What is a “book ladder”? I wanted to explore the ways nonfiction and fiction can overlap in terms of interest and topic. Providing students with a ladder of complex texts to explore throughout their journey as a reader in elementary school. I considered the most popular topics requested from some of our most resistant readers, and gathered a collection of high quality choices! These titles are listed not in alphabetical order, but in what I would consider a ladder of complexity. These are some of the titles in the ladders that were published in the last 2-3 years. I have additional titles in my ladders on the catalog in resource lists.

Example Book Ladder Topic: Dragons

**Summary:** Very basic text and illustrations, but fills a needed hole. Higher level text on the left side with simple words on the right. A great book to share with a struggling reader. Part of the “We Both Read” series.

**Summary:** Twin sisters Wei and Mei have very different personalities, but like Yin and Yang, they balance each other. This beautifully drawn story in pen and ink tells the story of when Wei wants to defeat the Dragon Frightful who has refused to move off a bridge that connects the two sides of their town. They can only solve the problem if they work together.

**Summary:** Beautiful photographs accompany this text that is formatted to be a joint reading experience between a stronger reader and a less confident reader. It discusses the mythology of dragons, and then compares features like claws, snouts, and thorns to other real world creatures. Each section ends with an activity for the readers. Part of the “You Read, I Read” series.

**Summary:** This non-fiction book takes the reader into the world of dragons with chapter one written as a short story. The rest of the book discusses dragon lore: common attributes stories have about dragons and what they symbolize in different cultures and how dragon stories may have started. This title ends with some writing prompts and a short quiz. Part of the “Mythical Creatures” series.

**Summary:** This collection of three traditional Latin American folktales: Tup, Martina Martínez, and Ratón Pérez, are told in graphic novel form. The writing is presented in simple clear sentences. The art style is also simple, but intriguing and feels like an old Disney cartoon. The endnotes tell the history of these three tales and the morals, and reasoning for why storytellers shared them. Includes storytelling starting lines as well.

**Summary:**

**Summary:** Fergus the class mouse is part of his classroom, he does all the lessons alongside the students. So when they class goes on a field trip and Fergus is not invited, he is indignant and hops a ride in a backpack. Fergus meet a mouse names Zeke at the museum and they explore together as only mice can. Will he make it back to the bus in time to make it home to school?


**Summary:** This hilarious graphic novel stars classroom pets packed with personality. A gang of pets, George Washington (G.W.), Barry, and Biter have been adopted into different classrooms in the same school. G.W. in an inventor and gathers materials dropped near his cage during the school day into his secret lair, hoping to stage a breakout and rescue his friends. An army of mice try to stop them, with messy and hilarious results.

**Example Book Ladder Topic: War Dogs**


**Summary:** This nonfiction book breaks down the variety of jobs a dog has within the military. They focus on guard dogs, scout dogs, detecting dogs, and combat tracker dogs and also explain the history of dogs in the military and how the dogs are trained. There are nice photographs that show the dogs in action, with sidebar information. I liked the font size and layout of this title.


**Summary:** Part of a series of books staring real dogs of war, this particular story follows Judy. Told from her point of view, Judy is a P.O.W alongside her Royal Navy crew. Taking place during World War II, they survive for years in internment and work camps. It does take the reader all the way through to Judy’s death, which occurs after the war.

**Other Book Ladder Themes Include:** Comic/Novel Mash ups, Cryptids, Records, Scary Stories, Sports, Survival, Unicorns.