



High Interest Easy Readers in Spanish

Creating a Bridge to Authentic Reading & Fluency with Engaging Language Learner Literature

by Bryce Hedstrom



When choosing materials, look for these characteristics (with comprehensible and interesting being by far the most important):

- **Controlled Vocabulary** *Comprehensible*
- **Engaging Story** *Interesting*
- **Life Lessons** *Relevant*
- **Quality Graphics** *Visual Support*
- **Target Language Setting/References** *Cultural*
- **Glossary** *Aids Comprehensibility*

Books are listed from easier to more difficult reading levels based on:

- 1) **Unique Word Count**
- 2) **Main Verb Tenses in the Text**
- 3) **Total Word Count**
- 4) **Idea Density &**
- 5) **General Level of Comprehensibility as Reported by Students**

Ratings are based on the reactions of my students and my own observations. The comprehensibility of a text can vary greatly. Themes in the text and student familiarity with the material are also major factors. Publishers may categorize some of these books differently based on their own criteria.

KEEP IN MIND: *Interest beats almost everything else. When they are interested in the content, students can often read books above their presumed reading level. Let students read what they want to read. Telling a student, "That book is too hard for you," is not only discouraging, it is often wrong. Guide their choices, but let the readers decide.*

- **Books are listed by independent student reading level in an acquisition-rich class that focuses on high frequency verbs.**
 - When students know high frequency verbs they can read at a higher level than is traditionally supposed.
 - Books will be more comprehensible when guided by a teacher and read together as a class.
 - With more reading, students acquire more vocabulary and become more fluent readers.
 - Students that read for 15 minutes a day tend to score in the top 20% of all readers.
 - Students that read for 30 minutes a day score in the top 2%.
 - How many words will each of your students read in the target language this year? 20,000? 50,000? 100,000? More?

Titles highlighted in gray = Available on brycehedstrom.com

	UNIQUE WORD COUNT	MAIN VERB TENSES	TOTAL WORD COUNT
<u>BEGINNER READERS / EARLY LEVEL 1</u>			
• El capibara con botas , Mira Canion	55	present tense	2,100
• La Leyenda de La Llorona , Bryce Hedstrom	80	present tense	1,700
• Brandon Brown dice la verdad , Carol Gaab	75	present tense	3,800
• Pobrecita Ana va uno por uno , Blaine Ray	100	present tense	3,800
• Brandon Brown quiere un perro , Carol Gaab	100	present tense	4,600
• Berto y sus buenos amigos , Chris Stolz	110	present/past tense	3,800
• Berto y sus buenas ideas , Magaly Rodríguez	200	present tense	2,500
• Las aventuras de Isabela , Karen Rowan	200	present tense	2,200
• Los niños detectives , Patricia Verano	100	present tense	3,000
• Daniel el detective , Landor & Tottingham	150	present tense	4,700
<u>MID LEVEL 1 / ADVANCED STUDENTS IN EARLY LEVEL 1</u>			
• Agentes secretos , Mira Canion	100	present tense	4,700
• La clase de confesiones 1 , Alicia Quintero	130	present tense	3,000
• La clase de confesiones 2: La bella mentira , Alicia Quintero	150	present tense	4,400
• Brandon Brown versus Yucatán , Carol Gaab	140	present/past tense	5,000 <i>each side</i>
• Fiesta fatal , Mira Canion	140	past tense	4,800
• El escape cubano , Mira Canion	140	present tense	3,000
• Isabela captura un congo , Karen Rowan	250	present tense	3,500

• Carl no quiere ir a México , Karen Rowan	250	present tense	5,000
• Ataques de hambre , Eric Herman	200	present tense	9,900
• La chica nueva , Jennifer Degenhardt	250	present tense	4,800
• Don Quijote, el último caballero , Karen Rowan	200	present/past	1,400 each section
• El nuevo Houdini , Carol Gaab	200	present/past tense	5,600 each side
• Tumba , Mira Canion	170	present tense	3,500
• Pobre Ana , Blaine Ray	300	present tense	6,000
• Pobre Ana moderna , Blaine Ray	300	present tense	9,600

LATE LEVEL 1 / ADVANCED STUDENTS IN EARLY-MID LEVEL 1

• Piratas del Caribe y el mapa secreto , Canion & Gaab	200	present tense	6,800
• Superburguesas , Mike Peto	250	present tense, yo form	4,200
• El Ekeko , Katie Baker	200	present tense	5,800
• Noches misteriosas en Granada , Kristy Placido	300	present/past tense	8,200
• Patricia va a California , Blaine Ray	400	present tense	6,400
• Casi se muere , Blaine Ray	400	present tense	5,800
• La vampirata , Mira Canion	240	past tense	5,600
• Piratas y el Triángulo... , Carol Gaab	280	past tense	9,900

EARLY LEVEL 2 / ADVANCED STUDENTS IN LEVEL 1

• Robo en la noche , Kristy Placido	380	present/past tense	8,400 each side
• Bianca Nieves y los 7 toritos , Carrie Toth	150	past tense	6,400
• Pobre Ana bailó tango , Blaine Ray	300	past tense	9,100
• Los Baker van a Perú , Nathaniel Kirby	375	past/present tense	7,300
• Noche de oro , Kristy Placido	290	past tense	9,000
• Las Lágrimas de Xóchitl , Virginia Hildebrandt	300	present tense	7,000
• El viaje de su vida , Blaine Ray	400	present tense	6,400

LEVEL 2 / ADVANCED STUDENTS IN LEVEL 1

• Conexiones , Bryce Hedstrom (Cultural Non-fiction)	300	present/past tense	22,300 words total
<i>Part 1 (Level 1): 5,000 words Part 2 (Level 2): 9,300 words Cultural Dictionary: 8,000 words)</i>			
• El silbón de Venezuela , Craig Klein		(# not provided by publisher) present tense	4,100
• Felipe Alou , Carol Gaab	150	past tense	6,000
• Rival , Mira Canion	270	past tense	5,400
• Mi propio auto , Blaine Ray	250	present tense	8,500
• Las Sueños de Xóchitl , Virginia Hildebrandt	300	present tense	6,900
• Rebeldes de Tejas , Mira Canion	400	past tense	10,700
• Pío Pista , Michael Miller	400	present tense	9,900
• ¿Dónde está Eduardo? , Blaine Ray	350	past tense	8,600
• El viaje perdido , Blaine Ray	350	past tense	8,900
• ¡Viva el toro! , Blaine Ray	350	past tense	8,000
• Esperanza , Carol Gaab	200	present tense, yo form	6,500
• Frida Kahlo , Kristy Placido	150	past tense	7,200

LEVEL 3 / ADVANCED STUDENTS IN LEVEL 2

• Soy Lorenzo , Virginia Hildebrandt	400	past tense	7,600
• Frida Kahlo , Kristy Placido	150	past tense	7,200
• Problemas en paraíso , Carol Gaab	250	past tense	9,000
• Rival , Mira Canion	270	past tense	4,000
• La maldición de la cabeza reducida , Nathaniel Kirby	400	past tense	7,200
• Los ojos de Carmen , Verónica Moscoso	450	past tense	7,500
• Vida o muerte en Cusco , Lisa Ray Turner	500	past tense/subjunctive	10,000
• Todo lo que brilla , Chris Mercer		(# not provided by publisher) past tense	12,400
• La Llorona de Mazatlán , Katie Baker	300	past tense	10,000

LEVEL 4

• Casa dividida , Chris Mercer		(# not provided by publisher) past tense	16,600
• Vector , Carrie Toth	400	past tense	7,100
• Vida y muerte en la Mara Salvatruchas , Anónimo	400	past tense	7,600
• La calaca alegre , Carrie Toth	425	past tense/subjunctive	9,900
• La hija del sastre , Carrie Toth	500	past tense/subjunctive	12,400

• La corza blanca , Gustavo Bécquer, Santillana Press	500	mostly past tense	3,400
• La cruz del diablo , Gustavo Bécquer, Santillana Press	700	past tense/subj	3,600
• La guerra sucia , Nathaniel Kirby	600	past tense/subjunctive	12,400
• En busca del monstruo , Pablo Ortega López	600	past tense/subjunctive	10,000

WHEN DESIGNING YOUR READING PROGRAM:

GET PAPER BOOKS WHEN POSSIBLE

- **Readers Comprehend Significantly Less with eBooks** Comprehension is about half of that with paper book reading.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/19/readers-absorb-less-kindles-paper-study-plot-ereader-digitisation>
<http://www.tested.com/tech/concepts/457411-paper-books-offer-better-reading-comprehension-digital/>
https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-case-against-kindle-why-reading-paper-books-is-better-for-your-mind-and-body/?utm_term=.de5747330c5a
- **eBooks Are Better than Nothing** If eBooks are all that you have available, then by all means use them.

PROVIDE PLENTY OF FICTION

- **Reading Fiction Helps Develop Empathy** Almost all of our students could use more empathy.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2016/07/22/does-reading-fiction-make-you-a-better-person/?utm_term=.aa33a5fd1f91
- **Reading Fiction Makes Your Brain Better** Fiction readers grow healthier brains with more connections the more of it they read.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYpofvqVxzc>

...BUT FIND QUALITY NON-FICTION READING MATERIALS TOO

- **Less than 10% of Student Reading Is STEM Related**
 A 2016 report by Renaissance Learning states that less than 10% of student reading is STEM related.

PROVIDE REGULAR READING TIME

- **More Reading Time = Better Readers** More reading creates waaaayyyyy better readers.
<http://www.scilearn.com/sites/default/files/imported/alldocs/rsrch/30388RAExtra10min.pdf>
- **Reading Makes You Smarter**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF6VKmMVWEc&feature=youtu.be&t=45s>
- **Do you have a procedure to get books from the classroom library?**
- **Is Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) a part of your weekly schedule and routine?**
- **How are you encouraging and enforcing SSR?**
- **What is the procedure for checking out books from your classroom library to take home?**
- **How are you encouraging Free Voluntary Reading? FVR = Reading because you want to on your own time for no credit.**

HAVE MANY WAYS TO CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- **Informal Comprehension Checks**
 - **Quick Reading Reactions**
 - **Dual Entry Journals**
 - **Short, Relevant Reports**
- Examples of all of the above are available at: <http://www.brycehedstrom.com/free-stuff>
- **Avoid traditional detailed written questions about reading**

DEVELOP A RUBRIC FOR READING EXPECTATIONS

- **Lets the students know what is expected**
- **Keeps the teacher focused on what is important during reading time**