

WHAT DOES A
READER
LOOK LIKE?



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The Reading Landscape (described by teachers)

engaged

actively acquiring information from text

not about key words, but situations and patterns needed to solve situations

create mental movie

takes pleasure in reading

engages in texts even when it is not a high interest topic

actively seeks reading material

value a literate lifestyle

able to give sustained attention to reading

makes inferences and draws conclusions

uses strategies to comprehend

accesses background knowledge

predict, question, and summarize

makes connections to text, self, and beyond

can comprehend fluidly at different developmental levels

successful decoder

use tone and inflection to express story vividly

able to read in class with teacher, peer, or self

visual imagery

able to "get lost in a book"

has an internal voice while reading

Add a little bit of body text

gains knowledge or enjoyment from written language

I asked several teachers from around the country (Dallas, TX, Denton, TX, Brooklyn, NY, and Salem, OR) to respond to the question, “What does a good reader look like?” I compiled five responses and they were extremely similar. Each wrote of using decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies to connect with written text. A couple of them detailed specific comprehension skills (predicting, questioning, and summarizing) while others included the value of accessing background knowledge and reading in different environments (with a teacher, peer, or independently). Surprisingly absent was any discussion of students selecting their own texts, even when the teachers wrote how good readers give sustained attention to and interest in reading. Reflecting on my personal experiences as a maturing reader through upper grades, as well as the teacher responses today, I question whether teachers understand the value of incorporating student choice in reading material. As noted in the article, *Seven Rules of Engagement, What’s Most Important to Know about Motivation to Read*, in “bounded choice... students still get to choose what they want to read; however, the range of materials is narrowed to text at the appropriate reading level” (Gambrell, 2011, 175). Perhaps this is a natural bridge for teachers to trek so that our great starts continue to make progress in developing literate individuals, reading for knowledge, work, and pleasure.

Gambrell, L. B. (2011). Seven rules of engagement: What's most important to know about motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(3), 172-178.