



The MSRI School Library Manual

Created by Intern Gwen Elmhirst, 2025/26

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What is a Library?

A **library** is a room or building with a collection of books. Libraries sometimes have other materials like movies and music that people can access and borrow. At our library, we only have books. Our school library is for the students and staff at the MSRI Sahabat school.

You can read books in the library, or you can borrow books to take up to your classroom or home with you. Books can be borrowed for a maximum of 2 weeks or 14 days.

In libraries, there are special rules you must follow. Generally, school libraries are calm spaces where people can read, select books, or do research.

Our library is small, so it is mostly a space where students can find books to borrow and take to their classes or take home.

There are many libraries in Kuala Lumpur and around the world. Here are some:



The Kuala Lumpur Library (Malaysia), the Admont Abbey Library (Austria), the Toronto Reference Library (Canada)

Library Glossary

What is a Glossary? A glossary is a list of words that helps the reader understand what some important words in the book mean. This glossary can help you to understand the library at our school better. Words that appear in the glossary are blue and are bold **like this**.

Author- The person who wrote the book. Their name will be on the cover, spine, and title page of the book.

Adult Reading Level- Books with **RED** tape. Books for older readers. These books are marked as appropriate for adults based on themes and content in the books.

Biography- A book about the story of a real person's life. 🧑

Cover- The outer part that protects all the pages inside a book. The front of the book is called the front cover. The back of the book is called the back cover. 📖

Dictionary- A dictionary is a book about words and their meanings. Words and their meanings are listed in alphabetical order from A to Z. Sometimes dictionaries have topics like “Science”, and focus on words about this topic. Dictionaries are helpful tools for improving your English and your writing.

Early Readers Reading Level- Books with **YELLOW** tape. These are books for beginning English readers to read on their own, or with some help. These books have very simple sentences with few words, a big font, and are short and simple stories.

Fiction Books- Books with stories made up from the imagination, like fairytales and mysteries. They are organized on shelves by Genre. 📚

Genre- The category of writing that determines what an author writes and how they write it. Book genres describe the style, literary technique, tone, content, or format of the book. The word genre is usually used to categorize fiction, or made-up books. Examples of genres are Fantasy or Horror.

Hardcover Books- Books with hard, strong covers, usually made of thick cardboard. They are heavier and often cost more than paperback books.

Illustrator- The person who makes the illustrations (drawings) for a book 🎨

Intermediate Reading Level- Books with **BLUE** tape. Books for young readers to read on their own or with some help. These books have short to medium sized sentences with familiar words, medium sized font and are short to medium length stories.

Librarian- A person who works in the library. Our school does not have a librarian. Instead, there are library helpers👩🏫

Library- A room or building with a collection of books. Libraries sometimes have other materials like movies and music that people can access and borrow.

Lower-grade Books- In this library, lower grade books are books that are written specifically for children aged 4 to 8 (usually KG – grade 3). These can include **YELLOW**, **BLUE** and **RED AND YELLOW** books

Middle-grade Books- Books with **SILVER/GREY** tape. In this library, middle-grade books are books that are written specifically for children aged 8 to 12 (usually grade 3 to grade 6), but they are appropriate and enjoyable for all ages. These books are for advanced readers who can read on their own easily. They have a standard book font. They are medium to long book length. They are great for teachers to read aloud or for students to practice their reading.

Non-Fiction Books- Books based on real facts, people, and events, like biographies, history books, and how-to guides. They are organized on shelves by subject.

Paperback- Books with flexible, softer covers, usually made from thick paper or thin cardboard. They are lighter and often cost less than hardback books.

Picture Book- Books with RED AND YELLOW tape. A children's book where illustrations (drawings) and text (words) work together to tell a story or explain a concept. In picture books, the pictures are important and help to tell the story. These books are usually made for children aged 2 to 8 to listen to or to read. Some picture books have little or no words.

Shelve/Reshelve- Shelve and reshelve are action words. Shelving a book means putting a book on a shelf. Reshelling a book, means returning a book back to its proper location on a shelf after it has been taken off a shelf.

Skim- Skim is an action word. Skimming is a reading method where you focus on the main ideas of a text instead of reading every word. You skip the extra information like details. Skimming usually includes reading the introduction, the first and last sentences of paragraphs, and **bold** words. By skimming a book or text, you can find out key information like the type of the book or the author's main ideas, quickly. It is helpful to skim a book before you decide to read it.

Spine- The back portion of a book's binding which is visible when a book is shelved in a bookcase. 

Storybook- Books with RED/YELLOW tape. A children's book that tells a story. Storybooks are similar to picture books, but may or may not have illustrations (drawings). Some storybooks are for young children, some are for older children to listen to or to read. Storybook collections are big books that have many stories inside.

Subject- Describes what a non-fiction book is about. The word subject is usually used to categorize non-fiction books— books based on real facts. Examples of book subjects are History, or Drawing.

Teenager/Young Adult Reading Level- Books with **GREEN** tape. Books for teenagers or adults. They have teen-age characters and topics. They have normal size fonts and have a medium to long book length. These books are rated as appropriate for readers 12 and older by the publishing company. They can include mature themes that are meant for older readers.

Thesaurus- A thesaurus is a book that shows words with similar meanings. A thesaurus lists a word and other words that mean the same (synonyms) or the opposite (antonyms). Like a dictionary, the list is in alphabetical order from A to Z. A thesaurus can help you improve your writing, avoid repetition, or help you choose better words for expressing ideas. This is what people used before Google and AI!

Title- The name of the book. A title is written on the cover, spine, and title page of the book.

Library Rules and Expectations

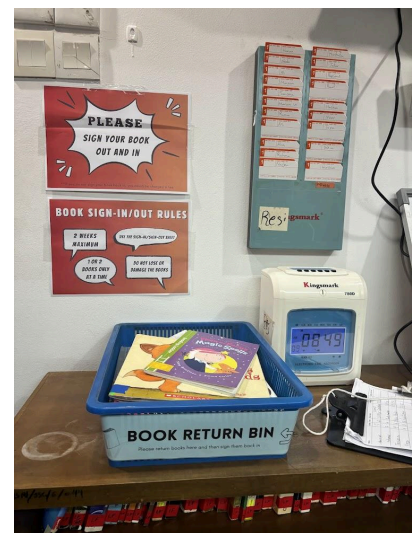


Rules in the Library

These are rules that we must follow in the library in order to keep the space clean, safe, and be respectful to others.

1. Respect the library space. Leave the library neater than when you arrived.

- **Follow the rules**
- Keep the library neat
- Throw away any trash you see
- Don't know where a book goes? Put it in the return bin and someone will put it away
- Put broken books in the hospital bin
- Place books back in their place if you know where they go, or put them in the return bin



2. Respect other students and staff.

- Understand this is a sharing space and that the library is close to the office where people are working.
- Keep your voice down



Rules for Borrowing Books:

1. When you sign out a book, it is your responsibility.

- If you lose a book or damage a book, there will be a 10RM fee.
- If you sign out a book, you must sign it back in, or you will pay a 10RM fee
- The sheet will ask for your name, the book name, your grade, your shift (A for afternoon or M for morning) and the sign out date. Leave the sign in blank until you bring the book back
- If you have younger siblings, do not leave a book with them.

2. Take care of the books

- No eating and drinking while reading the books
- Do not peel the tape!!

- No writing in the books
- Do not fold or tear the pages of the books

3. The maximum length of time you can take out a book is 2 weeks (14 days).

- Return the book quickly. Other people may be waiting to read the same book.

4. You may only take out 2 books at one time.

- You are *allowed* to take out the same book multiple times, but you must sign it out each time.

5. Let someone in the office know if a book was damaged when you took it home.

- Be honest.
- We need to know so we can repair or replace the book

Helping in the Library



How can I help in the library?

There are many ways you can help in our library. It is important that we all do our part to help in the library. Read this page to find out more.

1) Become familiar with the library:

Visit often. Read many types of books. See and learn how the books are organized and which shelves they go on.

2) Tidy up after yourself:

When you finish reading a book, put it back in the proper spot. If you do not know where it goes, put it in the blue return bin. Do not leave trash in the library.

3) Be a library superhero:

Help to tidy and fix the messy shelves, even if you did not make the mess. See books backwards or upside down? Fix them! See books in the blue bins and know where they should go on the shelves? Put them back! Is there trash in the library? Throw it away!

A little kindness goes a long way. We must all do our part to keep this space clean.



4) Help another student:

If you know where something belongs or how to sign out a book, help another student out. We are all learning how the library works!

5) Become a library helper:

Want to be an official helper in the school?

If you are an older student, you can be a library helper! Library helpers are responsible for keeping the library clean and helping other students find books in the library or learn the rules of the library. Being a library helper is a great way to make a difference in your school and learn more about the library.



Library Organization

How is our library organized? Our library is organized in a few ways. Read more to find out how.

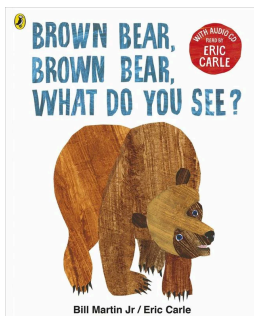
1) Fiction and Non-Fiction Books

First, the books in our library are organized by whether they are **fiction** or **non-fiction**.

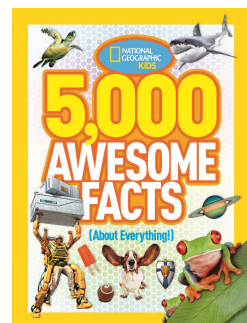
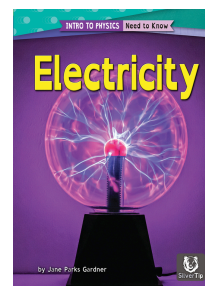
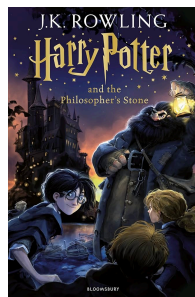
Fiction books are organized by age or reading level and **genre**. **Fiction books** are labelled with coloured tape and sometimes have a letter code on the tape.

Non-fiction books are organized by **subject**. Right now, they **do not have tape** labels, but this may change in the future.

In our library, **fiction** and **non-fiction** books are separated. Most of our fiction books are on one side of the room, and most of the non-fiction books are on the other side of the room. This way of organizing is different from some other libraries. In some libraries, these types of books are put on the same shelves together.



Examples of Fiction Books



Examples of Non-Fiction Books

2) Age

Fiction books are separated by age and reading level. The age-level of a book is indicated with coloured tape.

If you are under 12, all **YELLOW**, **RED AND YELLOW**, **BLUE**, **SILVER/GREY** will be appropriate for you. Some books may be beyond your reading level and may be too difficult for you

You must be 12 to read books with **GREEN** tape and 16 to read books with **RED** tape. **Non-fiction books** are not separated by age, because most books are appropriate for all ages, although some are more difficult than others.

In our library, fiction books that are meant for younger students are often on shelves lower down. Books for teenagers or adults are often on shelves that are higher up.

3) Reading level

The books in this library are mostly organized by reading level, and by what the book is about (Genre or Subject). People of all ages are at different reading levels for reading books in English. For **fiction books**, this reading level is shown with coloured tape.

For **non-fiction books**, reading level is not identified, though it can be found by using clues like the size of the text, the topic, and the use of complex words. For example, a book with lots of small text and challenging words may be better for a student with a more advanced (higher) reading level .

4) To fit in our library space

Our library is a small space. This means that sometimes sections of books are not all in the same area. It can also mean that sometimes books will be moved

by an adult as the library gets more books. Read the shelf label to make sure you find the books you are looking for!



Fiction Book Labels

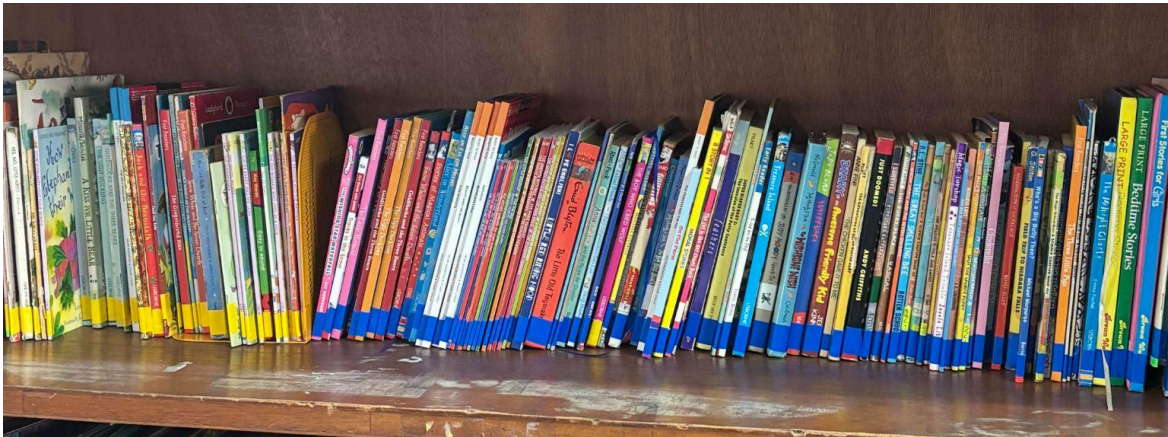
Are you curious about the coloured tape on the spines of books in the library?

Read below to find out more about the fiction book reading levels and genres in the MSRI Sahabat School Library.

The **Fiction** books in our library are organized in 2 ways.

1) By **Reading Level** or Age

- This is the level of difficulty or age group the book is meant for
- The Reading Level/Age of a book is identified with **COLORED TAPE**

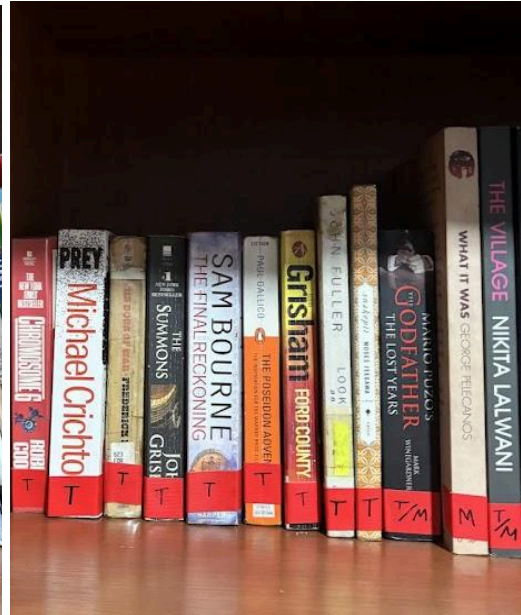


You can see that the books in this picture have **YELLOW** or **BLUE** tape, which tell the reader that they are **Easy Reading Level books** and **Intermediate Reading Level Books**

2) By **Genre**

- This is the topic of the book.
- The word **genre** is used for fiction books, the word **subject** is used for non-fiction books.

- The **genre** of a fiction book is identified with a LETTER CODE written on the coloured tape.
- Remember, a book **genre** is a category of a book, determined by its style, content, and subject matter. Examples of genres include Action/Adventure, Science Fiction and Comedy.
- **YELLOW**, **BLUE** and **RED AND YELLOW** books do not have genres. These books **do not** have letters written on the tape.



You can see that the books in these pictures have **LETTER CODES** written on the **COLORED TAPE**.

DID YOU KNOW? The books in the first picture are labelled with a “M” because their **genre** is Mystery. The books in the second picture have “T” for the Thriller **genre**, “T/M” for being both Thriller and Mystery books, and “M” for the mystery **genre**. We can tell that the books in the first picture are for middle-grade because they have **SILVER/GREY** tape. The books in the second picture are for adults (16+) because they have **RED** tape.

Other Labels found on Fiction Books:



Green circle sticker = A book is part of a series. The green dot may also have a number to indicate the order of the book in the series. This dot will be on the top of the book spine. Not all books that are part of a series have this mark yet

****NOTE:** See any other colours of tape or labels? See tape on the top of the book? This is NOT MSRI Library tape. Many of our books are donated and have tape or labels from their previous library.

Fiction Book Labels by Reading Level and Age



What is a reading level?

A reading level indicates the difficulty of a book. Reading levels help us choose the right book for our reading ability to help us improve our reading skills.

They help students and teachers choose books that are "just right"-- books that are not too easy and not too difficult.

How can I tell what level a book is?

Look at the tape!! The colour of tape on the bottom of a book's spine (back) shows the age or reading level for each book.

The tape could be:

YELLOW, **RED AND YELLOW**, **BLUE**, **SILVER/GREY**, **GREEN**, or **RED** colors.

Is this how all the books in the library are organized?

No, this system is for **fiction** books only. **Non-fiction** books are not organized by age, they are organized by subjects/topics.

1) **YELLOW**

Early Readers

- Simple and short sentences
- Simple stories
- Big font

- Made for younger students
- Pictures
- Small, thin books **or** small, thick books
- Stories with kid age characters

2) **BLUE**

Intermediate Readers (age

- Simple sentences
- More complex stories
- Medium to big font
- Made for younger students
- Pictures
- Small, thin books
- Stories with kid age characters

3) **RED AND YELLOW**

Children's Picture Books

- Easy to difficult sentences
- Easy to complicated stories
- Medium or small font
- Made for young students
- Big, thin books
- Stories with kid age characters

4) **SILVER/GREY**

Middle-grade Books

- Medium to difficult sentences
- Complex stories

- Small font
- Made for middle-grade students and older
- Small to medium, thick books
- Stories with kid age characters

5) GREEN

Young Adult Books

- Medium to difficult sentences
- Complex stories
- Small font
- Made for students 12 years old and up
- Stories with teen-age characters (12 to 19)
- Small to medium, thick books

6) RED

Adult Books

- Medium to difficult sentences
- Complex stories
- Small font
- Made for students 16 years old and up
- Small to medium, thick books
- Stories with adult characters

Finding your level:

When trying to find your reading level, test out a book from each level, starting at **YELLOW**. If it is too easy, go to the next colour. You can skip the **RED AND YELLOW** level if you want and go to **SILVER/GREY**.

Fiction Book Labels by Genre

What is a genre?

A book **genre** is the category of writing that determines what an **author** writes and how they write it. Book genres describe the style, literary technique, tone, content, or format of the book. The word **genre** is usually used to categorize fiction, or made-up books. In our library, the fiction books are divided by age/reading level and by genre.

How do I know what genre a book is?

Genre is indicated in our library with a 1 or 2 letter code on the coloured tape label of the spine of each book. You can also find out a book genre by using clues from the book itself.



Do all fiction books have a genre?

In our library, **YELLOW**, **BLUE**, and **RED AND YELLOW** books are not organized by genre. **SILVER/GREY**, **GREEN**, and **RED** books are. Read more below to learn how these books are sorted.

The Genres in our Library:

Code	Genre	Description	Ages
A	Action/Adventure 	Books for middle grade students (age 8-14) that are fast-paced stories full of excitement, danger, and exploration. They can include battles, travel, survival, rescue.	Middle grade
CF	Contemporary Fiction 	Books set in the present day, focusing on modern life, real-world settings, and current issues. The adult version of "general"	Adult

C	Comedy/Funny 	Funny stories that talk about everyday life, school, family, and friendships. Examples: Belly Up, Junie B Jones, Dogman	Middle grade
D	Drama 	Focus on emotional, real-life situations that teens face, such as relationships, identity, family struggles, and personal growth.	Young Adult (YA)
F F F	Fantasy 	Books set in a magical world, often involving myths and magical creatures. Fantasy books may have things like magic, dragons, goblins, wizards, or witches. Fantasy books often include some adventure. Examples: Harry Potter (Middle Grade)	Middle grade Young Adult (YA) Adult
G	General (Middle-grade) 	Middle grade books have realistic characters and are about everyday situations. Themes that these books explore include friendship, family, school life, and personal growth. These books do not fit into another genre like science fiction or mystery. Don't know what book to choose? General books are always a great option.	Middle grade
GN GN	Graphic novels 	A graphic novel is a book that tells a story using both pictures and words, like a long comic book. We also have easier graphic novels with fewer words in the Intermediate (BLUE) section. Examples: Dogman (Intermediate reader), the Adventures of Tintin (middle grade), The Odyssey Graphic Novel (Young Adult)	Middle grade Young Adult (YA)
HF HF HF	Historical fiction 	Historical fiction is a made-up story that takes place in the past. It includes real events, places, or people from history, but the main story and characters are usually imaginary. Examples: Magic Treehouse (Middle Grade)	Middle grade Young Adult (YA) Adult

HR	Horror 	Books made to scare, shock, or unsettle readers by exploring fear, danger, or the unknown. These books may include frightening scenes or violence. Examples: IT	Adult
LF	Literary Fiction 	Literary fiction is a type of story that focuses on deep characters, thoughtful themes, and artistic writing. It explores the human experience in a realistic or symbolic way. Examples: Wuthering Heights, Hamlet	Adult
M M M	Mystery/Crime /Scary 	Exciting stories filled with suspense, puzzles, and spooky moments Examples: Mr. Mystery, Nancy Drew, Goosebumps	Middle grade Young Adult (YA) Adult
PF	Political Fiction 	Political fiction is a genre that uses storytelling to explore, critique, or imagine political ideas, systems, and events. It often reflects real-world issues or presents alternative political realities. Examples: Ishmael	Adult
R	Romance 	Romance books are stories about love and relationships, where two people fall in love and face challenges before ending happily or hopefully. Examples: Love, Simon, Crazy Rich Asians	Adult
SF SF SF	Science fiction 	Books about an imagined future, especially about space travel or other planets. Examples: Star Wars (middle grade), Hunger Games (Young Adult)	Middle grade Young Adult (YA) Adult
T	Thriller 	Thriller books for adults are fast-paced, suspenseful stories that keep readers on edge with danger, tension, and unexpected twists. They often involve crime, spying, survival, or psychological drama.	Adult

Non-Fiction Books

Non-fiction books are books based on real facts, people, and events, like biographies, history books, and how-to guides. They are organized on shelves by **subject**.

Non-fiction books in our library currently do not have any visual identifying system for look and see where the books belong, like the tape and letter codes for **fiction books** do.

Non-fiction books are not separated by age. The content in the books is appropriate for all ages. However, some books are made for older audiences or more skilled readers.



Putting Non-fiction books away:

Non-fiction books currently do not have any visual identifying system for you to look and see where the books belong, like the tape and letter codes for **fiction books**.

To re-shelve non-fiction books, look at the book and identify what subject it is. Find the shelf label that matches, and put it back on the shelf where it belongs. If you do not know where a book belongs, put in the blue return bin for someone else to **reshelve**.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

This section is marked as a work in progress. The labelling of the non-fiction section of the MSRI library is not finished yet. It is still being worked on. This section will be updated again when it is finished.



Non-Fiction Book Subjects



The Subjects in our Library:

Category	Subject/Shelf Label	Description	Number of sections
Math	Math	Books about math concepts including adding/subtracting or logic. Workbooks and textbooks can be found in the Math Teacher Resources, not in this section.	1
Math	IGSCSE ICT, Math	IGSCSE textbooks and resources on the subjects of ICT and math	1

Language	English	Books for learning English. Includes books for many reading levels and ages. Dictionaries and Thesauruses . Workbooks and textbooks can be found in the English Teacher Resources, not in this section.	2
Language	Bahasa Malaysia	Books for learning Bahasa Malaysia. This includes books for many reading levels and ages.	1
Language	Children's English Encyclopedias	Big children's books with many stories and other types of English writing. A great teaching resource, or for casual reading.	1
Socials	History	Socials books about history. There are picture books, novels and textbooks in this section. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	2
Socials	Geography	Socials books about geography. There are picture books, novels and textbooks in this section. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	2
Socials	IGCSE History	IGCSE books about history.	1
Socials	IGCSE Geography	IGCSE level books about geography.	1
Science	Science (Environment, Weather, Rocks & Minerals, Light & Sound, the Human Body, Magnets, Pulleys & Levers, Forces, Other Science)	Books about Environment, Weather, Rocks & Minerals, Light & Sound, the Human Body, Magnets, Pulleys & Levers, Forces, Other Science. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	1
Science	Science (Earth, Habitats, Animals, Plants, Space, Water, General Science) (Tall Books)	Tall-sized books that are about Earth, Habitats, Animals, Plants, Space, Water, General Science. There are picture books, informational books and textbooks in this section. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	1
Science	Science (Earth, Habitats, Animals, Plants, Space, Water, General Science) (Short Books)	Short-sized books that are about Earth, Habitats, Animals, Plants, Space, Water, General Science. There are picture books, informational books and textbooks in this section. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	1

Science	Environmental Conservation & Climate change	Books about the environment and environmental issues like climate change. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	1
Science	IGCSE Physics, Chemistry, Biology	IGCSE books about Physics, Chemistry, and Biology	1
Art	Drawing and Making Art books	Books that show you how to make art or how to draw.	1
Art	Art and Art History	Informational books about art and the history of art.	1
Business	IGCSE Business, Accounting, Marketing, and Economics	IGCSE books about Business, Accounting, Marketing, and Economics.	1
Business	Business	Books about business, finance, marketing, accounting and economics.	2
General Information	Fact and Record books	These books list interesting facts or records.	1
General Information	General Information books	These books have information about many topics or lots of information about one specific topic. Includes books for many reading levels and ages.	2
General Information	IGCSE Test Papers	Old IGCSE Test Papers	1
Sports and Gaming	Sports and Gaming	Includes books about sports or gaming. Here, find books about your favourite football player or Minecraft.	1
Religion and Spirituality	Religion and Spirituality	Books about religions, including religious texts. Has books about religion for all ages, including for children.	1
Health and Wellness	Self-Improvement	Books about improving yourself.	1
Health and Wellness	Wellness, beauty, and cooking	Books about wellness, beauty and cooking.	1
General Information	Biographies	A biography is a detailed, non-fiction account of a person's life written by someone else. Biographies explore a	1

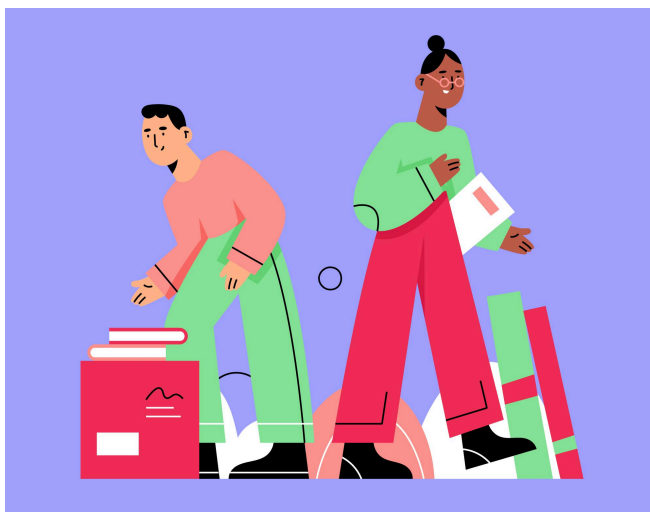
		person's experiences, personality, and achievements. They are often about famous or important people. Biographies written by a person about themselves are also in this section. These are called autobiographies.	
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FOR STUDENT LIBRARY HELPERS



The following sections are for student library helpers to read and use

Student Library Helper Expectations

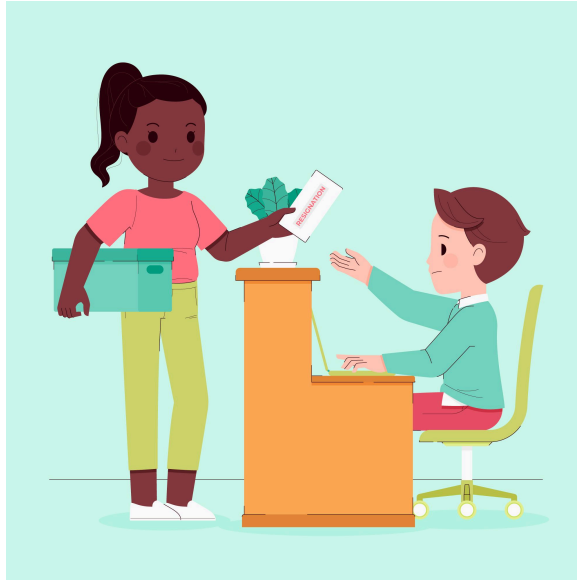


So you want to be a library volunteer... first of all, thank you for your interest! Our library is a more organized and welcoming space with your help. Continue reading for more information about being a library helper.

Expectations for library helpers:

- Arrive on time
- Bring your positive energy and ideas to the library
- Hold yourself and others accountable for following the library rules
- Treat yourself, the other library helpers, and the teachers, with respect
- Understand that if you do not follow the rules and expectations, you will be removed from the helper team.

The Responsibilities of a Library Helper



The responsibilities of a library helper include:

- Be kind, responsible, and respectful
- Keep the library clean
- Help remind students of library rules
- Teach other students the library routines
- Help young students sign out books
- Help students find books that match their interests and reading level

Library Helper Task Checklist

*Please wear a Library Helper Tag/Lanyard during your Library Shift.

Everyday tasks:

- ☐ Check if any books have been returned to the bin, but the student forgot to sign them back in on the list. If yes, add the sign-in dates for these books to the sign in/out sheet so that the student does not get identified as having a missing book.
- ☐ Make sure books are in the correct spots in the library. Put books that are in the incorrect place, back in the correct place. Make sure the tape is facing out and is near the bottom of the shelf. The book spines should be out.
- ☐ Add tape and letter identifiers to new books or books that have lost the tape. If you are unsure what category a book is, do not label it.
- ☐ Check the book hospital. Fix broken books. Tell the teacher in the office about the books that are not able to be fixed and put these in the trash.
- ☐ Make sure there are extra blank book sign-in/sign-out papers on the clipboard
- ☐ Neaten the books on the shelves. Organize them by label and by size, if you have time.
- ☐ Put any damaged books into the book hospital. This could include books that are ripped, have broken spines, or have writing in the books.

Beginning of the week (Monday/Tuesday) only tasks:

- ☐ Check the sign-in/sign-out sheet. Note any students who have not returned their book for more than 2 WEEKS and fill out a yellow Overdue book form. Give the form to the teacher in the office.
- ☐ Plan new library or bulletin board decorations. Write out a plan and share it with the person working in the office. Wait for management to approve your plan. This may take time.

End of the week (Thursday/Friday) only tasks:

- ☐ Help with the drop-in library sessions. Help students get books for the weekend. Encourage young students to bring their book back on Monday.

Additional tasks if everything else has been complete:

- ☐ Decorate the library bulletin board
- ☐ Tidy the library
- ☐ Fix broken books with tape from the office
- ☐ Read a new book! See what we have in the library
- ☐ Teach a friend how the library works.
- ☐ Come up with a new idea for the library!

Tips for Library Helpers:

- Try your best to keep the blue bins empty at all times
- Even if you cannot find the person who returned the book on the list, please put the book back on the shelf

FOR THE SENIOR LIBRARY HELPER



This section is for senior library helpers to read and use

Senior Library Helper Information



This section will talk about:

1. The role of the senior library helper
2. What to do when you first become a Senior Library helper
3. The regular (daily) tasks of the Senior Library Helper
4. The weekly tasks of the Senior Library Helper
5. The occasional tasks of the Senior Library Helper
6. What to do when there are new books to put in the library
7. How to skim books

A Note from Teacher Gwen:

Thank you for helping to keep the MSRI main school library alive! Libraries are very important hubs of community, they give students leadership opportunities, and they work to get our students excited about reading. Getting students interested in reading is an important part of increasing literacy, creativity and critical thinking skills. All of these things contribute to doing well in school and being a good employee in the future.

The role of the senior library helper is to....

- Help other students
- Help keep the library clean
- Share about the library with other students
- Be responsible for the Student Library Helpers
- Communicate with the office and management about the library

When you first become a Senior Library helper:

- ☐ **Familiarize yourself with the library.** Look through and see what we have. Take a book out of the library to understand how, and to try a book from our library.
- ☐ **Spend time with the library helpers.**
- ☐ **Join the Whatsapp group.**

Regular (daily) tasks:

Regular tasks are done every day. If you cannot complete these tasks daily, try to complete them regularly

- ☐ **Tidy the library.** Anytime you go into the library, check that it is neat. Are books in their place? Are any books backwards or upside down? Is the room clean?
- ☐ **Empty the return bins.** Put books back on the shelves in their places.
- ☐ **Check in with the teacher in the office.** Make sure they know the library schedule and that they reach out to students with overdue books

each week. Ask them if they have gotten the yellow forms and sent out messages about them.

Weekly tasks

Weekly tasks are done every week, or when it is needed.

- ☐ **Attend Library group meetings (twice a week).** Run the meeting. Ask if anyone has questions. Once the meeting is complete, give out tasks for the helpers to do (organize certain books, label, fill out yellow forms, etc.)
- ☐ **Organize book shelves.**
- ☐ **Put new books on display.**
- ☐ **Update the library helper schedule.** Who will help when? Let the students know.

Occasional tasks

Occasional tasks are done every once in a while, as needed, or if you need something to do.

- ☐ **Create a list/poster of book suggestions.** You can get library helpers to help with this. The idea is, people can find books about their interests, or they can learn more about specific books we have. Include books from many genres
- ☐ **If a student under 16 requests to read a RED book, check the book and see if it is appropriate for them.** Most importantly for inappropriate language or scenes. Also check to see if the student understands the words if the language is complex. You are able to give permission. If you are unsure at all, ask Miss Neda. If you are unsure you can also be cautious and say no, reminding the student of the over 16 rule. There are some books that are not inappropriate, they just include mature subject matters that need a more mature reader.
- ☐ **Make posters to put around the school.** You can encourage students to visit the library, share book facts, or share about books we have in our library.

- ☐ **Check if you have extra sign-in/sign-out sheets or yellow slips.** If you are running low, ask Management to print out more sign-in/sign-out sheets or yellow slips. Try to do this in advance of running out!
- ☐ **Decorate the library with helpful and colourful signs and posters.** Ask management before putting up decorations. Make them library themed.

When new books arrive to the library:

This is an exciting time! Because many of our books are donated, you must follow the check-list of things to do.

1. **Check that the books are not damaged.** This includes drawing or writing in the books, ripped pages, missing pages, broken book spines, damage from the book being very old,
2. **Skim each book as it arrives at the library.** This is very important. Find out 3 things.
 - 1) **Is this book appropriate and relevant to MSRI?** For example, the book may have inappropriate topics for a school library, or may be about something that students or staff of MSRI would not read.
 - 2) **What age/reading level is this book for?** Look at the book labelling manual to find out what colour tape it needs to be labelled with.
 - 3) **What genre or topic is the book?** Skip this step for **YELLOW**, **BLUE**, or **YELLOW AND RED** books. Do your best to use clues on and in the book to find the **genre** out yourself. Look at the **cover**, back of the book, and flip through a few pages. For example, if a book says things about pirates, fairies, or dragons, it is probably a

fantasy book. If you do not know, Google the book title, then “**genre**”. You can do the same thing for age rating

3. **Put the correct colored tape on the book if it is fiction and write a letter code on the tape.** Go to page 16 to find out more information about this.
4. **Find out where the book will go in the library.** Look for shelf labels. Ask yourself, “is there space for this book?” You may need to reorganize and move books around on the shelves. The MSRI library is small, so it can be difficult to find a space for everything. Also, note that you can put two rows of books on one shelf. However, this second row blocks the books behind it, and gets messier faster.
5. **Decide if you want to display the book.** Is it new and exciting? If yes, put it on a book stand and put it on display so other students can see it.



Skimming Books



What does it mean to skim a book?

Skimming is a verb (to skim). Skimming is a strategic, selective reading method where you focus on the main ideas of a text. When skimming, you purposefully focus on the main points of the book including the introduction, first and last sentences of paragraphs, and bold words. You skip text that provides details, stories, data, or other elaboration.

Instead of closely reading every word. By doing this, you can find the main ideas of the **author**'s message and the book type, without taking too much time.

Why do we skim books?

- To see if a book is a good fit (for you or someone you are helping)
 - Is it interesting?
 - Is it too difficult? Is it too easy?
 - Do you want to read it?
- To understand the reading level of a book
- To understand or check the content of a book
 - This could include checking if a book is appropriate for our library, or for a specific student

How to skim a book:

1. Look at the cover for clues.

- Is the book **fiction** or **non-fiction**?
- What is the book about?
- What is the **genre** or subject of the book?
- What age group is this book for?
Is there no age group?



2. Read the summary at the back of the book or inside the front cover (if it is a hardcover book)

- What is the book about? What age is this book for?

3. Turn to a random page and look at the writing

- Tip: If you are reading a book to see if it has violence or romance, flip to around half way or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the book.
- **Skim** for words that may indicate the book is not appropriate for younger reads
- See words that are complicated that you do not understand? The book may be wordy or in a style of English that is difficult to understand. This book may need to be marked as adult level **(RED)**

4. Look for other stickers or tape

- Is there another label on the book that says the genre or age?
Some of our donated books are already labeled from a past library and already have this information.

TEACHER/STAFF LIBRARY MANUAL

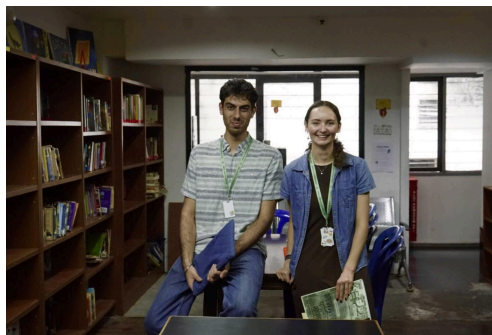


The following sections are for teachers/staff to read and use

MSRI Sahabat School Library Labelling System

This is an original labelling system designed by MSRI Intern Gwen in 2025. The focus was on organizing the fiction books in the library so that they were easy to find and reshelve based on reading level, age, and interest. The primary goal of this project is to create a simple and sustainable organization system for the MSRI Sahabat library that allow for students to easily find books that match their reading level/interest, and requires little staff intervention. The hope is that this system can be maintained by student volunteers past the time of the 2025 interns. This includes the completion of tasks like labelling new book donations, re-labelling books, repairing or retiring broken books, shelving returns, and creating new categories (if needed). The library program will involve students in the up-keep of the school, giving them opportunities to demonstrate their responsibility and leadership.

Overall, the new library labelling system aims to make reading more accessible and enjoyable for students and teachers. It is a step towards moving students away from their devices, making them more engaged in learning, and an active part of the school community.



Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for all you do!

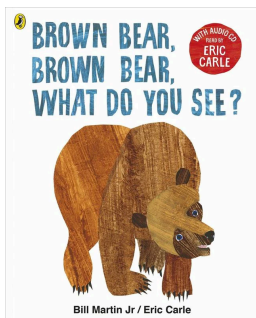
- **Teacher Gwen**

Fiction vs Non-Fiction

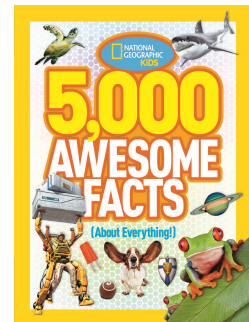
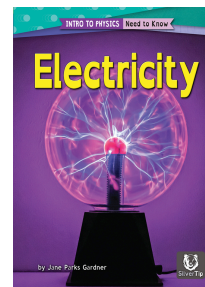
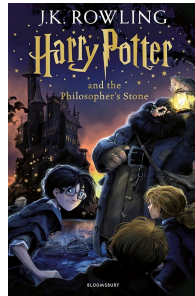
In our library, fiction and non-fiction books are not shelved together (for the most part). At the time of writing this, non-fiction books are on the office side of the library, and fiction books are on the other side of the library.

Fiction books- Made-up stories from the imagination, like novels, fairy tales, and mysteries. 📖 Fiction = pretend

Non-fiction books- Based on real facts, people, and events, like biographies, history books, and how-to guides. 📘 Non-fiction = real



Examples of Fiction Books



Examples of Non-Fiction Books

Fiction Book Labels Guide: Reading Level/Age for Teachers

Reading levels

*Please note, there is a student guide for Age/Reading Levels on page 18.



What is a reading level?

A reading level indicates the difficulty of a book. Reading levels help us choose the right book for our reading ability to help us improve our reading skills.

They help students and teachers choose books that are "just right"-- books that are not too easy and not too difficult.

How can I tell what level a book is?

Look at the tape!! The colour of tape on the bottom of a book's spine (back) shows the age or reading level for each book.

The tape could be:

YELLOW, **RED AND YELLOW**, **BLUE**, **SILVER/GREY**, **GREEN**, or **RED** colors.

Is this how all the books in the library are organized?

No, this system is for **fiction** books only. **Non-fiction** books are not organized by age, they are organized by subjects/topics.

Levels:

Early readers	Intermediate readers	Children's picture books	Middle-grade books	Young adult books	Adult books
YELLOW	BLUE	RED AND YELLOW	SILVER/GREY	GREEN	RED
(age 4-8)	(age 7-12)	/	(age 8-14)	(12+)	(16+)
Books for beginning English readers to read on their own or with some help. Very simple sentences with few words. Big font. Short and simple stories.	Books for young readers to read on their own or with some help. Short to medium-sized sentences with familiar words. Medium-sized font. Short to medium length stories. More challenging than yellow.	Stories for young children, but they may need the help of a more advanced English reader (Grey level or higher). Great books for teachers to read to students in nursery or KG to Grade 4.	For advanced readers. Standard book font. Medium to long book length. Appropriate and enjoyable for all ages. Great for teachers to read aloud or for students to practice their reading.	Books for teenagers or adults. Teen-age characters and topics. Mature themes. Normal size font and medium to long book length. These books are rated 12 and older by the publishing company.	Books for older readers. These books are marked as appropriate for adults based on themes and content in the books. While some books in this section have more mature themes only appropriate for adults, others are marked RED because of complex language and could be appropriate. Under 16 and want to read a RED? Check with a teacher.
Does not have genres	Does not have genres	Does not have genres	Has genres	Has genres	Has genres

YELLOW: Early Readers (age 4-8)

Books for beginning English readers to read on their own or with some help. Simple sentences and stories. Big font. Test the book with the student to see if it is the right level for them.

RED AND YELLOW: Children's Picture Books

Storybooks for children that young children will need the help of a more advanced English reader (parent, Sibling, Teacher etc.,) to read.

Intermediate readers (BLUE) may also be able to read these books alone.

BLUE: Intermediate Readers (age 6-10)

For readers who are increasingly confident, but may still need some help. Medium-sized font, and short to medium length books. If YELLOW is too easy, blue may be right for you.

SILVER/GREY: Middle-grade Books (age 8-14)

Books that are written specifically for children aged 8 to 14 (usually grade 3 to grade 8), but they are good and appropriate stories for all ages. These books are great for advanced readers to read alone or for teachers to read as read-aloud to their classes. This level is organized by genre, so look at the letters on the tape.

GREEN: Young Adult Books (12+)

Books for teenagers, but are great reads for adults as well. Must be 12 or older to read. Themes are more mature than middle grade fiction books such as violence. The main characters in the books are often teen-age. This level is organized by genre, so look at the letters on the tape.

RED: Adult Books: (16+)

Books for older readers. Must be 16 or older to read. This includes books with more complex language such as literary fiction classics, and books with topics that are only appropriate for adults. This level is organized by genre, so look at the letters on the tape.

Age restrictions and suggestions:

GREEN (12+) and RED (16+) are the only levels with strict age ratings based on their content. The other levels are based on general reading levels at these ages.

If students are under these ages (12 or 16) and want to read a book that is GREEN or RED, they must ask a teacher or school staff. If you are the teacher/staff being asked, make sure to **skim** the book and look up its age rating online.

For students under 12 years old, all YELLOW, RED AND YELLOW, BLUE, SILVER/GREY should be appropriate for them. However, which levels a student can read will depend on their reading level.

Other ages listed are suggestions based on standard reading criteria for first language English Speakers. Students will be at different levels depending on their English proficiency that may not correspond with their age. For example, an older student who has a lower English level may read YELLOW or BLUE books.

From youngest age to oldest:

YELLOW, RED AND YELLOW, BLUE, SILVER/GREY, GREEN, RED.

A note on age guidelines for teachers:

The ages listed are only guidelines. You can use your judgement and knowledge of your students to help decide what level they should be at. Young Adult (12+) and Adult (16+) age ratings are more strict, but still up to

you to decide as an adult what maturity level your student has and what you think they should be reading.

If you are unsure, you can google the age rating of a book to see what age the Publisher has rated the book for, and why. For example you could search “book name age rating”.

Finding a student's reading level:

When trying to find a student's reading level, test out a book from each level, starting at **YELLOW**. If it is too easy, go to the next colour up. You can skip the **RED AND YELLOW** (children's **picture books**) level if you want and go to **SILVER/GREY**.

From easiest to most difficult:

YELLOW, **BLUE**, **RED AND YELLOW**, **SILVER/GREY**, **GREEN**, **RED**.

A note on **RED AND YELLOW** books (Children's picture books).

Children's picture books are made for children to enjoy, but include writing or language that is difficult for young children to read. They are often bigger books and have lots of pictures. Kids may look at these books alone, but lower level readers (**YELLOW** and maybe **BLUE**) will need help reading

Non-Fiction Books

Non-fiction books are books based on real facts, people, and events, like biographies, history books, and how-to guides. They are organized on shelves by **subject**.

Non-fiction books in our library currently do not have any visual identifying system for look and see where the books belong, like the tape and letter codes for **fiction books** do.

To **reshelve** non-fiction books, look at the book and identify what **subject** it is. Find the shelf label that matches, and put it back on the shelf where it belongs.

If you do not know where a book belongs, put in the blue return bin for someone else to **reshelve**.

Non-fiction books are not separated by age. The content in the books is appropriate for all ages. However, some books are made for older audiences or more skilled readers.

There are books for **lower-grade** and **middle-grade** students on these shelves. These books have more pictures, bigger fonts and cover concepts that are in the curriculum for younger students.

There are also books for IGCSE students on these shelves. They are mostly textbooks. These books are labelled "IGCSE"

Some non-fiction books are less informational (like textbooks or factbooks) and are more story-like. They can be true stories like **biographies**, or advice books. Some of these books had red tape on them before, and many of them have no tape. They should not have tape like the fiction books.

Skimming Books

What does it mean to skim a book?

Skimming is a verb (to skim).

Skimming is a strategic, selective reading method where you focus on the main ideas of a text. When skimming, you purposefully focus on the main points of the book including the introduction, first and last sentences of paragraphs, and bold words. You skip text that provides details, stories, data, or other elaboration. Instead of closely reading every word.

By doing this, you can find the main ideas of the **author's** message and the book type, without taking too much time.

Why do we skim books?

- To see if a book is a good fit (for you or someone you are helping)
 - Is it interesting?
 - Is it too difficult? Is it too easy?
 - Do you want to read it?
- To understand the reading level of a book
- To understand or check the content of a book
 - This could include checking if a book is appropriate for our library, or for a specific student

How to skim a book:

1. Look at the cover for clues.

- Is the book **fiction** or **non-fiction**?
- What is the book about?
- What is the **genre** or subject of the book?
- What age group is this book for? Is there no age group?

2. Read the summary at the back of the book or inside the front cover (if it is a hardcover book)

- What is the book about? What age is this book for?

3. Turn to a random page and look at the writing

- Tip: If you are reading a book to see if it has violence or romance, flip to around half way or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the book.
- **Skim** for words that may indicate the book is not appropriate for younger reads
- See words that are complicated that you do not understand? The book may be wordy or in a style of English that is difficult to understand. This book may need to be marked as adult level **(RED)**

4. Look for other stickers or tape

- Is there another label on the book that says the genre or age? Some of our donated books are already labeled from a past library and already have this information.

Teacher's Room Resources:



Teachers' resources can be found in the teachers room, on the shelves. There are a variety of great resources teachers can use for ideas for lessons, classroom management, or activities. There are also activity books for passing time or ideas for fun activities to add to your lessons.

Examples of the Types of Books in the Teachers Room:

- Middle-grade math textbooks (Everyday Mathematics & Math Dictionaries)
- Lower-grade & middle-grade math textbooks
- Science textbooks
- Activity books and classroom management books
- English textbooks
- English teacher resources
- Math teacher resources

If You are Helping Put New Books in the library

When new books arrive to the library:

This is an exciting time! Because many of our books are donated, we must follow the check-list of things to do.

1. **Check that the books are not damaged.** This includes drawing or writing in the books, ripped pages, missing pages, broken book spines, damage from the book being very old,
2. **Skim each book as it arrives at the library.** This is very important. Find out 3 things.
 - 1) **Is this book appropriate and relevant to MSRI?** For example, the book may have inappropriate topics for a school library, or may be about something that students or staff of MSRI would not read. If not, do not keep.
 - 2) **What age/reading level is this book for?** Look at the book labelling section to find out what colour tape it needs to be labelled with.
 - 3) **What genre or topic is the book?** Skip this step for **YELLOW**, **BLUE**, or **YELLOW AND RED** books. Do your best to use clues on and in the book to find the genre out yourself. Look at the **cover**, back of the book, and flip through a few pages. For example, if a book says things about pirates, fairies, or dragons, it is probably a fantasy book. If you do not know, Google the book title, then “**genre**”. You can do the same thing for age rating

3. **Put the correct colored tape on the book if it is fiction and write a letter code on the tape.** Go to page 16 to find out more information about this.
4. **Find out where the book will go in the library.** Look for shelf labels. Ask yourself, is there space for this book? You may need to reorganize and move books around on the shelves. The MSRI library is small, so it can be difficult to find a space for everything. Also, note that you can put two rows of books on one shelf. However, this second row blocks the books behind it, and gets messier faster.
5. **Decide if you want to display the book.** Is it new and exciting? If yes, put it on a book stand and put it on display so students can see.