For students reading at **Literacy Level F/10**, including:
• English-language learners
• Students reading below grade level
• First grade readers

Objectives at a Glance

COMPREHENSION

Students will:

• Identify characters and setting
• Make predictions
• Monitor their reading by reading aloud to clarify
• Utilize text and graphic features
• Summarize the story
• Answer text-dependent questions
• Respond to the book

GENRE STUDY

Students will:

• Recognize the characteristics of fantasy
• Determine the story's message

VOCABULARY

Students will:

• Recognize high-frequency words
• Develop academic content (Tier Three) vocabulary
• Develop robust (Tier Two) oral vocabulary

WORD STUDY

Students will:

• Use context clues

LANGUAGE

Students will:

• Recognize the sentence structures *The _____ will _____* and *I will _____*
• Identify irregular plurals

PHONICS

Students will:

• Problem solve by searching all the way through words
• Recognize words with final **s**-family blends

FLUENCY

Students will:

• Read commas

WRITING

Students will:

• Write to a picture prompt
• Write to a text prompt
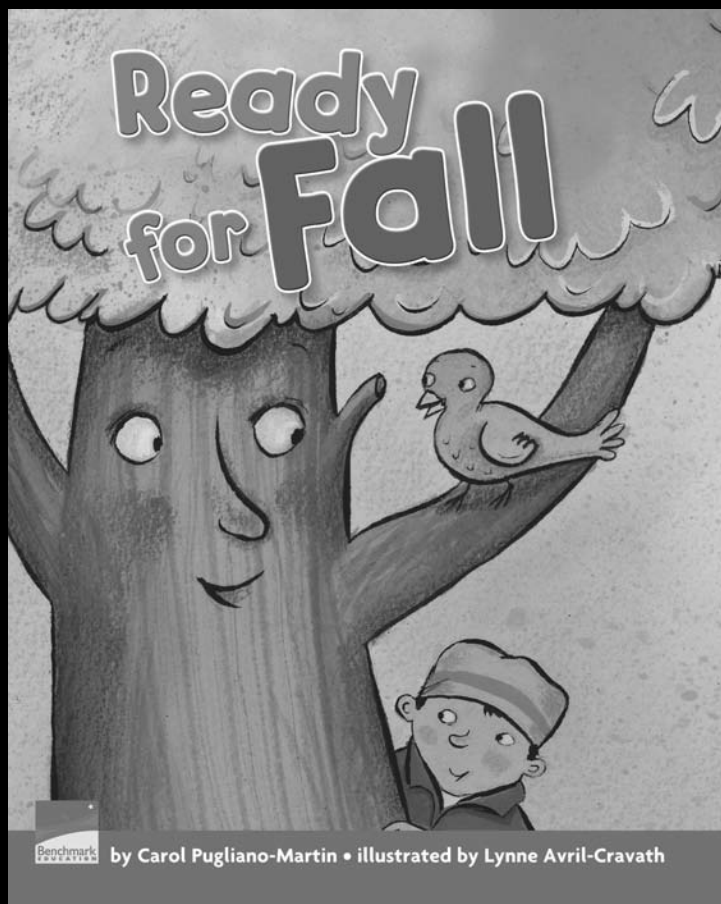
early Explorers™

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Ready for Fall

THEME: Weather
• Summer to Fall (Level F/10)
• **Ready for Fall (Level F/10)**
• Winter to Spring (Level H/14)
• See You in Spring (Level H/14)

GENRE/SUMMARY:

In this fantasy, Elmwood Tree is happy to learn that the children who enjoy playing in his shade also enjoy playing in the crisp fall leaves that fall from his branches.

Ready for Fall

Benchmark by Carol Pugliano-Martin • illustrated by Lynne Avril-Cravath

B E N C H M A R K   E D U C A T I O N   C O M P A N Y

Related Resources

The following Benchmark Education Company resources support the skills and strategies taught in this lesson.

Early Explorers Partner

• *Summer to Fall* (Nonfiction, Level F/10)

Early Comprehension Strategy Poster

• Make Predictions

Text-Dependent Comprehension Resources

• *Ready for Fall* Comprehension Question Card

• Power Tool Flip Chart for Teachers

• Student Bookmark

Assessment

• *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook*

• Grade 1 *Comprehension Strategy Assessment Book*

Make Connections and Build Background

• **Use Drama Say:** *We will read a book called* Ready for Fall. *The children and bird in this story like a special tree. I will pretend the tree is in my yard. I think the tree is beautiful. I will look at the tree from my window.* Pretend to do so. Then invite students to tell what they would do if the tree were in their yard. Encourage them to act out their ideas as well.

• **Use a Graphic Organizer** Draw a T-chart on the board with the headings **People** and **Birds**. Read the headings aloud. Ask students why people like trees and write their ideas under **People**. Then ask why birds like trees and write students' ideas under **Birds**. Finally, read each entry and invite students to echo-read.

People	Birds
• beautiful	• place to build nests
• give shade	• give food
• give food	• protect from other animals
• attract animals	

Introduce the Book

• **Preview Cover and Title Page** Give each student a copy of the book. Point to the front. **Say:** *This story is about a tree in the summer and fall.* Read the title and author, and ask students to echo-read. Invite them to tell what they see in the illustration. Repeat the process with the title page. **Say:** *The cover and title page get us ready to read the book.* Using the think-aloud strategy, model how to make predictions about the book based on the cover and title page information: *The title mentions fall. I see a tree losing its leaves I think the tree in the story loses its leaves in the fall.* Allow time for students to share their own predictions about the story.

• **Introduce Characters and Setting Say:** *The tree, the bird, and the children in the story are called characters.* Ask students to turn to pages 2 and 3, and point to each character as you read the matching name. Repeat the process, inviting students to echo-read. Then **say:** *The setting is where the story takes place. What is the setting of the story?* Help students use the illustrations to determine that the story takes place outdoors.

• **Preview Illustrations and Vocabulary** Revisit the illustrations on the cover and title page. **Say:** *The pictures in fiction books are called illustrations. Illustrations help us understand the words in the book.* Take students on a picture walk, emphasizing the words **branches**, **fall**, **leaves**, **nest**, **summer**, **wind**, **cool**, and **warm** as you talk about the illustrations and what is happening in the story. Make sure students can pronounce each vocabulary word.

• **Preview Sentence Structures** For students who need additional support, write *The _____ will _____* on the board. Read the sentence structure aloud and ask students to repeat it several times. **Say:** *This sentence structure is in the book. Page 8 has a sentence with this structure.* Model how to frame the sentence between two fingers. Then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. Invite students to turn to page 9. **Ask:** *Can you frame two sentences with a* The _____ will _____ *structure?* Assist as needed, and then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. Finally, repeat the process with *I will _____* on page 11.

• **Use Graphophonic Cues** **Say:** *Another word in this book is **back**. What letters do you expect to see after the /b/?* Allow time for students to respond, assisting as needed. Then ask them to find the word **back** on page 9. **Say:** *Search all the way through a word to help you when you read.* Repeat the process with the word **fell** on page 12.

• **Scaffold Spanish-Language Speakers** Say the word **color**. **Ask:** *Does **color** sound like a word you know in Spanish?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *The English word **color** sounds similar to the Spanish word **color**. **Color** and **color** look the same and mean the same thing, too.* Write the word **color** on the board and ask students to locate the word **colors** on page 11 in the book. Repeat the process with **in** on page 6 and **en**. Then point out that the words **too** and **to** on page 11 sound like the Spanish word **tu** but do not mean the same thing. Remind students that the English word **come** on page 8 looks like the Spanish word **come**, but they do not sound the same or have the same meaning. Finally, invite students with other first languages to share their cognates.

Set a Purpose for Reading

• Direct students' attention to the People and Birds T-chart. **Say:** *Now it's time to whisper-read the book. Read to find out what the children and bird do when Elmwood changes in the fall.*

Observe and Prompt Reading Strategies

• After the supportive introduction, students should be able to read all or most of the book on their own. Observe students as they read. Take note of the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues they use to make sense of the text and self-correct. Prompt individual students who have difficulty problem solving independently, but be careful not to prompt English-language learners too quickly. They may need more time to process the text as they rely on their first language for comprehension.

Strategic Reading Prompts			
Cue Source	**Prompt**	**Example**	**Page**
Graphophonic	Search all the way through the word. Are you blending the right sounds?	played	5
Syntactic	You read, "Flapper bird make a nest in Elmwood." Let's read that together and make it sound right.	Flapper bird made a nest in Elmwood.	6
Semantic	What do you see in the picture that would make sense in this sentence?	leaves	13

Use the Graphic Organizer to Summarize

• Ask students to think about their reading. **Say:** Look at our T-chart. Does the story tell about any of these reasons people and birds like trees? Put a ✓ next to any matching responses. Then ask students to name other ideas from the story. Add these to the graphic organizer and put check marks beside them. Finally, choral-read the checkmarked items and ask students to use the graphic organizer to tell the story to a partner.

People	Birds
• beautiful	• place to build nests ✓
• give shade ✓	• give food
• give food	• protect from other animals
• attract animals	• hide birds' nests ✓
• turn colors ✓	
• jump in fall leaves ✓	

Genre Study

• **Say:** *This story is a fantasy. You could see real people like the children. You could also see real birds and trees. But fantasy means some things in the story could not happen in real life. What parts of this story are fantasy?* Guide students to mention that a bird and a tree talk to each other and the tree has feelings.

• **Say:** *Fantasy stories have themes. A theme is like a message from the author. I notice in* Ready for Fall *that Elmwood Tree is sad because summer is over and fall is coming. Why does Elmwood feel that way?* (He thinks the children won't come to play in fall.) **Say:** *The theme for* Ready for Fall *could be "Good things happen in every season." The author uses the characters to send readers a message. The author is telling us that each season has things we can enjoy.*

Reading Strategy Mini-Lesson: Read Aloud to Clarify

• **Reflect** Ask students to think about the parts of the book that were hard for them to understand. **Ask:** *What did you do to help yourself understand what you read?*

• **Model** **Say:** *I always want to understand what I read. Sometimes I'm not sure about a certain part. I go back and read that part aloud. Reading aloud helps me figure out if something is wrong. I will turn back to page 8. The first time I read page 8, I was confused. Why won't Elmwood have any leaves? Then I read that part of page 8 aloud: "Elmwood said, 'Summer is over. Soon I will have no leaves.'" I better understand the words when I listen to them. Fall comes after summer. In fall, many trees lose their leaves. Elmwood will lose his leaves in fall. That makes sense. After I read the page aloud, I'm ready to keep whisper-reading.*

• **Guide** Ask students to turn to page 11. **Ask:** *Is Flapper Bird leaving?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *How can we check? Can we read the page aloud? Let's read the page aloud together. Then we will be sure we understand whether Flapper Bird is leaving.* Read the page aloud together and briefly discuss how this clarifies or confirms students' understanding.

• **Apply** Invite each student to turn to a tricky page. Then ask students to tell a partner about the page. Afterward, they should read the page aloud to make sure they understand it. Observe students as they read aloud to clarify, providing assistance if needed. See the *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook* for an observation chart you can use to assess students' understanding of the **read aloud to clarify** monitor-reading strategy. Then **say:** *You can read aloud any time you need to. Remember to go back and read aloud to help you understand.*

Answer Text-Dependent Questions

• **Explain** Remind students that they can answer questions about books they have read. **Say:** *We answer different kinds of questions in different ways. I will help you learn how to answer each kind.* Tell students today they will practice answering *Take It Apart!* questions. **Say:** *The answer to a* Take It Apart! *question is not stated in the book. You must think like the author to figure out the answer.*

- **Model** Use the *Take It Apart!* question on the Comprehension Question Card. **Say:** *I will show you how I answer a* Take It Apart! *question. I will read the question to figure out what to do. The question says: "Look at pages 12 and 13. The author shows two illustrations of Elmwood. Why did the author use these illustrations?" The question asks me to figure out the author's purpose. I know because the question has the words* **why** *and* **the author**. *What other information do you think will help me?* (Allow student responses.) *Yes, I need to look at the illustrations on pages 12 and 13. On page 12 Elmwood has many leaves. On page 13 Elmwood has few leaves. I think the author wants to show how different Elmwood looks with and without leaves. I am thinking like the author.*

- **Guide** Ask students to answer the other questions on the Comprehension Question Card. Use the Power Tool Flip Chart and Student Bookmark to provide additional modeling as needed. Remind students to ask themselves: *What is the question asking? How can I find the answer? Does my answer make sense? How do I know?*

Build Comprehension: Make Predictions

- **Explain** Create an overhead transparency of the "Ready for Fall" graphic organizer on page 8, or draw it on the chalkboard. **Say:** *Before reading a story, we make predictions. We use the title and cover illustration to think about what might happen in the story. Then we check our prediction. While we are reading, we make new predictions. We use what we have already read to guess what might happen next. We check these predictions, too. After we read, we still make predictions. We think about what might happen to the characters after the story is finished. Making predictions helps us stay connected to the story and enjoy it more.*

- **Model** **Say:** *Let's think about a prediction I might make before reading* Ready for Fall. *First I read the title. The title mentions fall. Then I look at the illustration on the cover. I see leaves falling from a tree. The tree looks surprised. Maybe the tree is surprised to lose its leaves. I will write this prediction in the first box on the graphic organizer. I check the prediction by reading the story. I can't mark* **Yes**, *because the prediction does not happen. Instead, I find out the tree is sad because fall is coming. I will write about this in the* **No** *column.*

- **Guide** **Say:** *Now let's think about a prediction in the middle of the story. Do you think someone might predict the children will come back? Why?* (Allow time for students to respond, assisting if needed.) *Yes, readers might agree with Flapper Bird's words on page 9. Let's write this prediction on the graphic organizer. We check the prediction by reading the story. We can mark* **Yes** *because the prediction comes true.*

- **Apply** Ask students to work with a partner to make a prediction about what might happen after the story ends. Remind them they will not be able to check this prediction. After each partnership shares, agree on how to word the entry on the graphic organizer. Finally, read the completed graphic organizer aloud and invite students to echo-read.

Teacher Tip Use Benchmark Education Company's K–2 Early Comprehension Strategy Poster Set to provide additional instruction in making predictions. Use BEC's *Comprehension Strategy Assessment* books to assess students' ability to make predictions in other brief, grade-level texts.

Home Connection

- Give students the take-home version of *Ready for Fall* to read to family members. Encourage students to work with a friend or family member to make a list of things they see or do in fall. Invite them to bring their lists to share with the group.

Reader Response

Invite students to respond to the book in a way that is meaningful to them. Model and use think-alouds as needed to scaffold students before they try the activities on their own.
• Use the illustrations to retell the story to a partner.
• Tell about something you wished would have happened in the story.
• Act out Elmwood and Flapper Bird's dialogue with a partner.
• Think about the theme of the story. Tell about something you like about each season.
• Draw a picture of Elmwood in summer and Elmwood in fall. Tell a partner why the pictures are different.
• Write about your favorite part of the story.

Write to a Picture Prompt

• **Write a Description** Tell students they will describe a picture in the story. Then they will write their descriptions. **Say:** *I like the pictures in this book. I like to describe the pictures in interesting ways, too. On page 10, I see a picture of several trees. I will describe the trees: The trees stood straight as soldiers. They wore fall uniforms of red, orange, and yellow. What do you notice about the picture? How would you describe the picture?* Allow time for students to respond. **Ask:** *Which picture do you like best? How would you describe the picture?* Allow time for students to respond, prompting further if needed. **Say:** *You have described the picture you chose. Now write your description. After you are finished, read your description to a partner.*

Write to a Text Prompt

• **Analyze Characters' Feelings Say:** *Think about Elmwood Tree. How did Elmwood's feelings change during the story? Write about Elmwood's different feelings. When you are finished, read your ideas to a partner.*

Phonics: Final s-family blends

• Ask students to locate the word **nest** on page 6. Write **nest** on the board. Explain that the two sounds at the end of the word—/s/ and /t/—are blended together to make /st/. Slowly draw your finger under the word as you blend the sounds. Then ask students to do the same in their books. **Say:** *The word **nest** ends with an **s**-family blend. Another consonant blends with the letter **"s"** to end the word.*

• Ask students to brainstorm words that end with **s**-family blends as you record them on index cards. Then spread the cards out on the table. Read each word, inviting students to echo-read.

• **Say:** *We can sort the words by final **s**-family blends.* Write **-sk** and **-sp** on the board. One at a time, point to a letter pair. Ask students to blend the sounds, locate any word cards that end with that blend, and place the cards on the chalk ledge under the letters. Once all the cards are sorted, invite volunteers to select one set of cards and read the words.

Vocabulary

• **Academic Content Vocabulary** Review the story with students and record words that apply to trees and seasons: **branches**, **fall**, **leaves**, **nest**, **summer**, **wind**, **cool**, and **warm**. Ask students to use the words to describe a day in summer and a day in fall.

• **Robust Oral Vocabulary Say:** *In the story, Flapper Bird **reassures** Elmwood. **Reassures** means you help someone understand that things will turn out all right. Elmwood Tree is worried that the children won't come back. Flapper Bird **reassures** Elmwood that the children will return. Say the word with me: **reassures**. Here are some ways one person **reassures** another: A mother rocks and sings to her fussy baby. A father promises his son he will be at the school play. Now, tell about how someone **reassures** you. Try to use the word **reassures** when you tell about it. You could start by saying, "_____ **reassures** me when he/she _____."* (Allow time for each student to respond, assisting if needed.) *What is the word we've been talking about? Yes—**reassures**. Let's try to use the word **reassures** many times today. We can use the word at school and at home.*

Word Study: Context Clues

- **Model Say:** *When I read, I want to know what the words mean. Sometimes I'm not sure about a word, though. Then I use the words I do know to help me. These helping words are called context clues. Look at page 5. Pretend I'm not sure what* **shade** *is. I can use the words* **under, tree,** *and* **leaves** *to help me. If you stand* **under** *the* **leaves** *of a* **tree***, you will find* **shade***.*

- **Guide** Invite students to read page 9 with you. **Say:** *Pretend I don't know what* **return** *means. What words on the page could help me figure it out?* (**come back**)

- **Apply** Pair students. Ask the partners to read page 12 and show one another how they could use context clues to figure out the word **fluttered**.

Language Development: Irregular Plurals

- **Model Say:** *Authors sometimes use plurals when they write. Plural means "more than one." Many plurals have the letter* **"s"** *at the end, like* **trees** *and* **colors***. Some plurals have the letters* **"es"** *at the end, like* **branches***. A few plurals are different. Look at page 4: "Elmwood Tree's branches were full of leaves."* **Leaves** *means more than one* **leaf***. I can use the words* **leaf** *and* **leaves***, too.* Write the word **leaf** on the board and draw a picture of a leaf. Then write the word **leaves** and draw a picture of several leaves. Point to the correct picture as you use the words in simple sentences, such as:
  One **leaf** *hung on the branch. Many* **leaves** *were on the ground.*
  One **leaf** *was red. Many* **leaves** *were brown.*
  I picked up one **leaf***. Then I picked up many more* **leaves***.*

- **Guide** Invite students to read the first sentence on page 5 with you. **Ask:** *Which word is plural?* (**children**) *Children means more than one _____.* (**child**) Write the word **child** on the board and ask a volunteer to draw a picture of a child. Then write the word **children** and ask volunteers to draw pictures of more than one child. Finally, invite student partners to point to the correct pictures as they make up sentences using the words **child** and **children**.

- **Apply** Write the words **wolf** and **wolves** on the board. Read the words and ask students to echo-read. Then invite students to make up sentences about a wolf and wolves that live near Elmwood. If more support is needed, utilize all or part of the "Guide" process.

Fluency: Read Commas

- **Say:** *Good readers do not run all their words together. Instead, good readers watch for commas as they read. Commas tell readers to pause. Pausing at commas helps readers understand an author's ideas. Pausing at commas also helps listeners understand readers.*

- Ask students to turn to page 5. Read the second sentence without pausing. Then read the sentence again, pausing at the comma. **Say:** *The comma in the sentence tells me to pause. Pausing makes the sentence sound right.* Read the sentence again, asking students to echo-read.

- Ask students to turn to page 9 and point to the commas. Then choral-read the page with them, pausing at each comma.

- Invite students to take turns rereading *Ready for Fall* with a partner. Remind them to pause when they see a comma.

Ready for Fall

Make Predictions

Before-reading prediction	Yes	No
↓	↓	↓

Middle-story prediction	Yes	No
↓	↓	↓

After-reading prediction →	