



Vilnius
University



PERLSI

SOLUTION AND IMPACT

Graded readers

Main concepts

- **Graded reader** – a book or a text adapted for a specific level of difficulty. *Extensive Reading Foundation* defines graded readers as “books of various genres that are specially created for learners of foreign languages. They may be simplified versions of existing works, original stories or books that are factual in nature. They are ‘graded’ in the sense that the syntax and lexis are controlled in order to make the content accessible to learners of the language”.

<https://erfoundation.org/wordpress/graded-readers/>

Headword – “words that form headings in a dictionary, under which their meaning is explained”

<https://www.oupjapan.co.jp/en/gradedreaders/index.shtml>

As such a concept of *headword* is similar to the one of *word family*, and words like *helps*, *helping*, *helpful*, *helpless* would be considered one headword.

- **Level** – level of difficulty. Publishers usually produce a series of 4-6 levels of increasing difficulty for progression.

- **Length** – length of the graded reader in words.

Other Graded readers

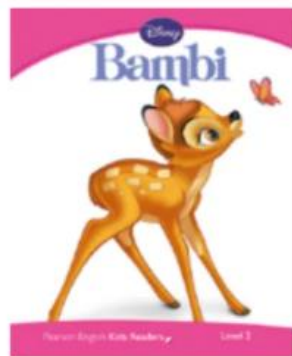
- For L2 learners
- Different levels, mostly follow *Common European Framework of Reference (A1, A2...)*
- Design inconsistencies: every publisher makes their own (not very explicit) choices about how to define levels

Topics / genres

- Adapted classical works of fiction
- Original fiction stories
- Film plots
- Biographies
- Fairy tales
- True stories
- Non-fiction
- Short stories taking place in familiar contexts
- ...

Topics / genres

LEVEL 2



Disney Bambi

Dr Barbara Ingham

Bambi, Thumper and Flower play and learn about the forest. One day, all the deer are in the forest. Suddenly, there is a loud noise. BANG! Bambi runs quickly. Where is his mother now?

American English
16 pages
264 words



Disney The Jungle Book: Mowgli Meets Baloo

Nicola Schofield

Mowgli is a boy. He lives in the jungle. The dangerous tiger does not like Mowgli. Mowgli meets Baloo the bear. Can Baloo help Mowgli?

American English
16 pages
189 words



Disney Princess The Little Mermaid: Ariel and the Prince

Kathryn Harper

Ariel is a mermaid. One day she sees a Prince on a boat. Suddenly there is a storm. Can Ariel help the Prince?

American English
16 pages
250 words

LEVEL 1



Where I Live

Linnette Erocak

Emma loves her neighbourhood. There is a park. There are stores and a market. Where does she go every day?

British English
16 pages
121 words

ISBN 9781408288207

American English
16 pages
121 words

ISBN 9781447944386

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 2



Awake at Night

Laura Miller

In the dark, Amy points. 'Look, she says. What are they? Bats, birds, butterflies, moths ...? Learn about animals of the night!

British English
16 pages
271 words

ISBN 9781408288283

American English
16 pages
271 words

ISBN 9781447944232



Clothes at Work

Linnette Erocak

Uniforms are clothes at work. Mechanics have overalls, chefs have tall hats, some vets wear white coats, and dentists wear masks.

British English
16 pages
262 words

ISBN 9781408288139

American English
16 pages
263 words

ISBN 9781447944249

LEVEL 3



The Count of Monte Cristo

Alexandre Dumas

When people tell lies about him, Edmond Dantes is thrown into prison. There, a man tells him about some treasure. Will Edmond escape and find the treasure? Will he see Mercedes again?

British English
56 pages
12,014 words



Dangerous Game

William Harris

For a number of years, William plays a game with a pottergeist before he goes to sleep. At first, the games are friendly, but then the game begins to change and becomes dangerous. Who will win?

British English
80 pages
1,7761 words



David Copperfield

Charles Dickens

David Copperfield's happy life suddenly changes when his mother marries a cruel man. When she dies, he is sent to work in London but runs away - it is the beginning of his life of adventure.

British English
112 pages
23,699 words



Amistad

David Franzoni

It is 1839. There is a bloody fight on the slave ship, Amistad, and the African slaves are free. But soon they are in prison in the U.S. Must they return to their owners, or are they free people?

British English
48 pages
7,995 words



The Beatles

Paul Shipton

This book tells the story of the greatest band in the world - from their early days in Liverpool to Beatlemania and how they changed modern music forever.

British English
48 pages
8,721 words

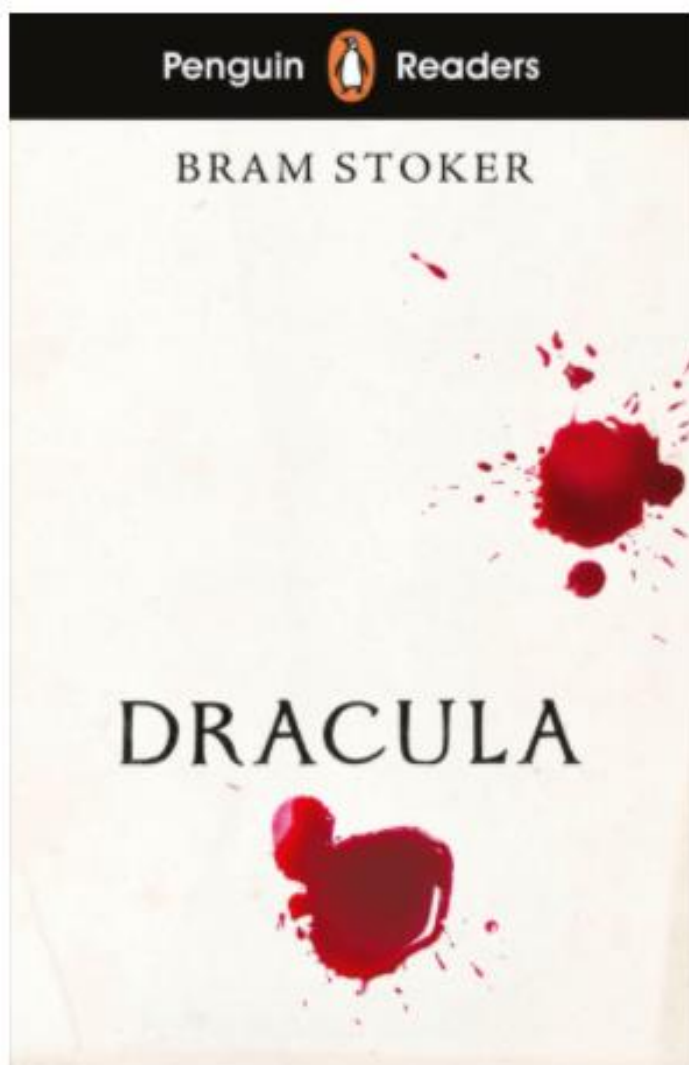


Becoming Jane

Kevin Hood

Read the story of how 20-year-old Jane Austen's romance with Tom Lefroy inspired her to write the great novels Pride and Prejudice and Sense and Sensibility.

British English
56 pages
11,795 words



Penguin Readers Level 3: Dracula (ELT Graded Reader)

Bram Stoker



Penguin Readers Level 1: Plastic (ELT Graded Reader)



Penguin Readers Level 1: A Christmas Carol (ELT Graded Reader)

Charles Dickens

Headwords lists

- Vary across publishing houses and usually are not made available.
- Sometimes actual readers do not follow them closely (though, research indicating this is a bit dated).

An example from *Pearson*: topics they base their headword lists on

Actions

- Breaking or damaging
- Closing and opening
- Doing a task or job
- Falling or not falling
- Hiding, losing and finding
- Moving in a particular direction
- Moving or holding someone or something
- Moving your body
- Showing your feelings
- Touching, hitting or throwing
- Using your senses

Activities and free time

- Art and media
- Competitions
- Daily routine
- Games
- Hobbies and activities
- Internet and computer
- Music
- Musical instruments
- Sports
- Sports equipment
- Teams and clubs
- Toys
- TV, theatre and cinema

Animals

- Animal homes
- Animal noises and behaviour
- Animal parts
- Insects and small animals
- Pets and farm animals
- Wild and garden animals

Each publishing house has their headword counts for different levels and they do not necessarily match.

	Cambridge University Press	McMillan y press	Oxford universit	Pearson	Penguin	National Geographics	Usborne	Alma Edizioni IT	
pre-A1	250				350	200	300		
A1	400	300-400	250	200-300	550	350	500	300	
A1-A2	450		400		700			1000	
A2	700	1100		600-1200	1000	800-1000	800		
A2-B1		1400	700		1200			1500-2000	
B1	1200	1600	1000	1700	1600	1300-1600	1200		
B1-B2			1400		2000	1500-2400			
B2	1800	2200	1800	2300	2500	1900-2200			
B2-C1			2500						
C1				3000		2600			
C2									

- *Extended reading association* provides a very comprehensive review of existing graded readers for English, with topics, numbers of headwords per level etc.
- Following their summary, we make our suggestions for our graded readers.



The Extensive Reading Foundation Grading Scale

Beginner				Elementary			Intermediate			Upper Intermediate			Advanced			Bridge			Near Native
Alphabet	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	Early	Mid	High	
1	51	101	201	301	401	601	801	1001	1251	1501	1801	2101	2401	3001	3601	4501	6001	8001	12001-18000
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	and above
50	100	200	300	400	600	800	1000	1250	1500	1800	2100	2400	3000	3600	4500	6000	8000	12000	

This scale is only for approximate leveling of Language Learner Literature by headword¹ counts by series. Some individual titles may need to move up or down as necessary. A list of where each publisher's Graded Reader series fits this scale is available at the website.

Extensive Reading Foundation
www.erfoundation.org

Syntactic simplifications

- Grammatical structures also increase in difficulty. Some publishers match them carefully with their textbooks.
- Example from *Pearson's Graded Readers Series*

EASYSTARTS 200 HEADWORDS A1	LEVEL 1 300 HEADWORDS <i>As previous level plus</i> A1	LEVEL 2 600 HEADWORDS <i>As previous level plus</i> A2
<p>NOUNS</p> <hr/> <p>Singular forms and plural forms with s Common irregular plural forms Possessive form ('s) Transparent compounds</p> <p>PRONOUNS</p> <hr/> <p>Personal, subject and direct object Demonstrative: <i>this, that</i> (also as determiners) Interrogative: <i>Who? What?</i> <i>It (+ be)</i> in impersonal expressions</p> <p>DETERMINERS</p> <hr/> <p>Articles: a, an, the or zero + noun (phrase) Cardinal numbers (also as pronouns): 1 - 100 Ordinal numbers (for dates): 1st - 31st Possessives Quantifiers: <i>some, any</i> Distributives: <i>every, all + noun</i></p> <p>ADJECTIVES</p> <hr/>	<p>NOUNS</p> <hr/> <p>Possessive form (s') Gerunds for activities and pastimes</p> <p>PRONOUNS</p> <hr/> <p>As indirect objects Possessive Demonstrative: <i>these, those</i> (also determiners) Interrogative: <i>Which?</i> (also determiner)</p> <p>DETERMINERS</p> <hr/> <p>Cardinal numbers (also as pronouns): 101-1,000 Demonstrative: <i>these, those</i> (also pronouns) Quantifiers: <i>a little, a lot of, much, many</i> Interrogative: <i>Which ...?</i> (also pronoun)</p> <p>VERBS</p> <hr/> <p><i>There was/were</i> Negative imperative forms Present continuous with future meaning</p>	<p>PRONOUNS</p> <hr/> <p>Indefinite: <i>some-, no-, any-, every- (body/thing)</i></p> <p>DETERMINERS</p> <hr/> <p>Ordinal numbers: <i>first - hundredth</i> Quantifiers with <i>more</i> Distributives: <i>another, other, each</i></p> <p>ADJECTIVES</p> <hr/> <p>Comparative: <i>-er/more + adjective...than, as ... as</i> Superlative: <i>the -est (in/of), most + adjective better, best, worse, worst, more, most</i></p> <p>VERBS</p> <hr/> <p>Negative questions Past simple of listed irregular verbs <i>will</i> for offers, requests, and with future meaning <i>could</i> for past ability and possibility <i>have to</i> for obligation <i>would like + infinitive</i> Common phrasal verbs with transparent meanings</p>

Other Graded readers

Our graded readers:

- To have three separate **levels of difficulty** (with increasing number of headwords, increasing length and increasing complexity of the texts).
- To have **various topics** per each level, so that we cover a variety of text types: some descriptive, some explanatory, some narrative.
- To aim for a diversity of texts, so different individuals could find something for them and we would also have a wide range of examples for future EtR writers / translators.

Level 1	400 headwords per whole level	Length: up to 500 words per reader
Level 2	700 headwords per whole level	Length: up to 1,500 words per reader
Level 3	1,000 headwords per whole level	up to 2,500 words per one reader

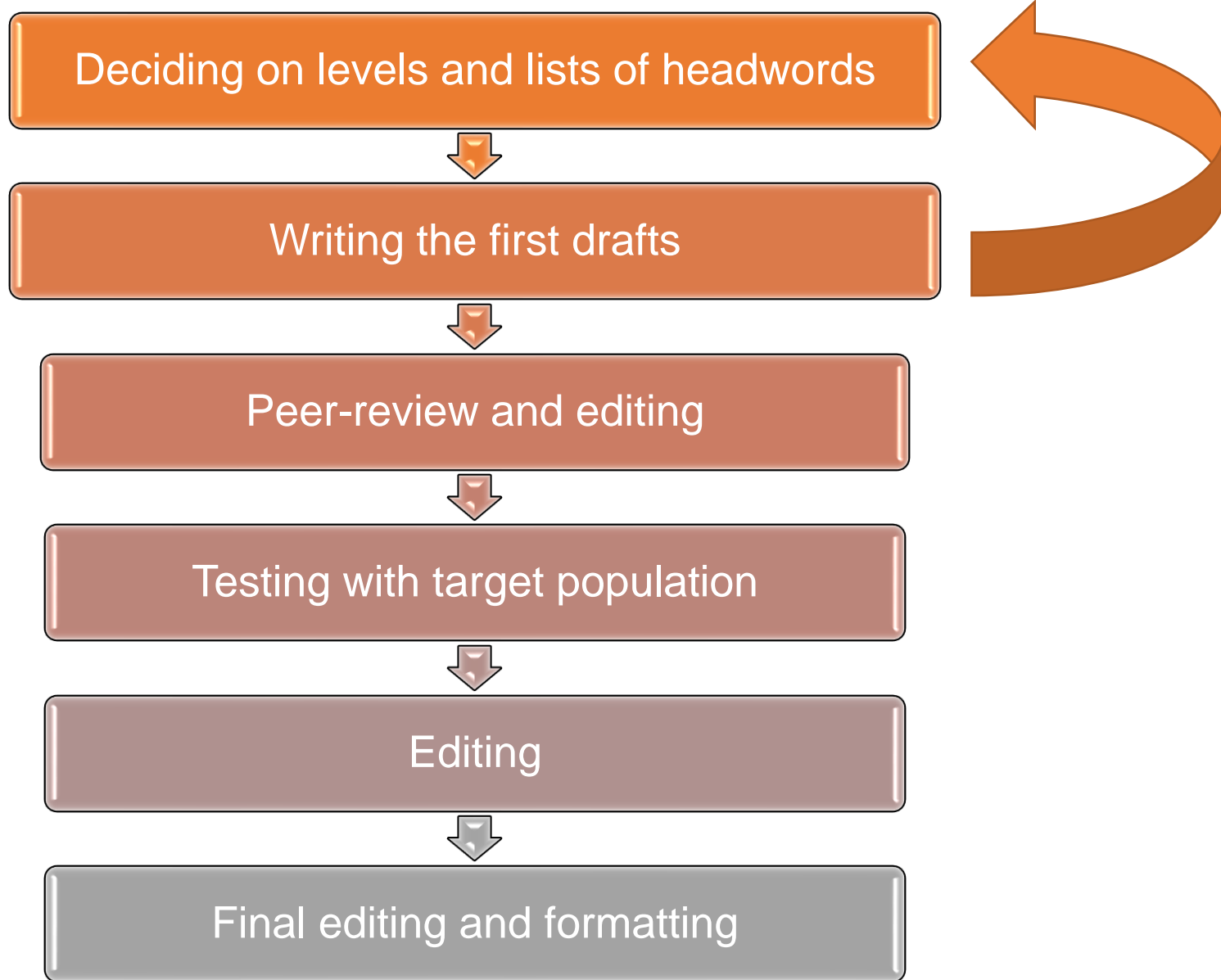
Topics

- **Instructions:** 2-3 instructions of increasing difficulty for each level
- **Public life related texts:** 1-2 texts of increasing difficulty for each level
- **Fiction works:** 1-3 texts of increasing difficulty for each level

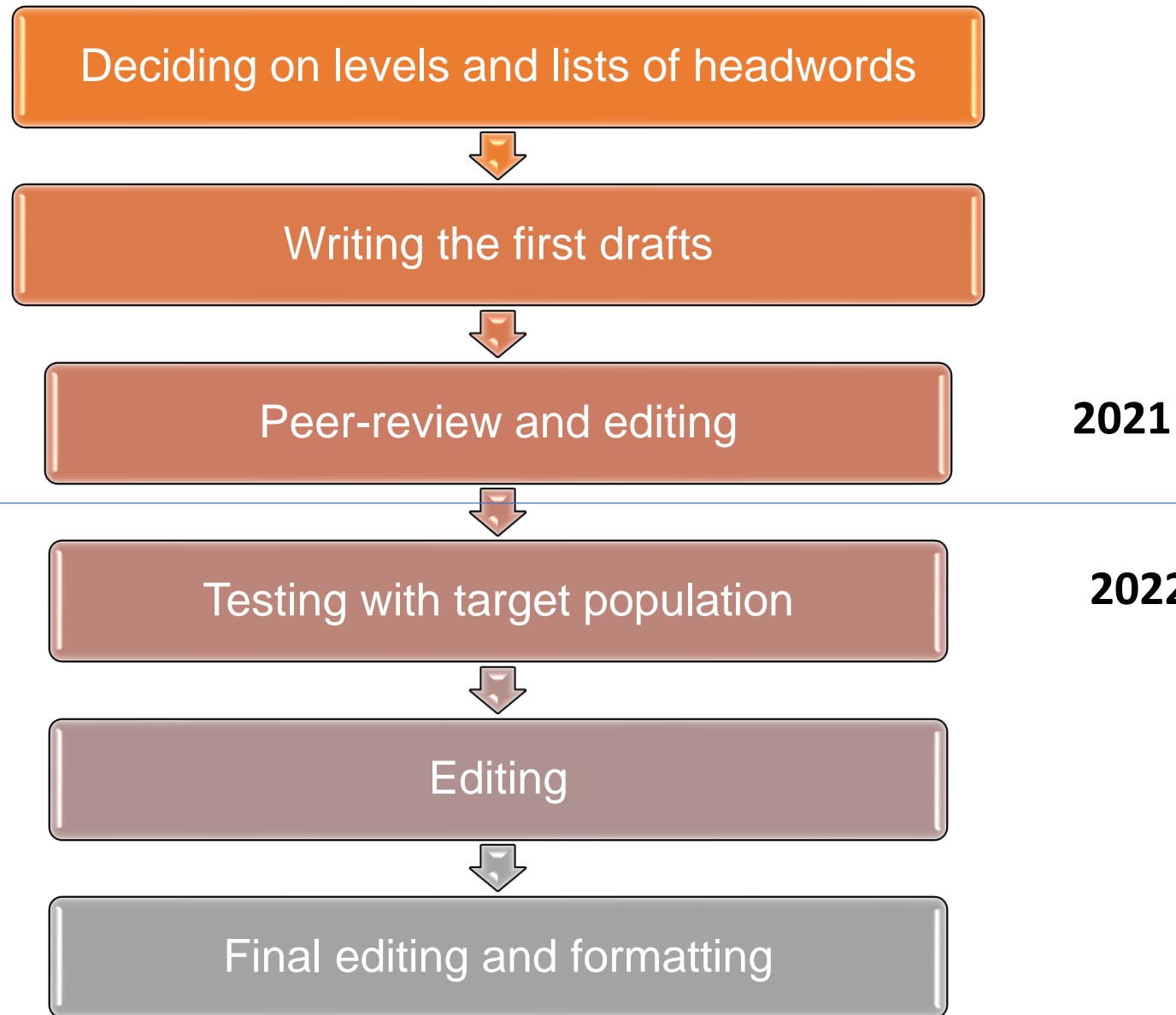
Timeframe

- Starting point 01/02/2021
- Deadline: 17/07/2022

Process



Process



RESULTS



Topics

- **Instructions:** 2-3 instructions of increasing difficulty for each level (Lithuania)
- **Nature and people:** 1-3 texts of increasing difficulty for each level (Slovenia)
- **Public life related texts:** 1-2 texts of increasing difficulty for each level
- **Fiction works:** 1-3 texts of increasing difficulty for each level

Instructions (Lithuania)

Level 1

Easy to make recipes

Level 2:

Instructions for everyday tasks: how and when to wash your hands, how to drink water.

Level 3

Instructions for more complex daily tasks: how to create your email account, how to use self-service terminals to send and receive parcels

Instructions (Latvia)

Level 1:

Instructions for safety (forest, swimming, crossing the street, kitchen, reflectors).

Level 2:

Instructions for safety (forest, thunderstorm, fire, home)

Level 3

Instructions for safety (internet)

Nature and people (Slovenia)

Level 1

?

Level 2

Dandelion

Level 3

Slovenia

Public life

Level 1

- Lithuania: texts about the institution of president, parliament and government.
- Latvia: Handbook (Guide) on Services Provided by the Municipality of Riga to foreigners
- Slovenia: Text about the town Maribor

Public life

Level 2

- Lithuania: Explanation of tax system.
- Latvia:
 - Handbook (Guide) on Services Provided by the Municipality of Riga to foreigners
 - “Latvian State Forests” tourism destinations – 12 destination descriptions (12 texts)
- Slovenia: A text about enrolling your child in first grade

Public life

Level 3

- Lithuania: Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Latvia:
 - Handbook (Guide) on Services Provided by the Municipality of Riga to foreigners,
 - 4 texts for the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia's website
- Slovenia: Etiquette in theater

Fiction

Level 1

- Lithuania: 3 fables.
- Latvia: 5 national tales
- Slovenia: 1 Slovene folk tale

Fiction

Level 2

- Lithuania: a classical myth and a national fairy tale.
- Latvia: 6 national tales
- Slovenia: a fable

Fiction

Level 3:

- Lithuania: original short story by a national author.
- Latvia: 5 national tales
- Slovenia: a myth

Text length agreed

Level 1	up to 500 words per reader
Level 2	up to 1,500 words per reader
Level 3	up to 2,500 words per one reader

The actual text lengths

Level	Topic	Length agreed	Lithuania	Latvia	Slovenia
1	Public life	up to 500 words	82; 96; 647	928–4928	923
1	Fiction	up to 500 words	95; 135; 188	43-105	286
1	Instructions	up to 500 words	214; 222; 224	765–5068	-
1	Nature and people	up to 500 words	-	-	-
2	Public life	up to 1500 words	575	219-1998	675
2	Fiction	up to 1500 words	646; 748	70-153	415
2	Instructions	up to 1500 words	214 267	799–1700	-
2	Nature and people	up to 1500 words	-	-	269
3	Public life	up to 2500 words	2012	341–4323	802
3	Fiction	up to 2500 words	1674	100–207	356
3	Instructions	up to 2500 words	201; 484	1005–2067	-
3	Nature and people	up to 2500 words	-	-	1759

Summing up the text lengths

1. Topic of public life in some cases exceeded the agreed word limit.
2. Is the way we structure the text more important than the length of the text? (Longer texts have clear parts that can be read separately?)
3. In most cases, text length increased with level.
4. Shortest text - 43 words, longest texts - 5068 words.

Headwords (lexical diversity)

Level	Headwords agreed	Lithuania
1	400	363
2	700	537
3	1000	731

Words per sentence (means)

	Latvia	Lithuania
Level 1	4,6	4,9
Level 2	7,1	6,4
Level 3	15,2	7,8

Feedback received: Lithuania

Public life related texts were most difficult.

Feedback received: Lithuania

Interest in fiction (1)

Facilitator:

Dominykas made only few comments on the text of the short story, which he liked very much. He remembered it well and felt that it was very interesting to him.

Feedback received: Lithuania

Interest in fiction (2)

End of a fable:

The same thing sometimes happens to people. When they find something difficult, they stop trying.

Facilitator:

The validators really liked the endings of the fables. They started to share their own experiences.

Feedback received: Lithuania

Interest in recipes



Feedback received: Latvia

- The translated materials (national tales) are a good source to enlarge the vocabulary as they cover topics that might be very common several decades ago, but now are rather unusual.
- For Level 2 – the experts were much more interested in the public life texts. They read the information about all the destinations with huge interest, paying special attention to the prices. National tales did not arise such interest.
- Also, during the validation sessions, we noticed that the experts understood the text even when they read it out with mistakes or their speech was unclear.