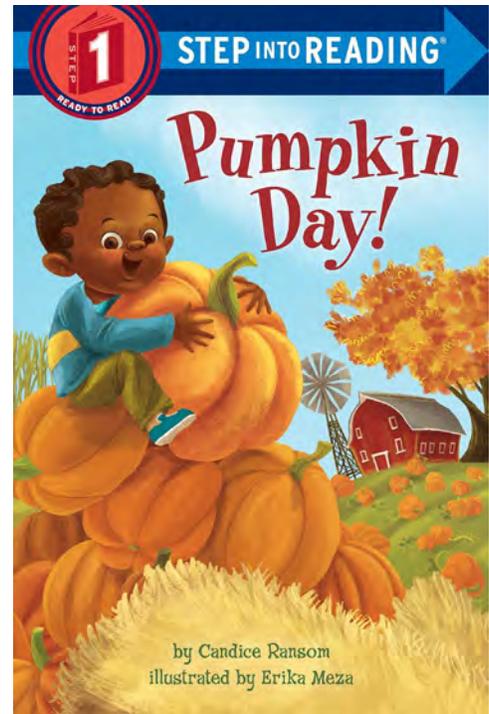


Easy Reader Curriculum Guide Candice Ransom

Writing Easy Readers (Harder than you think!)



I was asked by an editor to write a Level 1 easy reader for the publisher’s series. The stories are 100 to 150 words and use rhyme, rhythm (meter), and simple words. I wrote Pumpkin Day and the editor liked it. She asked me to write a sequel, with the same brother and sister having another fun day.

Apple Picking Day was much harder. I worked four months to find the story, keep the same tone as the first book, and follow the guidelines. A big word like mountain had to be changed to hill. Any changes threw off the rhythm and sometimes the rhyme scheme. I learned to make lists of one syllable words that rhymed: go, row, low. I never changed the story to suit the rhyme, but noodling around with rhyming words helped.

Next, I was asked to write three more “Day” books: Snow Day, Garden Day, and Beach Day. Snow Day was the hardest because I wrote it in July! Beach Day was the most fun. Soon I was writing other easy readers, Tooth Fairy’s Night and Go, Go, Tractors! I wrote them all in an orange spiral notebook I still have. I carry that notebook everywhere and work on my stories in my truck in parking lots, waiting in the dentist’s office, in the lobby before exercise class. Writers learn to use little scraps of time!

Level 1 books feature large type, easy words, and short sentences. Rhythm and rhyme make the stories fun to sound out. Colorful illustrations provide cues. I have gathered some activities—some Common Core or Science Standards aligned—and discussion questions so students can have even more fun with these books.

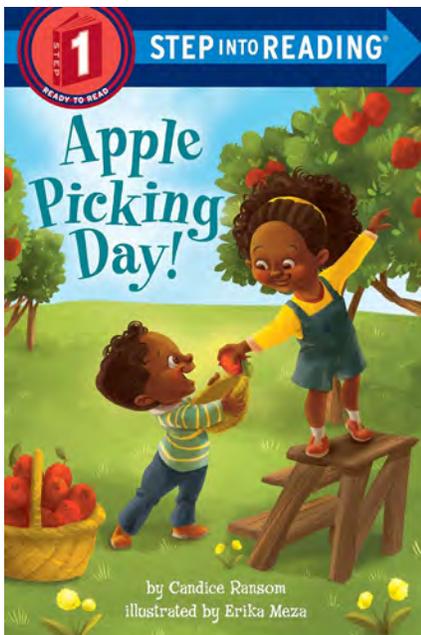
Pumpkin Day Activity - Do Pumpkins Float?

1. *Let students examine pumpkins of different sizes. What are their shapes? Are they light or heavy?*
2. *Let them guess how pumpkins will react in water. Will the heavy pumpkin sink? What about the mini pumpkin?*
3. *Place the pumpkins in a tub of water. What happens? They all float!*
4. *Let students find out why. Cut open a pumpkin. What is inside? Seeds and pulp, with lots of space around the seeds. Space contains air.*
5. *Even heavy pumpkins are mostly hollow inside. Air helps objects float.*

Apple Picking Day Activity - What is Inside an Apple?

1. *Make five labels: skin, flesh, seeds, stem, leaf.*
2. *Let students examine an apple cut in half. (Apples from a store are fine, but an orchard-picked one is better to get the stem and leaf.)*
3. *Ask students to identify the parts, using the labels. What might be an apple's skin?*
4. *Ask students to draw an apple half, labeling the seeds, leaf, stem, flesh, and skin.*

Science Standards: Pumpkin Day and Apple Picking Day NGSS-1-LS1-1

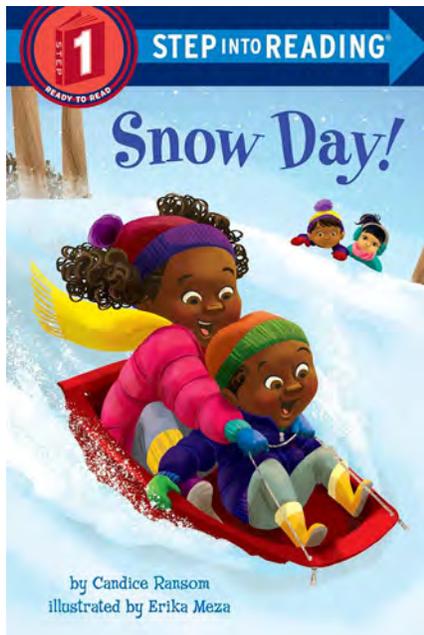


In the morning

we leave town.

Drive past woods

all gold and brown.



*First one flake,
then millions more.
Snow falls outside
our front door!*

Snow Day Activity - Make Paper Snowflakes

No school today! Stay home and have fun!

- 1. Fold square paper in half to make a triangle. Fold in half again to make a smaller triangle.*
- 2. Cut shapes into the sides of the triangle.*
- 3. Open! Hang up your square snowflake!*

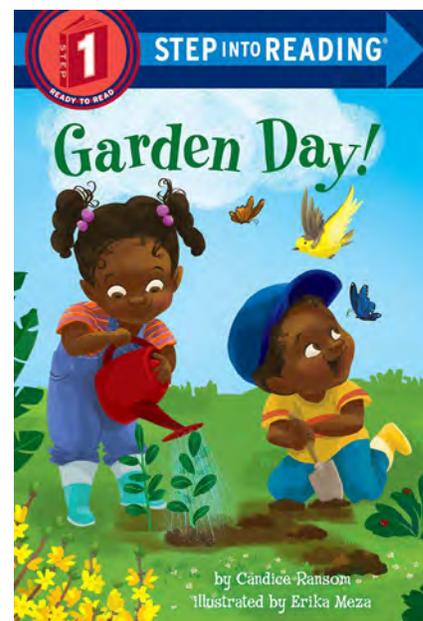
Garden Day Activity - Plant a Lima Bean

- 1. Soak 6 dried lima beans overnight. Fill 2 plastic cups halfway with potting soil.*
- 2. Poke small holes in the soil. Put 3 beans in each cup and cover with soil.*
- 3. Moisten soil. Cover the cups with plastic wrap.*
- 4. Check the cups each day. What is that green?*
- 5. It's a seedling! Remove plastic wrap. Let it grow!*

Question: *How did the soil stay moist?*

Common Core Standard - Snow Day
CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.K.1

Science Standard - Garden Day
NGSS-K-LS1-1

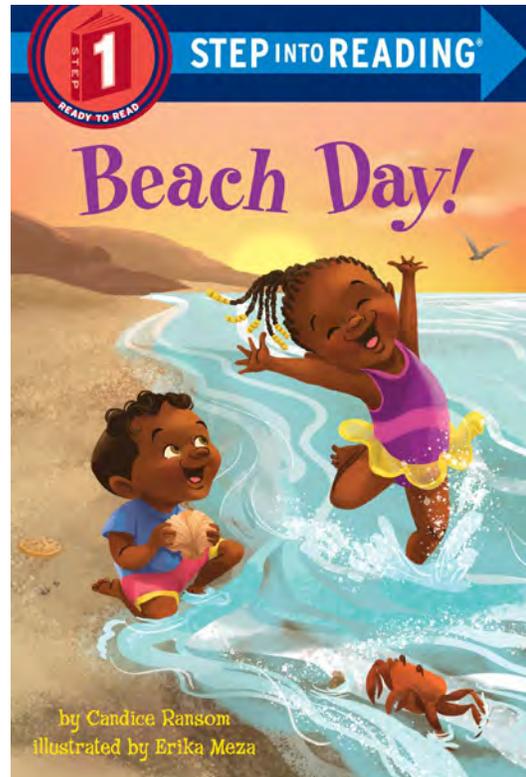


Summer morning.

Pack the car.

Follow beach road.

Here we are!

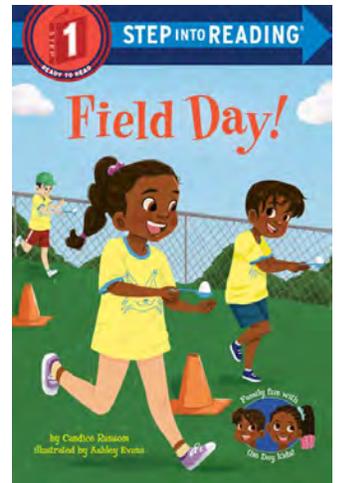
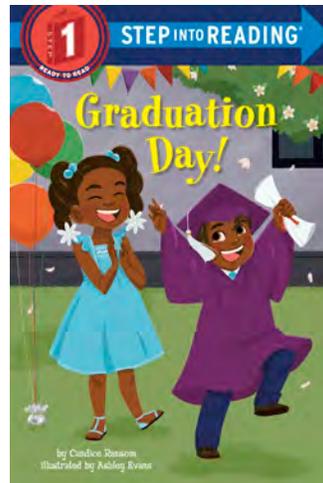
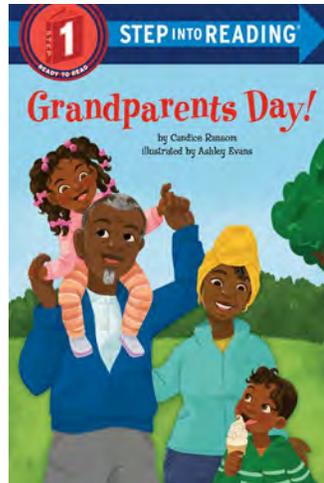
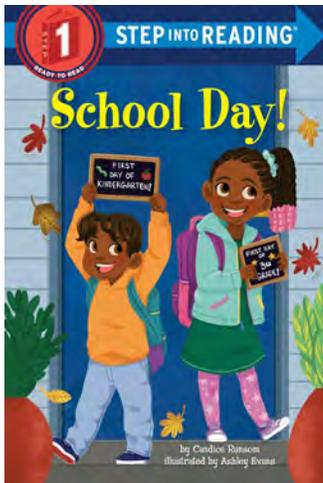


Discussion Questions: Beach Day

- 1. Ask students what elements make up a beach region (coastline, ocean, bay, sand).*
- 2. Ask students if they have ever been to the beach? Which one? Did they have fun?*
- 3. Ask what objects they might find at the beach (seashells, rocks, seaweed).*
- 4. Ask what animals might be found at the beach (seagulls, crabs, fish, dolphins).*
- 5. What did the characters in the story do during their day?*
- 6. Ask students what they most like to do at the beach.*
- 7. Ask students what is not fun at the beach (sunburn, sand castle washed away).*

Common Core Standards: Beach Day

CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.K.1



New Titles in the “Day Kids” Family Series:

School Day!
Random House, 2022
ISBN: 0593302605

Grandparents Day!
Random House, 2022
ISBN: 059330263X

Graduation Day!
Random House, 2023
ISBN: 059364364X

Field Day!
Random House, 2024
ISBN: 0593643674

Coming Soon!

Halloween Night!
and
Sleepover Night!

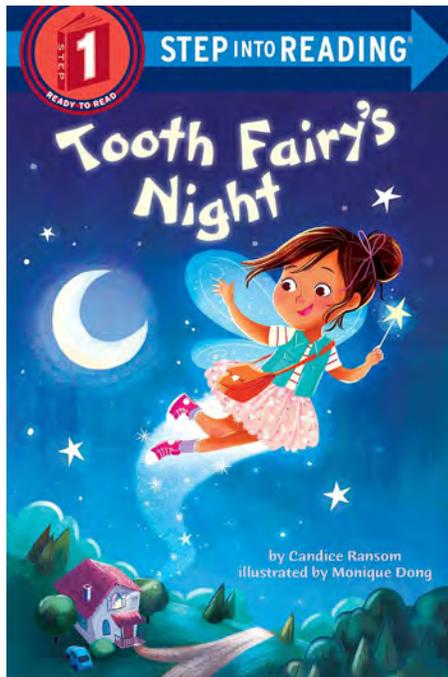
Pumpkin Day!
Random House, 2015
ISBN: 055351419

Apple Picking Day!
Random House, 2016
ISBN: 0553538586

Snow Day!
Random House, 2018
ISBN: 1524720372

Garden Day!
Random House, 2019
ISBN: 1524720407

Beach Day!
Random House, 2020
ISBN: 1524720437



How I Wrote Tooth Fairy's Night (El hada de los dientes)

“Bedtime? Not for the Tooth Fairy! She may be small but she has a BIG job to do . . .”

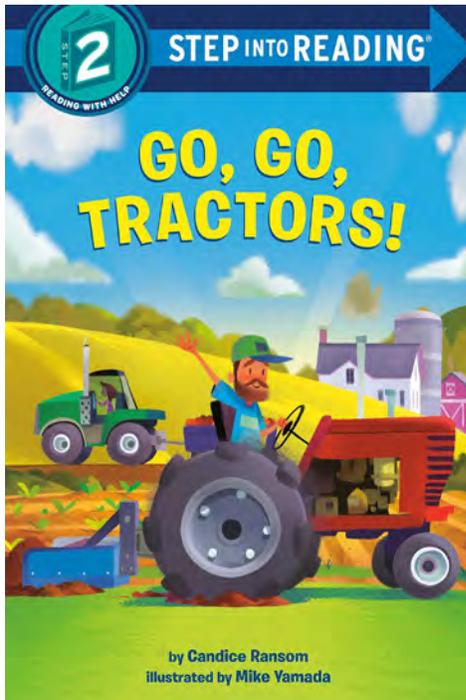
While I was writing the “Day” books, I was asked to write a Level 1 Reader about the Tooth Fairy. Yikes! That was hard! I thought about her job. The Tooth Fairy works every night, unlike Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. In my story, she feeds her pet, packs her address book, snack, and tooth bag. Then she’s off to work.

I loved the “pet” that artist Monique Dong created for the Tooth Fairy. Illustrators have their own ideas about what the author’s words look like. It’s all part of our wonderful job of making books!

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Ask students how many houses the Tooth Fairy visited.*
- 2. Ask students what dangers the Tooth Fairy faced.*

Common Core Standards:
CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.K.1



On the farm.

On the road.

Busy tractors.

Go, go, go!

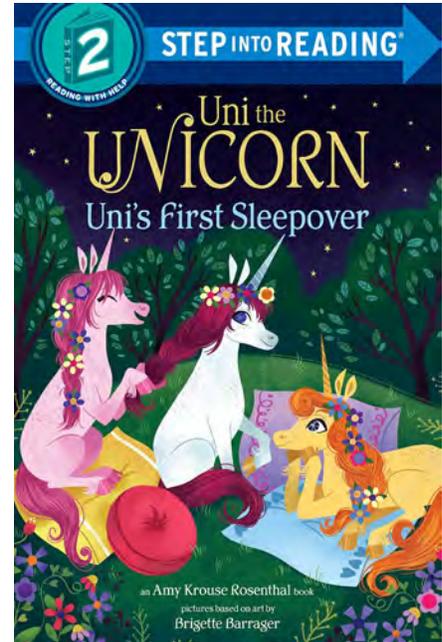
Discussion Questions: Go, Go, Tractors!

Who doesn't love tractors? As a kid, I rode on my stepfather's tractor in the spring when we plowed our garden. It looked the red one on the cover.

- 1. Ask students to name the colors of all the tractors in the book.*
- 2. Ask students to count all the tractors in the book, including the ones on the cover. (4 of them are in there twice!)*
- 3. Ask students to count the wheels on the tractors. There are a lot!*
- 4. Ask students to name the different jobs the tractors perform.*
- 5. How many students have a tractor at home or know someone who does?*

Common Core Standards:
CCSS.ELA.Literacy.RL.K.1

Uni the Unicorn
Step into Reading
Level 2

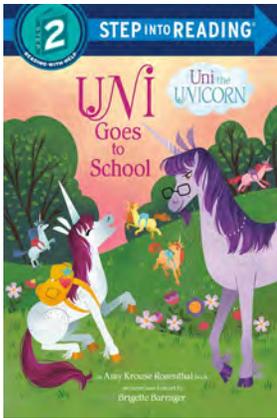


*My Step into Reading editor reached out to me to write something new: Level 2 readers with a character from the existing picture book, *Uni the Unicorn* and its sequel, *Uni the Unicorn and the Dream Come True*, written by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, illustrated by Brigitte Barrager. I would write new stories about Uni the Unicorn, and Lissy Martin would illustrate these books in Barrager’s style.*

I faced challenges right away. I wasn’t familiar with the very popular picture books. The author had died and her estate wished to continue making books about the character. Uni is non-binary—no pronouns. The topics of the books would be created by my editor and Rosenthal’s estate. However, I could expand Uni’s world in the Land of Unicorns. I didn’t have to use meter or rhyme.

In the first book, Uni’s First Sleepover, I gave Uni three friends: Goldie, Pinkie, and Silky. Uni has magical abilities, but still must fit in with friends. Uni tells stories to keep everyone from being afraid during the sleepover. (And I invented sparkle ball!) My name is not on the cover, but look for it on the copyright page.

Each book in the series emphasizes nature, friendship or family, and character traits such as courage, honesty, caring, giving, patience, leadership, teamwork, and being helpful. Level 2 readers are for PreK to Grade 1, with short sentences, basic vocabulary, and simple stories, all served with a sprinkle of magic!



Uni's First Sleepover
Random House, 2019

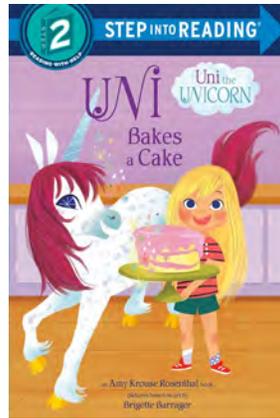
Uni Goes to School
Random House, 2020

Uni Bakes a Cake
Random House, 2020

Uni Brings Spring
Random House, 2021

Uni and the Perfect Present
Random House, 2021

Uni and the Butterfly
Random House, 2022



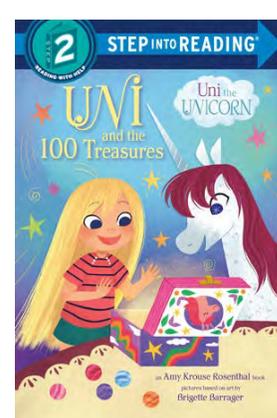
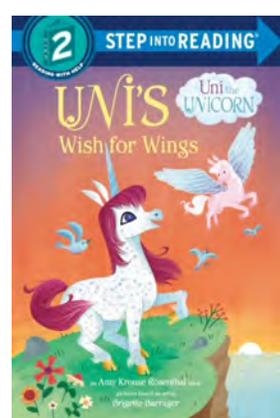
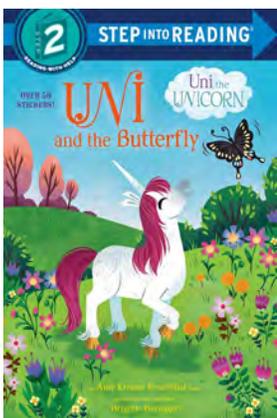
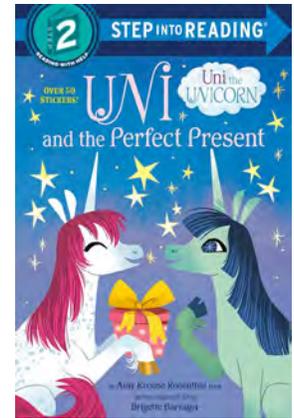
Uni's Wish for Wings
Random House, 2022

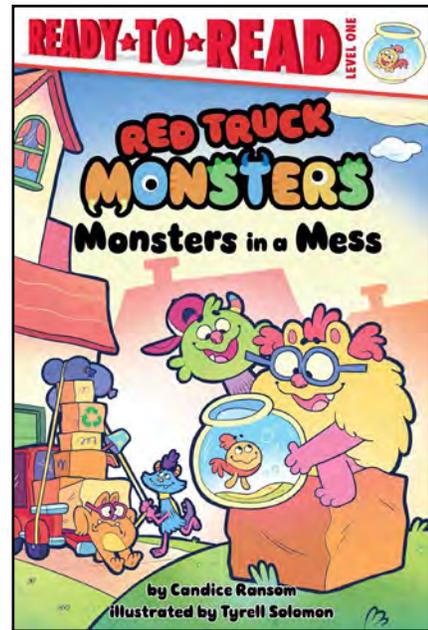
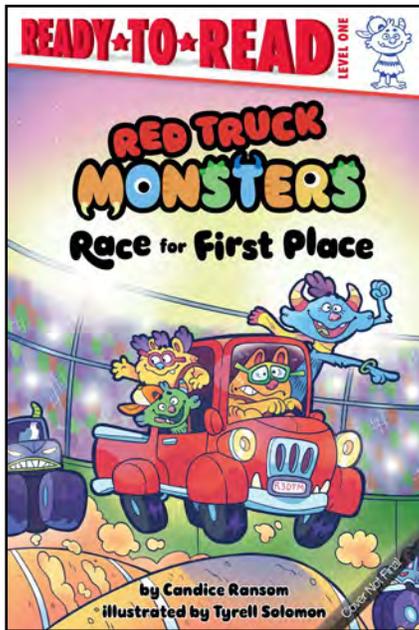
Uni and the 100 Treasures
Random House, 2023

Uni Joins the Team
Random House, 2023

Uni's First Recital
Random House, 2024

Uni and the Dolphin
Random House, 2024





Announcing a Brand-new Series!

Red Truck Monsters!

Race for First Place

Pictures by Tyrell Solomon

Simon Spotlight, 2022

ISBN: 1665901675

Monsters in a Mess

Pictures by Tyrell Solomon

Simon Spotlight, 2022

ISBN: 1665901605