These are levelled using a simple numerical sequence with fine gradations. Levelling
depends, after Level 2, on more than a dozen factors, all of which are controlled to match
young learners’ growing skills.

These factors include:

• children’s conceptual understandings
• traditional story structure or ‘story grammar’ (in the Story Books)
• meaning (paying attention to clarity, logic, cause and effect, factual accuracy)
• choice of appropriate sentence structures
• prose that flows easily, without awkwardness
• steady introduction and reinforcement of high frequency vocabulary
• a low ratio of unknown to known words
• the repetition of many grapho-phonetic forms in meaningful context
• the clarity of the layout
• the clarity of the typography
• the amount of text on a page
• the length of the book
• the supportive illustrations
• correlation with Fry Readability scores after Level 20.

A valid Benchmark test must include the concepts, language structures, vocabulary and
typography that children meet in their daily reading.
Key to the PMs
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Key to the PMs
The Key to the PMs sets out the 700 titles in the PM and PM Plus reading program, consisting of:

- Alphabet and Alphabet Blend books
- Shared Books
- Readalongs (lap-size books and small books with audio cassettes)
- Books with one and two lines of text (Starters)
- Story Books
- Lap-size Starters and Story Books
- Traditional Tales and Plays
- Non-fiction Books
- CD-ROMs and software
- Benchmark Kits for Levels 1–30
- Teachers’ Guides for all components.

It is a unique collection of material, published over a number of years, with the particular needs of young children uppermost in the minds of the authors, editors, designers, illustrators and publishers who have contributed to it.

The philosophy that underpins much of the PMs is based on the teaching and writings of Dame Marie Clay, the pioneering work of Myrtle Simpson and Pat Hattaway at the Department of Education, New Zealand, and Warwick Elley’s research on words children use in their writing. The three principal PM authors — Beverley Randell, Annette Smith and Jenny Giles — have brought their extensive, hands-on classroom experience in teaching beginning readers to the writing and final shaping of the books.

Simply expressed the PM philosophy is this:

- children learn to read well if they are encouraged to use a variety of skills, processes and behaviours, rather than a particular method or approach
- when children are learning to read they should be given materials that have been carefully crafted to meet their needs; books that give them, from their earliest experiences with the printed word, success, enjoyment and understanding.
About the PMs

‘Children learn best with books that have meaning and are rewarding ... ’
Reading in Junior Classes, New Zealand Department of Education.

Every book in the PM series has been shaped to support these twin tenets. On every page in every book care is taken with the sentence structures; the choice of words; the clear, well-spaced type; and with the meaningful, accurate illustrations. Because the books are easy as well as interesting, children are able to practise a variety of reading skills and enjoy the feedback of success.

Each PM Story Book has classic story structure and deals with concepts and experiences children can understand. It is a real reading experience and has an intrinsic worth because it offers children traditional story structure with tension, climax and resolution. PM Story Books tempt children to re-read. They want to revisit the text in order to recapture the success and enjoyment they experienced the first time the stories were read.

Some children prefer reading non-fiction. It fascinates them. In the PM Non-fiction titles the text is carefully researched and accurate. Clear and logical presentation of the facts, coupled with superb photography and realistic illustrations, make the books relevant, satisfying and enjoyable to read. A delight in truth and a respect for the real world in all its diversity are very much part of the PM meaning-driven philosophy. The same respect for truth underpins the PM Story Books in which real animals appear.

All the PM titles from Levels 1–24 have been written using carefully selected vocabulary. In each successive book in the series beyond Level 5, there is a very low ratio of new word introduction (at most 1:20). Each title is completely child-centred and full of meaning. Meaning is paramount in the PMs.

With over 700 titles from Levels 1–24, teachers have a core reading program for children in their first four years of school — material that will open up children’s minds, challenge their thinking and stir their emotions.
# PM Benchmark Kits, 1 and 2

The PM Benchmark Kit is a comprehensive reading assessment resource. Teachers can use the PM Benchmark Kit to assess students' reading abilities using unseen, meaningful texts. The PM Benchmark Kit includes 30 accurately levelled texts ranging progressively from emergent level to Reading Age 12. Guidelines on how to administer the texts and interpret assessment data are also included in the teachers' notes. Each benchmark text has a prepared Reading Record and Assessment Record pro forma.

There are two PM Benchmark Kits (pictured above) both levelled in the same way, as teachers may wish to alternate their use of the kits to avoid students becoming overfamiliar with the texts.

## Levelling Using a Simple Numerical Sequence

The PM Benchmark Kits are levelled using a numerical sequence with fine gradations, running from Level 1 to Level 30. The early levels are not equated with years spent at school, grade levels or Reading Ages. This is because some children start their formal schooling before five, while others may not begin until six. If children begin schooling at the age of six, it is unhelpful to suggest that Level 7 “equates” with a Reading Age of 5.6 years! The advantage of a numerical levelling sequence is that it has very fine gradations, and that it suits every child’s progression, regardless of the child’s age at entry. It is only after Level 15 that Reading Ages start to have validity, and these are provided.

## About the PM Benchmark Kit

The PM Benchmark Kits offer:
- a quality assessment resource
- a system for accurate identification of students’ reading levels
- evidence of students’ achievement and progress
- a vehicle for consistent assessment practices within and between schools
- data for school review and community feedback.

### PM Benchmark Kit 1 and PM Benchmark Kit 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PM Benchmark Kit 1</th>
<th>PM Benchmark Kit 2</th>
<th>Teachers’ Notes</th>
<th>Reading Record</th>
<th>Assessment Record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 86961 450 X</td>
<td>0 17 010541 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information on a Reading Record identifies the cues and strategies that a student uses while processing print. Reading levels can be identified when accuracy and self-correction rates are calculated.

The Assessment Record includes Retelling, Questions and an Analysis of the student's Reading Record. The retelling identifies the students' level of understanding as they read. By responding to the questions, students recall and explore details from the text.
The PM Benchmark Kits will identify the student’s:

- instructional reading level
- ability to read for meaning
- integration of meaning, structural and visual cues
- self-monitoring systems
- knowledge of print convention
- rate of learning
- level of independence

Information can be used for:

- providing students with constructive feedback
- organising students into groups of similar learning needs
- planning programs
- reporting to parents/caregivers
- transferring information within and between schools
- developing school policies for literacy learning
- presenting data for class or school accountability
- purchasing resources.
PM Alphabet Books
These books build phonemic awareness and a knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

The PM Library Alphabet Book
The PM Library Alphabet Book – big book format
1 86955 695 X

A First Alphabet Book
A First Alphabet Book – small book format
1 86955 755 1

About these books...
The two alphabet books help establish ‘trigger’ words. The photographs have clarity and impact.
26 PM Alphabet Starters
These books build phonemic awareness and a knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

PM Alphabet Starters

Each PM Alphabet Starter contains five or seven words that begin with the same letter. The words are supported by clear photographs and together they build understanding: dog, duck, door, dinosaurs, dolls, deer, doctor. When these words are spoken aloud, children become conscious of the impact of both the initial sound and the initial letter, and learn to associate them.

About PM Alphabet Starters

Aural, oral, visual and kinaesthetic information is linked in these books — the raised felt letters on the covers invite exploring fingers, increasing awareness of letter shape. Rhyming alliterative verses on the back cover increase phonemic awareness. The verses are for teachers to read aloud, over and over again — soon children will be able to join in.

Down at the duckpond,
down at the park,
The ducks go dabbling
from dawn till dark.

The vowel books should be introduced last because vowels are highly irregular and are difficult for beginners. Two pronunciations for each vowel are included because a flexible approach to vowels is necessary in reading. On pages 19–49 links with the PM Starters and PM Story Books are pinpointed: mastering letter-sound relationships is an ongoing affair, not completed at Starters level.
### PM Alphabet Blends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blend</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>sh</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 702 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>th</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 703 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ch</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 716 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>br</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 696 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>st</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 707 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bl</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 703 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>gr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 699 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 701 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sp</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 706 9</td>
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<td><strong>cr</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pl</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 700 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 698 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1 86955 719 0</td>
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<td>1 86955 710 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>cl</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 697 6</td>
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<td><strong>fr</strong></td>
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<td><strong>pr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 713 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sl</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 705 0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>sm</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 718 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>wh</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 715 8</td>
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<td><strong>ph</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 729 8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>sv</strong></td>
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<td>1 86955 708 5</td>
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<td><strong>st</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 722 0</td>
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<td><strong>kn</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 712 3</td>
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<td><strong>tw</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 728 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sc</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 726 3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 86955 717 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>thr</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>spr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 720 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>squ</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 721 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>scr</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 727 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft g</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 724 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soft c</strong></td>
<td>1 86955 723 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### About the PM Alphabet Blends

PM Alphabet Blends work best when links are made with children's current reading. The book **br** links with Brave Father Mouse (see page 25), in which both brave and bread are used.

The common digraphs sh, th and ch are met early and practised often, but the less common onset soft 'c' for city may not be mastered until Turquoise Level (see pages 60–61 Ant City). Children who are sure about word onsets are well-equipped.

Five words, five photographs and an alliterative rhyme allow the 'personality' of each digraph and blend to be absorbed.

The shy shellfish
The shellfish lives
In a shiny shell.
She shuts her door.
She shuts it well.
PM Readalongs

‘Chant, song and dance ... are among the most powerful forms of human learning, primitively satisfying, deeply memorable, and globally meaningful.’ (Don Holdaway The Foundations of Literacy, Ashton Scholastic 1979.) All children, but especially those whose first language is not English, can become familiar with the structures of English through this rich resource.

PM Shared Books

Shared reading lets children associate books with joy. Shared books are the classroom equivalent of the bedtime story.

PM Readalongs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven little ducks</td>
<td>1 86955 781 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulberry Bush</td>
<td>1 86955 883 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bus song</td>
<td>1 86961 043 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnyard song</td>
<td>1 86955 785 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here we go Looby Lod</td>
<td>1 86955 887 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming round</td>
<td>1 86961 042 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old MacDonald</td>
<td>1 86955 789 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punchinello</td>
<td>1 86955 887 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The big ship sails</td>
<td>1 86961 045 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The farmer in the dell</td>
<td>1 86955 793 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round the village</td>
<td>1 86955 895 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'er the mountain</td>
<td>1 86961 041 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avignon</td>
<td>1 86955 899 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'ne more river</td>
<td>1 86961 044 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BINGO</td>
<td>1 86955 797 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawpaw patch</td>
<td>1 86955 903 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over in the meadow</td>
<td>1 86955 801 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down by the station</td>
<td>1 86961 046 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PM Shared Books – Fiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just Like Me!</td>
<td>1 86961 454 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Growl</td>
<td>1 86961 455 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Snake Cake</td>
<td>1 86961 451 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;WAIT!&quot; Said the Mouse</td>
<td>1 86961 453 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When these books are first introduced, the teacher will do all or most of the reading, but very soon children will anticipate the repeated lines, e.g. “Wait,” said the little mouse. But no one listened, and join in with enthusiasm, savouring the rhythm and rhyme, the humour and the long exciting words, such as Tyrannosaurus rex.

Together the PM Shared Books and PM Readalongs provide support for young learners. Hearing book language read aloud enriches the language of children whose spoken language is limited for any reason at all. Phrases such as over the hills and far away (from Seven Little Ducks), early in the morning (from Down by the Station), day after day (from “Wait!” Said the Mouse), long, long ago (from When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth) belong to books. Shared reading helps children to internalise the language of books and make it their own.

PM Shared Books – Non-fiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signs and Symbols</td>
<td>1 86961 452 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth</td>
<td>1 86961 456 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to the PMs
Key to the PMs

PM Plus Starters One

- Book handling skills
  - Holding the book the right way up; finding the front; turning pages one at a time in correct sequence.

- Learning to understand the technical vocabulary of reading:
  - cover, page, front, back, first, last, left, right, top, bottom, line, beginning, letter, word, sentence, space, capital letter, full stop, question mark, sound.

- Knowing that reading means focusing on print

- Directionality
  - Starting top left and moving along the line from left to right. Making a return sweep to the beginning of the next line.

- Mastering a growing number of high frequency words in context: A, a, am, and, are, at, big, come, Dad, down, go, going, Here, here, I, in, is, look, little, me, Mum, my, on, said, see, The, the, to, up, we, went.

For PM Software for Magenta Level see page 17
• Looking for meaning; expecting words to match the pictures
• Learning sounds as well as letter names (Double-u is not a ‘sound’. ) Linking the first spoken sound in a word to the first written letter in a word. Linking a PM Alphabet Starter to each book, e.g. m Mum; d Dad; b Baby, Balloons, Big things; h A house; l Little things; z At the zoo.
• One-to-one matching of spoken and printed words
PM Plus and PM Starters Two - more emergent reading concepts and skills

- Recognising more high frequency words
  When children know 25-30 high frequency words they are ready for PM Story Books. Many of the words taught at Starters One are repeated at Starters Two, with some new ones: are, blue, can, for, he, goes, I’m, into, it, like, play, red, she, some, this, too, way, where, you.

- Becoming confident with a few sentence constructions
  Mastering these will lead to success at Red Level (see pages 18-25). Here is a ... Here is the ... Here comes ... Come here ... Look at ... I am ... ing Where is ... I can see ... in the ... said the ... We went ... We are going to ... Can you see ...

- Paying close attention to print
  Small variations (an extra word, a changed pronoun, an omitted line, a changed construction, a change in layout) mean that Starters Two cannot be read from oral memory alone.

- Knowing that the print carries the message and that print is constant
  For example, Mum is always Mum; Mother is always Mother.

- Noticing 's' at the ends of words

For PM Software for Magenta Level see page 17
By the end of Starters Two children should be able to recognise 25-30 high frequency words.

- Continuing to link letters with sounds
  In Ben’s red car there are windows with windscreen wipers and in The farm in spring a pink pig has six piglets. In My accident a child has an x-ray. All PM Alphabet Starters can be linked to one or more books in Starters One and Two. The more often children notice links the greater their insights.

- Learning to stop at full stops and feel the impact of meaning

- Using stress and intonation to emphasise meaning

- Directionality
  Making return sweeps to read two or more lines.

Key to the PMs 15

For PM Teachers’ Guides for Magenta Level see page 17.
These 6 Non-fiction books are designed to be used at Magenta Level, with teacher guidance. They can also be enjoyed at Red Levels 3–5, when children are a little more skilful and independent.

- Level 1 books give step-by-step instructions. This text form is defined as a procedure. They support art, craft and maths (shapes).
- Level 2 books are reports on observed facts. They support science and technology.
- The title pages of the three Level 1 books introduce children to labelled diagrams. This will be a new text convention for small children, who should be encouraged to follow the linking lines with their fingers.
The PM Plus Software complements the story books in Magenta Level and has been developed to enhance literacy learning by utilising computers to help create contexts for meaningful reading.

Children can choose the book they wish to read — they can see the book on screen and listen to it being read. They can then explore the book’s content and meaning by completing a range of interactive activities. The activities are highly focused and offer a variety of interactions with the language of the PM Plus books, and have been designed to encourage and promote reading success. The activities focus on all aspects of the texts — whole text, sentence, word and word parts.

Read to me and Read the book

Children can listen to the story while they see the illustrations on screen. They can also read the book on screen, and click on individual words to hear them spoken.

Follow the book

Children are shown a short sentence from the book, and are asked to click on the words in the correct order.

Match the letter and picture

Children are presented with an incomplete word, and a matching picture. Using the picture as a clue, they complete the word by choosing one of three letters, and dragging it into position.

Match the letters

Children are presented with three upper- or lower-case letters. The children match these letters with their upper- or lower-case equivalents, provided below.

Complete the sentence

Children are shown an incomplete sentence from the book. They choose one of three provided words to complete the sentence.

Writing workshop — Make a poster

Children print a poster, choosing from three provided book pages featuring text and illustrations.

There are 4 Teachers’ Guides for the books at Magenta Level:

- PM Alphabet Starters Teachers’ Guide
- PM Plus Teachers’ Guide Levels 1–2 (Magenta) (includes activities for 20 PM Plus Starters and 6 Non-fiction books)
- PM Starters One Teachers’ Guide Magenta Level
- PM Starters Two Teachers’ Guide Magenta Level.

The Guides contain suggestions for:

- early guided reading related to the child’s experience
- going beyond the book
- developing visual and phonemic awareness
- stories with related themes.

They also contain:

- reading record sheets
- blackline masters
- a page for checking children’s recognition of 25–30 high frequency words needed for success at Level 3.