerging independent readers in particular can benefit from teacher support, as they are just learning how to select books aligned to their interests and reading level. One small study of first graders found that students chose books that were too difficult for them roughly half of the time (Sewell, 2003). Teachers have a pivotal role in creating a positive independent reading experience by monitoring students’ book selections and, when necessary, steering them to books that fit both their interests and their reading abilities.

Literacy experts redesigned a silent independent reading program for third graders with additional supports to aid their literacy development, including a weekly check-in meeting with their teacher (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson, & Smith, 2008). During the individual conferences, the teacher reviewed each student’s reading progress, asked questions about the book the student was reading, and provided feedback. At the end of the yearlong study, the researchers concluded that the scaffolded silent reading program was as effective as guided repeated oral reading in improving students’ reading skills.

An effective independent-reading program also facilitates peer-to-peer feedback. Like adults, students value their friends’ book recommendations and are motivated to read by sharing books with one another (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Allowing students to rate and review books validates their opinions and builds their self-confidence as readers.

## ENCOURAGES SETTING—AND ACHIEVING—READING GOALS

“To be independent and successful, all readers must assume responsibility for self-assessment: setting clear goals for reading, monitoring progress along the reading path, and determining if reading is successful” (Afflerbach, 2016, p. 416). Goals drive much of what people do every day, from going to the gym to completing work assignments. Self-set goals have a strong influence on learning (Hattie, 2012) and are more effective than assigned ones. In one study, sixth graders with learning disabilities were taught subtraction in a series of classes. Before instruction began, one group of students set goals for their performance, another group had comparable goals assigned to them, and a third group learned without goals. Those who set their own goals had the highest self-efficacy and did the best at subtraction (Schunk, 1990).

The best goals are specific, proximal, and difficult (Schunk, 2001). Specific goals promote self-efficacy because progress is easy to gauge. They also boost performance by providing precise details about how to achieve success. Proximal goals are better than distal ones because they are accomplished faster and facilitate self-evaluations of progress. When students perceive progress in their reading, they feel capable of improving their skills, connecting the dots between practice and proficiency. Finally, goals should be challenging enough to both motivate and allow students to self-regulate. In studying children’s motivations for reading, literacy experts concluded that intrinsic motivation and learning goals “are crucial predictors of long-term participation” (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997, p. 429).

## SUPPORTS EMERGING READERS AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

Research suggests that students who get off to a fast start with reading are more likely to make reading a lifelong habit. With the right supports, striving readers can catch up with their peers and engage with books just as deeply (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Independent reading programs that take advantage of technological advancements can meet the needs of emerging readers and English learners like never before. Embedded supports in digital literacy programs, such as note-taking capabilities, built-in dictionaries, and read-aloud options, provide scaffolding for striving readers and make reading more rewarding (Larson, 2010). Digital note-taking, the equivalent of writing in the margins of a paperback, also gives teachers insight into each student's reading behavior and comprehension skills, which can be used to differentiate instruction.

One small study used ebooks with audio narration and some recorded word explanations to investigate vocabulary learning of first graders at low-achieving elementary schools. After students read two ebooks, their knowledge of seven explained words was compared to that of seven unexplained words. As a whole, recorded word explanations led to greater vocabulary learning than when explanations were not provided (Lee, 2020).

# SCHOLASTIC LITERACY PRO AND INDEPENDENT READING

Based on decades of research, Scholastic Literacy Pro features the key attributes that are considered essential to an effective independent reading program. Literacy Pro supports students in applying and practicing skills such as fluency, decoding, and vocabulary gained during literacy instruction to strengthen reading comprehension.

## AVAILABLE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

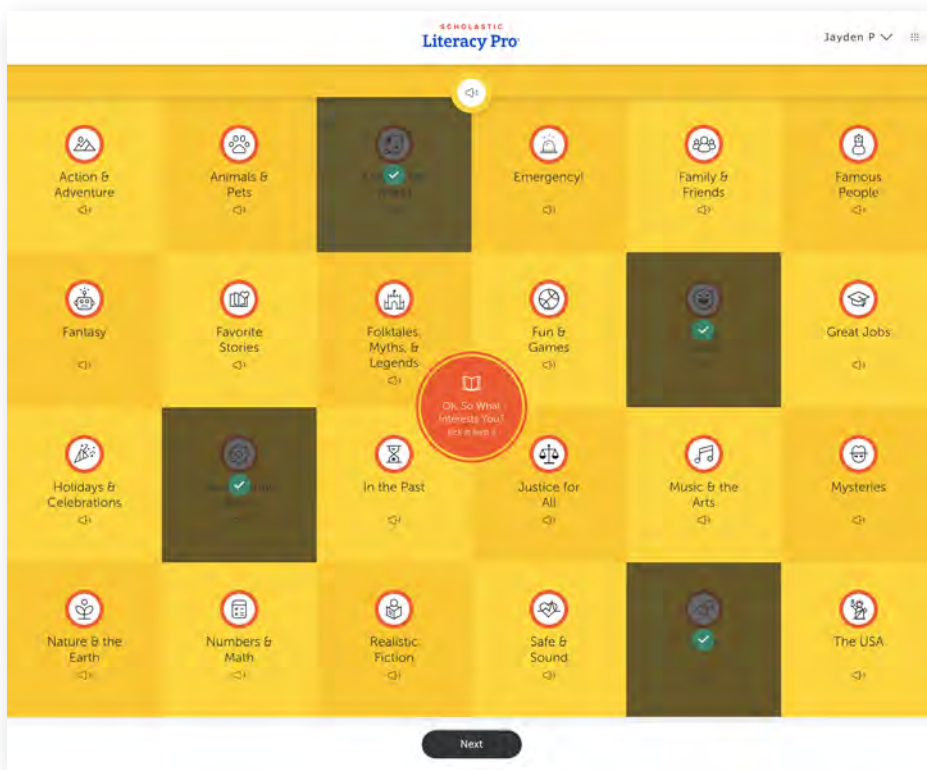
Easy access to high-quality, engaging books is critical to developing a daily habit of independent reading. Students can log in to Literacy Pro and immediately start reading on any desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device with an internet connection, both in and out of school.

When students log in to Literacy Pro for the first time, they are asked to pick an avatar—one of the many ways they can personalize their reading experience—that they can change at any time. The program then directs them to take a brief interest survey, which generates personalized book recommendations for their online bookshelf. Students are asked to select at least three areas of interest from a list of more than 20, such as Famous People, Around the World, Justice for All, and Animals and Pets. These initial selections can be expanded or changed at any time. Students are also shown book covers of various genres and asked to indicate which ones they think they would like.

## AN EXTENSIVE LIBRARY OF POPULAR, APPEALING BOOKS

Four out of 10 students say they have trouble finding books they like, and for infrequent readers the rate jumps to nearly 60%, according to the Kids & Family Reading Report™, a national survey that shares the views of both kids and parents on reading books for fun, and about influences that impact kids' reading frequency and attitudes toward reading (Scholastic & YouGov, 2019). An effective independent reading program entices students with a wide assortment of books that appeal to their diverse interests and experiences, thereby boosting their engagement. Literacy Pro responds to this mandate by offering immediate, simultaneous access to more than 2,800 fiction and nonfiction ebooks and supports offline reading with connections to thousands of popular paperback titles.

After a student completes the interest survey, a dashboard highlights three recommended Literacy Pro ebooks based on their interests and grade level. Below the dashboard are several curated collections of ebooks available on Literacy Pro that are also based on the student's interests and grade level. These collections can be accessed by selecting *Explore* on the navigation bar as well.



Students complete an interest survey after their first sign in.

Every book in Literacy Pro is represented by a Book Card with several icons that give additional at-a-glance information about the title. Ebooks with a sound icon, for example, have a read-aloud feature, while Spanish-language ebooks are marked with a tilde icon (ñ). Literacy Pro includes more than 300 Spanish-language titles, and many are also available in English. Students can select the plus icon in the upper left corner of a book cover to add the title to their bookshelf or click Read It Now on any ebook to launch it. They can also click on the book cover to access additional details, such as a brief synopsis, reading level, page count, and the Think More comprehension check when available.

Fly Guy/ There Was an Old Lady...

## There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy

by Tedd Arnold

★★★★☆

A young boy named Buzz had a pet fly named Fly Guy. When Buzz took Fly Guy to meet his grandma, Grandma swallowed Fly Guy by accident! Grandma had an unusual way to get Fly Guy out. First she swallowed a spider, then the spider was followed by a bird, cat, dog, goat, and cow! In the end, Fly Guy flew out by himself and the other animals followed.

Pages 32, Lexile – 370L, Genre – Series Book, Comedy & Humor, Picture Book

[See Less](#)

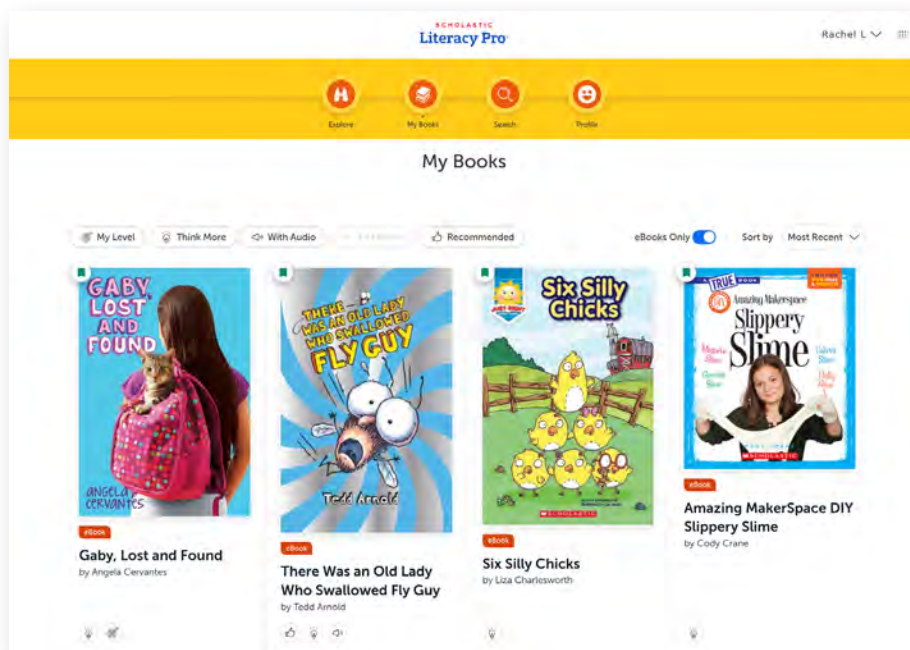
[Read It Now](#) [View Think More](#)

### Book Card

Just as in an actual library, students using Literacy Pro are free to explore and discover books on their own. From the navigation bar, students can select *Search* to find ebooks and print titles for their grade level by author, title, series, genre, interest category, or keyword. Students can filter search results by different attributes, such as ebooks only, ebooks with audio support, and Spanish-language titles only.

## MEETS STUDENTS AT THEIR READING LEVEL

Students must read with a high degree of accuracy to enjoy reading and to develop their budding literacy skills. Literacy Pro collaborates with teachers to ensure that every student in every classroom can easily locate books at the student's just-right reading range. During set-up, teachers using the Guided Reading or Lexile leveling system in their classroom can input student reading measures or levels into Literacy Pro. The inclusion of reading measures guarantees a customized browsing experience for students. As they explore books in Literacy Pro, students see a bullseye or "My Level" icon on titles within their independent reading range, although they are always free to read any title that aligns with their grade level and interests. In Lexile classrooms, a student's independent reading range includes books that are 100L below and 50L above that student's Lexile measure. In Guided Reading classrooms, the range includes books that are one and two Guided Reading levels below a student's instructional level. Teachers also have the option to extend access to books in additional grade levels, either for an entire class or for individual students.



### Book Cards (one with a "My Level" icon)

For educators who do not already have reading measures for students, Literacy Pro includes the Scholastic Reading Measure, an adaptive assessment that evaluates a student's independent reading level and provides a [valid and reliable Lexile measure](#). Teachers can administer the Scholastic Reading Measure to an entire class or to individual students before granting access to Literacy Pro. They can also assign the Scholastic Reading Measure a few times during the school year as an informal way to track students' reading progress in conjunction with other sources of information.

Teachers can access and update their students' Guided Reading levels or Lexile measures at any time. Using Literacy Pro's reporting tools, teachers can also monitor how often students are reading books within their independent reading range, a valuable insight that can help identify students who could benefit from additional support in selecting titles.

## PUTS STUDENTS IN CHARGE

When students choose what they read, their motivation and engagement soars, which drives even more reading and higher achievement. Literacy Pro puts students in control of their reading, helping them build confidence in their ability to select books that they not only can read but *want* to read. Each time students log in to Literacy Pro, their Home screen displays the three books that they have been interacting with most recently. Students can jump back in or select *Explore* in the navigation bar to browse book collections based on their interests and grade level. If students want to see additional book collections beyond those listed, they can expand their list of interests in their Student Profile, accessed from the navigation bar. They can also use the *Search* feature to search for titles by reading level, audio support, and other filters. Once they find an appealing title, students can start reading it immediately if it is an ebook or add it to their personalized bookshelf by selecting the plus sign on the Book Card.

Students can access their bookshelf at any time by selecting *My Books* from the navigation bar. The bookshelf displays all the titles that a student is reading or would like to read in the future, both ebooks and print titles, enabling students to curate their reading experience and feel a sense of ownership of the titles they have chosen. A book also appears on the My Books bookshelf if a student has logged time reading it or taken a Think More comprehension check for it. (Think Mores are optional and tied to core ELA skills that gauge students' understanding of texts.) Students can use various filters to quickly find the book they are looking for on their shelf.

Literacy Pro empowers students by providing the option to read online or offline. Students can record all of their independent reading, regardless of format—ebooks or print books—in their Reading Log, which is found in their Profile. The Reading Log lists all the titles that a student has been reading and those the student has marked as completed. If students read ebooks in Literacy Pro, the time spent reading is automatically included in the Reading Log, and students can easily log their minutes for print titles read offline.

Students love to share with peers their thoughts and opinions about books. It builds their self-confidence and gives them a sense of authority as readers. Literacy Pro encourages students to provide feedback on books through ratings and reviews. After indicating that they have finished a book, students can rate it on a scale of one to five stars. Ratings are averaged and appear on the Book Card for that title. Students can also write a book review, which is shared with their teacher and can be a conversation starter for student-teacher conferences.



SCHOLASTIC  
**Literacy Pro**

Home   
 My Books   
 Search   
 My Profile

### My Activity

Track all your reading – print and digital – in your Reading Log to achieve your reading goals!

#### My Recent Books

**The Bad Guys**  
by Aaron Blabey

**Owl Diaries**  
Eva Sees a Ghost  
by Rebecca Klotz

**Pájaro y Ardilla escapan** (Bird & Squirrel on the Run)  
by James Burke

10

minutes

Read this week

You earned

3

LitBits

[See your Reading Log](#)

**Hi! Fly Guy**  
by Tedd Arnold

**Frida**  
by Jonah Winter

**Twins**  
by Varian Johnson

**Storms**  
by Minam Busch Goin

**Amazing Makerspace**  
**DIY Basic Machines**  
by Kristina A. Holzweiss

**Grace Hopper**  
Queen of Computer Code  
by Laurie Walmark

**What If You Had**  
**Animal Feet?!**  
by Sandra Markle

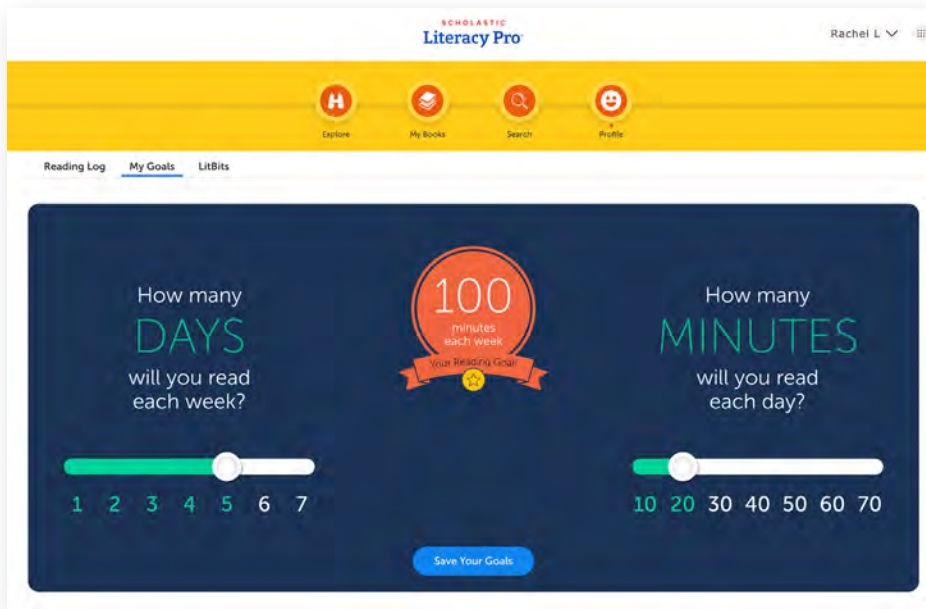
**The Brain**  
by Tory Woolcott

## BUILDS AND REWARDS READING STAMINA

The International Literacy Association (2018) recommends at least 15 minutes of independent reading daily, noting that “without this frequency and duration, students may not develop appropriate stamina” (p. 5). Reading stamina is the ability to focus and read independently for an extended period of time without being distracted. To increase students’ stamina, Literacy Pro guides them to set weekly personal goals for the number of days they will read and the length of time they will read on those days. This feature follows research suggesting that engagement and motivation are enhanced when goals are self-determined, not assigned, and are near-term rather than long-term. Literacy Pro automatically records all ebook reading and applies it to a student’s goals. It also motivates and validates reading offline by allowing students to log time spent reading print books to reach their goals.

Goals are displayed prominently on the Student Home Screen to encourage students to stay on task. When students accomplish their weekly goals, Literacy Pro celebrates the achievement by awarding LitBits, the digital equivalent of earning a sticker in the classroom. Students also receive LitBits for reaching other reading milestones, such as finishing a book or reading at least 10 minutes a day for three days in a row. In this way, Literacy Pro promotes the development of good reading habits and sustained, long-term participation.

At any time, a student can view and change the reading goals designated on their Student Profile, which is accessed from the navigation bar. The Goals section displays current goals, quick stats on the total number of books and minutes read, and personal records for the most minutes read in a day and a week. A bar graph illustrates the number of days the student read each month. This screen can be emailed or printed out for reviewing at student-teacher conferences and sharing with family.

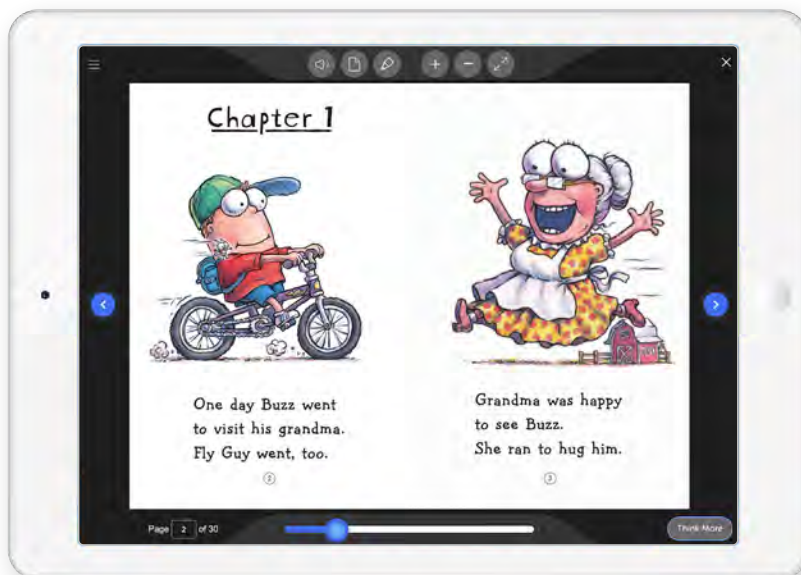


### Student Goals

## SUPPORTS THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students in the earliest stages of reading development require extra support to make independent reading accessible and enjoyable. Literacy Pro helps educators identify emerging readers in their classrooms through Scholastic Reading Readiness, an optional evaluation administered before students enter the program. This tool gauges students' mastery of foundational skills and reading abilities: alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness, syllabication, blending, and decoding. Students who have not yet mastered these skills can benefit from Literacy Pro's Read-to-Me audio support, which models how to read in a natural voice and is available in two speeds to aid striving readers and English learners with comprehension and fluency. Read-to-Me support is available for hundreds of ebooks, mostly for Grades K–3, and is noted with the sound icon on the title's Book Card. Educators with emerging readers in upper grades can expand their grade-level libraries at either the class or individual-student levels to ensure that all students have access to books that are appropriately challenging.

Literacy Pro ebooks feature several other digital tools to aid comprehension and engagement. Note-taking and highlighting tools let students interact with the text, allowing them to actively work as they comprehend. The tools also encourage students to make connections and ask questions, which can later be discussed with their teacher. Students can save their notes and highlighting to refer to later, print out, or share with their teacher. In addition, all ebooks have a built-in dictionary for vocabulary and pronunciation support, helping students build confidence in reading. For Spanish speakers, Literacy Pro has more than 300 Spanish-language ebooks, including 70 titles with audio support, many of which are also available in English.

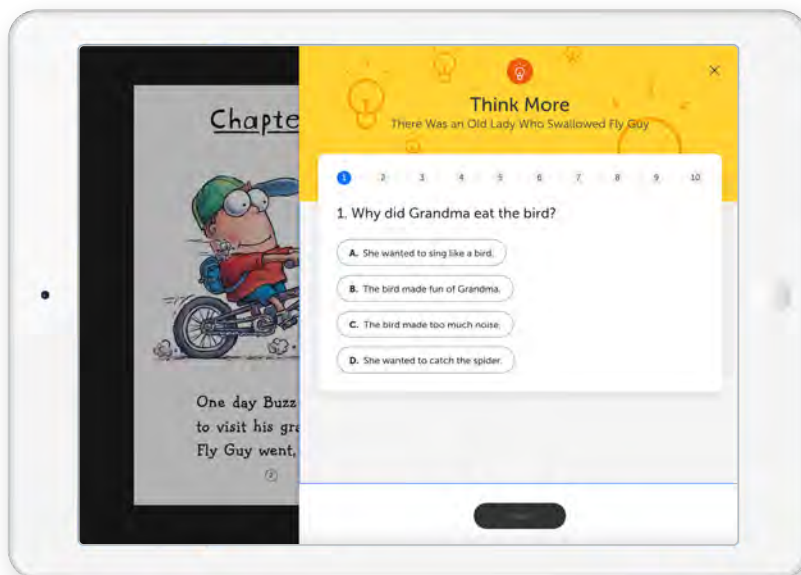


eBook View

All Literacy Pro ebooks, as well as thousands of print titles referred to in the program, include a Think More, an optional comprehension check that allows students to assess their understanding of the text. Most Think More comprehension checks have 10 questions, but those for some very short books have only five. Think More comprehension checks for Spanish ebooks are in Spanish. Each higher-order thinking question is aligned to one of the following ELA skills, depending on the book content:

- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Draw Conclusions
- Identify Key Ideas and Details
- Identify Reasons and Evidence
- Make Inferences
- Recall
- Sequence
- Summarize
- Vocabulary

Think More comprehension checks are designed to aid, not test, students' reading comprehension. The activity window opens over the window with the ebook reader, allowing students to refer back to the book to find text evidence. Students do not have to finish a Think More within one session and can return at any time to where they left off. Once they complete a Think More, students receive immediate feedback and see the correct answers for all of the questions. They can also take a book's Think More multiple times and may be asked different questions. Educators can see all Think More results, including multiple attempts at the same one, and use them to differentiate small-group and one-on-one instruction.



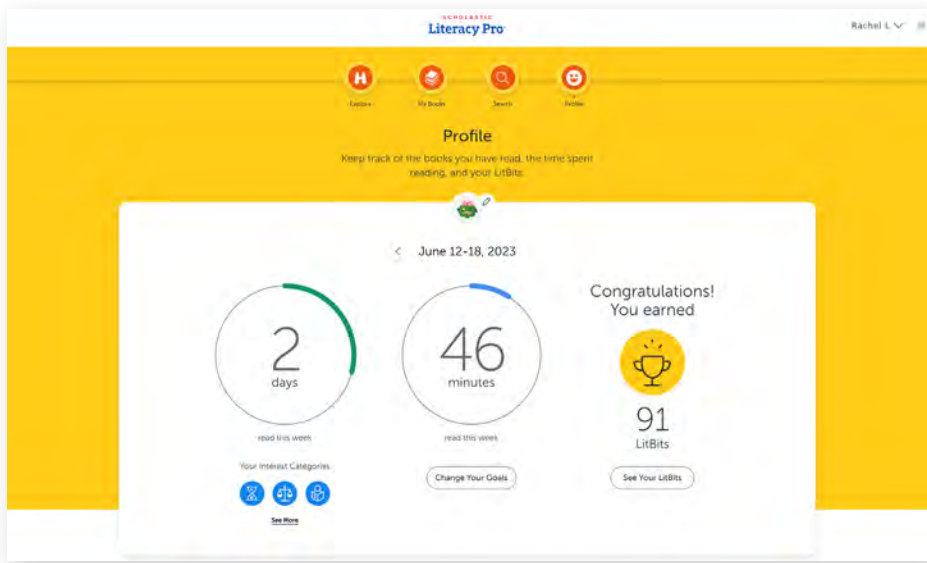
Think More Student View

# SCHOLASTIC LITERACY PRO DATA AND REPORTING

Literacy Pro offers a variety of data for students and educators. Students can share detailed reading accomplishments with their teacher and family. The program also provides both high-level and in-depth reports for educators to monitor the progress of individual students, track improvements in specific comprehension skills, and pinpoint where extra instructional support is needed.

## REPORTS FOR STUDENTS

Literacy Pro wants students to take ownership of their reading journeys and provides several records for them to assess their progress along the way. The data in the Goals section of the Student Profile describes a student's progress toward reaching their weekly personal goals and quick stats on the amount of reading done so far that year. The Reading Log Record, also in the Student Profile, lists the books that a student is reading or has completed, both Literacy Pro ebooks and paperback titles, which are in print and read offline, to present a complete view of their independent reading. Lastly, students can share the notes and highlighting they have added to their ebooks, providing a good conversation starter with their teacher or parent.

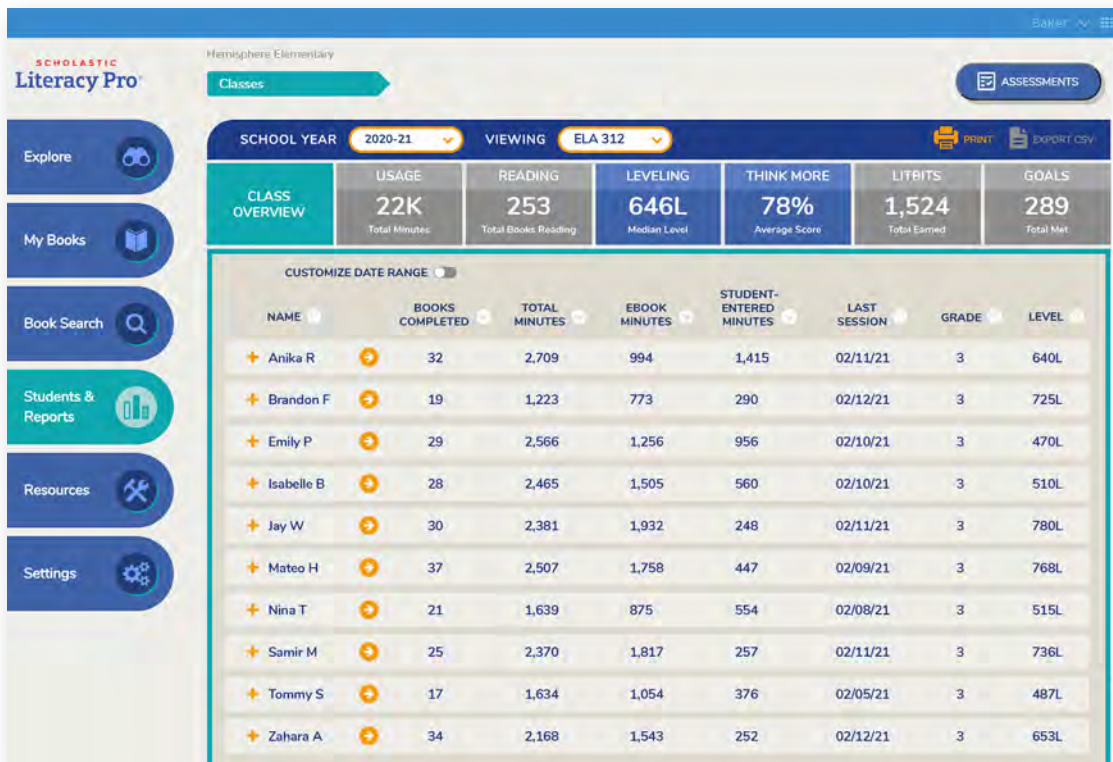


Student Profile



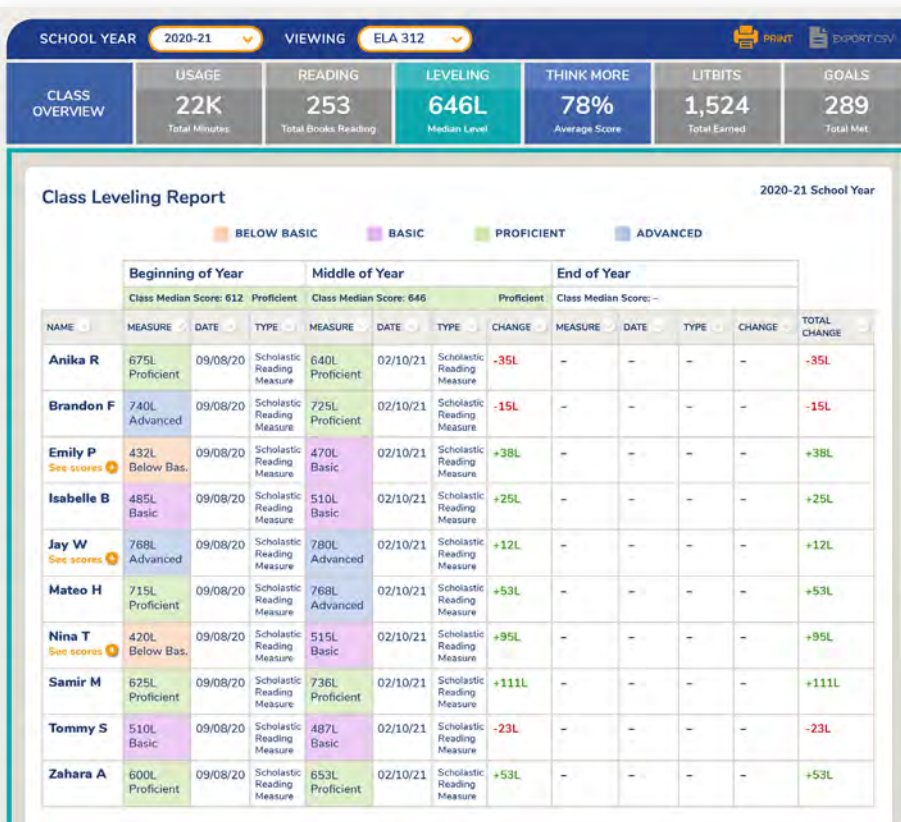
## REPORTS FOR TEACHERS

Literacy Pro puts actionable, real-time data into the hands of teachers to track the literacy growth of an entire class and of individual students. The Class Overview report includes the Class Headline, which presents high-level data about independent reading for a class, such as total minutes read, the number of books being read, median reading level, and the class's average score on Think Mores. The Class Headline is the jumping-off point to access more detailed reports, including the Class Leveling report, which allows educators to monitor changes to student reading levels throughout the school year, in both Guided Reading and Lexile classrooms. Using the Think More class-level report, teachers can access the average scores of students on each of the ELA skills they have encountered in the comprehension activity, helping inform class-wide instruction.



Class Overview Report



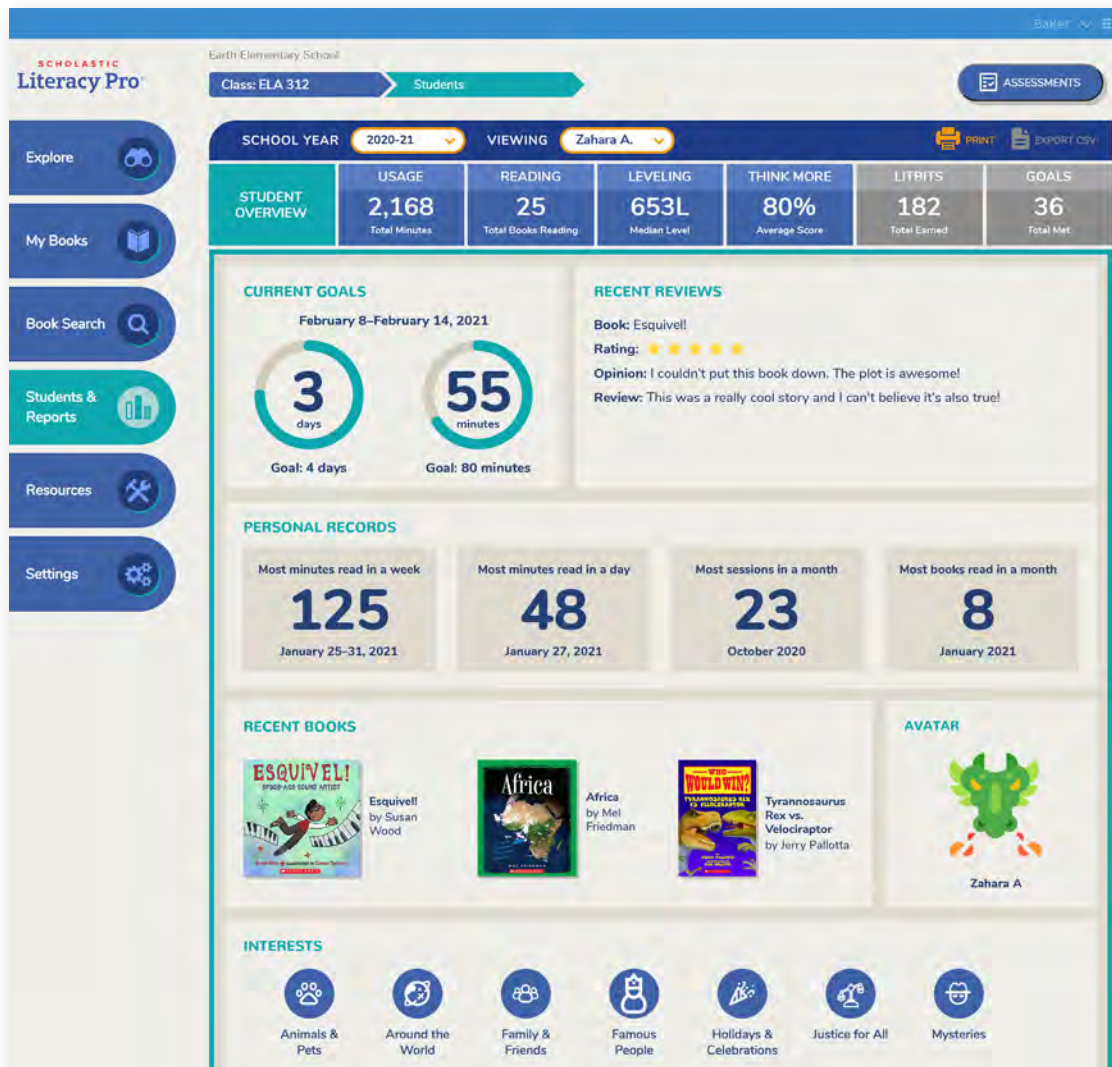


Class Leveling Report



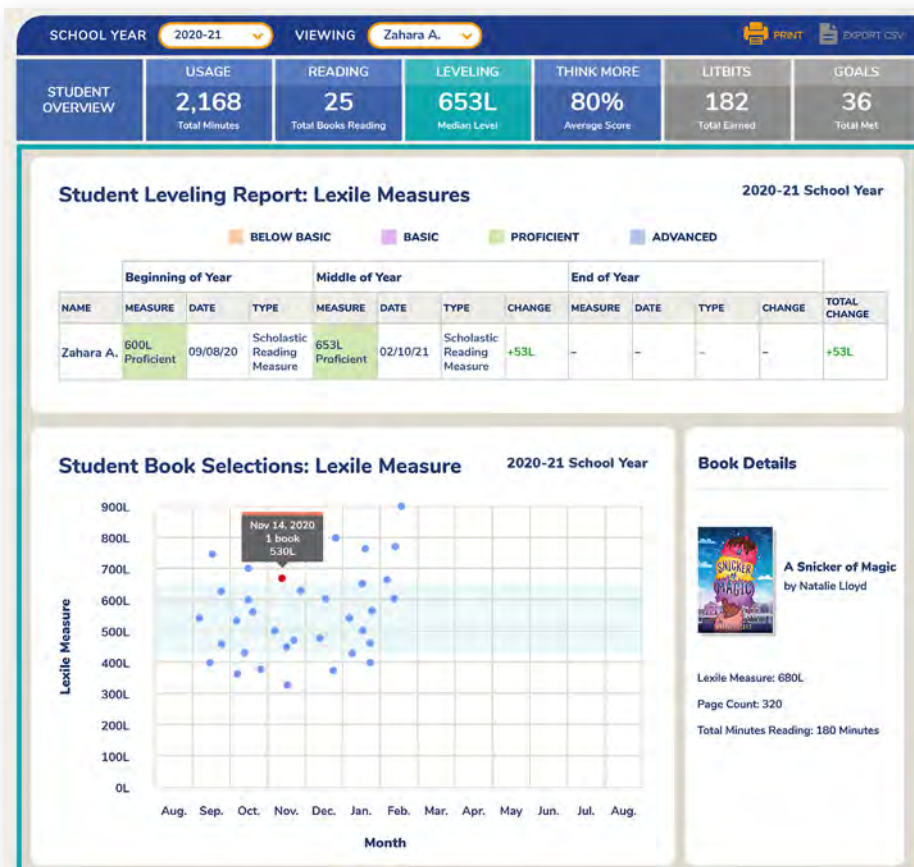
Class Think More Report

Because students progress at their own pace as independent readers, Literacy Pro also provides teachers with a close-up view of each student’s activity in the program. The Student Overview report is a comprehensive look at a student’s reading experience in Literacy Pro, from avatar selected to books being read to personal goals set. Teachers can also read students’ book reviews and see their selected interests, providing useful insights into their reading lives.



Student Overview Report

The Student Usage report indicates how many minutes students have been reading Literacy Pro ebooks, how many minutes they have logged for reading paperbacks, and how many minutes they have used the program overall. Teachers can use these three data points for a complete picture of how students are using Literacy Pro and how they are reading independently. The Student Leveling report shows changes to a student's reading level from one administration of an assessment to the next and whether the student is reading books within their proficiency range. With this information, teachers can quickly identify students who are consistently selecting books above or below their reading level and, if necessary, guide them to more appropriately challenging titles or at least begin a meaningful conversation about reading.



Student Leveling Report



Teachers can use a student's Think More report to drill deeper into a student's scores on comprehension, reviewing their performance on each of the ELA skills encountered. In addition, teachers can see a student's scores on each Think More and assess comprehension based on their answer to each question. Such granular data can help teachers group students and focus small-group and one-on-one instruction on skills that students need to strengthen, as well as provide context for understanding students' comprehension and performance.

**STUDENT OVERVIEW**

USAGE	READING	LEVELING	THINK MORE	LITBITS	GOALS
2,168 Total Minutes	25 Total Books Reading	653L Median Level	80% Average Score	182 Total Earned	36 Total Met

**Student Think More Skills Report** TIME PERIOD: Year To Date

SKILL	% CORRECT	TOTAL QUESTIONS: 210	THINK MORES TAKEN: 21
Cause and Effect	77% average	10 of 13 questions correct	
Compare and Contrast	67% average	8 of 12 questions correct	
Draw Conclusions	80% average	12 of 15 questions correct	
Identify Reasons and Evidence	77% average	17 of 22 questions correct	
Key Ideas and Details	87% average	26 of 30 questions correct	
Making Inferences	75% average	18 of 24 questions correct	
Recall	92% average	23 of 25 questions correct	
Sequence	74% average	17 of 23 questions correct	
Summarize	81% average	22 of 27 questions correct	
Vocabulary	79% average	15 of 19 questions correct	

**Student Think More Scores Report**

DATE	TITLE	LEXILE TEXT LEVEL	SCORE
02/09/21	Africa by Mel Friedman	780L	70%

**1. Mount Kilimanjaro is**

- always covered with snow.
- a grassy plateau.
- too dangerous to climb.
- still an active volcano.

Comprehension Skill: Key Ideas and Details

Student Think More Report

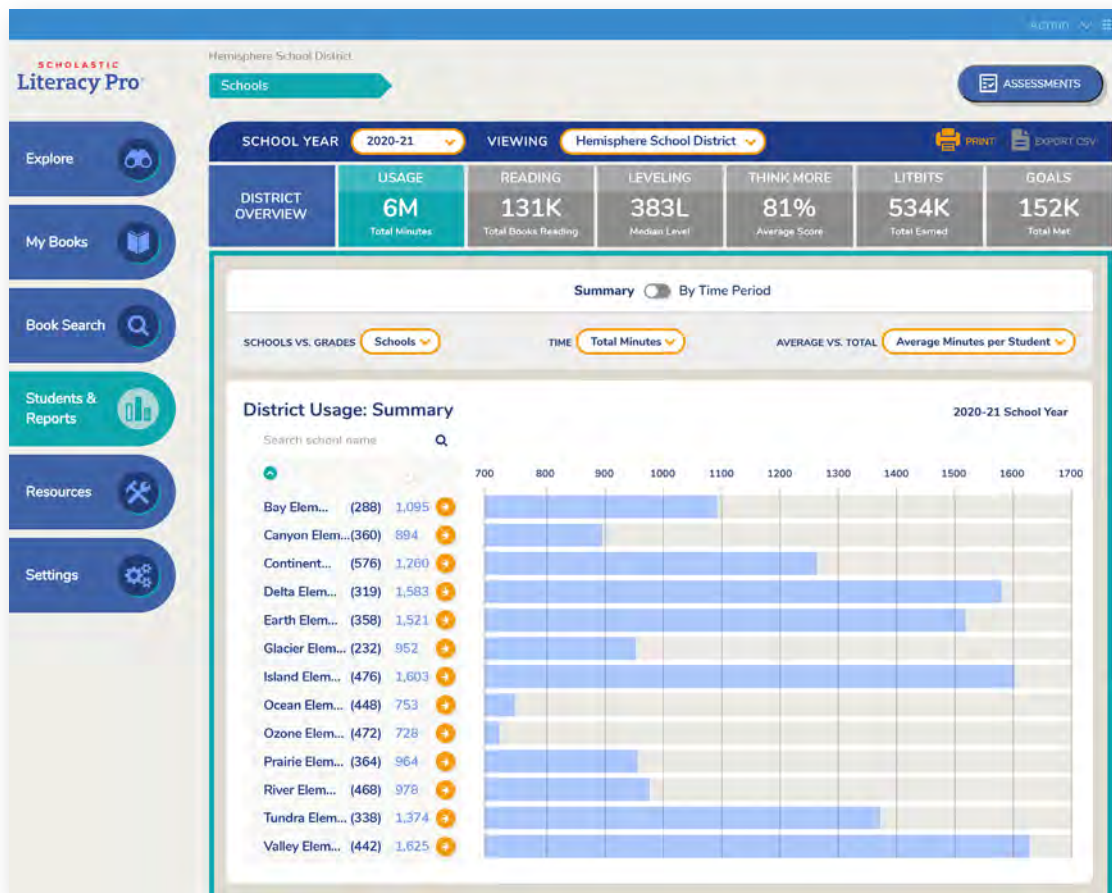
## REPORTS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

Literacy Pro provides school and district leaders with a complete view of program usage. The School Headline and Overview reports show the level of engagement with Literacy Pro across a variety of data points for an entire school. School leaders can also delve deeper to view data for particular teachers or classes. The District Headline report presents similar information for all schools in a district.

PRIMARY TEACHER	STUDENTS ENROLLED	BOOKS COMPLETED	TOTAL MINUTES	EBOOK MINUTES	STUDENT-ENTERED MINUTES	LAST SESSION	GRADE(S)
Doug Allerton	24	312	30K	16K	11K	02/11/21	2
Amy Bashir	22	451	28K	21K	4,005	02/08/21	K
Shayla Baker	28	735	46K	35K	7,708	02/14/21	3
Valeria Cortes	26	721	45K	31K	11K	02/09/21	4
Paul Davis	30	605	33K	22K	8,685	02/11/21	1
Kymani Edwards	21	651	38K	30K	5,867	02/08/21	5
Jason Feldman	21	232	29K	17K	9,550	02/05/21	1
Melissa Garcia	24	316	24K	12K	9,706	02/08/21	K
Justin Harris	26	580	41K	25K	12K	02/10/21	5
Christina Li	30	398	47K	27K	17K	02/12/21	1
Rachel Monroe	27	610	35K	17K	15K	02/08/21	3
Samira Rahman	26	289	33K	25K	4,836	02/03/21	K
Juan Rodriguez	31	465	40K	32K	5,270	02/12/21	2
Emily Stevens	22	494	75K	29K	8,925	02/05/21	4

School Overview Report

Administrators can customize the School Usage report using several filters—time period, teacher, grade, total time spent in Literacy Pro, total time spent reading, and more. Similar filters are available for the District Usage report.



District Usage Report

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Literacy Pro also includes many resources to support implementation fidelity, independent reading, and instructional reading. Educators new to Literacy Pro can access a Getting Started webinar and a detailed User Guide that provides a walk-through of all Literacy Pro reports. In addition, the program comes with Conferring Questions to guide meaningful student and teacher discussions, student engagement activities to inspire frequent reading, family materials in English and Spanish to promote Literacy Pro usage at home, and Teaching Tip Cards for nearly 700 ebook titles, supporting teachers who choose to use Literacy Pro ebooks for in-person or remote reading instruction.

# CONCLUSION

Decades of research confirm that the more students read independently, the better their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. When students read on their own, they practice the skills and strategies learned in the classroom and take charge of their literacy development. Access to high-quality books and the freedom to choose which ones to read are critical for students' positive independent-reading experiences and sustained engagement. Books should be available anytime, anywhere, in whatever format students prefer—fiction and nonfiction, digital and print, chapter books and graphic novels—and be aligned to their changing interests.

Using Scholastic Literary Pro, students can embark on a successful journey as independent readers. Right from the start, they take control of their reading experience as they define their interests, assess their reading skills, and rate books. They decide which titles populate their personal bookshelf and set their own weekly goals to track their progress. Literacy Pro equips educators with real-time actionable data—at the student, class, school, and district levels—to monitor student goals, comprehension improvements, and reading growth. With a deeper understanding of their students' progress, teachers can better tailor instruction and facilitate more rewarding reading experiences in and out of school.

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