Books for level 2 and level 3 readers: what they look like on Peabody

Books for level 2 and level 3 readers on Peabody: free stories with blends like sh and ch at level 2, pattern books at level 3, with examples and how to tell which fits.

On Peabody, a level 2 book is a first book to sound out that adds blends and letter pairs like st, sh, ch, th, ck and ng, and a level 3 book is a pattern book, where one line comes back on every page with one small change. There are 10 free level 2 stories and 18 at level 3 in the library, each readable with no account, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026. The Book Club gathers them on books for level 2 and books for level 3.

Peabody's levels are its own, numbered 0 to 18. A "level 2" or "level 3" on another site, a school's reading scheme or a shop-bought early reader is a different scale, so read a page before you trust the number.

Level 2: sounding out, with blends

Level 2 picks up where level 1 stops. Level 1 used one consonant at a time; level 2 puts two together, as in frog, shell, chip, fish and jump, and adds a few more words to know by sight, such as see, go, no, he, we and you. Every word is still one a child can sound out or has learnt.

On the page:

- A line or two, six words at most. "A frog sits on a log." "Plop! The frog is wet." (Both from Frog on a Log.)
- A picture on every page.
- Books of 9 to 12 pages among the six below, and 37 to 60 words.

- Story: A Bun for Fran · Pages: 12 · Words: 47
- Story: A Nest on the Hill · Pages: 12 · Words: 60
- Story: Chip and the Shell · Pages: 9 · Words: 43
- Story: Fish in a Dish · Pages: 9 · Words: 44
- Story: Frog on a Log · Pages: 9 · Words: 45
- Story: Jump, Jump, Jump! · Pages: 10 · Words: 37

Level 2 suits a child who reads the level 1 books without help.

Level 3: pattern books

Level 3 is a different kind of reading. Instead of sounding out every word, a child learns the line that repeats, "I see a pig. I see a hen. I see a cow.", and works out the one word that changes, often from the picture. A few common words are known by sight. It is the first level Peabody ties to a school grade: kindergarten.

On the page:

- One or two short sentences, six words at most, the same limit as level 2.
- A repeating line with one small change a page. "Go, car, go! Go, bus, go!" (from Go, Snail, Go!)
- Books of 10 to 16 pages among the six below, and 35 to 66 words.

- Story: A Cat and a Dog · Pages: 14 · Words: 61
- Story: Ants Are Strong (a true book) · Pages: 11 · Words: 43
- Story: At the Farm · Pages: 10 · Words: 37
- Story: Ben and the Blocks · Pages: 16 · Words: 66
- Story: Dex on the Bus · Pages: 16 · Words: 64
- Story: Go, Snail, Go! · Pages: 11 · Words: 35

Level 3 suits a child who has finished the sound-it-out books and is ready for kindergarten reading.

Why level 2 comes before level 3

It can look backwards, since a pattern book can seem easier. The two ask for different things. Level 2 is cracking the code: every word is built from sounds a child has met. Level 3 asks a child to hold a sentence in their head, notice what changed and use the picture as a clue. Peabody puts the code first, and level 3 is where its school grades begin.

Where they sit on the ladder

- Peabody levels: 0 to 2 · What they are: First books to sound out
- Peabody levels: 3 · What they are: Pattern books, for kindergarten
- Peabody levels: 4 and 5 · What they are: First grade: little stories, then short stories
- Peabody levels: 6 · What they are: First grade: a bridge, 12 to 20 words a page
- Peabody levels: 7 to 13 · What they are: 2nd grade to 8th grade
- Peabody levels: 14 to 18 · What they are: Past the school grades

Each level is measured from the story's own text, from sentence length, words a page and word lists, never from a child. Peabody doesn't measure or claim Lexile, AR or guided-reading letters, so there is nothing to convert.

How to tell which fits

Read one story from each level with your child. If they sound out the level 2 words and can tell you what happened, level 2 fits. If the level 3 pattern clicks after a page or two, level 3 fits. If either is a struggle, step back a level; if both are quick, try level 4, where the first little stories begin.

The which level am I? quiz gives a child three lines to read aloud, easy, OK or hard, and points to a level. For grown-ups, Peabody Teach has a free level finder.

Reading challenges at these levels

Short books make a reading challenge move fast. On 100 Books, a favourite read again on another day counts again, and books of fifty or sixty words fill squares quickly. The Winter Break challenge, 19 December 2026 to 3 January 2027, asks ten books of a reader aged 5 to 7, and books read aloud count. If school wants something on paper afterwards, the kindergarten book report is mostly drawings: the title, three pictures and one sentence.

Questions parents ask

Are there more level 2 and level 3 books than Peabody's?

Yes, on library and bookshop shelves. The kids' list of sight-word and decodable friendly books is a start, with buy links that are plain searches and no affiliate tag.

My child reads level 3 but not level 2. Is that a problem?

Not on its own. Pattern books lean on a repeated line and the pictures, which is a different skill from sounding out every blend. Keep some level 2 books in the mix so the sounding-out keeps growing alongside.

Will Peabody read the stories aloud?

Yes. Every story has a button, so a child can hear a pattern book once and then read it alone.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/books-for-level-2-and-3-readers