

## Lucy Calkins Classroom Libraries Video Interview Transcript

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**Question:** *What do teachers need to know about the Below Benchmark Libraries?*

**Lucy:** For us, this entire project has been a mission, a real mission of love. One of the most important things on our mind were the kids in classrooms that are reading well below benchmark, because what we so often see is that those kids are given books that are way too hard for them. Or they're given books that they think of as baby books, and they think, why read if that's the kind of thing you want me to read? Therefore, it was really important to us to develop two Libraries for each grade level. One Library is designed for a class of kids that are reading roughly at benchmark, and of course there will be the normal arc, where some of the kids are well below benchmark, and some above. But we also know that there are lots of classrooms in this country where kids are reading dramatically below benchmark. And so we spent a huge amount of time developing a second library at each grade level, curating the very best Libraries we possibly could for kids who are reading dramatically below benchmark.

For example, if you've got a class of sixth graders who are reading dramatically below benchmark, you can't give them fifth grade level books. You really need to go to the books that are sort of at the level M, N, and sometimes below that. And then the challenge is trying to find books that are second, third grade level books, but are going to be interesting for those sixth-grade kids. We spent tremendous amounts of time trying to get high-interest books that are at low levels. It was particularly challenging because we want our sixth graders to be reading in particular genres, so we want sixth graders to be reading fantasy, and we want them to be reading historic fiction. And to get historic fiction that's written at the second grade level or the fantasy books at the second grade level, third grade level, is very challenging. We spent a huge amount of our time trying to find the really, truly, high-interest, low-level books that kids deserve.

*To learn more about the TCRWP Classroom Libraries, browse representative titles, and order shelves, visit [calkinslibraries.com](http://calkinslibraries.com)*