

A Blog for Busy Teachers

FREE LANGUAGE-BASED TEACHING STRATEGIES

Chall's Stages of reading

Jeanne Chall, a leading researcher in the field of reading, developed what is referred to as [Chall's Stages of Reading Development](#) in 1983. In her research, Chall determined that reading skills developed in a hierarchy, each skill layering upon the previous. As an overview, Chall's stages of reading include:

- **Stage 0: Prereading:** Approximately Birth to Age 6. In this stage, children “play” read. By being read to, they have begun to understand that books contain words that provide meaning. They may “read” books from memory, start demonstrating book handling skills, and begin “writing” the alphabet.
- **Stage 1: Initial Reading and Decoding:** Approximately Ages 6-7 / Grades 1-2. Children begin to understand the alphabetic principle and can connect sounds to symbols. In this stage, children read small books containing high-frequency sight words.
- **Stage 2: Confirmation and Fluency:** Approximately Ages 7-8 / Grades 2-3. In this stage, children read familiar books in order to begin applying aspects of fluency.
- **Stage 3: Reading for Learning the New:** Approximately Ages 8-14 / Grades 4-8. At this point in Chall's stages, instruction shifts from learning to read to reading to learn. Now, students read a variety of materials in order to learn new concepts.
- **Stage 4: Multiple Viewpoints:** Approximately Ages 15-18 / Grades 9-12. During the high school years, students are required to read a variety of materials, expository, and narrative, that contain differing viewpoints in order to compare and contrast.
- **Stage 5: Construction and Reconstruction:** Approximately Ages 18+ / College level and beyond. Finally, as people continue to read throughout their lives, they read relevant material in order to enhance what they already know through what they have read. This type of reading allows for the development of a new schema.



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Students may move through the stages at varying paces, and not necessarily in a linear progression, as Harvard Graduate School of Education lecturer Vicki Jacobs argues in her [research](#), because reading development is a dynamic process that will not always follow a clear continuum. Nevertheless, Chall's stages can be a helpful framework for generally understanding the hierarchical progression of reading.

Citation

Chall, J. S. (1983). Stages of reading development. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

