

MA-thesis English: education and communication

Literature and language: an impossible combination?

How to encourage lower secondary school students' development of literary skills and language skills concurrently.



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Background

In my thesis I want to focus on Witte's level indications 1 and 2. I will try to find out how a student can be granted a gradual development and progress in complexity of novels beginning from level 1. The situation at many schools is that in lower secondary school books are only read for the sake of reading skills and they are not dealt with within the literary framework, in other words: CEF rather than Witte. In the early stages of literary knowledge and language skills it is hard to attune these two. Adapted editions of literary works could form a nice bridge and be part of the solution to the problem. Reading English literature in Dutch would also make literature more accessible. The question is why teachers want their students to read English literature, for language training, literary teaching or for both purposes. I have composed a list of 25 books for both levels 1 and 2 of Witte, also taking into account CEF which I will present to teachers (and students) and collect their views on the list.

Research question: What should be the role of English reading books in teaching English (literature) when stimulating a gradual development of literature experience, while improving students' language skills?

Hypothesis: A combination of Witte's level indications 1 and 2 with CEF levels leads to a better arrangement of language training and literature education.

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Introduction

Literature has been a subject taught in Dutch schools for many decades. In the 19th century people saw the need of students being educated through the literary heritage of the culture (Johannes in Dorleijn & Van Rees, 39-68). This came from an increasing consciousness of the glory of the nation's cultural heritage and history. Literature was taught to distinguish Dutch culture from other cultures. Furthermore, exposure to great literary works would allow appreciation for literature grow in the student (Bolscher et al, 162). Initially, literature teaching did not include other cultures apart from the classical. In 1863 and 1876 the Education Acts introduced teaching of literature in modern languages as a separate discipline in certain school types. From then on it became obligatory to teach French, English and German (De Melker, 352). This teaching did not just involve the language, but also literature and the skills that go with discussing and dealing with literature in class.

Even today the use of literature teaching is widely acknowledged and, which is demonstrated by the exam requirements for HAVO¹ and VWO² ('Examenprogramma MVT'). Literature is part of the knowledge that is expected from students who finish secondary school at HAVO or VWO-level. The examination subjects do not apply to Dutch only but foreign languages also have a domain devoted to literature. A comparison between Dutch and other modern languages shows that the goals are very similar (Bolscher et al, 165).

Both for Dutch and for other modern languages the aims have been clearly defined. Although the *tweede fase* has limited the freedom of teaching literature considerably (162), to a degree it is still up to the schools how to make the students reach these goals. This is true in terms of emphasis on the relationship between knowledge and skills, in other words: regarding literature teaching, some teachers prefer culture transfer and others are focused on the personal development of the student (167). However, while the *tweede fase* is clear about what the student should be able to do and know, the lower secondary school (years 1-3) allows the schools far more freedom to teach whatever they like (10). Moreover, lower school students do not have to spend any time on foreign literature in its original form, such as unabridged and unaltered prose or poetry. The Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development's (SLO) main aims does not include any literature teaching ('SLO, kerndoelen'). In lower school the emphasis is more on language skills, also to prepare the

¹ Higher general secondary education, five years course.

² Pre-university, six years course.

pupils for reading literature in a foreign language later on in their school career. As Witte shows, students are sometimes not prepared in terms of literary development to cope with novels they have to read in upper school (from year 4 onward) (Witte, 444). Seeing that the goals for upper school students are the same for Dutch and for modern foreign languages and the core aims do not require foreign language fiction reading, the problem that Witte mentions applies not only to Dutch, but at least as much to foreign language education. Therefore, I would, as Witte does for Dutch (454), advocate a gradual development in literary reading by providing a list of literature that is accessible to students whose language skills have not developed so much yet.

The tool for measuring a certain language level is the Common European Framework. This framework distinguishes different levels in language skills ranging from A1 to C2, serving as an international framework to which language learners from all European countries can refer (CEF). For literature teaching it is not sufficient to focus just on this CEF to come to a proper choice of books for students. Students would have to read children's stories which are not fit for them content-wise. On the other hand, when providing students with a low level of language skills with books that are suitable for them content-wise, they would not be able to cope with the language level of the book. Theo Witte has designed a tool for level indication of Dutch literature (560-562). It includes both content and language level and many other factors. This is a useful help in finding the right books for language learners of a certain age. Yet, even for Dutch literature it is not always easy and can be unambiguous where to categorize which novel since some criteria clash with others. For a foreign language this is even harder as the language skills and content level hardly ever fit one and the same "Witte level".

Coming back to the plea for a gradual development and having looked at CEF and Witte, the aim of the thesis can now be defined. It wants to focus on Witte levels 1 and 2 to find out how a student can be granted a gradual development and progress in complexity of novels beginning from the lowest levels. Many lower schools only aim for developing reading skills when they make their students read books. They do not take into account any literary framework, in other words: CEF without Witte. In the early stages of literary knowledge and language skills of a student it is hard to attune these two. This thesis will therefore try to come up with possible solutions to solve this problem as much as possible. There are a few solutions that are not ideal, but they meet the problems in some ways. Adapted editions of literary works, for instance, could form a good bridge and be part of the solution to the problem; reading English literature in Dutch would also make literature more

accessible to the student; or there could be a compromise on literary level of titles. These possible solutions all have their disadvantages though, which is why they will be discussed at some length. Furthermore, the question is why teachers want their students to read English literature, for language training, literary teaching or for both purposes. The emphasis of the thesis will be on the collection of a list of 25 books for both levels 1 and 2 of Witte, also taking into account CEF. In the end I will present to teachers and students the list I made and collect their views on it.

The main question that will keep coming back throughout this thesis is: what should be the role of English reading books in teaching English (literature) when stimulating a gradual development of literature experience, while improving students' language skills? The question implies that there is a way in which literature can play a role to serve literature experience and language skills. This may turn out to be too ambitious, however. Regarding the two aims that are mentioned here: literature experience or literary development and improving language skills, it can be added that the aim is to serve them both, but that it is hardly possible to serve them evenly. Bearing all the nuances in mind, the hypothesis will be as follows: a combination of Witte's level indications 1 and 2 with CEF levels leads to a better arrangement of language training and literature education. A reading list of about 25 titles will help both teachers and students to make a well-balanced choice from the range of titles that is available. Hence, the core of this thesis is the reading lists and putting these together will prove how and to what extent Witte and CEF can be combined. It is to be expected that it will prove difficult to give a definite solution for every title as language level and content level are sometimes too far apart to be given an exact label.

The main question will be answered step by step and in various ways. The first part will provide a theoretical framework that serves as the basis for this research. The question will be raised why English literature should be taught at all (in lower school). Having answered that we can begin to discuss to what extent and in what way English literature teaching is helpful to students. The following section will describe current practice at schools regarding literature teaching, how it sometimes clashes with theoretical schemes and methods and what problems teachers and students encounter. That is where the levels of Witte and the Common European Framework come in. Both the concepts of Witte and CEF will be explained briefly after which they will be compared with regard to their relevance for literature teaching in the lower forms and composing reading lists for Witte's levels 1 and 2. Possible solutions for reading literature in lower school will be discussed next. Secondary literature will be consulted in order to draw up a set of criteria for selecting books suitable for

reading lists. These points will serve as criteria to decide whether a title should be added or not. The next chapter then describes certain findings while gathering every relevant detail of a book, followed by the difficulties that were encountered. The list will then be presented to teachers and students and they will be asked for their opinions by means of a questionnaire. The final chapters will discuss the results from the questionnaire.

1. Literature in the classroom

The question could be raised: what is the importance of teaching English literature at all? Is it not sufficient for teachers to be aware of the fact that certain exam goals require some knowledge from the student and that is why some literature has to be taught? If teachers were only concerned about the requirements, like students are about their tests, it is a waste of time to discuss a matter like reading levels. Therefore, before focussing on our field of research, we need to know why it is important and helpful to incorporate literature in the English lessons.

Collie and Slater have written a resource book of ideas and activities for literature in the classroom and they discuss similar questions. In the chapter on aims and objectives they list a few reasons why a language teacher should use literary texts in class. Some do not apply to foreign literature only. A general reason is because “literature offers a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material which is ‘important’ in the sense that it says something about fundamental human issues”, even in our day and age. It is also authentic material, “genuine and undistorted” (Collie & Slater, 3). Literature can offer opportunities to pass on certain values the teacher believes in to have a profitable exchange of ideas about essential matters in life, which deepens common lesson practice. Collie and Slater continue with listing reasons for teaching literature in foreign languages. They argue that it opens up the world of the culture of the language that is being learned (4). The culture behind a foreign language does not need to be taught by means of dry facts from a workbook, but literature contains starting points for discussions of cultural and historical aspects. Although the language in literary works is often not entirely like the vocabulary learners need for communication, language enrichment is the third reason being mentioned. It enhances students’ reading skills as they “gain familiarity with many features of the written language” and it serves to “broaden their writing skills” (5). This only applies to students who have studied the language for a considerable time and have acquired the basic skills of a language. Otherwise they would not be able to analyse it in the way the authors aim at. When students read literature they like, they become involved in the story and the language becomes transparent. This way the student “is drawn into the book” and feels close to what happens in the book, which is beneficial because the student starts to feel “that he or she is taking possession of a previously unknown territory” (6). This should be the aim of every teacher.

Once a student has come to this point, he or she only needs encouragement and guidance to continue on the endless road of literature.

Literature has become a wide concept in which much that is readable is categorised. It will not be redundant, therefore, to narrow this notion a little in order to have a clearer idea of what it means in the context of literature teaching and reading lists. The aim is not only to help students improve their reading skills, but also to prepare them for literary works that they will have to read in upper school. Ideally, the texts they read contain some literary themes which can be discussed in class or worked out in an assignment. One way to be sure these works have those elements, is to limit the list of books to classics. Holly Koelling has written an article on classics and argues that they are also to be found outside the canon. She defines classics as follows:

Any work of literature (fiction and nonfiction, prose and verse) from times long past to the recent past that is acknowledged with some consensus, through the test of time, through literary and/or social review, or through the award-winning status of the work or its author, to be of exemplary merit for: its form or style, its original or unique expression of enduring or universal concepts, or its unique reflection of the conditions of its people and times. (Koelling, 37)

It is a challenge for teachers to bring together students and the right sort of classics “based on developmental stages and interests, reading levels (...)” (37), which leads to the questions to be answered throughout this thesis.

All reasons mentioned above only apply when students read literary works that are fit for them. Students will not be excited by a book either below or above their level, which brings us to some relevant questions. How do students arrive at the stage at which they start to enjoy reading and experience the depths of (foreign) literature? And: how can a teacher give guidance to the student in offering him or her the right books at the right moment? These and more questions will be dealt with in the course of this thesis.

2. Current situation

The reasons for using literature in the classroom listed in the last chapter sound good in theory, but the question remains what happens at schools in practice. As Witte describes in his book *Het oog van de meester* students in the upper school usually start at various levels. A group of HAVO-students can be divided into levels 1 to 3 (331-332) which means that the students at level 1, for instance, will have difficulty adapting to the high level of literature that is expected from them in upper school. In many schools students start reading literature at Witte levels 3 or 4 while they have never read anything below. “Vooraf voor de leerlingen van niveau 1 – ruim 40% van de onderzochte groep – was deze overgang te groot. De doorstroming naar niveau 4 (interpreterend lezen) verliep op alle scholen moeizaam” (444-445). Witte explains that the weak students will catch up over the years, but students that already were at the right level do not get challenged as much as they should. “Een patroon in de ontwikkeling van de groepen is dat de leerlingen met een betrekkelijk zwakke startpositie (...) onevenredig meer winst boeken dan de groep met een sterke startpositie (...)” (441). Witte also describes the reasons for this false start. “Approximately half the students who start class four are actually behind in their literary education because they read little in lower secondary school and are not yet able to understand simple literature for adults” (536). There is a problem then in the basic skills which some students have and some have not acquired. No wonder Witte mentions the learning continuum in his paragraph on further research (474). According to Witte his levels should be worked out further for primary education and academic studies. In contrast to what the summary suggests,³ he does not mention lower secondary school, which should be mentioned too, as Witte himself points out somewhere else that research has shown that in lower school children begin to lose their interest in books (326). The same problem is observed by Bolscher et al. They plead for the introduction and assessment of youth- and adolescence literature to bridge the gap between lower and upper school (524).

So much for some conclusions and recommendations concerning the current problems in literary education. The main purpose of Witte’s research, however, is to develop “a teaching instrument that teachers can use to best encourage the literary development of students” (524). He concludes that five principles apply for this development-based teaching of literature: 1) different levels, 2) strong foundations, 3) active exploration, 4) social

³ “For the rest, it is self-evident that the system of developmental levels should be extended to include primary education, lower secondary education and the academic teaching of literature.” Witte, 542.

interaction, 5) pleasure experience (88). This thesis takes its start from the first principle: the definition of different levels, and focuses on strong foundations being developed in lower school from which reading pleasure will hopefully develop.

Witte has written his study from the perspective of Dutch literature. His reading lists are based on the student's competence, but not so much as far as language skills are concerned. He realises that himself, as he states under recommendations for further research: "Ook de parameter T (taal) is van belang. Welke factoren spelen een rol bij het lezen van literaire teksten in een vreemde taal? Indien de literaire ontwikkeling bij de vreemde talen synchroon verloopt met de literaire ontwikkeling in de moedertaal, kan men het instrument ook gebruiken bij het vreemde talenonderwijs" (470). Especially for the first levels of Witte the literary level will not correspond with the language level. Students who have just started learning a language are often used to reading Dutch books that require a fairly high level of literary competence. A similar problem occurs in foreign language education in a broader sense, but this thesis will concentrate on secondary school students.

Witte concludes from several studies on literary socialisation that children of 12 – 15 often find themselves in a reading crisis at a certain point, caused by numerous new physical, psychological and literary factors. The crisis is not so much that they do not want to read, but they experience that they have come to a certain point where they are not triggered any more by the books they used to read and they are still too young to read books for adults (43). Therefore, it is crucial what sort of books they are offered during this period and how. If they are too much forced to read, they might develop a negative attitude towards books, whereas the other extreme: to give them absolute freedom in what to read, would not keep them motivated either. Van Schooten (2005) believes the solution lies in attention to personal reading experience and reading pleasure (Witte, 43). As we saw earlier on Bolscher et al are of the same opinion. The question is then: what books will keep students motivated and prepare them for literature of a higher level in upper school. It is not sufficient to have a list of titles that could work for them, the books will have to be collected cautiously on the basis of what we know about reading levels and certain criteria will have to be listed that define the right sort of book.

3. Witte and CEF, literature and linguistics

As mentioned before, Witte has developed his theory and the resulting reading levels for Dutch literature, in particular for students who read literature in their mother tongue. When picking level 2 as an example, it appears that for instance “meer genuanceerde, deels onbekende woorden” is mentioned as a characteristic feature of that particular level (560). Applying this system to foreign language education would not work, since the language skills needed to read a book of a certain level will collide with other features, especially where content is concerned. This thesis aspires to answer the question what books are helpful to bridge the gap between language and content and how literature in a foreign language can be taught to students who have a relatively low level of English. In order to come to a well-balanced list the levels as Witte explains them have to be combined with and adapted according to the language proficiency levels defined by the Common European Framework (CEF). Before considering the relation between the two, a brief discussion of the CEF levels and Witte’s reading levels will be needed to obtain a clear view of the contrasts.

The CEF is defined as follows in a 264 pages-long document:

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. (1)

The CEF describes stages of language use for communication and includes four different aspects of language proficiency: reading, writing, listening and speaking. It distinguishes six levels. Basically there are three main levels: A: Basic User, B: Independent User and C: Proficient User. Each level is divided into two branches, 1 and 2. A more detailed discussion of these levels will follow. First of all, it is important to know which levels are relevant when dealing with the stage preceding upper school. SLO, the national assessment centre for curriculum development, is concerned with the realisation of core aims for lower school to guarantee a fluent transition from lower to upper school, where teachers will be confronted with the exam requirements. To offer a guide to teachers to decide where their students should be at the end of their lower school career, SLO has defined and applied the

Framework levels to the years and levels as they are used in secondary education in The Netherlands. The following grid shows which levels should be looked at in particular when discussing these matters. Note that CEF counts with target levels rather than factual levels. The target level is to be read as the level students should be at at the end of lower school.

ERK niveau

Leerstoflijn vmbo-bk, vmbo-kgt⁴, havo/vwo

Table 1

Engels	BB	KB	GT	havo	vwo
luisteren	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2	A2	A2/B1
lezen	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2	A2	A2/B1
gesprekken voeren	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2	A2	A2
spreken	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2	A2	A2
schrijven	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2	A2	A2 (SLO)

Both for listening and reading the CEF levels vary from A1 for the lowest level to A2/B1 for the highest level. Regarding the fact that this thesis focuses on literature, reading is the appropriate skill here and according to this grid the levels A1, A2 and B1 will be relevant for the ultimate reading lists. These levels will be used as criteria to come to a proper selection of titles for the reading lists.

The next step is to find out exactly what these CEF levels mean when it comes to reading. The grid below defines the relevant levels for the reading aspect of CEF.

Table 2

A1	A2	B1
I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts, I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters. (26)

⁴ Lower general secondary education, four years course. Within VMBO there are different streams ranging from BB to GT (from lower level to higher level).

The description of the levels does not mention anything like literature and only seems to refer to technical or personal texts. The complete grid containing the full range of levels shows that B2 mentions literary prose and C1 refers to appreciation of literary texts, which hints at an assumption that literature is at least not a way to improve students' (reading) skills, nor is it a requirement to read literature at the lower stages within CEF. The absence of references to literature also makes it more complicated to find out where to classify which book. The question needs to be answered how literary texts relate to the kind of texts that are mentioned in A1, A2 and B1.

In an article on text complexity Hess & Biggam name a number of factors that determine the complexity of a text: word difficulty and language structure, text structure, discourse style, genre and characteristic features of the text, background knowledge and/or degree of familiarity with content, level of reasoning required, format and layout of text, length of text (2). Without discussing all these factors separately, it becomes clear that literary texts, because of the more abstract and figurative language, are more difficult to understand than technical and personal texts as mentioned in CEF: “[P]opular fiction tends to (a) use less figurative language than literature, (b) be more repetition (sic) of information, and (c) have more conventional language use; therefore demands on the reader of popular fiction are more about basic understanding of explicit messages than on (sic) interpretation of the message” (Hess & Biggam, 2). This explains why CEF makes no mention of literary texts in levels up to and including B1. Hess and Biggam provide a diagram in which the abovementioned factors are described for grades. It would require a study on itself to translate this into our Dutch system. However, many of these factors are taken into consideration by Witte in developing his reading levels of which a brief discussion will follow next.

Several aspects of Theo Witte's research have already been mentioned. The main part of his investigation is an elaborate matrix of six reading levels characterised in terms of kinds of reading: “experiential reading (level 1); identifying reading (level 2); reflective reading (level 3); interpretive reading (level 4); literate reading (level 5); and intellectual reading (level 6)” (Witte, 527). Witte has divided each level into three components: the student as a reader, text and task. The website ‘Lezen voor de lijst’ shows how the levels of Witte correspond with the years and levels in Dutch secondary education. Witte's level 1 is considered insufficient for 4HAVO as a starters' level but level 2 is normal (Lezen voor de lijst). Since the focus of this thesis lies on lower school, parts from the text components of levels 1 and 2 will be quoted here:

1. The books suitable for these students are written in simple, everyday language and are closely linked to the experiences of adolescents in terms of content and characters. The storyline is clear and simple, with exciting or dramatic events succeeding one another at a rapid pace. There are few structural elements, such as thoughts or descriptions, to interrupt the action. (528)
2. The books suitable for these students are written in everyday language, have a simple structure and relate to their experiences. Although the books are written for adults, the main character is usually an adolescent. There is a dramatic storyline in which actions and events succeed one another at a fairly rapid pace. It is not particularly problematical if the tension is interrupted from time to time by thoughts and descriptions. These students prefer a closed ending. (529)

The text component is further specified in the so called validated competence matrix of books. That is to say, each level has its own level descriptions according to a number of competences such as: “familiar with literary language”. The latter competence is then translated for level 1 as “everyday language”, “simply structured, short sentences”, and “redundant, literary language” (560). Comparing this level 1 description to the CEF reading level A1 “I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues”, a certain overlap is suggested in the first part of the sentence, however, the end betrays the context in which the simple sentences appear, which creates a considerable distance between the two. It shows how little words actually say.

Having just explained CEF, Witte and the matters that are involved, the time has come to consider the relation between Witte and CEF. The conflicts and interfaces in Witte and CEF are to be viewed in the light of the relationship of literature versus language proficiency. De Melker discusses these matters in *De Engelse literatuur op school* (1970). He highlights that literature and linguistics are too often regarded as two separate entities. He raises the question why literature education has always been perceived as an autonomous field and not as an elaboration on the reading lesson. De Melker believes that the main cause lies in the fact that younger students are not yet able to understand and analyse literature, moreover “dat alles nog op een leeftijd waarop iedere serieuze vorm van analyse op grote weerstand van de leerlingen zal stuiten” (45). Bogdal & Korte agree that adult literature for students with a restricted competence is like pearls before swine, but they argue that children’s literature advances the reading progress and that students not only at school but in every area of life have to be confronted with literature so as to make them familiar with it (145-146).

CEF and Witte are both important factors when it comes to English literature for lower school students. CEF decides the average maximum reading level students can handle and SLO helps to combine school level and CEF level. Students of the higher levels in lower school should be able to read literature on level A2/B1 by the end of the third year. The explanation of Witte's competence levels has shown that language is also an essential element, together with features like open ending, succession of events etc. It has become clear that CEF and Witte have a certain overlap but as far as the foreign language is concerned, there is a distance between the two. Every book that seems to be a good addition to the list will be a matter of consideration regarding Witte and CEF. However, these are no more than models which can never be applied equally strictly to every book. According to CEF and other studies of reading levels, the reading of literature seems to be no option for students who are below level B2, while others plead for the incorporation of literature in lessons from the very beginning. The following chapters will deal with this ambiguous issue in more depth.

4. Possible solutions

There are several series that have developed adapted famous classic novels to make them accessible even for young readers. *Classic Starts* is one of them. “With *Classic Starts* young readers can experience the wonder of timeless stories from an early age. Abridged for easier reading and carefully rewritten, each classic novel is filled with all the magic and excitement that made the original story a beloved favourite” (The Book Farm, 1). The *Told to the Children* Series of books was published in Great Britain in the early 1900’s. The purpose of the book series was to introduce readers between the ages of 9 and 12 to the best known classic novels of the 19th century (Heritage-History). Clearly, this is a way to make students familiar with world literature. If the edition is simple enough students will be able to read it and obtain a taste of literature, which hopefully will lead to a better appreciation of literature in general at a later stage in their development. Obviously, the literary aspects in adapted versions exclude much if not all of the original literary style. However, students who are at level A1 and A2 will not be able to notice a certain style anyway. This cannot be a reason, therefore, to object to offering students “literature light”. A valid objection that could be made is that students will not read the original version later on, because they already know the story. Only those who find it worth the effort to struggle through the original version will read the same titles again. De Melker discusses the outcome of the question whether teachers offer students adapted classics. Although 112 out of 155 teachers admit doing so, only 20 of them strongly recommend the use of these versions. Several reasons for and against are mentioned, but it would go too far to discuss them here (De Melker, 193). It all boils down to the words used by one of the respondents: “a necessary evil” (194).

Another option to lower the degree of difficulty is to take a few selections from the original version. Students will catch a sense of what the original is like in its full splendour. This option cannot be applied to any work of literature as we are still dealing with students from lower school. However, a book that uses a fairly easy language level but that exceeds the desired length according to the levels of Witte would perfectly lend itself to a measure like this. A big disadvantage is that students are not really into the story if they only read an excerpt. They will not get a sense of the development of characters and other aspects of the book. These are all obvious possible disadvantages but they do not necessarily apply to every book. That is why the teacher has to be careful when considering applying this option.

A third alternative that is often mentioned in the literature on this subject is reading foreign literature in translation. It totally depends on the aim of the teacher if this is a relevant

option. It is an easy way to make the students have an insight in the culture of Britain. For example, *Oliver Twist* is a novel lower school students can easily identify with content-wise and it is a source of information about London in the 19th century. The obvious objection is that they do not practice their English-language reading skills, but another objection is similar to the one mentioned under adapted versions: if they already know the story, they probably will not read the English version again later on.

Having seen the advantages and disadvantages of each option, we can conclude that none of these is ideal for literature education as it has been defined so far. However, they can at least be used in particular cases as a nice addition to the general lesson programme. Teachers will have to decide for themselves which option they think is best for their own students. The problem remains that it is hardly possible to offer lower school students good literature that they can grasp language-wise.

5. Criteria for selecting books for the list

From a long list of possible candidates for levels 1 and 2, a strict selection needs to be made as to which books can be put on the list and which cannot. Different sources mention different criteria, like length, literary style, theme, etc. It cannot be avoided to apply just a limited number of conditions. Certain criteria are taken into account, which are partly derived from Witte and partly from CEF. I have selected a few that I consider the most relevant measure tools and which cover most of the small criteria just mentioned. Throughout the discussion it will become clear why. Successively the following criteria will be discussed: meaningfulness and enjoyableness; content level and language level. For each criterion the relevance with regard to the selection will be explained. Besides all these criteria there is one other thing that needs to be taken into account, namely balance of text, assignment and student. It is not so much a criterion, but it cannot be seen apart from the other factors.

Collie and Slater describe a general criterion which is worth considering before looking at other denominators: “[i]f it is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learners’ linguistic and cultural knowledge” (6). A linguistic and cultural gap has to be bridged, but if the content is exciting enough the reader will consider it worth the effort to read on, thus overcoming linguistic obstacles (7). One could wonder whether meaningful and enjoyable are the right terms to use when it comes to criteria. Let us therefore first look at the relation between the two. According to Collie and Slater meaningfulness is expected to have a positive effect on the reader. The reader will be taken by the content and its meaning and hence enjoy the text, although the linguistic level might be beyond what one would expect of such a person. The condition remains that the language level is “not too much above the students’ normal reading proficiency”. It is claimed that book’s appeal and relevance are even more important than its straightforward and simple language (6). Meaningfulness does not remain a vague term in the discussion of the suitability of literature. As long as aspects of the texts contain elements of unexpected twists or perspectives, the reader will be encouraged to find out the meaning. That is why it is important to choose works with a meaningful content and not only focus on the language level.

In *De Engelse literatuur op school* we encounter a totally different view on this matter. De Melker discusses the outcome of a questionnaire among teachers of English as to which literary books they read with their classes. He draws F. Whitehead into the discussion, the English author of *The Attitude of grammar-school pupils towards some novels commonly*

read in school and he says in relation to the question what determines a positive attitude towards the books being discussed:

Grammar school children of this age prefer novels written in easy language, dealing with themes that are relatively immature emotionally, in which they find it easy to identify themselves with the hero or heroine, and in which the element of wish-fulfilment is comparatively open. The imaginative coherence of the novel has little importance for them. (De Melker, 166)

De Melker admits that the Dutch teachers only mention easy language being a possible solution, but not the other elements. Although one might wonder to what extent the English students who read these novels in their mother-tongue, can be compared to Dutch learners of English, it is likely that people who read books in a foreign language would attach more value to an exciting content than those who have no language barrier at all. It is not necessary to play these two opinions off against each other, regarding the fact that classes and individuals may differ in this respect anyway. Meaningful novels may not be meaningful to every student when the message is not clear and thus he or she will not think it worth the effort to try and overcome the language barrier. The application to the selection of books is to mind the meaningfulness of the content and the language level, so that the student will enjoy reading.

A second criterion is the content level of a certain text. Content is a rather broad area, but what it means here is that it covers matters such as theme, literary motifs, characters etc. Not only do we want the students to improve their language skills, they also need to be trained in reading good literature. However, as we are dealing with young readers here, we need to be careful in offering them texts with a literary content that is too sophisticated for them to understand. Many literary works consist of a superficial simple story while at the same time containing a deeper layer which gives teachers the opportunity to explain extent some literary elements. *Alice in Wonderland* can be read as a simple fairy tale-like story about a little girl and talking animals, but at the same time it contains numerous elements that have a deeper literary layer. This would be a way of offering students not too difficult, but meaningful material. Another way of introducing students to meaningful material is offering the option of adapted classics in which the story is summarised and retold in simple words. The next chapter will discuss the value of this concept.

It goes without saying that students should be exposed to the right language level of a certain text in order to gain benefit from what they read. One way of measuring the language level is applying the CEF criteria, which define the most suitable types of text and take

vocabulary into account. Another way of looking at the language level, which is partially covered by CEF, is to decide how much literary style is involved. Metaphors and other style elements may be confusing to students since they are mainly focused on meaning when reading a text in a foreign language.

As mentioned before, Witte points out that different competence levels can be described in terms of three parameters: text, assignment and the student as a reader (526). Not only the text in itself has to be considered, but some titles may seem too hard or too easy at first but appear to be suitable for teaching as long as they are discussed in class in the right way. The background of the student can also play a major role in understanding the text. This applies in particular to foreign texts as they are written in a culture which is different from the students'. There are many ways in which texts can be judged on their levels. However, as Witte shows in his view on balance between text, assignment and student, it is not only a matter of adding up all criteria and applying them to candidates for the reading list. Criteria that are crucial for one text can be of less importance for a different one. Moreover, it is a rather subjective and personal selection sometimes as teachers may differ in their opinions about a selection of titles. Yet, the above mentioned criteria will be used to come to a balanced list of English texts for lower school students.

The following titles have been selected for the reading list.

“Sleeping Beauty” – The Brothers Grimm

“The Ugly Duckling” – Hans Christian Andersen

A Little Princess – Frances Hodgson Burnett

Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll

Animal Farm – George Orwell

Anne of Green Gables – L.M. Montgomery

Black Beauty – Anna Sewell

Black Peter the Red-Headed League – Conan Doyle

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – Roald Dahl

Five on a Treasure Island – Enid Blyton

Jim Elliot He is no Fool – Irene Howat

Little Bear at Work and at Play – Francis Margaret Fox

Little House on the Prairie – Laura Ingalls Wilder

Little Pilgrim's Progress – Helen L. Taylor

Little Women – Louisa May Alcott

Mary Jones and her Bible – M.E. Ropes

Peter Pan – J.M. Barrie

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe – C.S. Lewis

The Pearl – John Steinbeck

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole – Sue Townsend

The Swiss Family Robinson – William H.G. Kingston

The Taylor of Gloucester – Beatrix Potter

The Wind in the Willows – Kenneth Grahame

Watership Down – Richard Adams

Winnie the Pooh – A.A. Milne

6. Reading list: regular findings and problems

The aim of this thesis is not only to select some titles from a enormous range of options, but also to provide the necessary extra details that can be used by teachers and students to make a proper choice. The following format will be used throughout:

Table 3

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Author
Year of publication
Genre
Main theme
Brief content description
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Audio book(s)
Didactic assignment(s)

While compiling the lists for levels 1 and 2, several general patterns and problems occurred. They will be discussed in this chapter to give insight into the complexity of the matter. First, some general results will be mentioned which serve as an addition to the reading lists instead of including it separately in every entry. The second part of the chapter will be dedicated to the discussion of some problems that were encountered.

It is true for almost every book that there are several different audio versions available. There is one website, however, that contains every possible title in audio, namely LibriVox. Also many publishers which focus on school material provide audio CDs with the books they sell. Especially for lower classes it is highly recommendable to make use of audio material. It helps the students to concentrate on what they are reading, because they are forced to catch up with the sound. Furthermore, it strengthens the relation between word and sound, which is especially helpful for dyslectic students.

The internet is also a source for numerous lesson plans, but as can be expected, they are not all equally good. There is one website, however, which has a lesson plan for nearly every book, namely E-notes (www.enotes.com). The only disadvantage is that they charge a certain fee for their lesson plans, which suggests that they are valuable, though. Publishers like Penguin Books (www.penguinreaders.com) focus on second language readers and their books often include a couple of questions and activities which are especially adjusted to the

level of the students. Seeing that it was not possible to include a didactic assignment for every title 'didactic assignment(s)' has been deleted for most titles. Appendix III provides a few examples of didactic assignments for one of the books from the reading list, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

Finally, there is a film version for virtually every book and for some titles the film versions are countless. It requires another study to single out the best ones within the framework of literature teaching. The most relevant and recent titles will be included in the lists. So much for some general findings as an addition to the reading list.

While composing a list of books certain problems arose. To give insight into the kind of problems that appeared during the process, the way in which the list has been put together will be described in some detail. First of all I have looked at my own findings for levels 1 and 2 collected in an earlier paper. These findings were partly based on my own judgements about it and compared to certain features Witte mentions in his description of the levels and not on CEF specifically. Besides, I have asked fellow students to share with me what English books they thought should be included. Any title that met the criteria of Witte in some way or other was added to the list which made me end up having two long lists of titles. From then on I started altering and adding to the initial list by zooming in on the features of Witte. Lists of English titles on www.scholieren.com, www.digischool.nl and a few other websites helped me to find more books that fitted in the same categories. Our school library offered me some more titles I could use. The next step was to judge the choices taking into account CEF. I went through both lists of levels and had a look into every book comparing the language level to levels from CEF. I found out that only for a few titles Witte and CEF went together quite well while many of the items were too hard language-wise to serve as a reading item for 2nd and 3rd year students. As to the criteria of meaningfulness and enjoyableness, it was hardly possible to draw a strict line there. As it is an important criterion though, as I pointed out earlier, it should not be looked over too quickly. For being able to judge a book on this it is necessary for a teacher to know the books that are recommended to the students.

It is not possible to put together an objective and balanced reading list only by one person, which is shown by the above mentioned findings and matters that have been encountered. That is why the list needs a second opinion from more experienced colleagues and it will be adapted according to their views.

7. Questionnaire data in relation to chapters 1-6

So far several topics have been discussed from the perspective of the theory that the literature offers. Even more interesting would be to know what teachers and students themselves think about these subjects nowadays. This chapter will present some results from a questionnaire that was carried out among teachers and students. First of all some general information will be given about the questionnaire. The following paragraphs discuss the results from the questionnaire about the frequency and contents of literature lessons, what sort of literature is read and also how and why teachers give their students books for reading.

The questionnaire was carried out among secondary school teachers and students from the centre of Holland. Four locations of the Van Lodensteincollege were approached as well as many schools from the network of schools that cooperate with Utrecht University. A number of classes from the Van Lodensteincollege in Amersfoort were sent an email to their personal school e-mail address. The result was a number of respondents consisting of 145 students and 68 teachers with a strikingly high percentage of female respondents: approximately two-thirds. Of both groups a few respondents have been accounted invalid as they left a number of questions unanswered, which narrows the total number down to 62 teachers and 140 students. The second part of the students' questionnaire, in which they had to say to what extent they would like to read a certain book, was skipped by 35 of the 145 students.

Witte mentions the reading crisis many teenagers go through in the course of the first years of secondary school. The students have answered the question how much they like reading English books. 2% enjoys it very much, 28% thinks it is quite fun and the remaining part does not like it very much. Whatever the reasons may be for this poor enthusiasm, only 16% finds it quite difficult to read English books, and more than 30% do not have a problem with reading at all. Apparently for many students the level could be a little higher. This would probably also boost the student's motivation for reading English books. And again, meaningfulness and enjoyableness could be important factors here to seek to lift the reading morale, although there will always be a number of students who cannot be motivated in any way.

Chapter 2 describes the practice concerning literature from Witte's perspective. He concludes that little attention is given to reading literature in lower school because of which upper school teachers have a problem as to what books they can give their students to read. It has to be noted that Witte's conclusions are based on his research for Dutch. The same

pattern can be seen for English however. The results from the questionnaire shed some light on the literature that is being used in secondary schools and how often a literature lesson is taught. Literature lessons as such are not common practice in lower school, seeing that 61% teaches a literary lesson less than once a month and still 27% of upper school teachers say they devote their lessons to literature less than once a month. For teachers who teach both upper and lower school this percentage is considerably lower: 14%. Apparently, it cannot be taken for granted that lower school students are offered books to read. One out of five of their teachers say to read no books at all with their classes. Most lower school students read four books per year; this is six for upper school. The minimum number of books per year is two there.

Not only teachers answered these questions, but also students were questioned about this. As the questionnaire was only held among lower school students the student version reveals the differences between 1 HAVO⁵ as one end of the spectrum and 3 TTO as the other end of the scale. In accordance with the results from the teachers' questionnaire the overall response to the question how much lesson time is devoted to literature teaching is 'sometimes'. An interesting outcome from TTO students is that the percentage of 'sometimes' and 'much' is exactly the same, whereas for VWO 'never' has a higher percentage than 'sometimes' and 'much' has no votes at all. This shows how much regular VWO and TTO classes can differ and that it is important to treat them as different streams. The overall outcome is consistent with the 61% of teachers that teach literature less than once a month. Considering the quantity of books that are read in lower school classes, again there seems to be a huge difference between VWO and TTO. 50% of the VWO classes read a maximum of 2 books a year, whereas this is 0% for TTO, which means that all TTO students read more than 2 books a year. The results for 1 HAVO are very similar to those of 3 TTO, although the length and level of books will probably be totally different. 70% of all respondents say to read six or more books per year.

The next step is to find out why teachers think students should read books for English. The reasons why teachers give the students books to read differ. The results from the questionnaire show that 90% of the teachers regard language development (among other things) as the purpose of reading books. Reading books also has a few other functions. More than half of the lower school teachers declare to implement this to add some variation to their lessons. Literary development is selected by one out of three. In upper school the number of

⁵ Only 1% of the respondents is VMBO student.

teachers who choose language development is only a little lower, while literary development has a much higher score: 80%.

The reasons for choosing the right sort of book for the students depend on several factors. Some of these that are mentioned in *Literatuur & Fictie*, like ‘connection to a theme’ (Bolscher et al, 69) or ‘recommended by teachers’ (36), are only ticked by a few. Availability in the school library has an average score of about 50% and the right level⁶ is about 80% for 1HAVO and 40% for 3VWO (TTO). Also for teachers the level appears to be the most important factor. Another striking result which links in with the teacher determining which books the students read is that two thirds of the teachers say to choose books on the basis of resolutions within the department. This shows that the skill of developing the student’s own reading taste is not put in practice yet in the schools. Depending on external factors is indeed the easiest way to choose a book, but probably not the most profitable.

If a considerable number say to read literature for literary development, how then do teachers go about the problem of the general high level of literature books? Chapter 4 has already discussed the solutions that are offered in secondary literature. One of the questions in the questionnaire focuses on this particular subject and the results give a clear overview of how English teachers deal with this problem. The question is what teachers do for students who cannot read the original literature yet. Translations are not regarded an option, according to lower school teachers and those who teach lower and upper school. From the teachers who only teach upper school only 6.7% say to read translations of foreign literature with their classes. It can be concluded that reading of translations is not common practice in secondary education. This links in with the result that shows that most teachers give their students books to read to improve their language skills. Apparently literature teaching in general and particularly in lower school is not aimed at the content in the first place. More so in lower school but also in upper school there is a tendency towards the solution of reading adapted versions. In all cases more than half of the respondents ticked the box of adapted versions; this percentage is especially high for lower school teachers. The results from the questionnaire among students show that except for 3TTO all classes read short books with simple language. Although some lower school students sometimes read selections of literature, this option is more popular in upper school and the overall score is approximately one-third. Apart from the options given in the questionnaire, some respondents have added alternatives, some of which have a certain overlap. Some do read books but not necessarily

⁶ The questionnaire does not distinguish between language level and content level here.

classic literature. Most alternatives lie somewhere between this sort of literature and adapted versions: young adult literature, simple literature especially written for second language learners, and literature on their level.

The results of the questionnaire show the facts about the practice of literature education in schools nowadays. In many areas this practice goes back to the more traditional views on literature education which are quite different from the ideals mentioned in Witte and Bolscher et al. Especially the way the teacher and students come to a choice for a book is telling. What matters most is the level, which is very important indeed; the next important determiner is availability in the library for students and decisions of the department. The students' attitude towards reading English books is not very positive but most of them do not seem to hate it more than other aspects of the subject of English. Half of the respondents feel the books are at a suitable level for them. Although only 3% of the students say that they read no books at all, the teachers' questionnaire shows that it cannot be taken for granted that lower school students are offered books to read. In lower school literature lessons are not a common practice either. Yet, almost a hundred respondents read six or more books per year. Many of these books are adapted versions and especially upper school classes also tend to read selections of books. Reading translated English literature is rare among the respondents. This ties in with the outcome that only one-third of the teachers make their students read literature for literary development. The most important reason is still the development of reading skills.

8. Results and evaluation of proposed list of books

The questionnaire not only contains questions that give insight into the current situation in secondary schools and reasons why certain choices have been made, but the most interesting and at the same time most complicated part is the list of books that is judged by teachers and students. As for the teachers, they were given the list of titles and they were asked the question what level they think the book should be. In view of the fact that not every teacher is used to the levels from the CEF and since it is very likely they do not know anything about the levels of Witte, the levels have been arranged according to secondary school classes. Although the focus of this research is on lower school classes I have also incorporated primary school (indicated by B) on one side and the 4th and 5th forms on the other side, giving respondents the opportunity to assign a higher or lower level to the book than the ultimate target groups. Each book has to be assigned a language level, content level, and general level. The results should indicate what type of students can read which book. For the students it was not possible within this type of questionnaire to investigate the language level they preferred, although part of the books they received in front of them were probably known to them. They were given a title and a very short summary of the book on the basis of which the students had to indicate how eager they would be to read that book. This indication should show whether this book is suitable for them content-wise.

According to the results from the teachers' questionnaire the books should be categorised as follows, from low to high.

Table 4

Title	Language Level	Content Level	General Level
<i>'Sleeping Beauty' – The Brothers Grimm</i>	B	B	B
<i>'The Ugly Duckling' – Hans Christian Andersen</i>	B	B	B
<i>Little Bear at Work and at Play – Francis Margaret Fox</i>	B	B	B
<i>Winnie the Pooh – A.A. Milne</i>	2	B	B
<i>A Little Princess – Frances Hodgson Burnett</i>	B	1	1
<i>Black Peter the Red-Headed League – Conan Doyle</i>	1	1	1
<i>The Taylor of Gloucester – Beatrix Potter</i>	1	1	1
<i>Mary Jones and her Bible – M.E. Ropes</i>	1	2	1
<i>Black Beauty – Anna Sewell</i>	2	1	1
<i>Five on a Treasure Island – Enid Blyton</i>	2	1	1,2

<i>Peter Pan</i> – J.M. Barrie	3,4	1	1,2
<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> – L.M. Montgomery	2	2	2
<i>Jim Elliot He is no Fool</i> – Irene Howat	2	2	2
<i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> – William H.G. Kingston	2	2	2
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i> – Kenneth Grahame	3	3	2
<i>Little House on the Prairie</i> – Laura Ingalls Wilder	2	1	2,3
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> – Roald Dahl	3	B	3
<i>The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole</i> – Sue Townsend	3	3	3
<i>The Pearl</i> – John Steinbeck	3,4	3	3
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> – Lewis Caroll	3	4	3
<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> – C.S. Lewis	4	3	3
<i>Little Women</i> – Louisa May Alcott	4	4	3
<i>Little Pilgrim's Progress</i> – Helen L. Taylor	3	4	4
<i>Animal Farm</i> – George Orwell	3	5	4
<i>Watership Down</i> – Richard Adams	4	4	4

From these results it becomes clear that it is not easy to make new levels combining CEF and Witte. It is not impossible, and it is done all the time by teachers who give the whole class the same book to read, but in most cases either content level or language level has to be compromised on. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (table 4) is a clear example of how differently content and language are being estimated. Its language level is regarded suitable for year 3 whereas content-wise this book could be read by primary school children. Therefore these numbers do give teachers an idea how the levels relate. Especially in view of individualised literature teaching, which Bolscher et al. Support, an overview of the different levels would help the teacher and the student decide whether a certain book is suitable or not. The first part of the questionnaire among students show, however, that teachers hardly ever offer a suggestion as to what sort of book can be recommended. However, anticipating on the developments within literature education in which personal reading experience is a highly regarded value the level differentiation might come in useful. It also gives the group-focused teacher the opportunity to compile a reading list that is balanced both content- and language-wise.

The fact that language level and content level differ here and there does not mean that we cannot draw a conclusion for a proper reading list for Witte levels 1 and 2. According to the general score, the titles in the table that are printed black are considered suitable for years two, three and four. This broad range of years corresponds with levels 1 and 2 of Witte as we saw earlier on. The books and stories that have been given a B or a 1 cannot be included in the final reading list as their level is considered too low to be useful for reading English

literature. However, among these low level books the scores for content level and especially language level are sometimes slightly different from the general level and those have been marked blue. Although they are strictly speaking not part of the ideal reading list, they are not totally useless. A teacher might want to focus on language level even if the content level is lower and then start reading for instance *Winnie the Pooh* with the class. As long as teachers are able to motivate the students to read it is no problem that a level deviates from the ideal standard level. Also in this case it is true that the text is not the only thing that counts when looking at the level. A didactical assignment can compensate the level of a text and as such it can be an important element in deciding if a certain book is suitable for students.

The students were given the same list of titles and they were asked to indicate to what extent they would like to read a certain book on the basis of a title description. The outcome was meant to show whether the content level would be suitable for them. Again I categorised the titles from low to high. The results in the second column are the averages of all years and levels that were interviewed. They had to choose from a 5-scale in which a 1 meant that they ‘would never choose this book’ and number 5 stood for ‘I would certainly choose this book’.

Table 5

title	degree of preference for lower school students general	degree of preference for 1HAVO students	degree of preference for 3 VWO (TTO) students
“Sleeping Beauty” – The Brothers Grimm	1	3	1
“The Ugly Duckling” – Hans Christian Andersen	1	3	2
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> – Lewis Carroll	1	3	2
<i>Animal Farm</i> – George Orwell	1	2	3
<i>Little Bear at Work and at Play</i> – Francis Margaret Fox	1	1	2
<i>Peter Pan</i> – J.M. Barrie	1	1	1
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i> – A.A. Milne	1	1	1
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i> – Kenneth Grahame	2	3	2/3
<i>Watership Down</i> – Richard Adams	2	2	2
<i>Little Pilgrim’s Progress</i> – Helen L. Taylor	3	2/3	4
<i>Mary Jones and her Bible</i> – M.E. Ropes	3	2/3	4
<i>The Pearl</i> – John Steinbeck	3	2	5
<i>The Taylor of Gloucester</i> – Beatrix Potter	3	3	4
<i>Black Beauty</i> – Anna Sewell	4	5	3

<i>Five on a Treasure Island</i> – Enid Blyton	4	4	4
<i>Jim Elliot He is no Fool</i> – Irene Howat	4	5	3
<i>The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole</i> – Sue Townsend	4	3	3/4
<i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> – William H.G. Kingston	4	2	4
<i>A Little Princess</i> – Frances Hodgson Burnett	5	5	3/4
<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> – L.M. Montgomery	5	5	3
<i>Black Peter the Red-Headed League</i> – Conan Doyle	5	2	3
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> – Roald Dahl	5	2/3	4
<i>Little House on the Prairie</i> – Laura Ingalls Wilder	5	5	5
<i>Little Women</i> – Louisa May Alcott	5	5	4
<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> – C.S. Lewis	5	3/4	4/5

When comparing the results in the above table to the classification of the books by the teachers, it becomes clear that there is a huge difference, even when just looking at the content level. It has to be noted, though, that the students' scores do not actually tell us what they think the level is, but to what extent they would like to read a certain book. That is why not too much can be concluded from a comparison between the two sets of results. Yet, there are some striking differences to be seen. Only one of the five books with the highest score according to the teachers (*Little Women*) is classified with a high score by the students. The remaining four of the five are scored very low. As far as the simpler books are concerned, however, teachers and students seem to be more on the same level. All books and stories that receive the B-level have been given a 1 by the students. At the same time, it is interesting to see that the other books that are given a 1 belong to the books that have the highest score in the teachers' questionnaire. These books show several general features. They are all fairy-tale-like, in the sense that animals or fairy tale-figures are the main characters of the story. That could explain why *Animal Farm* and *Alice in Wonderland*, which are of a high level content-wise, are in that same category. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* form an exception in this respect, though. It would be interesting to know what the reason has been for students to indicate they did not like these books. As to the actual fairy tales and a book

like *Little Bear* it seems logical to assume that students considered those as childish. To a lesser extent this could go for the books with number 2.

The interesting question is whether students from different levels and years make different choices, in other words, if they decide according to their own level. Again I compared HAVO 1 and 3 VWO (TTO) as the two extremes and that is why these two categories have also been included in table 5, columns 3 and 4. It appears that 3VWO students, more than 1HAVO students, are inclined to give a 1 for the books that the teachers classify as B-level. This is logical regarding the fact that these books are far below the level of 3VWO students. The judgment of *The Pearl* shows a clear difference between the students' levels. The theme of *The Pearl* does not appeal much to 1 HAVO, but 3VWO would certainly go for this book. This is just one of the few examples where there is a striking difference though.

The general results show that students are not totally indifferent as to what they like to read. This is an encouragement for teachers who may think that their students are not very motivated to read English literature. Nearly half of the books (12 out of 25) have been given a 4 or 5. It shows that as long as teachers offer their students the right books, the students will be prepared to start reading them. This does not say what will happen if the language appears to be difficult or if they find it less exciting than they believed at first.

Conclusion

What should be the role of English reading books in teaching English (literature) when stimulating a gradual development of literature experience, while improving students' language skills? As we have seen throughout this thesis there are many ways to come to an answer to this question. It has also become clear that not everything offers a sufficient solution to the problem that is pointed out in the introduction, that students who start reading literature in upper school experience a reading gap that makes it difficult for them to catch up with the reading level that is required of them in the fourth year. The ideal would be a combination of Witte's level indications 1 and 2 with CEF levels, leading to a better arrangement of language training and literature education.

An attempt has been made to provide ways to combine the language and the content element as best as possible. We have seen why English literature should be taught at all in schools but especially in lower school. During the first years of secondary school, students often find themselves in a reading crisis. Therefore, it is crucial how and what sort of books they are offered during that period. Knowing this, we can begin to discuss to what extent and in what way English literature teaching is helpful to students. When judging the level of literature both the levels of Witte and the levels defined by the Common European Framework are to be taken into account. It appears that students of the higher levels should be able to read literature on level A2/B1 by the end of the third year, but only from B1 onward does the description of the CEF level start matching a literary text. Possible solutions for bridging this gap have been offered and discussed. Adapted versions, selections from books and translations of foreign literature all have their advantages and disadvantages. They are certainly a tool to overcome level difficulties. Apart from the text itself there are two other parameters that define the level of the text: an assignment and the student's background. Another study has shown that as long as a text is meaningful and enjoyable a reader will be prepared to make an effort to overcome the level. Bearing these factors in mind, a list of books has been compiled containing every relevant detail useful for teachers or students when they need to choose a suitable book. The list of titles has been presented to teachers and students and they have given their opinions by means of a questionnaire.

The questionnaire started with some questions about the topics discussed in chapters 1 to 6. They have been summarised in one chapter which is why only a few findings have been highlighted. It gives an actual impression of the current situation in schools as far as literature education is concerned. On the one hand, in lower school teachers do not spend much time on

literature in their lessons, on the other hand, many students read a considerable number of books per year supposedly as homework. Reading books in lower school serves the development of reading skills rather than literary skills. Upper school teachers spend more time on literature, as they should when taking into account the end goals. The choice of books is still mainly regulated by anything but the student's own level and interest.

According to our expectations it has not been easy to compose a reading list with books that meet the standards of both Witte and CEF. Original literary works have proved to be either too easy content-wise or too difficult language-wise. However, the results from the teachers' questionnaire show that teachers do not see a huge gap between content and language. Only in four cases is the difference in indication of content and language more than one year. Apparently teachers do not separate the two levels as much as could be expected on the basis of the CEF levels, so judging from the teachers' opinions many books from the reading list are suitable for secondary school students. This thesis has tried to aim at lower school students and especially those of years two and three, simply because year one does not have the level yet to read English literature. This decreases the number of suitable works for the reading list considerably. Because of afore-mentioned motives that both easier and more difficult texts can be used even if they do not match the actual level of the students, all books will remain in the original reading list be it with a clear indication that either content or language level is not fit. In fact, a combination of language and literature works best for 2VWO and 3HAVO/VWO, the top of the lower school. For lower levels literary level will only form a barrier in understanding the text. If teachers want to combine literature and developing reading skills, they should have a clear motive and be aware of the high level of authentic literature.

Discussion

Many topics have been covered in the questionnaire but not every topic has turned out to be relevant for this research. Yet, when looking back on the questions that have been asked, there are also a few things that should have been added to the questionnaire to be able to zoom in on topics that really matter. Some respondents have helped in making suggestions for improvement. To do justice to the results from the questionnaire I would like to mention a few points of discussion.

First of all, the reading list for teachers could only be scored by year and not by level. The higher up the year, the more the level differs. There was no room in the questionnaire to distinguish between HAVO and VWO. This was not clear for the respondents and this might have given them difficulty to decide between 4 and 5 for instance in the sense that they did not know whether 4 and 5 HAVO was meant or 4 and 5 VWO.

The questionnaire for teachers did not contain a brief description, so they had to know from the title how to score it. Most of the titles will have been known to teachers of English, but it would have been easier still if the author had been added.

The risk of internet questionnaires and especially among children is that some do not fill it in seriously. This has become true for this questionnaire also. Especially the questions that asked for an opinion were skipped by many respondents.

The questionnaire has been set out among many schools via networks and a mailing-list but I have also asked my own classes and colleagues directly or via personal email to fill in the questionnaire. This is especially true for the students' questionnaire. Not many students apart from those from Van Lodensteincollege have been asked directly to fill it in. There is no question in the questionnaire that asks for information about the school, so it cannot be stated for sure though whether this has been the case.

Although the thesis is about literature in general, the questionnaire focuses on books, and not on poetry or short stories or drama. The list contains just two stories and the questions in the questionnaire also focus on books. It is possible that teachers read many short stories instead of a few books and that does not appear from the questionnaire.

This is probably not everything yet that can be said about the questionnaire, its set up and the results, but I want to show that I am aware of factors that might have influenced the results. Most of the above points would have gone too far to prevent in a small research like this. It would have been better if the questionnaire had focussed more on a few things rather than on many interesting topics.

Recommendations

Both the study of literature and results of the questionnaire have shown that there are many areas in the field of literature education that deserve reflection. Therefore I would like to finish my thesis with a few brief and practical recommendations for teachers.

Be aware of the end goals and exam requirements and look ahead more than one year only.

Think about why and what you want to teach your students about literature and do not randomly follow the curriculum.

Be aware of the content level and language level of books and make an effort to let them read literature as early as possible.

Compile a list of books you think are meaningful and enjoyable for students and recommend them to your students so that they will be prepared to read books you know are good.

Show that you are concerned in the choices your students make when they need to choose a new book.

Make sure there is a good balance between the level of the text and the level of the assignment. See Appendix III for examples of assignments according to Witte's levels 1 and 2.

Keep reading English literature yourself.

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Appendix I

Enquête voor docenten Engels

Beste docent Engels,

Fijn dat u wilt meewerken aan dit onderzoek! De bedoeling is dat u eerst een aantal gesloten vragen beantwoordt over u persoonlijk en uw lespraktijk. Daarna zal u een lijst voorgelegd worden van Engelse titels en u zal gevraagd worden deze titels te koppelen aan een klas waarin een gemiddelde H/V leerling deze het beste kan lezen. Ten slotte wordt u gevraagd zelf een aantal titels aan te dragen.

Hartelijk dank!

Janine Floor

- 1. Geslacht:** *man / vrouw*⁷
- 2. Leeftijd:** *onder de 30 / 30 – 45 / boven de 45*
- 3. Aan welke klassen geeft u les?**
- onderbouwklassen
 - bovenbouwklassen
- 4. Aan welk(e) niveau(s) geeft u les?**
- VMBO
 - HAVO/VWO
- 5. Hoe vaak besteedt u aandacht aan literatuur in uw lessen?**
- minstens één keer per week
 - gemiddeld één keer per maand
 - minder dan één keer per maand
- 6. Hoeveel Engelse literatuur lezen uw leerlingen per jaar?**
- onderbouw [...] boeken en [...] verhalen
 - bovenbouw [...] boeken en [...] verhalen
- 7. Wat doet u voor leerlingen of klassen die nog geen Literatuur kunnen lezen?**
- Ze lezen vereenvoudigde versies.
 - Ze lezen vertaalde versies.
 - Ze lezen fragmenten.
 - anders, namelijk...
- 8. Wat is uw doel met de leerlingen wanneer u ze Engelse boeken te lezen geeft?**
- literaire ontwikkeling
 - taalvaardigheid
 - leuke afwisseling
 - anders, namelijk...
- 9. Wat bepaalt uw keuze voor een boek dat u de leerlingen te lezen geeft?**
- studiewijzer
 - beschikbaarheid in de schoolbibliotheek
 - wens van de leerling
 - niveau
 - thema
 - anders, namelijk...

⁷ Omcirkel wat van toepassing is.

Hieronder ziet u een aantal Engelse titels van verschillend niveau. Bepaal bij elke titel het taalniveau, inhoudsniveau en algemeen niveau door te kiezen uit 7 opties: basisschool (b) of één van de klassen (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) van het voortgezet onderwijs. Bij een voor u onbekende titel kiest u onbekend (o) onder de kolom(men) die het betreft.

Titel	Taalniveau	Inhoudsniveau	Algemeen
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Five on a Treasure Island</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Little Pilgrim's Progress</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Black Beauty</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Little House on the Prairie</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Taylor of Gloucester</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Jim Elliot He is no Fool</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
“Sleeping Beauty”	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Little Bear at Work and at Play</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Mary Jones and her Bible</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Pearl</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Watership Down</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Animal Farm</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Peter Pan</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Little Women</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>A Little Princess</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
“The Ugly Duckling”	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Black Peter the Red-Headed League</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o
<i>The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole</i>	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o	b / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / o

Welke Engelse titels komen bij u boven gelet op de 6 niveaus die u hierboven hebt gebruikt?

B:.....

1:

2:

3:

4:

5:

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Enquête voor leerlingen

Beste leerling,

Fijn dat je wilt meedoen aan een onderzoekje. Je krijgt eerst een paar vragen over jezelf en het vak Engels. Daarna krijg je een lijst met Engelse boeken te zien. Waarschijnlijk ken je de meeste daarvan nog niet. Daarom staat er bij elk boek in het kort bij waarover het gaat. Jij mag dan kiezen welke boeken je het liefst zou lezen.

Bij een **0**, kies je één antwoord uit, zie je een , dan mag je meerdere mogelijkheden aankruisen.

Dankjewel!

Miss Floor

1. **Ik ben een:** *jongen / meisje*⁸
2. **Ik zit in klas:** *1 / 2 / 3*
3. **Ik doe niveau:** *vmbo / havo / vwo / vwo - tto*
4. **Gaat het in de les wel eens over Engelse boeken of verhalen?**
- Ja, best veel.
- Ja, soms.
- Nee, nooit.
5. **Hoeveel Engelse boeken lees je per jaar?**
- Geen
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6 of meer
6. **Wat voor soort boeken lees je?**
- Dunne boekjes met makkelijke woorden en zinnen.
- Nederlandse vertaling van een Engels boek.
- Een gedeelte uit een boek dat te dik is om helemaal te lezen.
7. **Vind je het moeilijk om Engelse boeken te lezen?**
- nee, helemaal niet.
- niet moeilijk, maar ook niet makkelijk.
- ja, best moeilijk.
8. **Wat vind je ervan om Engelse boeken te lezen?**
- niet zoveel aan
- leuker dan les uit het boek
- best leuk
- superleuk!
9. **Hoe weet je welk boek je moet lezen?**
- De hele klas leest hetzelfde boek.
- Het moet aanwezig zijn in de schoolbibliotheek
- De docent geeft mij persoonlijk advies welke ik moet kiezen.
- Het moet het goede niveau hebben.
- Het moet aansluiten bij een bepaald thema.

⁸ Omcirkel wat van toepassing is.

Hieronder zie je een lijst met Engelse boeken. Lees de beschrijving en geef aan achter elk boek of je dit boek snel zou kiezen om te lezen of niet.

- 1: ik zou dit boek nooit kiezen
 2: ik zou dit boek niet zo snel kiezen
 3: ik weet niet of ik dit boek zou kiezen
 4: ik zou dit boek misschien wel kiezen
 5: ik zou dit boek zeker kiezen

Titel					
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> Op een saaie zomerdag volgt Alice een wit konijn naar een konijnenhol. Als ze binnen is, ontdekt ze dat ze in een wonderlijke wereld gekomen is vol met bijzondere wezens.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The Wind in the Willows</i> De hoofdpersonen uit de verhalen in dit boek zijn pratende dieren die in en rond de rivier wonen. Het zijn net mensen. Sommige dieren hebben goede eigenschappen, anderen zijn veel slechter van aard. Ze beleven allerlei dingen waardoor ze elkaar allemaal hard nodig blijken te hebben.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Five on a Treasure Island</i> Dit boek komt uit de serie <i>The Famous Five</i> . Vier kinderen en een hond maken steeds weer een spannend avontuur mee. Ze vinden een wrak van een schip, maar waar is de schat? De vijf gaan opzoek, maar zij zijn niet de enige...	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Winnie the Pooh</i> Winnie the Pooh woont samen met zijn vrienden in een groot bos. Pooh is een teddybeer die van alles meemaakt. Elk verhaal heeft weer een ander probleem met een eigen oplossing.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Little Pilgrim's Progress</i> Een kleine jongen, Christian, woont in de stad verderf, maar hoort Evangelist spreken over de hemelse stad waar de grote Koning woont. Christian gaat op weg en ontmoet veel gevaren en leert van alles. Een vriendinnetje van hem, Christiana, onderneemt dezelfde reis en komt veel dezelfde maar ook een aantal andere gevaren tegen.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Black Beauty</i> Black Beauty is een paard en heeft een prima thuis. Zijn eigenaars moeten hem echter verkopen en dan komt hij in handen van allerlei mensen die hem slecht behandelen, totdat een nieuwe kans zijn leven verandert.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Little House on the Prairie</i>	1	2	3	4	5

Het gezin Ingalls reist vanuit de grote bossen van Wisconsin naar een nieuw thuis op de prairie, waar ze een nieuw huis bouwen, Indianen ontmoeten en een gevecht leveren tegen een prairiebrand.					
<i>The Taylor of Gloucester</i> Dit boek vertelt het verhaal van een arme kleermaker die de opdracht krijgt een kostuum voor de burgemeester te maken. De kleermaker wordt ziek, maar de muizen helpen om de jas af te maken.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jim Elliot He is no Fool</i> Jim Elliot heeft een lieve vrouw en een prachtig dochttertje, maar God heeft hem geroepen om het evangelie van Jezus Christus naar de Auca Indianen te brengen. Jim zal daar de rest van zijn leven doorbrengen, een leven dat niet langer zal duren dan enkele maanden.	1	2	3	4	5
“Sleeping Beauty” Een boze fee spreekt een toverspreuk uit over een prinses. De toverspreuk kan alleen gebroken worden door een zoen van een knappe sprookjesprins.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Little Bear at Work and at Play</i> Dit boek gaat over Little Bear die allerlei avonturen beleeft met zijn vrienden.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> Marilla en Matthew Cuthbert willen graag een weesjongen adopteren die voor hen kan werken, maar in plaats daarvan wordt een mager roodharig meisje naar hen gestuurd. Anne zit vol fantasie en energie en daardoor belandt ze vaak in de problemen. Ondanks alles besluit het echtpaar Cuthbert haar te houden.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> Vier kinderen verblijven in een oud huis waarin een bijzondere klerenkast staat die hen in het magische land van Narnia brengt. Narnia is veroordeeld tot eeuwige duisternis totdat de kinderen met de leeuw Aslan zich verenigen tegen de witte heks en licht en blijdschap over het land brengen.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Mary Jones and her Bible</i> Dit boek beschrijft het verhaal van een 16-jarig meisje dat 25 mijl op blote voeten aflegt om een Bijbel te kopen waarvoor ze jaren heeft gespaard.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The Pearl</i> Kino, een arme Indiaanse parelduiker vindt ‘de parel van de wereld’. Hij denk dat hij nu heel	1	2	3	4	5

gelukkig zal worden, maar houdt geen rekening met alles wat rijkdom met zich mee kan brengen: hebberigheid, jaloezie en zelfs geweld.					
<i>Watership Down</i> Fiver en Hazel ruiken gevaar en moeten onmiddellijk vertrekken. Ze overtuigen de andere konijnen en zo begint een lange gevaarlijke tocht van een groep konijnen die op zoek zijn naar een veilig thuis. Uiteindelijk komen ze uit bij Watership Down.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Animal Farm</i> In het boek spannen boerderijdieren samen tegen mensen die de baas over hen spelen. Ze zijn het beu om als bezit gezien te worden en proberen de macht over te nemen. Echter tijdens dit proces nemen sommige dieren meer macht dan anderen en zo ontstaat er uiteindelijk een totalitair systeem onder de dieren.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Peter Pan</i> Op een nacht neemt Peter Pan de kinderen Darling mee op avontuur en brengt ze in Neverland, waar feeën en piraten wonen en de vreselijke kapitein Haak.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Little Women</i> Dit boek beschrijft het lief en leed van vier zussen die opgroeien tijdens de Amerikaanse Burgeroorlog. Hun vader is veldprediker aan het front.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>A Little Princess</i> Sara Crewe heeft geen moeder meer, alleen een rijke vader. Ze gaat naar school bij Miss Minchin en wordt als een prinsesje behandeld. Als haar vader overlijdt, veranderen haar omstandigheden en ze wordt erg vernederd. Haar sterke karakter zorgt ervoor dat ze haar armoede en de plagerijen van haar leeftijdsgenootjes kan verdragen.	1	2	3	4	5
“The Ugly Duckling” Een eendje wordt lelijk geboren en wordt geplaagd door zijn broertjes en zusjes. Uiteindelijk verandert hij in een prachtige zwaan.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Black Peter the Red-Headed League</i> Het verhaal dat zich afspeelt in 1890 volgt Sherlock Holmes en Dr. Watson op zoek naar de oplossing van een mysterie rondom Jabez Wilson. Hij krijgt grote bedragen toegestopt, terwijl hij slechts naar een kantoor moet komen om daar de <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> over te schrijven. Er zit echter meer achter.	1	2	3	4	5

<p><i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> Dit verhaal beschrijft het verhaal van een gezin dat schipbreuk lijdt op een verlaten eiland. Ze blijven één ondanks alle tegenslagen.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> Als Charlie Bucket hoort van het gouden kaartje dat hem door de poorten van Willy Wonka's chocoladefabriek kan brengen, wil hij die graag winnen. Zijn dromen komen uit, maar de geweldige fabriek bevat meer dan alleen gewoon snoepgoed en Charlie komt in een avontuur terecht dat zijn hele leven duurt.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p><i>The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole</i> In dit dagboek vertelt de 13-jarige Adrian Mole op een leuke manier welke problemen hij heeft in zijn leven: ziekte, ouders die bijna gaan scheiden, afwijzing van zijn gedichten en nog veel meer.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>

Welk(e) Engelse boek(en) (niet uit deze lijst) heb je ooit met plezier gelezen of zou je graag eens willen lezen?

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

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Appendix II

Reading list

1.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
‘Sleeping Beauty’ A2 – 1/language level B ⁹ - content level B
Author
The Brothers Grimm
Year of publication
1917
Genre
Fairy tale
Main theme
fairy tales, magic, evil fairies, good fairies
Brief content description
An angry fairy casts a spell on a lovely princess. The spell is made less frightening by another fairy. In spite of all efforts to avoid the spell, the princess falls prey to its power. The spell can only be broken by the kiss of a handsome prince charming.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Floris Books, 9780863153426, 28 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 5.1
Film version(s)
Walt Disney 1959, David Irving 1987
Audio book(s)
yes
Didactic assignment
http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/contents/000/0020/0020_mat.pdf

2.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
‘The Ugly Duckling’ A2 – 1/language level B - content level B
Author
Hans Christian Andersen
Year of publication
1845
Genre
fiction, fairy tale
Main theme
personal transformation for the better
Brief content description
The story tells of a homely little bird born in a barnyard who suffers abuse from his neighbours until, much to his delight, and to the surprise of others, he matures into a graceful swan, the most beautiful bird of all.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
North-South Books, 9780735821460, 32 pages

⁹ B corresponds with ‘primary school’

Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 3.7, ages 4-8
Film version(s)
Walt Disney 1939
Audio book(s)
yes

3.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
A Little Princess B1 – 2/language level B - content level 1 ¹⁰
Author
Frances Hodgson Burnett
Year of publication
1905
Genre
children's literature
Main theme
poverty, imagination
Brief content description
Motherless Sara Crewe was sent home from India to school at Miss Minchin's. Her father was immensely rich and she became 'show pupil', a little princess. Then her father dies and his wealth disappears, and Sara has to learn to cope with her changed circumstances. Her strong character enables her to fight successfully against her new-found poverty and the scorn of her fellows.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Digireads.com, 9781420925296, 112 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Walter Lang 1939, Alfonso Cuarón 1995
Audio book(s)
yes

4.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Alice in Wonderland B1 – 3/ language level 3 - content level 4
Author
Lewis Carroll
Year of publication
1865
Genre
fairy tale; children's fiction; satire; allegory
Main theme
experience of childhood
Brief content description
Alice is one of the most beloved characters of English writing. A bright and inquisitive child, one boring summer afternoon, she follows a white rabbit down a rabbit-hole. At the bottom,

¹⁰ 1-5 corresponds with 'secondary school year 1-5'

she finds herself in a bizarre world full of strange creatures, and attends a very strange tea party and croquet match. This immensely witty and unique story mixes satire and puzzles, comedy and anxiety, to provide a smart depiction of the experience of childhood.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
London: Macmillan & Co. 9780812504187, 128 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Walt Disney 1951, TV Series 1999, Tim Burton 2010
Audio book(s)
yes

5.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Animal Farm B1 – 2/language level 3 - content level 5
Author
George Orwell
Year of publication
1946
Genre
Dystopian animal fable, satire, allegory
Main theme
The corruption of socialist ideals in the Soviet Union, societal tendency toward class stratification, danger of a naive working class, abuse of language as instrumental to the abuse of power
Brief content description
Mr Jones of Manor Farm is so lazy and drunken that one day he forgets to feed his livestock. The ensuing rebellion under the leadership of the pigs Napoleon and Wellington leads to the animals taking over the farm. Vowing to eliminate the terrible inequities of the farmyard, the renamed Animal Farm is organised to benefit all who walk on four legs. But as time passes, the ideals of the rebellion are corrupted, then forgotten. And something new and unexpected emerges Animal Farm the history of a revolution that went wrong is George Orwell brilliant satire on the corrupting influence of power.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Archeion Press, 9781605121611, 112 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Joy Batchelor and John Hallas 1954, John Stephenson 1999
Audio book(s)
yes

6.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Anne of Green Gables series B2 – 3/language level 2 – content level 2
Author
L.M. Montgomery
Year of publication
1908

Genre
Coming-of-age novel; juvenile literature
Main theme
The conflict between imagination and expectation; sentimentality versus emotion
Brief content description
Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert are in for a big surprise. They are waiting for an orphan boy to help with the work at Green Gables, but a skinny, red-haired girl turns up instead. Feisty and full of spirit, Anne Shirley charms her way into the Cuthberts' affection with her vivid imagination and constant chatter. It's not long before Anne finds herself in trouble, but soon it becomes impossible for the Cuthberts to imagine life without 'their' Anne; and for the people of Avonlea to recall what it was like before this wildly creative little girl whirled into town.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Sterling, 9781402714511, 312 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 7.5, ages 9-12
Film version(s)
Don Harron 1956, Kevin Sullivan 1985
Audio book(s)
yes

7.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Black Beauty B1 – 2/language level 2 – content level 1
Author
Anna Sewell
Year of publication
1877
Genre
adventure, drama, family
Main theme
animal suffering
Brief content description
Black Beauty begins life in a loving home. But his owners are forced to sell him, and Black Beauty's fortunes change. He is moved from place to place and job to job, often suffering cruel treatment and harsh conditions, until a chance encounter leads to a new turn of events.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Sterling, 9781402714528, 208 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
young adult
Film version(s)
James Hill 1971, Caroline Thompson 1994
Audio book(s)
yes

8.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Black Peter and The Red-Headed League, B1 – 3/language level 1 – content level 1
Author

Arthur Conan Doyle
Year of publication
1892
Genre
Detective
Main theme
mystery, suspense
Brief content description
The story, set in 1890, follows Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as they attempt to solve the singular puzzle provided by a London pawnbroker Jabez Wilson, who is being paid very large sums of money for simply coming to an office and copying the <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> . There is a far more serious underlying motive, though.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Crest Publishing House, 9788124200254, 80 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: level 6
Film version(s)
John Bruce, 1985
Audio book(s)
yes

9.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory B1 – 2/language level 3 – content level B
Author
Roald Dahl
Year of publication
1964
Genre
children's fantasy novel
Main theme
family
Brief content description
When Charlie Bucket hears about the Golden Ticket that will take him through the gates of Willy Wonka's wonderful Chocolate Factory, he longs to win one with all his heart. And then his dreams come true. But the marvellous factory holds more than simple sweets and Charlie embarks on an adventure that will last him and his family a lifetime.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Puffin, 9780142410318, 176 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12
Film version(s)
Mel Stuart 1971, Tim Burton 2005
Audio book(s)
yes

10.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Five on a Treasure Island (Famous Five series) B1 – 2/language level 2 – content level 1

Author
Enid Blyton
Year of publication
1942
Genre
children's novel
Main theme
mystery, adventure
Brief content description
The very first Famous Five adventure, featuring Julian, Dick, Anne, not forgetting tomboy George and her beloved dog, Timmy! There is a shipwreck off Kirrin Island! But where is the treasure? The Famous Five are on the trail, looking for clues, but they are not alone! Someone else has got the same idea. Time is running out for the Famous Five, who will follow the clues and get to the treasure first?
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Hodder Children's Books, 9780340796146, 256 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12
Film version(s)
TV Series 1978, TV Series 1996
Audio book(s)
yes

11.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Jim Elliot He is no Fool A2 – 2/language level 2 – content level 2
Author
Irene Howat
Year of publication
1958
Genre
missionary story
Main theme
perseverance, love for God
Brief content description
Jim Elliot had a loving wife, a beautiful little girl, and a reason for real joy. God had called him to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the Auca Indians. The love of Christ not only thrilled him but also gave him peace. Jim would spend the rest of his life bringing Jesus to the lost Aucas... but the rest of Jim's life was only a matter of months.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
CF4K, 9781845500641, 153 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Torchlighters: The Jim Elliot Story, 2005
Audio book(s)
yes

12.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Little Bear at Work and at Play B1 – 1/language level B – content level B
Author
Frances Margaret Fox
Year of publication
1920
Genre
children's fiction
Main theme
learning trough experience
Brief content description
Little Bear at Work and at Play is about the adventures of Little Bear and his friends.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Kessinger Publishing, 9781419130717, 48 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 5.5
Film version(s)
no
Audio book(s)
yes

13.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Little House on the Prairie B1 – 1/language level 2 – content level 1
Author
Laura Ingalls Wilder
Year of publication
1935
Genre
family saga, western
Main theme
family, love, friendship
Brief content description
A family travels from the big woods of Wisconsin to a new home on the prairie, where they build a house, meet neighbouring Indians, build a well, and fight a prairie fire.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
HarperTrophy, 9780060581817, 335 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12
Film version(s)
Michael Landan 2003
Audio book(s)
yes

14.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Little Pilgrim's Progress B1 – 2/language level 3 – content level 4
Author

Helen L. Taylor
Year of publication
1992
Genre
allegory
Main theme
journey through life
Brief content description
This is really two stories in one book, the first story tells of Christian, a small boy living in the City of Destruction, who hears Evangelist talking about the Celestial City where the great King lives. Christian becomes a pilgrim, and sets off for the Celestial City. Along the way he has many encounters and learns many lessons. The second story is about Christiana, a friend of Christian, who sets out with others to walk the same path, and they encounter many trials, often different than the ones faced by Christian.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Moody Press, Chicago Illinois, 9780802449245, 256 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 6-12
Film version(s)
no
Audio book(s)
no

15.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Little Women B1 – 3/language level 4 – content level 4
Author
Louisa May Alcott
Year of publication
1868
Genre
fiction, historical
Main theme
family, overcoming adversity
Brief content description
<i>Little Women</i> concerns the lives and loves of four sisters growing up during the American Civil War. It was based on Alcott's own experiences as a child in Germantown, Pennsylvania with her three sisters, Anna, May, and Elizabeth.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Sterling, 9781402714580, 526 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 7.6
Film version(s)
Harley Knoles 1918, Mervyn LeRoy 1949, Gillian Armstrong 1994
Audio book(s)
yes

16.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
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Mary Jones and her Bible, A2 – 2/language level 1 – content level 2
Author
M.E. Ropes
Year of publication
1985
Genre
real life children's story
Main theme
commitment to God
Brief content description
Mary Jones is a young girl who lived in rural Wales in the late 1700s. Mary was a popular girl who loved her parents, worked hard and was keen to learn but most of all she longed to have a Bible of her own. After six years of saving hard she sets off to walk a round trip of 50 miles on her bare feet, in the hope that she will be able to buy a Bible and bring it home. Mary's dream comes true and her dedication to God and determination to get a copy of His Word inspires the setting up of the 'British and Foreign Bible Society'.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
CF4K, 9781857925685, 160 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12
Film version(s)
no
Audio book(s)
no

17.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Peter Pan (Peter and Wendy) B1 – 1/language level 3,4 – content level 1
Author
J.M. Barrie
Year of publication
1911
Genre
children's novel
Main theme
growing up, maturity, self-discovery
Brief content description
It was Friday night. Mr and Mrs Darling were dining out. Nana had been tied up in the backyard. The poor dog was barking, for she could smell danger. And she was right. This was the night that Peter Pan would take the Darling children on the most breath-taking adventure of their lives, to a place called Neverland, a strange country where the lost boys live and never grow up, a land with mermaids, fairies and pirates, and the terrible, evil, Captain Hook. Peter Pan is undoubtedly one of the most famous and best-loved stories for children, an unforgettable, magical fantasy which has been enjoyed by generations.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
HarperFestival, 9780060563073, 240 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 4-8
Film version(s)

Herbert Brennon, 1924, P.J. Hogan 2003
Audio book(s)
yes

18.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe B1 – 3/language level 4 – content level 3
Author
C.S. Lewis
Year of publication
1950
Genre
Children's literature; allegory
Main theme
Christian allegory, faith, the possibility of the impossible, redemption, rebirth
Brief content description
In this book four children are sent to live in a rambling, old house, and in an empty, forgotten room they find an old wardrobe which leads them into the magical land of Narnia, a place doomed to perpetual Darkness unless the children unite with Aslan the lion against the evil White Witch to restore joy and light to the land.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Geoffrey Bless, London, 9780060234812, 176 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12
Film version(s)
TV Series 1988, Andrew Adamson 2005
Audio book(s)
yes

19.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Pearl B1 – 2/language level 3,4 – content level 3
Author
John Steinbeck
Year of publication
1947
Genre
parable, allegory
Main theme
Greed as a destructive force; the roles of fate and agency in shaping human life; colonial society's oppression of native cultures
Brief content description
When Kino, an Indian pearl-diver, finds 'the Pearl of the world' he believes that his life will be magically transformed. He will marry Juana in church and their little boy, Coyotito, will be able to attend school. Obsessed by his dreams, Kino is blind to the greed, fear and even violence the pearl arouses in him and his neighbours.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Penguin, 9780142000694, 96 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher

Film version(s)
Emilio Fernandez 1948, Alfredo Zacarias 2001
Audio book(s)
yes

20.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole B1 – 2/language level 3 – content level 3
Author
Sue Townsend
Year of publication
1982
Genre
diary
Main theme
desires and ambitions
Brief content description
At thirteen year old Adrian Mole has more than his fair share of problems: spots, ill-health, parents threatening to divorce, rejection of his poetry and much more, all recorded with brilliant humour in his diary.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
HarperTeen, 9780060533991, 272 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Peter Sasdy 1985
Audio book(s)
yes

21.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Swiss Family Robinson B2 – 3/language level 2 – content level 2
Author
Johann Wyss
Year of publication
1812
Genre
adventure novel
Main theme
struggle and survival
Brief content description
This story tells of the happy discovery of the wonders of natural history by a family shipwrecked on a desert island, who remain united through all the adversities they encounter.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Penguin Classics, 9780143104995, 496 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 9-12

Film version(s)
Disney 1960, TV Series 1974, 1975
Audio book(s)
yes

22.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Tailor of Gloucester A2 – 1/language level 1 – content level 1
Author
Beatrix Potter
Year of publication
1902
Genre
fiction, fantasy
Main theme
kindness, loyalty
Brief content description
This book tells the story of a poor tailor, his cat, and the mice that live in his shop. He has many scraps of cloth and ribbons left over that are too small for any practical use. The mice take these and make fine clothes for themselves. The tailor sends his cat Simpkin to buy food and a twist of cherry-coloured silk for a coat the mayor has commissioned for his wedding. While the cat is gone, he frees the mice from teacups where Simpkin has imprisoned them. When Simpkin returns and finds his mice gone, he hides the twist in anger. When the tailor falls ill, the mice save the day by completing the coat.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 9780548792483, 60 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Lit2Go: 5
Film version(s)
John Michael Phillips, 1989
Audio book(s)
yes
Didactic assignment
http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/contents/300/0309/0309_mat.pdf

23.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
The Wind in the Willows A2 – 1/language level 3 – content level 3
Author
Kenneth Grahame
Year of publication
1908
Genre
children's literature
Main theme
characters
Brief content description
The principle characters of these stories are talking animals who live in and around a river. Though they all have their faults, they are idealised in many ways. Several virtues are

characterised in Mole, Rat, Badger, and Toad, so much so that they become themes. There are numerous examples of hospitality, forgiveness, compassion, generosity, and humility. Even the arrogant Toad is able to humble himself and put aside his conceited ways in the end, having matured through a succession of trying circumstances with the guidance and help of loyal friends.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 9780684193458, 261 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 4-8
Film version(s)
Walt Disney 1949, Cosgrove Hall 1983, TV Series 1984-1990, Rankin/Bass 1987, 1995, Terry Jones 1996, 2006
Audio book(s)
yes

24.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Watership Down B1- 2/language level 4 – content level 4
Author
Richard Adams
Year of publication
1972
Genre
Fantasy, allegory
Main theme
Home, leadership, nature
Brief content description
Fiver could sense danger. Something terrible was going to happen to the warren, he felt sure of it. So did his brother Hazel, for Fiver's sixth sense was never wrong. They had to leave immediately, and they had to persuade the other rabbits to join them. And so begins a long and perilous journey of a small band of rabbits in search of a safe home. Fiver's vision finally leads them to Watership Down, but here they face their most difficult challenge of all.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Rex Collings, Ltd., 0901720313, 413 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
Film version(s)
Martin Rosen 1978
Audio book(s)
yes

25.

Title with indication CEF and Witte
Winnie the Pooh A2 – 1/language level 2 – content level B
Author
A.A. Milne
Year of publication
1926
Genre

children's novel
Main theme
friendship, imagination
Brief content description
The stories deal with simple situations that people may encounter in life. The book consists of several short stories themed around Pooh and his friends, each with a new problem and solution.
Publisher, ISBN, pages
Dutton Juvenile, 9780525457237, 368 pages
Different level indication e.g. by publisher
ages 4-8
Film version(s)
Walt Disney 1966, 1968, 1974, 1977, 1981, 1983, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2011
Audio book(s)
yes

Appendix III

Practical Assignments Didactics

Animal Farm – George Orwell

Assignments Witte level 1

1. Title

Aim: reflection of contents

Think of three other suitable titles for the book and explain why you have chosen them.

2. Identification

Aim: identification, increase involvement

There are different characters in the book. Which character do you like most and which character do you like least?

Write a letter of 200 words to the character you sympathise with referring to a specific event in the book.

3. Reading experience

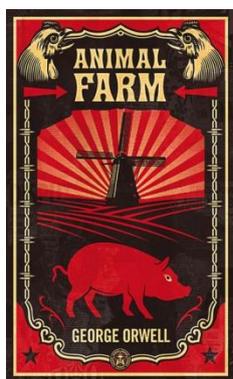
Aim: awareness of reading experience

1. Which part of the book did you like most and why?
2. Put this part of the book into a different form. You can choose from the following forms: poem, comic, drawing.
3. Show your poem, comic or drawing to your classmate and explain how you have come to this form.

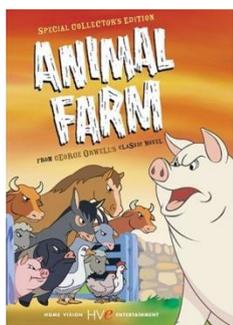
4. Cover

Aim: connection between cover and contents

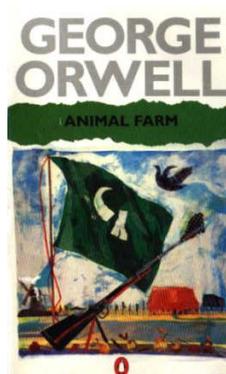
Below you can see different covers of *Animal Farm*.



A



B



C



D

Answer the following questions:

1. How does each of the covers relate to the story?
2. How do they differ from each other?
3. Which is your favourite cover and why?

4. Design your own cover and explain why you chose for this form.

Assignments Witte level 2

1. Genre

Aim: reflection themes

Animal Farm is a story about animals who can talk.

1. What genre is Animal Farm?
2. What are the characteristics of this genre?
3. Why would the author have chosen this genre for his book?

2. Characters

Aim: describe characters

The characters (mostly animals) in the book have names that have been chosen on purpose: Mr Jones; Napoleon; Snowball; Squealer; Moses, the crow; Boxer.

1. Choose four characters and describe the meanings of their names.
2. What does this say about who they are and in what relation they stand to each other?

3. Storyline

Aim: insight into storyline

There is a certain development in the book that eventually leads to the pigs talking with people and walking on two legs. Draw a timeline in which you show how everything has developed from the rebellion to the end of the book. Mention at least six incidents that are important steps in the development.

4. Test

Aim: encourage understanding

1. Write a test of 10 questions about the contents of the book.
2. Share the test with your classmate and answer the questions of your classmate's test.
3. Discuss each other's answers.