

LEVEL I NOVELS

Averages: 58 pages / book
103 words / page
6,050 words / book

Listed in order from easier readability to harder

1. **Agentes secretos y el mural de Picasso** Mira Canion
Novice-Low
84 pages **4,700 total words** **56 words/page**
Present tense, 100 word vocabulary, realistic fiction, Spain
2. **Tumba** Mira Canion
Novice-Low
64 pages **3,500 total words** **55 words/page**
Present tense, 100 word vocabulary, realistic fiction, Mexico
3. **Rival** Mira Canion
Novice-Low
88 pages **5,400 total words** **61 words/page**
Present tense, 100 word vocabulary, realistic historical fiction, Spain
4. **Las aventuras de Isabela** Karen Rowan
Novice-Low
24 pages **2,200 total words** **92 words/page**
Present tense, 200 word vocabulary, adolescent fiction, Guanajuato, Mexico
5. **Berto y sus buenas ideas** Magaly Rodríguez
Novice-Low
22 pages **2,500 total words** **114 words/page**
Present tense, 200 word vocabulary, fiction, Spain
6. **Isabela captura un congo** Karen Rowan
Novice-Low
43 pages **3,500 total words** **81 words/page**
Present tense, 350 word vocabulary, fiction, Costa Rica

7. **Carl no quiere ir a México** Karen Rowan
Novice-Low
40 pages **5,000 total words** **125 words/page**
Present tense, 350 word vocabulary, fiction, Mexico
8. **Pobre Ana** Blaine Ray
Novice-Low
39 pages **6,000 total words** **154 words/page**
Present tense, 300 word vocabulary, fiction, California/Tepic, Mexico
9. **Piratas del Caribe y el mapa secreto** Mira Canion & Carol Gaab
Novice-Low
53 pages **6,800 total words** **128 words/page**
Present tense; ¿ word vocabulary; historically-base adventure (fiction), Caribbean
10. **El nuevo Houdini** Carol Gaab
Novice-Low
62 pages **5,600 total words** **90 words/page**
Two versions in one book: Present on one side & Past on the flip side, 200 word vocabulary, plus 100 cognates; Humor (adolescent fiction); Compares U.S. culture to target culture.
11. **La vampirata** Mira Canion
Novice-Low
71 pages **5,600 total words** **79 words/page**
Past tense, 240 word vocabulary, fiction, Colombia
12. **Los piratas del Caribe y el Triángulo de las Bermudas** Carol Gaab
Novice-Low
88 pages **9,900 total words** **113 words/page**
Past tense, 280 word vocabulary, Historically-based Adventure/Science Fiction, Bermuda
13. **Esperanza** Carol Gaab
Novice-Low
67 pages **6,500 total words** **97 words/page**
1st person, present tense, 200 word vocabulary, Non-fiction, Guatemala/USA
14. **Noches misteriosas en Granada** Kristy Placido
Novice-Low
65 pages **8,200 total words** **126 words/page**
Present tense, 280 word vocabulary, Culture-based Mystery (fiction), Spain

15. **Patricia va a California** Blaine Ray
Novice-Low
45 pages **6,400 total words** **142 words/page**
Present tense, 400 word vocabulary, fiction, Guatemala
16. **Felipe Alou: Desde los valles a las montañas** Carol Gaab
Novice-Low
60 pages **5,900 total words** **98 words/page**
Past tense, 150 word vocabulary, Biography, Dominican Republic
17. **Casi se muere** Blaine Ray
Novice-Low
43 pages **5,800 total words** **135 words/page**
Present tense, 400 word vocabulary, fiction, Chile
18. **Robo en la noche** Kristy Placido
Novice-Mid
74 pages **8,400 total words (each side)** **114 words/page**
Present on one side & Past on the flip side, 400 word vocabulary, Culture-based fiction, Costa Rica
19. **Pío Pista** Michael Miller
Novice-Mid
48 pages **9,900 total words** **206 words/page**
Present tense, ¿ word vocabulary, fiction, Puerto Rico
20. **El viaje de su vida** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
44 pages **6,400 total words** **145 words/page**
Present tense, ? word vocabulary, Culture-based Mystery (fiction), Yucatan, Mexico
21. **Pobre Ana bailó tango** P. Verano, V. Moscoso, Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
38 pages **9,100 total words** **239 words/page**
Past tense, 600 word vocabulary, realistic fiction, Argentina

LEVEL II NOVELS

Averages: 67 pages / book
140 words / page
9,400 words / book

Listed in order from easier readability to harder

22. **Mi propio auto** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
58 pages 9,100 total words 157 words/page
Past tense; Culturally-based fiction; El Salvador
23. **Los Baker van a Perú** Nathaniel Kirby
Novice-Mid
51 pages 7,000 total words 137 words/page
Past and present tense; Fiction; Peru
24. **¿Dónde está Eduardo?** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
52 pages 8,600 total words 165 words/page
Past tense; Fiction; Costa Rica
25. **El viaje perdido** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
60 pages 8,900 total words 148 words/page
Past tense; Culture-based fiction; Puerto Rico/Travel/TL Beliefs
26. **Viva el toro** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
Novice-Mid
60 pages 8,000 total words 133 words/page
Past tense; Culture-based fiction; Spain/Bullfighting
27. **Sueños de la isla** JJ Hill, Marissa Smith, Roberta Price
Novice-High
39 pages 7,000 total words 179 words/page
Past tense; Culture-based sports fiction; Dominican Republic

28. **La maldición de la cabeza reducida** Nathaniel Kirby
Novice-High
58 pages **7,200 total words** **124 words/page**
Past tense; Fiction, Peru
29. **Rebeldes de Tejas** Mira Canion
Novice-High
90 pages **10,700 total words** **119 words/page**
Past tense; Historical fiction; Mexico & Texas
30. **Problemas en paraíso** Carol Gaab
Intermediate-Low
72 pages **8,500 total words** **118 words/page**
Past tense; 350 word vocabulary, 100's of cognates; fiction, Mexico

LEVEL III NOVELS

Listed in order from easier readability to harder

31. **Los ojos de Carmen** Verónica Moscoso
Intermediate–Low
47 pages
Fiction; Ecuador
32. **Vida o muerte en el Cusco** Lisa Ray Turner & Blaine Ray
61 pages
Intermediate-Low
Past tense; Fiction; Peru
33. **Vida y muerte en la marasalvatruchas** Anónimo
Intermediate-Low
51 pages *7,600 words* *149 words/page*
Biography
34. **La corza blanca** (*Santillana Press vocabulary controlled edition*) Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer
Intermediate–Low
26 pages *3,400 words* *130 words/page*
Past tense; Fantasy/folklore; Medieval Spain
35. **La cruz del diablo** (*Santillana Press vocabulary controlled edition*) Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer
Intermediate–Low
32 pages *3,600 words* *113 words/page*
Past tense; Fantasy/folklore; Medieval Spain
36. **La hija del sastre** Carrie Toth & Carol Gaab
Intermediate-Low
12,400 words
Fiction, Argentina
37. **La guerra sucia** Nathaniel Kirby
Intermediate–Low
12,400 words
Historical fiction, Argentina

LEVEL IV NOVELS

Listed in order from easier readability to harder

38. **Viajes Fantásticos** Elías Miguel Muñoz
Intermediate–Mid
144 pages
Historical fiction and fiction, Mexico & Puerto Rico
(McGraw-Hill Storyteller’s Series; Introduction by Stephen Krashen)
39. **Ladrón de la mente** Elías Miguel Muñoz
Intermediate–Mid
136 pages
Fiction / Horror, Spain
(McGraw-Hill Storyteller’s Series; Introduction by Stephen Krashen)
40. **Isla se luz** Elías Miguel Muñoz
Intermediate–Mid
174 pages
Historical fiction, Caribbean
(McGraw-Hill Storyteller’s Series; Introduction by Stephen Krashen)

SpanishTranslations of Popular Literature

41. **Escalofríos: Bienvenidos a la casa de la muerte** R.L. Stine
Intermediate–Low (Reading level 4 in English)
124 pages
Past tense
Adolescent horror fiction
42. **¿Quién se ha llevado mi queso?** Spencer Johnson, M.D.
Intermediate–Low
Written in all tenses
Self-help book, fiction
43. **El alquimista** Paulo Coelho
Intermediate–Mid/High
197 pages

Written in all tenses

Historically/culturally/geographically/religiously/philosophically-based fiction

Highly recommended. See this resource to help students understand this novel at:

<http://www.brycehedstrom.com/products>

44. **Hoyos** Louis Sachar
Intermediate–Mid (Reading level 5 in English)
All tenses, fiction
45. **Harry Potter y la piedra filosofal** J.K. Rowling
Intermediate–Mid (Reading level 5 in English)
254 pages
All tenses, fiction
46. **Harry Potter y la cámara de los secretos** J.K. Rowling
Intermediate–High (Reading level 6 in English)
286 pages
All tenses, fiction

RANKING THE NOVELS for EXTENSIVE READING

The list above was compiled to help students pick reading materials for their Extensive Reading assignments. Students are required to read novels.

ORDER

The novels on the lists are ranked from easiest to hardest based on their comprehensibility to the average HS language Spanish student. Traditional readability scores can be based on length of book, sentence length, word length, rare words per thousand, etc. But those formulas may not apply as neatly to MS/HS students because:

- 1) They can already read English*
- 2) Their expanded English vocabularies and cognitive ability can help them to recognize cognates*
- 3) They already know something about the world*
- 4) They have interests and prior knowledge about topics*

READING LEVEL

*The novels are organized from easiest to hardest reading level based upon feedback from students, teacher experience and information provided by authors. The reading level printed on the book by the publisher should be thought of as the **Guided Reading Level** (the level at which a student can read a novel with the help of a teacher) and not the **Independent Reading Level** (the level at which a student can read a novel on their own without the help of a teacher or extensive use of a dictionary).*

It is always trying to figure out how the ACTFL levels correspond to the expected levels of students in our classes. A simple system might be: ACTFL Novice Low = level 1, Novice Mid = Level 2, Novice High = Level 3, etc. This is not just a firm description, just a working definition that can be used to try and organize a reading program.

The reading level does not always correspond to the comprehensibility of a novel because of the variables of linguistic ability, familiarity with a genre or author, and background knowledge. If students cannot understand what they are reading, they need to drop down the level or find a genre with which they are more comfortable. A big problem with high achieving students is that they often choose books that are too hard for them.

WORD COUNT vs. PAGE COUNT

The word count is important because there is so much variability between the number of words on a page from book to book. Even though all of these books would be considered text-rich books, or “chapter books” the words per page can vary between 50 and 200 due to many factors such as the size of the font, the amount of dialogue and the illustrations.

The total word count for each novel is based on the actual words in the story. It does not include glossing or vocabulary lists. The word count does not always correspond with the level of difficulty of a novel—a long novel can still be at a lower reading level.

DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions such as “realistic fiction, fantasy, teen fiction, historical fiction, etc. We may need to make some of the definitions more concise so that they correspond to generally recognized categories and are helpful to students, teachers and administrators.

USEFULNESS

The usefulness triple play is **comprehensibility, interest** and **cultural relevance**. Too often we have settled for only comprehension. Most of the novels on these lists hit all three areas: they are understandable to students, have a story with some compelling points and have to do with the culture of the target language.

READING REQUIREMENTS

Since there is such a close correlation between the amount of free reading and achievement in a language, students in levels 2-AP are required to read a certain number of words in Spanish each semester. Beniko Mason describes how she required Japanese university students learning English to read 70 to 100 pages per week—all together, about 1000 pages per semester:
http://www.benikomason.net/articles/Interview_By_Ken_Schmidt/index.html

Beniko Mason: “Their reading speed in a second language is between 100 to 150 words per minute. The average native high school student reads about 200 words per minute in the native language, and the average college student reads 300 words per minute in the native language.”

In many elementary school reading programs, the goal is for each fourth and fifth grader to read 25 chapter books each school year to equal about one million words. This can be achieved with 15 minutes of reading per day. In a second language, students will not read as quickly.

What is a reasonable goal for high school second language learners? More is better, but here is a reasonable schedule:

Level 1: 10 minutes, twice a week times a week in class.

Level 2: 15 minutes, three times a week in class.

Level 3: 30 minutes, twice a week, plus 60 minutes a week outside of class.

Level 4 & 5: 60 minutes once a week in class, 90 minutes outside of class.