



Phonic Decoding Assessment

How Do I Use This Assessment?

This assessment is best used as a formative assessment—as a quick but effective way to determine what word reading skills to teach next. Therefore, check-ins with students should be brief (about 5 minutes) and should usually involve *only* those sections of the overall assessment most likely to give key information that you can use to plan your next steps for instruction. Note that typically, you'll only assess students using one set of a particular section at a time. You'll start with Set 1, only moving to Set 2 if a student needs to be reassessed in the same category.

When administering this assessment . . .

1. Show the student page for the relevant section and ask the child to read the real words aloud. You might say: "Here are some real words that you might see in a book. Please read them to me. You can sound out the words, like this, /sssīīp/. Sip,' or you can read the words all at once, like this, 'Sip.'" Depending on the student, you might show an entire row of words or show the words one at a time.
2. After the child has read the real words from the set, ask the child to read the nonsense words aloud. You might say: "Here are some nonsense words. These are not real words, they're just silly and made up, but you can still read them. Don't try to change them into real words. You can sound out the words, like this, /nnnööömmm/. Nom,' or you can read the words all at once, like this, 'Nom.'" As before, show a row of words or one word at a time.

Nonsense words are included in the assessment so that you can determine whether or not students are able to apply their phonics skills to the decoding of unfamiliar words. Even some students *without* strong decoding skills may be able to recognize certain real words by sight.

How Do I Mark Student Responses on the Teacher Recording Sheet?

- If the child reads the word correctly, put a checkmark next to the word.
- If the child reads the word incorrectly, write the attempt next to the word.
- If the child makes multiple attempts to read the word, record all of the attempts.
- If the child self-corrects, write SC next to where you've written the incorrect attempts.
- If the child does not attempt to read the word, leave it blank. Then ask the student to try the word. If the child still does not attempt the word, move on.
- Record your additional observations in the box. Examples: "Reads sound by sound." "Reads whole words." "Accurate but slow." "Rushes and makes mistakes." "Inconsistent." "Confident."

How Do I Score This Assessment?

Since the check-in is a formative assessment, it should be scored with an eye toward what to teach next. Guidance on how to score each section and determine an instructional focus for the child is provided below.

After a student has attempted all the words in a section, determine the percentage read correctly. What you're looking for is the first section where the child can no longer read 80% of the words correctly. The phonics skills targeted by that section will be a good instructional focus for the student. As you administer the assessment your rule of thumb should be: If 80% or more of the words are read correctly, move on. If less than 80% of the words are read correctly, stop here—you've found something you can teach into. This information is reflected in the table below.

Score on Specific Word Reading	The student is at . . .	Level of Instructional Focus	You might . . .
100%	Mastery	Move On	Select a different instructional focus. Periodically review the phonics skills targeted by this section if it seems sensible. Keep in mind that students will also review them as they read and write.
80% or more	Proficiency	Be Strategic	Shift toward a different instructional focus, most likely the phonics targeted by the next word reading section. As you do, strategically teach into the phonics required to read the words in this section.
Achieved proficiency in the preceding section but less than 80% in this section	Instructional	Provide Intensive Teaching	Make the phonics targeted by the words in this section a major instructional focus for the student.

Phonic Decoding Assessment - List of Sections

Click below to jump to the Teacher Recording Sheet or Student Page for each section

1. **CVC Words with Short Vowels *a, i, o***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
2. **CVC Words with Short Vowels *a, i, o, u, e***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
3. **Consonant Blends**
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
4. **Consonant Digraphs *ch, sh, th, ck, ng***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
5. **Silent *e* Words**
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
6. **Inflectional Endings *-s, -es, -ing, -ed***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
7. **Vowel Teams *ea, ee, ai, ay, oa, ow***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
8. **Vowel-R *ar, or, er, ir, ur***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
9. **Special Vowels *ou, ow, oi, oy, au, aw, oo***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
10. **Two-Syllable Words consonant-LE, *closed syllables, open syllables***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
11. **Two-Syllable Words *all syllable types***
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page
12. **Three-Syllable Words**
 - Teacher Recording Sheet
 - Student Page

Phonic Decoding Assessment – Teacher Recording Sheets

Student Name: _____

CVC Words with Short Vowels *a, i, o*

Set 1

Example Real Word: sip

Example Nonsense Word: nom

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
not		kid		rom	
pig		rot		pid	
man		cap		mot	
				san	
Observations					

Proficient: 8-10/10

Set 2

Example Real Word: not

Example Nonsense Word: rom

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
sip		ram		nom	
pan		sad		rit	
dog		kit		cag	
				kip	
Observations					

Proficient: 8-10/10

Student Name: _____

CVC Words with Short Vowels a, i, o, u, e

Set 1

Example Real Word: can

Example Nonsense Word: vog

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
lap		sip		zum	
fed		yet		sim	
jog		cob		vap	
kit		nag		hob	
tug		hum		tez	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15 /15

Set 2

Example Real Word: lap

Example Nonsense Word: zum

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
can		hum		vog	
yet		kid		meb	
sub		rot		lat	
fin		leg		wup	
dot		zap		jit	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15 /15

Student Name: _____

Consonant Blends

Set 1

Example Real Word: flag

Example Nonsense Word: welf

Real Words with Initial Blends		Real Words with Final Blends		Nonsense Words with Initial and Final Blends	
snap		cost		grob	
plum		milk		quam	
sled		jump		smet	
drop		hand		tusp	
quit		felt		rilk	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: snap

Example Nonsense Word: rilck

Real Words with Initial Blends		Real Words with Final Blends		Nonsense Words with Initial and Final Blends	
flag		help		clug	
quiz		pond		trin	
grub		camp		quot	
trot		fist		welf	
sled		tusk		zamp	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Consonant Digraphs *ch, sh, th, ck, ng*

Set 1

Example Real Word: chin

Example Nonsense Word: vath

Real Words with Initial Position		Real Words with Final Position		Nonsense Words	
shut		such		thup	
chop		bath		leck	
thin		neck		yich	
		wish		shog	
		long		jang	
Observations					

Proficient: 11–13/13

Set 2

Example Real Word: shut

Example Nonsense Word: thup

Real Words with Initial Position		Real Words with Final Position		Nonsense Words	
chin		rang		vath	
that		lock		chib	
shed		mesh		zong	
		with		guck	
		much		sheb	
Observations					

Proficient: 11–13/13

Student Name: _____

Silent e Words

Set 1

Example Real Word: safe

Example Nonsense Word: fike

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
ripe		cave		bome	
take		rude		yide	
mule		joke		nafe	
home		size		zepe	
Observations					

Proficient: 10 - 12/12

Set 2

Example Real Word: ripe

Example Nonsense Word: bome

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
safe		bone		fike	
cute		gate		dete	
mine		tube		wobe	
rope		lime		vame	
Observations					

Proficient: 10 - 12/12

Student Name: _____

Inflectional Endings -s, -es, -ing, -ed

Set 1

Example Real Word: running

Example Nonsense Word: tumped

Real Words with Short Vow-els		Real Words with Silent e		Nonsense Words	
jumps		likes		vanded	
digging		named		fomps	
passes		rules		zaking	
helped		biking		yishes	
Observations					

Proficient: 10–12/12

Set 2

Example Real Word: jumps

Example Nonsense Word: vanded

Real Words with Short Vowels		Real Words with Silent e		Nonsense Words	
running		homes		tumped	
landed		making		nosks	
chops		smiled		peshes	
gushes		pipes		laking	
Observations					

Proficient: 10–12/12

Student Name: _____

Vowel Teams ea, ee, ai, ay, oa, ow

Set 1

Example Real Word: toad

Example Nonsense Word: zay

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
mail		goat		feek	
beep		rain		zow	
low		heat		tay	
weak		peel		voap	
ray		coat		yaid	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: mail

Example Nonsense Word: feek

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
toad		mean		zay	
real		paid		yeap	
seen		beep		fow	
mow		day		poan	
pail		loaf		raif	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Vowel-R ar, or, er, ir, ur

Set 1

Example Real Word: arm

Example Nonsense Word: zer

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
fork		yarn		lirf	
her		hurt		sarb	
turn		born		mert	
card		girl		vorg	
bird		fern		nurp	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: fork

Example Nonsense Word: lirf

Real Words			Nonsense Words		
arm		far		zer	
herd		dirt		lorm	
firm		burp		yarp	
corn		germ		wurt	
surf		sort		dirl	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Special Vowels ou, ow, oi, oy, au, aw, oo

Set 1

Example Real Word: hawk

Example Nonsense Word: fow

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
town		saw		jout	
joy		took		naul	
loud		coin		mawn	
boil		how		zoy	
haul		boot		voop	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: town

Example Nonsense Word: jout

Real Words				Nonsense Words	
hawk		soil		fow	
out		loop		baum	
book		boy		roif	
faun		jaw		oud	
toy		howl		lawp	
Observations					

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Two-Syllable Words consonant-LE, closed syllables, open syllables

Set 1

Example Real Word: mumble

Example Nonsense Word: yottle

Consonant-LE Words		VCCV Words		VCCCV Words		VCV Words		Nonsense Words	
apple		rabbit		pumpkin		robot		pungle	
handle		napkin		bathtub		cabin		vimbut	
puzzle		helmet		subtract		frozen		zobin	
Observations									

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: apple

Example Nonsense Word: pungle

Consonant-LE Words		VCCV Words		VCCCV Words		VCV Words		Nonsense Words	
mum- ble		cactus		fish- pond		broken		yottle	
fizzle		tennis		hun- dred		silent		ligan	
uncle		sudden		instant		finish		zundid	
Observations									

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Two-Syllable Words *all syllable types*

Set 1

Example Real Word: polite

Example Nonsense Word: durper

Silent e Words		Vowel-R Words		Vowel Teams Words		Special Vowels Words		Nonsense Words	
athlete		farmer		display		outlaw		deeply	
volume		inform		oatmeal		annoy		oilish	
cascade		purple		rainbow		raccoon		garba-ze	
Observations									

Proficient: 12–15/15

Set 2

Example Real Word: athlete

Example Nonsense Word: deeply

Silent e Words		Vowel-R Words		Vowel Teams Words		Special Vowels Words		Nonsense Words	
polite		sparkle		hollow		boot-camp		durper	
bedside		ladder		rain-coat		tinfoil		pizzow	
ex-plode		forgot		freeway		awful		clictate	
Observations									

Proficient: 12–15/15

Student Name: _____

Three-Syllable Words

Set 1

Example Real Word: argument

Real Words	
fantastic	
antelope	
explaining	
reminder	
nocturnal	
<i>Observations</i>	

Proficient: 4–5/5

Set 2

Example Real Word: fantastic

Real Words	
argument	
imitate	
publishing	
volcanic	
hamburger	
<i>Observations</i>	

Proficient: 4–5/5

Phonic Decoding Assessment – Student Pages

CVC Words with Short Vowels a, i, o

Set 1

not	pig	man	
kid	rot	cap	
rom	pid	mot	san

Set 2

sip	pan	dog	
ram	sad	kit	
nom	rit	cag	kip

CVC Words with Short Vowels a, i, o, u, e

Set 1

lap	fed	jog	kit	tug
sip	yet	cob	nag	hum
zum	sim	vap	hob	tez

Set 2

can	yet	sub	fin	dot
hum	kid	rot	leg	zap
vog	meb	lat	wup	jit

Consonant Blends

Set 1

snap	plum	sled	drop	quit
cost	milk	jump	hand	felt
grob	quam	smet	tusp	rilk

Set 2

flag	quiz	grub	trot	sled
help	pond	camp	fist	tusk
clug	trin	quot	welf	zamp

Consonant Digraphs *ch, sh, th, ck, ng*

Set 1

shut		chop		thin	
such	bath	neck	wish	long	
thup	leck	yich	shog	jang	

Set 2

chin		that		shed	
rang	lock	mesh	with	much	
vath	chib	zong	guck	sheb	

Silent e Words

Set 1

ripe	take	mule	home
cave	rude	joke	size
bome	yide	nafe	zepe

Set 2

safe	cute	mine	rope
bone	gate	tube	lime
fike	dete	wobe	vame

Inflectional Endings -s, -es, -ing, -ed

Set 1

jumps	digging	passes	helped
likes	named	rules	biking
vanded	fomps	zaking	yishes

Set 2

running	landed	chops	gushes
homes	making	smiled	pipes
tumped	nosks	peshes	laking

Vowel Teams ea, ee, ai, ay, oa, ow

Set 1

mail	beep	low	weak	ray
goat	rain	heat	peel	coat
feek	zow	tay	voap	yaid

Set 2

toad	real	seen	mow	pail
mean	paid	beep	day	loaf
zay	yeap	fow	poan	raif

Vowel-R ar, or, er, ir, ur

Set 1

fork	her	turn	card	bird
yarn	hurt	born	girl	fern
lirf	sarb	mert	vorg	nurp

Set 2

arm	herd	firm	corn	surf
far	dirt	burp	germ	sort
zer	lorm	yarp	wurt	dirl

Special Vowels *ou, ow, oi, oy, au, aw, oo*

Set 1

town	joy	loud	boil	haul
saw	took	coin	how	boot
jout	naul	mawn	zoy	voop

Set 2

hawk	out	book	faun	toy
soil	loop	boy	jaw	howl
fow	baum	roif	oud	lawp

Two-Syllable Words *consonant-LE, closed syllables, open syllables*

Set 1

apple	handle	puzzle
rabbit	napkin	helmet
pumpkin	bath tub	subtract
robot	cabin	frozen
pungle	vimbut	zobin

Set 2

mumble	fizzle	uncle
cactus	tennis	sudden
fishpond	hundred	instant
broken	silent	finish
yottle	ligan	zundid

Two-Syllable Words *all syllable types*

Set 1

athlete	volume	cascade
farmer	inform	purple
display	oatmeal	rainbow
outlaw	annoy	raccoon
deeper	oilish	garbage

Set 2

polite	bedside	explode
sparkle	ladder	forgot
hollow	raincoat	freeway
bootcamp	tinfoil	awful
durper	pizzow	clitrate

Three-Syllable Words

Set 1

fantastic	antelope	explaining	reminder	nocturnal
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Set 2

argument	imitate	publishing	volcanic	hamburger
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