Introducing the ERF Graded Reader List

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The ERF Graded Reader List (accessible through the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) website <www.erfoundation.org/erf/>) is an ongoing project of the ERF in cooperation with publishers of EFL/ESL-targeted graded readers. The goal is to provide a reasonably comprehensive, searchable, online database of readers—a valuable resource for language educators and learners around the world. The list consists of a number of Google Docs spreadsheets, including publisher-specific lists, and a comprehensive, combined list. A variety of information is available for each title, including word counts, series-independent level assessments, genre and target audience, Moodle Reader quiz availability and ERF awards. It is hoped that the list will aid in tracking learner reading, implementing and administering ER programs, and conducting ER research. Interested educators and publishers are invited to participate in the project.

The ERF Graded Reader List is an ongoing project of the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) in cooperation with publishers of EFL/ESL-targeted graded readers, and is available through the ERF website <http://www.erfoundation.org/> (click on “Graded Readers”). The goal is to provide a reasonably comprehensive, online database of graded readers providing a range of useful information (Figure 1) that will be a valuable resource for language educators and learners around the world. This set of Google Docs spreadsheets allows anyone with a browser to view, search and download the data for personal use, while also allowing direct, online editing by publishers and list administrators. In this article, I briefly describe the list and its features, note its rationale and offer suggestions for practical use.

Figure 1. Sample view of the ERF Graded Reader List, showing the main data types: basic information (title, series, author), level information, word count/length, Moodle Reader quiz availability, genre and audience, publication data, and further information.
List Structure and Access

The ERF Graded Readers List actually consists of three list types:

- **a.** a set of individual, publisher-specific lists.
- **b.** a Combined Reader List that automatically gathers data from the individual lists.
- **c.** a Various Readers - Odds and Ends list containing old graded reader series, as well as books not specifically targeted at EFL/ESL, but still appearing in some ER collections. This list will be further organized and divided into 2-3 more focused lists as time and resources allow.

A gateway website (Figure 2) allows click-through access to each list, as well as background information and tips for use. It is accessible a) through a link on the ERF website <http://www.erfoundation.org/> (click on "Graded Readers" and scroll down to "The ERF Graded Reader List"), or b) directly at <https://sites.google.com/site/erfgrlist/>. For those unable to access Google Docs, a comprehensive MS Excel spreadsheet can be downloaded directly from the "Graded Readers" page on the ERF site.

List Features

Each list contains the following fields (columns), grouped as shown:

**Basic Information**
- ERF code: Provides a unique code for each reader series and level.
- Publisher: Only appears in the Combined and Various Readers lists.
- Title: ERF Language Literature Award winners are highlighted in red print, finalists in blue.
- Author(s): For simplified versions, most publishers only list original authors.
- Series: (e.g., Macmillan Readers, Helbling Young Readers)

**List Features**

- **List links** (click to open)
- **Notes:** (major series, verification status, alerts, publishers’ website links, etc.)
- **Publisher-specific lists**
  - Black Cat - Covid
  - Burlington Books (Spain)
  - Cambridge U. Press
  - Cengage Heinle
  - Compass Media
  - Egmont Easy Readers
  - ELI - European Language Institute
  - Express Publishing
  - Helbling Languages
  - Hunter Verlag
  - IBC Loolter
  - Macmillan ELT
  - McGraw Hill Asia
  - MRI Publications
  - NRI - Matsuda Physics Institute
  - Oxford U. Press
  - Penguin ELT
  - Richmond Publishing
  - Scholastic ELT
  - Various Readers - Odds and Ends

**Figure 2.** ERF Graded Reader List gateway website homepage. All components of the list are listed under “List links,” with further information available through the menu on the left.
Level Info
- Publisher level: Most series are divided into levels (e.g., Level 1, 2; Beginner, Elementary).
- Headwords: (e.g., 400 words, 1,000 words)
- ERF level: The ERF Graded Reading Scale provides a common level system based on headwords.
- Common European Framework (CEF) level: Numerous publishers tie materials to the CEF.
- Yomiyasusa level: From the Start with Simple Stories (SSS) Extensive Reading Study Group in Japan [http://www.seg.co.jp/sss/], providing an independent assessment of reading level.

Word Count/Length
- Word count (body only): Critical for accurate tracking of learner reading.
- Additional material word count: For supplemental reading materials, excluding exercises and glossaries.
- Actual or estimated count: Actual word-by-word count (usually software-based) or estimate.
- Book length: Number of pages in the book.

Moodle Reader
- Moodle Reader Quiz availability: The Moodle Reader Module (<http://moodlereader.org/>) provides quizzes on graded readers and books for young readers to aid teachers in assessing their students' work. New quizzes are added regularly.

Genre & Audience
- Fiction or nonfiction
- Genre: (e.g., mystery, adventure, love, horror)
- Target age group: (e.g., children, teen, adult)

Publication Data
- ISBN A: (without CD/CD-ROM)
- ISBN-B: (with CD/CD-ROM)
- Copyright year: For the most recent edition.
- Year first published
- In print?

Further Information
- This field is a catchall containing notes on publishing history (e.g., series reassignments), awards, special features, etc.

Although all sheets contain the fields above, the data available vary from publisher to publisher and series to series. New titles and series will be added as they are published. Out-of-print or reassigned titles will not be removed from the lists, thus aiding administration of reader collections containing older titles.

Why Develop the List?
The initial rationale for the list was to provide easily accessible word counts for readers. A central goal of extensive reading (ER) is processing large quantities of engaging, comprehensible input. The amount of reading being done is thus an important factor in research on ER and SLA, in setting goals for reading, and in ER program administration. A lack of reliable word counts was a long-standing source of frustration in the ER field, but many publishers of graded readers now make running word counts available.

As the project developed, we saw the chance to address other needs, as well. For example, educators and learners need series-independent level estimates to aid in selecting readers at appropriate levels. The ERF Graded Reader Scale and Yomiyasusa Level can help users negotiate the various publisher-specific level systems to find readers suiting their needs.

In this way, the ERF Graded Reading List has grown to be a "one-stop shop" where educators and learners can quickly find word counts, level estimates and a range of other useful information to help in conducting research, selecting appropriate readers and administering ER programs. The list also provides a way for publishers to offer a value-added service that also highlights their products.

Suggestions for Use
There are many ways to use the ERF GR List data. Here are a few:

Search: Search the lists for titles, authors or genres of interest at appropriate levels (command/ control F). For example, search the Combined Reader List to find that Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is available from nine different publishers at various levels.

Find Language Learner Literature Award winners and finalists: Search for the string "LLLA" to find winners and finalists, as noted in the "Further Information" field.

Create your own database(s): Download data in a variety of formats (Excel, CSV, PDF, etc.—select "Download as" under "File") to create your own reader database(s).
Establish a publisher-independent level system:
Use the ERF Level, CEF Level and/or Yomiyasusa Level data to establish a consistent level system for your students.

Track actual words read: Use the "word count" and "additional material word count" values to accurately award credit for student reading and calculate reading totals for research purposes. Word counts also help independent learners to track their progress toward reading goals.

Order books: Compiling large book orders—including publishers, titles and ISBNs—can take hours. Use data from the list to quickly compile your book order.

How to Participate
We invite users to notify colleagues, submit suggestions, flag errors, encourage publishers, and contribute data to help fill out our offerings. We also invite contact from publishers of EFL/ESL-focused readers who are not yet participating. Please see the "Participate!" page on the list gateway site <https://sites.google.com/site/erfgrlist/>.

Conclusion
We hope that with help from publishers and other colleagues, the ERF Graded Reader List will serve as an up-to-date and useful tool for educators and learners, alike. We also hope the list will be an effective way for publishers to present their products and provide value-added service to users.

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