Who are considered early primary school children?

Children in grades/levels one to three or children out of school aged approximately 6-10.

What are decodable texts?

Decodable texts are those that only contain letters and sounds a child or student has already learned. They support explicit reading instruction at the very beginning of reading instruction, generally kindergarten and first grade.   This approach to instruction introduces children systematically to letters and sounds, according to a language specific scope and sequence.

What are leveled texts?

Leveled texts are books or stories with increasing levels of difficulty (Cunningham, et. al, 2005). They are designed to provide students with reading materials that range from very simple to more complex[1].

Purposes and characteristics of leveled texts:

- Leveled texts are used to build vocabulary, develop comprehension skills, learn the structure of narrative or expository text, and develop fluency skills.
- They provide young students with reading material that is at their independent reading level (defined as material with no more than five unknown or new words per page).
- They can be placed on a continuum of difficulty, from very easy to very challenging. The 'level' of a book in a leveling system can help a teacher determine whether that book would be an appropriate match for a reader.
- They are not calibrated using quantitative methods but rather by qualitative expert judgment.
- Teachers can use them to evaluate the skill levels of each individual student and to adjust the match between students and books as needed.
- They are not designed for use with only one specific lesson or program; teachers using different programs or curricula can use the same series of leveled readers.

What is a reader?

These are non-fiction and fiction texts (short books or cards) that support reading acquisition.

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[1] Davidson, Marcia. "Books that Children Can Read: Decodeable Books and Book Leveling." Cambridge Education. 2013.
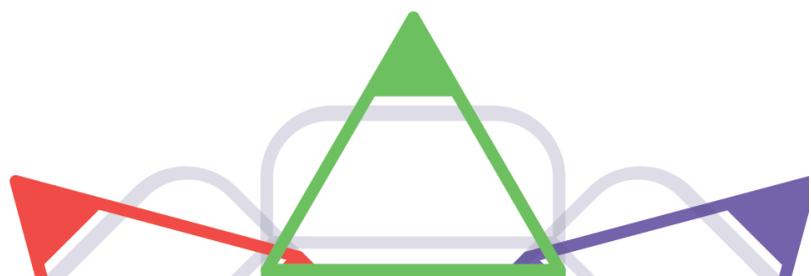
What format should the software be in?

Software can be in any form – it can be an application for Windows, Mac OS, Linux or mobile. However successful software needs to be accessible to the widest possible audience; so Windows software must be accompanied by either a Mac or Linux version (and vice-versa) and a mobile app for Android must be accompanied by a mobile app for iOS or Windows Mobile (and vice-versa). Web applications are very welcome, and will be acknowledged in the scoring, but are not eligible on their own (i.e. they must be submitted along with one of the above mentioned combinations). Obviously if your software is available in all of these formats, feel free to upload them all!

Remember, however, that mobile apps must still fulfil all of the software specifications.

Does the software have to be standalone or can it be an add-on?

The software can be an add-on, but it must be for a widely used application such as MSWord. The add-on must still be developed using source code you have the exclusive rights to and/or is licensed under open source; the application it is an add-on to, does not.

Can I write my software in any programming language?

Yes, you can use any programming language to write your software. However the code must be able to be manipulated in a freely available development environment and use a freely available compiler/interpreter. Remember that winning software will be made available for open source development, so it must be conducive to this.

What does the entry process involve?

You will be asked to answer sets of questions related to you and your software before finally uploading a copy of your software (as a single executable file as well as the source code files, necessary libraries, and associated documentation) and manual. The questions are structured as follows:

- The first set asks for some basic details on you and your team. These are for reporting purposes only and will not be used in evaluating your entry.
- Then you are asked to confirm whether your software meets the essential specifications as listed here.
- The final set of questions gives you an opportunity to provide further detail on the functionalities of your software
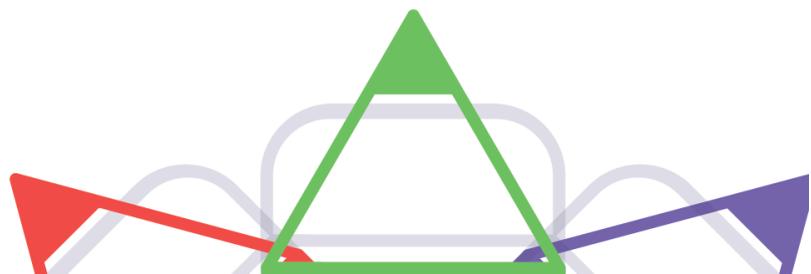
Who will be judging my entry and have access to my software?

Entries will be seen by judges from InnoCentive, WV, USAID, the Australian Government, as well as a number of expert judges from a range of fields and industries including literacy, education and technology. Unless you are selected as one of the three finalists, your software will not be shared beyond this circle and judges are committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards when reviewing your entry.

What does Phase Two involve?

In Phase Two, each finalist's submission will be tried out in countries where ACR GCD Partners have early grade reading programs. In each country, three writers will each use all three software submissions and produce leveled and decodable readers. The three entries will be judged by two criteria:

1. The ease of use, as judged by the writers.
2. The quality of the readers produced, as judged by a local team of educators and students.

The software with the highest combined score will be awarded **$100,000**. Following Phase 1, finalists will receive feedback from expert judges in order to assist them in further developing their software and fixing any bugs in preparation for Phase 2. Phase 2 will be funded and managed by the ACR GCD Partners.
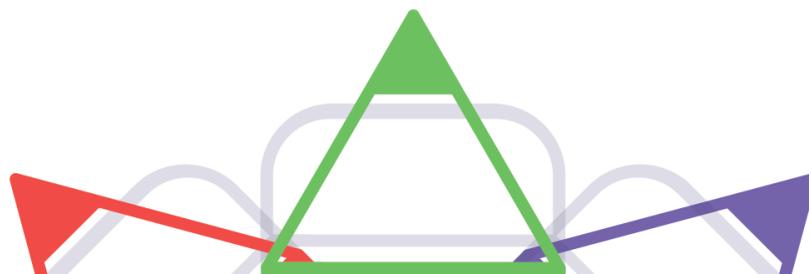
What's the prize?

Not only will you be contributing to improving literacy in developing countries, the three finalists in Phase One will receive:

-   A $12,000 cash prize.
-   Invitations to exclusive events.
-   Global recognition from ACR GCD.
-   Expert feedback on their software.
-   Exclusive entry into Phase 2 and the chance to win $100,000.

What language should be used for the software and manual?

The manual should be in English. Software should be Unicode-compliant and user prompts within the software must support at least Latin, Arabic, and Devanagari scripts and the necessary diacritical,[2] tone and accent marks, as well as any characters from the International Phonetic

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[2] The International Phonetic Association. http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/ipachart.html. 2013.

Alphabet needed for African, Asian, and Latin American languages written in Latin, Arabic or Devanagari scripts.

If I win, what do I have to provide in order to receive the prize?

To receive an award, finalists must provide the software to the public under an open source license, with minimum rights provided to the public equal to a GNU General Public License, whereby the finalist makes the submitted work publicly available under a license that allows the software and source code to be freely used, copied, and shared, and for any derivative works to be freely used, copied, and shared, without charge and with proper attribution. WV, USAID, and the Australian Government each receive a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the submitted work for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. Under the Federal purposes rights granted by the finalists, USAID intends to provide the submitted work, including the source code to the public free of charge.

Finalists must provide all source code, necessary libraries, and associated documentation. Please note that software must be built using source code you have the exclusive rights to and/or released under an open source compatible license.

Which formats should my software output readers to?

Readers should be able to be outputted to PDF **and** a common editable format in which layout is preserved when opened through free-to-use software (e.g. HTML); but if creating electronic readers, they should be outputted to at least .epub format.