

## English

# 5: Reading assessment, book leveling and group work

## Main ideas

- reading phases
- Overview of assessment methods
- taking Running Records
- leveling of reading books
- catering for different ability groups in the classroom / guided reading
- developing a take-home reading system
- overview of literacy resources available through Beacon Media (free downloads).

## Outcomes

At the completion of this session teachers will:

- be aware of the phases a child passes through in learning to read
- be able to take a running record
- be able to administer Burt and Holborn tests
- understand the meaning of a 'reading age'
- be able to choose reading books that are the right level for the child
- be able to organize and conduct a group reading session
- be able to organize a take-home reading system

## Content

### 1. Phases of reading

#### Emergent Phase

a) Emergent phase Level 1

Children pay close attention to print, noticing many features of words and letters. Reading books should:

- have direct match between text and illustration
- have one line of text per page
- have a word count between 0 and 50 words
- use familiar language and a range of punctuation.

b) Emergent Phase Level 2

In addition to the features of Level 1,

- Sentence length begins to vary
- Texts often have two lines of print per page
- The text is predictable and repetitive

c) Emergent level 3

Additional features to Levels 1 and 2 include:

- longer texts
- increasing variation in sentence structure
- the core of high frequency words is increased

d) Emergent Level 4

Additional features:

- Text extent increases.
  - One to five lines of text per page
  - Longer sentences
  - More story carried in the text
- e) Emergent Level 5
- 1-5 lines of text per page
  - more complex high frequency words
  - Direct speech is used – “said” and “asked”
  - “ing” and “ed” are used

### **Early Phase Levels 6-11**

The topics are slightly more complex but still easy to understand

There is an increase in the range of genres

Sentences may contain more than one idea.

There is more variety in vocabulary.

A full range of punctuation is used.

### **Transitional Phase Levels 12-14**

Children are moving towards becoming more fluent and have a wider repertoire of problem-solving strategies.

### **Extending Phase levels 18-23**

These books may have several ideas in the plot and are often in episodes.

## **2. Book leveling**

### ***Reading goals and expectations:***

Levels 1-30 to be worked through and completed by approximately the age of 9 years. The levels can be grouped into alphabetical ‘broadbands’, (see table below)

### ***Classroom organization of reading books:***

Reading books can be colour coded according to levels or ‘broadbands’ and set up in containers.

e.g. Red spots on the back of books for Levels 1-3; yellow spots for Levels 4-6 and so on. This means that there are 10 colour coded sets of books which are worked through systematically from beginners to middle primary.

Example:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Colour</b>
1-2	Red (A)
3-5	Yellow (B)
6-8	Dk blue (C)
9-11	Lt blue (D)
12-14	Green (E)
15-17	Purple (F)
18-20	Orange (G)
21-23	Brown (H)
23-26	Black (I)
27-30	Grey (J)

Once a child can comfortably read a book at level 30, they can move on to suitable chapter books, (middle to upper primary), which can be chosen at the discretion of the teacher.

### 3. Overview of assessment methods

#### a) A general assessment can be made by listening to a child read.

Look for the following:

- Is there a decoding problem? (Are there any words that are hard to say?)

You can devise a test for decoding skills... can be made up words, e.g. fis, fen, coy, bide, criss, conker, dapple, lote, gud, hin, sut, jav, tope, sive, bame, nel, sult, faim<sup>i</sup>

- Is there a vocab problem? (Tell me what this word means to you? Can you tell me a bit more about it?)
- Is there a comprehension problem? (What do think this means so far? Where are the hardest bits?)

#### b) Formal testing

Burt and Holborn tests – see supplements. These tests give a reading age.

What is a 'reading age'?

A level of text difficulty, able to be read by a child of a particular age

Marie Clay: Running Records, (see next point)

Marie Clay was a New Zealander who developed an assessment method called 'Running Records'. This involved listening to a child read a passage of 100 words, and making a note on the accuracy of each word, then converting this information to a score.

### 4. Taking Running Records

#### Reading at the right level:

1. Choose a book that you THINK might be at the child's level. Make sure that the subject matter is meaningful to the child and within their sphere of experience.
2. Choose 25, 50 or 100 words from the text and photocopy it.
3. Teacher sits next to the child in order to view the book.
4. Teacher marks the text with a tick for each word the child reads correctly, and an underline for each word unknown or incorrect. Symbols are placed above the word to denote the kind of error.
5. At the end of the passage, the teacher either asks the child to retell the story, or asks some comprehension questions.

### **Codes for recording:**

- Tick every correct word that is read correctly, and underscore the words that are not read correctly.
- SC – self-corrected (not an error)
- T - if word was unknown and had to be told by teacher
- Long dash if a word was skipped
- Arrow head if a word was inserted, (write the word above)
- TA – teacher asks the child to try that word again
- P – pause (not an error)

### **Scoring**

Accuracy rate:

Subtract number of errors from total number of words.

e.g. Total words = 50; errors = 4, then the score is 46

Now make it into a percentage by working out the score out of 100

$46/50 = 92/100$

### **Interpretation**

95-100% = independent reader. The child can read books at this level quite well.

90-94% = instructional level. The child will need help with reading a book at this level. This level gives an important challenge. It will help the child extend vocabulary if given appropriate support.

90% and below = frustration level. Try a lower level.

### **Analyzing mistakes**

M = meaning

S = structure

V = visual

#### *Meaning*

This would be where the child's words do not relate to the meaning of the story and its illustrations.

#### *Structure*

Example: a child misreads "He walk to the shop" instead of "He walks to the shop". This is a grammatical error.

#### *Visual*

Example: a child misread the word "Dad" for "father". The word "Dad" doesn't look like "father", although it does make sense.

[http://www.lda-ia.org/Running\\_Records](http://www.lda-ia.org/Running_Records)

### **Using the test results:**

**Independent level** – 100% accuracy. A good level to use for take-home books.

**Instructional level** – 95% accuracy with 80% comprehension.

**Frustration level** - less than 95% accuracy and 70% or lower in comprehension. This book is too hard for the child.

***How often to test:***

At least twice per term. More frequent for lower levels.

## 5. Reading speed

The following shows an average for silent reading:

Age	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	adult
Words per minute	80	138	173	195	214	237	280

## 6. Catering for different reading ability groups in the classroom

Once you know the reading level of your students, they can be grouped for activities.

Divide your class into three ability groups. They can be given groups names, e.g. Lions, tigers, cheetahs

*Conducting a reading session:*

In lower primary, start each session with a 'big book' read by the teacher while the students follow the text. A pointer can be used.

Then the three groups go to work in their different areas.

Each day, one group works with the teacher, (guided reading) while the other two groups work independently. (Parent assistance would be of great help for independent working groups, especially at the lower levels.)

The group with the teacher can read through a text under the guidance of the teacher. The teacher could ask the children to read in pairs, to read altogether, to read a short passage silently. The teacher will question for comprehension throughout the session. It is not a good idea to ask insecure readers to read aloud in front of the group. This only makes them feel more insecure.

Independent working groups could be doing the following:

Lower primary:

- phonics activities such as picture / sound matching; card activities
- making letters from play dough
- jigsaws
- reading / phonics work sheets
- silent reading books of choice (at their level)
- read and draw

Middle / Upper primary

- working on spelling words
- silent reading
- grammar / punctuation exercises
- Reciprocal reading

You could make up a table to show which group works on which activity. Here is an example for a fortnight.

Date	With teacher	Spelling/phonics	Silent reading
Sept 4	tigers	lions	cheetahs
Sept 5	lions	cheetahs	tigers
Sept 6	cheetahs	tigers	Lions
Sept 7	tigers	lions	Cheetahs
Sept 8	lions	cheetahs	Tigers
Sept 11	cheetahs	tigers	lions
Sept 12	Tigers	Lions	Cheetahs
Sept 13	Lions	Cheetahs	Tigers
Sept 14	Cheetahs	Tigers	Lions
Sept 15	tigers	lions	cheetahs

## 7. Developing a take-home reading system

### ***Equipment needed:***

Each child should have a cover folder such as a plastic document folder, to protect the reading material they are borrowing.

### ***Reading material to be supplied:***

Each day the children should take home some new reading material, at a slightly easier level than they work on in class.

Examples of reading material to be supplied: laminated stories, home made books, printed story sheets, commercially produced books

### ***System checklist:***

Each child should have a piece of paper in their take-home document folder where the books they have read are recorded and daily reading is signed by parents or siblings who hear the child read.

Example:

Date	Book or story title	Pages read	Signature

## 8. Assistance for reading

Parent/community members can assist by listening to reading in school time. Make a roster.

Teacher's aides can help with testing.

## Assessment task

During your practicum:

- a) Make a list of the students in your class and record their reading ages at a given date using the Burt and Holborn reading tests

Assess the reading level of the students in your class using Running Records. Record the results.

## Appendix: Holborn and Burt reading tests

# HOLBORN READING SCALE

*A test of word recognition.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

The child is asked to see how many of the sentences they can read. Prompt them by telling them the words he/she is unable to name until altogether they have failed to name four. The numbers indicated on each line will indicate their reading age, shown in years and months.

1. The dog got wet and Tom had to rub him dry.	5yr 9 mth
2. He was a very good boy to give you some of his sweets.	6 yr
3. My sister likes me to open my book and read to her.	6yr 3mth
4. Go away and hide behind that door where we found you just now.	6yr 6mth
5. Please don't let anyone spoil these nice fresh flowers.	6yr 9mth
6. The string had eight knots in it which I had to untie.	7yr
7. Wine is made from the juice of grapes which grow in warm countries.	7yr 3 mth
8. Mary went to the grocer's and bought some sugar and some syrup.	7yr 6mth
9. Quench your thirst by drinking a glass of our sparkling ginger ale.	7yr 9mth
10. The people could scarcely obtain enough food to remain healthy.	8yr
11. Elizabeth had her hair thoroughly combed and her fringe cut.	8yr 3 mth
12. By stretching up, George just managed to touch the garage ceiling.	8yr 6mth
13. Father had a brief telephone conversation with my cousin Philip.	8yr 9mth
14. This coupon entitles you to a specimen piece of our delicious toffee.	9yr
15. The chemist could not suggest a satisfactory remedy for my headache.	9yr 3mth
16. Nobody recognised Roger in his disguise as a police official.	9yr 6mth
17. Leonard was engaged by the Irish Linen Association to act as their London agent.	9yr 9mth

18. Judged by his photographs your nephew is certainly a peculiar character.	10yr
19. The examiner was impatient when I hesitated over a difficult phrase in my reading.	10yr 3mth
20. Delicate individuals should gradually be accustomed to gentle physical exercise.	10yr 6mth
21. The musician whose violin was interfered with has our sincere sympathy.	10yr 9mth
22. The soloist was not in a convenient position for seeing everyone in his audience.	11yr
23. Christopher omitted to acknowledge the receipt of Michael's annual subscription.	11yr 3mth
24. The secretary said there had been a substantial increase in the Society's expenditure.	11yr 6mth
25. The Borough Council decided to celebrate the occasion by organising a gigantic sports festival.	11yr 9mth
26. It is essential that engineering apprentices should acquire some good technical qualification.	12yr
27. Particulars of the careers of eminent men will be found in any good encyclopedia or biographical dictionary.	12yr 3mth
28. Certificates of insurance will be issued to all policy holders paying the necessary premium.	12yr 6mth
29. The ceremony ended, appropriately enough, with the choir and Orchestra joining in the National Anthem.	12yr 9mth
30. It is both a newspaper which chronicles events and a magazine with the usual miscellaneous features.	13yr
31. The necessity for accelerating the work of the Economic Conference was repeatedly emphasized.	13yr 3mth
32. These documents constitute an authoritative record of a unique colonial enterprise.	13yr 6mth
33. Psychology is a science which seems to fascinate both the adult and the adolescent student.	13yr 9mth



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## ***Burt Reading Test (1974) Revised***

### **Instructions for administration**

With all standardised reading tests it is essential that there is no teaching to the test. None of the words should be taught in preparation for the test.

Each child is tested individually on the Burt Reading Test.

#### ***Instructions***

- Administer the test in a quiet area away from other children.
- Child (younger than 9 years old) starts at the top and reads words from left to right.
- Stop after 10 consecutive errors (or earlier if struggling).
- Count the words that have been read correctly. This is the raw score. Consult the chart 'Revised Norms For Burt (Re-arranged)' and convert the raw score into a Reading Age e.g. a score of 24 would give a reading age of 6.5. The reading ages are given in years and months (Not years and tenths of a year).

#### ***Recording***

While the child is reading the words on the printed sheet, the teacher should record the responses on a separate sheet (a photocopy of the test works well). The recording should not be made so obvious as to distract the child. At the same time the recording should be carefully and systematically done for each pupil. Do not try to count orally the number of words correctly (or incorrectly) read by the child, and do not try to score on odd bits of paper. A convenient way of recording is to make a tick (✓) or to circle each word correctly read.

If a pupil reads too fast for the purpose of recording, he may be asked to read more slowly, or to reread a word which the teacher was not sure about.

#### ***Where to start***

Children up to the age of nine or those known to be weak readers should start the test from the beginning.

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Pupils above the age of nine years may be allowed to commence the test at the third, fourth or fifth group of ten words (according to the age and the teacher's judgement), i.e. a 10-year-old may commence at the word 'nurse', a 13-year-old at 'emergency'. The point at which a child should commence is left to the discretion of the teacher, but a mark should be made on the record sheet of the first word of the group at which these older or brighter pupils commence, to enable the teacher to calculate the score correctly.

Should a pupil fail with any word of a group of ten words, when he has started at a point beyond the initial groups of ten, then he should be taken back to read the preceding group of ten words.

E.g. A child commencing at 'beware' and failing on any word within this group

should be taken back to read the group commencing 'nurse'.

If he read correctly all ten words in this pair of lines, he should, of course, be credited with success on all earlier words.

### *During the test*

- The child's original response should be accepted but spontaneous corrections should be allowed.
- The child should not be told whether his responses were correct or not; if he asks, only general encouragement should be given.
- Asking for a repetition of the word should be used only when the examiner is not sure of what the pupil has said. If the word is clearly said wrongly, e.g. 'know' instead of 'known' then there is no need to ask for a repetition. Asking the child to reread the word should not be used to indicate "You had better look at it again, there is something wrong with it." The only case in which one would allow this is when an obviously bright pupil or good reader makes a slip in an earlier word. For example a bright ten-year old reading quickly may leave the 's' off 'boys', but on being asked again to read the word will usually give it correctly. It may be appropriate to advise a pupil who makes several such errors through inattentiveness to look at each word carefully before saying it.
- The pupil should be allowed to read at his own speed. Some pupils are very slow and show a fairly well developed power of word analysis and synthesis if given sufficient time. The pupil should not be hurried, and self-corrections should be counted as correct.
- Guessing is allowed; indeed a child should be encouraged to guess rather than omit words that he does not know.
- Words should not be pronounced for pupils even when they stumble over them. Usually when a child is unable to say the word, the injunction, "We will leave that one. Let's go to the next word," is sufficient.
- The usual pronunciation of words should be accepted. Local variations occur and these should be allowed for in deciding on the correctness or otherwise of responses.

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- Any attempt at coaching or teaching the difficult words to pupils should be studiously avoided

\* Note that it is advisable to wait at least six months before testing a child again on the same test.

### **Burt Reading Test (1974) Revised:**

to is up he at  
for my sun one of  
big some his or an  
went boys that girl water  
just day wet pot things  
no told love now sad  
nurse carry quickly village scramble  
journey terror return twisted shelves  
beware explorer known projecting tongue  
serious domineer obtain belief luncheon  
emergency events steadiness nourishment fringe  
formulate scarcely universal commenced overwhelmed  
circumstances destiny urge labourers exhausted  
trudging refrigerator melodrama encyclopaedia apprehend  
motionless ultimate atmosphere reputation binocular  
economy theory humanity philosopher contemptuous  
**autobiography excessively champagne terminology perambulating**

