

# THE OXFORD BOOKWORMS SYLLABUS

STARTER	present simple present continuous imperative <i>can/cannot, must</i> <i>going to</i> (future) simple gerunds	250 headwords
STAGE 1	past simple coordination with <i>and, but, or</i> time clauses with <i>before, after, when</i> reason/result clauses with <i>because, so</i> adverbs of manner infinitive of purpose gerunds and infinitives	400 headwords
STAGE 2	present perfect past continuous <i>will</i> future <i>must not, (don't) have to, could</i> comparison of adjectives simple <i>if</i> clauses tag questions <i>ask/tell</i> + infinitive	700 headwords
STAGE 3	present perfect continuous past perfect <i>should, may</i> <i>used to</i> causative relative clauses indirect statements	1000 headwords
STAGE 4	past perfect continuous passive (simple forms) <i>would</i> conditional clauses indirect questions relatives with <i>where/when</i> clauses of purpose, reason, contrast gerunds after prepositions/phrases	1400 headwords
STAGE 5	future continuous future perfect passive (modals, continuous forms) <i>would have</i> conditional clauses modals + perfect infinitive <i>so/such ... that</i> result clauses	1800 headwords
STAGE 6	passive (infinitives, gerunds) advanced modal meanings clauses of concession, condition	2500 headwords

## The Bookworms Grading Scheme

Bookworms are graded at seven language stages, from beginner to advanced level. Vocabulary and structure are carefully controlled according to the guidelines in the lexical and grammar syllabuses, but these are only the surface attributes of the grading process. The readability of a text at any level cannot be measured just by lexis, grammar, and sentence length.

Equal care is given to syntax, discourse markers, clarity of reference, linear progression in subordinate clauses, avoidance of complex embedding, the balance of given and new information, elements of style, and so on. Structuring the discourse to suit the developing reading strategies of the learner plays a very important part in the Bookworms grading scheme.

### What is the Starter Stage?

Texts at Starter level are much shorter, and the storytelling is carried as much by illustration as by text. A further staging within Starters is in effect provided by different text types.

- Comic strip stories (average length 950 words) suit less confident beginner readers.
- Narrative stories (average length 1500 words) with many illustrations suit beginner readers.
- Interactive stories (average length 1600 words) for beginner readers who enjoy choosing different routes through the text.

### What are Headwords?

They are words that form headings in a dictionary, under which their meaning is explained.

Examples of headwords are:

**go / happy / book**

The 'families' of those words could include:

**go:** *goes, going, went, gone*

**happy:** *happier, happily, unhappy, happiness*

**book:** *books*

These derived forms would not be in the headwords list, but they could be used in a text at that level.

The Bookworms lexical syllabus consists of a list of headwords which students are expected to know at each level. A text will never contain all the headwords available for the level; from the 700 Headwords at Stage 2, for example, perhaps only about 400/450 words will actually be used in the text.