What is the Intervention Decision Tree?

The Intervention Decision Tree is an instructional tool to help determine appropriate data-based interventions in the domains of word recognition and language comprehension. The Simple View of Reading (SVR) represents the two most important components of reading – the ability to decode the written word and the ability to comprehend the language of text. Each domain of the SVR includes strands that are definable, measurable and somewhat independent as demonstrated in the Reading Rope. The decision trees also include links for additional assessments to use to gather even more data for instructional planning. Educators are encouraged to use the decision trees along with the Literacy Outcome Framework resource to support instructional planning alongside the data analysis process.

Big Ideas of Reading

Through implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports, educators must use the Big Ideas of Reading to focus intentionally on the developmental milestones in reading. The National Reading Panel’s findings indicate that the Big Ideas in Reading represent the best approach to teaching reading include explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension. The chart identifies the areas of focus for each grade level.
Reading Comprehension is the product of word recognition and language comprehension.

Please note: Data for the whole class should be collected from a valid, reliable, and efficient universal screening measure (aimswebPlus) 3 times yearly. This data can be analyzed at the building level (BLT) and at the classroom level (TBT).

- If a student is below benchmark as evidenced through screening, is everything else I know about the student (e.g., history, school records) consistent with that result?
- If a student is below benchmark as evidenced by the oral reading fluency portion of the screening, do I follow up with a phonics and word-recognition survey to pinpoint skills that the student needs to learn?
- If a student does struggle with decoding, do I give a Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST) to determine the student’s needs in the foundational skill of phonological awareness? Has the team considered automaticity and accuracy scores with the PAST?
- Do I give a spelling screener and compare results to the phonics and word recognition survey and to the student’s written expression?
- If a student is below benchmark as evidenced by the screening but does well in phonic decoding, does he or she have noticeable problems in oral language comprehension?

*When analyzing curriculum based measure assessment results (aimswebPlus), be sure to start with the composite score and work backwards. Sometimes a student scores low in a skill that has already been mastered as a pre-requisite (e.g., phoneme segmentation may be scored low once fluency is developed).
Initial Sounds (IS)  
Phoneme Segmentation (PS)

**At or Above Benchmark**

**Tier 1**  
Continue to teach phonemic awareness daily (ex. Michael Heggerty curriculum).  
Continue to teach phonics daily including letter-sound relationships and high frequency words (ex. Lucy Calkins Phonics Units of Study, FUNdations, Systematic Sequential Phonics).  
Use grade level standards and core curriculum to support student learning and skill acquisition.

**Below Benchmark**

**Dig Deeper:**  
Use PAST phonemic awareness assessment to identify areas of need.  
80% correct or more continue to next section. Repeat process until student scores 79% or less in one area. Facilitate interventions that target focus in that area.

**Tier 2/3 Intervention Focus**

Facilitate interventions that target focus in the area identified by the PAST assessment.  
*Basic Syllable  
*Basic Phoneme  
*Onset-Rime  
*Advance Phoneme

*Strategies to support learners can be found in the Foundational Skills portion of the Outcome Framework.*
A student that is struggling with Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) and Letter/Sound Correspondence could indicate a phonological processing issue. Students need more early phonological awareness in addition to practice with letters.

*Strategies to support learners can be found in the Foundational Skills portion of the Outcome Framework.*
A student that is struggling with Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) and Letter/Sound Correspondence could indicate a phonological processing issue. Students need more early phonological awareness in addition to practice with letters.

**First Grade**

**Intervention Decision Tree**

**Initial Sounds (IS)**

**Phoneme Segmentation (PS)**

**At or Above Benchmark**

- **Tier I**
  - Continue to teach phonemic awareness daily (i.e., Michael Heggerty Curriculum).
  - Continue to teach Phonics daily including letter-sound relationships and high frequency words (i.e., Lucy Calkins Phonics Units of Study, FUNdations, Systematic Sequential Phonics, Tools for Reading).
  - Use grade level standards and core curriculum to support student learning and skill acquisition.

**Below Benchmark**

- **Dig Deeper:**
  - Use the PAST phonemic awareness assessment to identify areas of need.
  - 80% correct or more continue to next section. Repeat process until student scores 79% or less in one area. Facilitate interventions to focus in that area.

**Tier 2/3 Intervention Focus**

- Facilitate interventions that focus on the area of need identified by the PAST assessment.
  - *Basic Syllable*  
  - *Basic Phoneme*  
  - *Onset-Rime*  
  - *Advance Phoneme*
At or Above Benchmark

Tier 1
- Continue on to...
- Blend with automaticity without saying each sound.
- Practice advanced phonemic awareness.
- Facilitate explicit and systematic phonics lessons:
  * Decode with blends and digraphs
  * Phoneme/Grapheme mapping
- Map high-frequency words.
- Have students read decodable text.
- Use grade level standards and core curriculum to support student learning and skill acquisition.

Below Benchmark

Dig Deeper:
- Use PAST phonemic awareness assessment and/or phonics screener to identify areas of need.
- 80% correct or more continue to the next section. Repeat process until student scores 79% or less in one area. Facilitate interventions to focus in that area.

Phonemic Awareness Intervention Focus
- Sound blending
- Basic phonemic awareness
- Early phonological awareness and phoneme articulation
- Onset-rime, syllables
- C&V phonemes place and manner of articulation (mirrors)

Phonics Intervention Focus
- Basic phonics
- Multisensory blending with phoneme/grapheme mapping
- Letter/sound correspondence
- CVC blending with graphemes, segmenting
- Have students read decodable text

*Strategies to support learners can be found in the Foundational Skills portion of the Outcome Framework.*
Intervention Decision Tree

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

At or Above Benchmark

Tier 1
Continue on to...
Sustain momentum through an entire short text or a beginning chapter book, making significant progress daily.
Notice and use punctuation with the voice through intonation and pausing
Adjust reading to show awareness of sentence variety: i.e., placement of subject, verb, adjectives, and adverbs.
Recognize dialogue with phrasing, word stress and intonation.
Read both orally and silently at a rate that reflects fluent processing but also maintains comprehension and accuracy.
Use grade level standards and core curriculum to support student learning and skill acquisition.

Below Benchmark

Dig Deeper
Use the phonics/word reading screener to determine areas of need and/or the PAST (phonemic awareness) screener to determine areas of need.
80% correct or more continue to next section. Repeat process until student scores 79% or less in one area. Facilitate interventions that target focus to that area.

Phonemic Awareness Intervention Focus
Early phonological awareness and phoneme articulation
Onset-rime, syllables
Additive sound by sound blending
Advanced phonemic awareness

Phonics Intervention Focus
Basic phonics
Multisensory blending with phoneme/grapheme mapping
Solve words using letter-sound analysis from left to right
Recognize and write many high-frequency words
Word structure (syllables, contractions, prefixes and suffixes)
Have students read decodable text

*Strategies to support learners can be found in the Foundational Skills portion of the Outcome Framework.*
If the students demonstrate true dual deficits (word recognition AND language comprehension) remember that while intervening in word recognition (phonics and phonemic awareness) we MUST also continue to build language skills through read alouds of rich text with listening comprehension.
Intervention Decision Tree

Reading Comprehension (RC)

At or Above Benchmark

Tier 1
continue on to...

Search for information across chapters connected to a single plot.
Search for and use information in texts with variety in placement of the body of text, sidebars, and graphics.
Use background knowledge to search for and understand information about settings.
Use text resources to search for information: i.e., author’s note, pronunciation guide, glossary.
Talk about the text after reading, including important information in organized summary form.
Summarize important parts of a text (i.e., chapters or sections).

Below Benchmark

Intervention Focus

Vocabulary: Expand understanding of the meaning of words by connection with pictures and or understanding the content.
Slow down to problem-solve words and resume reading with momentum.
Develop comprehension starting with sentences and moving toward increasingly longer texts.
Comprehension of oral and written language: Talk about what the reader knows about the topic before reading the text, and identify new knowledge gained from reading.

*Try comparing a student’s reading comprehension to his or her listening comprehension to determine if the deficit is in word recognition or language comprehension.

*Strategies to support learners can be found in the Foundational Skills portion of the “Outcome Framework.”
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SCREENING TEST (PAST)

David A. Kilpatrick, Ph.D.

There is a history behind the title “PAST.” First, PAST stands for Phonological Awareness Screening Test. Second, the acronym functions to acknowledge the past work of others. This type of test originated with Rosner & Simon (1971). A similar version was used for three decades by Dr. Philip J. McInnis, first titled the Language Processing Test and then the Phonological Processing Test. Since 1999, I have used a modified form of the test. So, while this is my version of the test, it is based upon the work of my predecessors (hence, the PAST).

The PAST has four forms: A, B, C, and D. This allows teachers to do formalized assessment a few times a year to track a student’s progress.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

Do not use this test unless:

1. you have carefully read and understood the directions; and
2. you have had the chance to practice it with feedback before testing a student.

Use of Sample Lines

Follow the sample line at the beginning of each level. Administer each item at a given level the same way. Note that you are always deleting or substituting the sound represented by the letter(s) in the parentheses (e.g., cow[boy] means boy gets deleted).

Proper Pronunciation of Sounds

Sounds are depicted with slash marks, called virgules. When giving directions for Levels F through M, use letter sounds, not letter names. When you say, “Change /a/ to /i/,” you say the sound made by the letter, not the name of the letter. The exception is with the long vowel sounds (Level J II). Long vowel sounds are represented by uppercase letters in virgules (e.g., /A/). These long vowel sounds match the letter name (e.g., the a in words like cake, tame, or made).

The Assessment of Automaticity

All items are timed. When you administer an item, as soon as you finish speaking, immediately count in your head, “One thousand one, one thousand two.” Use a stopwatch or sweep second hand at first to be sure your counting closely approximates two seconds. If the student responds correctly before you get to the word two in that phrase, he or she receives credit for responding automatically. Put a “check plus” (✓+) in the blank next to the word to indicate an automatic response. However, if the student answers correctly but after that two-second count, mark a check (✓) next to the item. See Figure 1 below.

When you count in your head, continue counting until you reach “one thousand five.” If the student gives no response after five seconds, repeat the item to give the student a second chance. After repeating the item, resume the mental counting. If the student responds correctly within five seconds of this second chance, score the item as correct with a ✓. An automatic ✓+ score can only occur within the first two seconds of the first try. The second chance is given because students sometimes forget what you asked. Also, if the student asks you to repeat the item, do so. However, repeated items cannot be scored as automatic, only as correct (✓) or incorrect (0). If the student does not respond after the second count of five, score the item as zero and provide the correct feedback on the item (see the Providing Feedback section below).

If you misspeak a word, excuse yourself, skip the item, and go on to the next one, as long as it wasn’t the last item at that level. Go back to the item you spoiled before going on to the next level and score normally (i.e., they can receive an automatic score if they answer in less than two seconds). If this occurs on the last item of a level, repeat that item immediately and use your best judgment about scoring.
Occasionally, a student will respond to the previous item. For example, you have the student go from sit to sat (Level J). On the next item, you ask the student to go from hid to had, but instead of had, the student says sad, accidentally carrying over sounds from the previous item. This may not be the result of a phonological awareness problem, but may result from confusion or a working memory issue. If you judge that a student has carried something over from the previous example, readadminister the item. However, the student cannot receive an automatic score on a readministered item, only correct (√) or incorrect (0).

| Advanced Phoneme Levels (early to late second grade; Level M is early third grade to adult) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **LEVEL J** (Substitution) “Say ran. Now say ran but instead of /a/ say /u/.” |
| FEEDBACK: “If you say ran, and change the /a/ to /u/, you get run; ran-run.” |
| I.  (use sound of vowel) t/a/n /a/ → run ✔+  k/u/t /a/ → cut ✔+  h/u/ff /a/ → half ✔+ |
| II. (use name of vowel) b/e/a/k /A/ → bake 0 back  f/i/ne /O/ → phone ✔+ |

**LEVEL K**

K1 (Deletion) “Say bread. Now say bread but don’t say /r/.”

FEEDBACK: “If you say bread without the /r/, you get bed: bread-bed.”

b/e/a/d → bed ✔+  s/n/e/a/k → seek ✔+  

K2 (Substitution) “Say crew. Now say crew but instead of /r/ say /l/.”

FEEDBACK: “If you say crew, and change the /r/ to /l/, you get clue: crew-clue.”

c/r/e/w → c/l/ue ✔+  p/r/oud → p/l/owed ✔+  s/n/e/e/z → s/k/is ✔+  

**Correct**  **Automatic**  **Correct**  **Automatic**  **Correct**  **Automatic**  **Correct**  **Automatic**

4/5  A: 4/5  5/5  A: 4/5  

*Figure 1 Sample Scoring*

Automatic responding typically takes one second or less, so a count of two is generous. Therefore, only give automatic credit if students complete their response (or are making a response) when you have mentally said two while you silently count “one thousand two.”

**Repeating an Item**

If a student seems confused, or seems to lapse in attention, it is okay to repeat an item. However, when you repeat an item, that item cannot be scored as automatic. Students can only receive a √ if the response was correct, or a 0 if it was incorrect.

**Pacing**

One important reason to be thoroughly familiar with the administration procedures and to have practiced the test beforehand is pacing. It is important to administer the PAST at a good pace to keep things moving. A moderately quick pace prevents lapses of attention, prevents boredom, or prevents you from unnecessarily taxing a student’s working memory. See the LETRS online demonstration in Unit 2, Session 8 to observe the pacing of the test.

**Providing Feedback**

A unique feature of the PAST is that the examiner provides corrective feedback for every incorrect item. Feedback on the PAST is based on the assumption that a student is not going to develop phonological awareness skills in the 6–8 minutes it takes to administer this test. Give feedback for every incorrect response. The standard correction is: “The answer is tall. When you say ball, and change the /b/ to /t/ you get tall. Ball, tall. See how that works?” No further demonstration or explanation is permitted (especially, no visual cues). Also, you must never refer to the location of the sound within the word. Correct every incorrect item, even if it is the last one at a level. It’s also okay to acknowledge that the student got an item correct, especially if he or she responds tentatively, but correctly. However:

1. Do not teach any item or level. This is a test, not a teaching session. Ample oral feedback is provided, but no teaching, manipulatives, or explanations are allowed.
2. Never say anything about the position of the sound within the word, because this is a big part of what you are testing. For example, never say anything like, “See how I switched the /b/ to a /t/ at the beginning of the word?” A key part of phonological awareness is being able to isolate a sound, so saying anything about position is like giving away the answer.

Discontinue Rule. If the combined correct score on two levels in a row is 0 or 1 out of 10, discontinue the test. Score all items above those levels as incorrect. For example, if a student got only one correct item between Levels I and J combined, discontinue the test. Do not administer K, L, or M. All items on the unadministered levels are scored 0.

SCORING THE PAST

Passing a Level. A level is considered passed if at least four out of the five items are correct. A level is considered automatic if at least four out of the five items are answered automatically. Levels with three out of five, or fewer, are not considered passed. Keep in mind, each level yields two scores: (1) a correct score, and (2) an automatic score. A student may pass the level with his or her correct score but not with the automatic score. These differences are preserved for the total scoring (see Figure 2 and the Total Scores section below).

Item Scoring. By now, it should be clear that items are scored in one of three ways:

1. Incorrect (Score = 0)
2. Correct but not automatic (Score = ✓)
3. Automatic, i.e., the student responds in two seconds or less (Score = ✓+)

At each level, count every score of ✓ and ✓+ and put the total in the Correct column on the right. Scores of ✓ or ✓+ are both scored as correct items. In the Automatic column, only include the number of ✓+ for that level (see Figure 1 above for an illustration).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULTS:</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Automatic</th>
<th>Highest Correct Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Syllable</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset-Rime</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>(Levels not passed below the highest correct level) N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Phoneme</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Phoneme</td>
<td>18/20</td>
<td>15/20</td>
<td>Highest Automatic Level: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Total</td>
<td>47/50</td>
<td>44/50</td>
<td>(Non-automatic levels below highest automatic level)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate Grade Level (Circle): PreK/K  K  late K/early 1st  1st  late 1st/early 2nd  2nd  late 2nd to adult

Figure 2 Sample of Scoring Results

The Total Scores. As mentioned, students receive two scores at each level. One score is the number of correct items. The other is the number of items that were answered automatically. Transfer the totals from the right-hand column to the top of the first page of the test.

There are two sides to this. First, the student receives a score that indicates how many were correct and how many were automatic at the syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme levels. The other side gives the highest level passed. Remember a level is passed as correct if at least four out of five at that level are correct. A level is considered automatic if at least four out of five items were automatic. Thus, for most children, the highest correct level will be higher than his or her highest automatic level (see Figure 2). It is also important to note any levels not passed that were below the highest level passed.
**INTERPRETING THE PAST**

Even though the PAST correlates powerfully with reading, traditional normative scores have not yet been established. However, based on (1) McInnis’ 35 years using these levels; (2) my eleven years working with the PAST; (3) several studies that show when children developmentally can do specific phonological manipulations; as well as (4) several studies I have done on the PAST, the following is a guide to interpreting the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Typically Achieving Readers</th>
<th>Low Achieving Readers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Late Kindergarten</td>
<td>D1–E2 or higher</td>
<td>D1–2; E2 or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mid First Grade</td>
<td>E3, F, G, I, or higher</td>
<td>E2, F, G, or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Late First Grade</td>
<td>E4–5, F, G, H, I, J</td>
<td>F, G, I, or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mid Second Grade</td>
<td>H, I, J, or higher</td>
<td>F, G, H, or I, or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Late Second Grade</td>
<td>H, I, J, K, and L, most automatic</td>
<td>H, I, maybe J, or lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mid Third Grade</td>
<td>All levels, most automatic</td>
<td>Many levels correct, I to M mostly not automatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fourth Grade to Adulthood</td>
<td>All levels automatic</td>
<td>Most levels correct, but J to M not all automatic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a student’s performance matches the shaded Low Achieving Readers column, it suggests that phonological awareness may be a concern. If a student’s level is lower than is listed in that column, then a phonological awareness problem is almost certain. In either case, those students will require training beyond what they may be receiving in whole-class instruction.

Notice above how subtle the differences can be, especially early on (i.e., K–1). Except for obvious cases of very low performance, the differences may be very small. This is why all students should get phonological awareness training from kindergarten on. Next, note that over time, typical students start to pull away from those with difficulties. Then, automaticity becomes a big factor, especially after second grade. After third grade, lack of automaticity at any level may indicate that a phonological awareness difficulty may be present.

Do not be surprised by inconsistencies in levels. A student may struggle through an easier level, and pass a higher level. A reason for this is that different levels involve different types of manipulations. For example, Levels H and K involve splitting initial blends. If a student struggles with awareness of sounds in blends, he may not pass H, but may pass I and J, which don’t involve blends. Also, students who struggle with awareness of ending sounds may do poorly with Level I and L, but do fine with H, J, and K. A final example is a student who had a rough time with E2 and E3*, but who does well on phoneme-level tasks. Most likely, that student took a while to “warm-up” with the task. That student’s phonological awareness is probably fine, but you may want to check his working memory and his ability to focus.

*Note that the E3 line does not appear on Form A.
**PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SCREENING TEST (PAST) FORM A**

David A. Kilpatrick, Ph.D.

Adapted from the levels used in McInnis (1999) & Rosner (1973)

Name: ___________________________ D.O.B.: ___________ Grade ___ Age ___

Teacher: __________________________ Date: ___________ Evaluator __________________________

INSTRUCTIONS: See the Instructions for Administering the Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST).

RESULTS:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Automatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Syllable</td>
<td>___/10</td>
<td>___/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset-Rime</td>
<td>___/10</td>
<td>___/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Phoneme</td>
<td>___/10</td>
<td>___/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Phoneme</td>
<td>___/20</td>
<td>___/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Test Total:** ___/50 ___/50  

Highest Correct Level: ________  
(Levels not passed below the highest correct level) ________

Highest Automatic Level: ________  
(Non-automatic levels below highest automatic level) ________

Approximate Grade Level (Circle):  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PreK/K</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>late K/early 1st</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>late 1st/early 2nd</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>late 2nd to adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: The grade levels listed throughout the PAST are estimates based on various research studies and clinical experience. They are not formalized norms.

---

**I. SYLLABLE LEVELS**

*Basic Syllable Levels (D, E2—preschool to mid kindergarten; E3*—mid to late kindergarten)*

**LEVEL D “Say bookcase. Now say bookcase but don’t say book.”**

FEEDBACK: “If you say bookcase without saying book, you get case. Okay? Let’s try another one.”

D1 (book)case _____ (sun)set _____ (space)ship _____  
D2 (silver) _____ (mar)ket _____ (gen)tle _____  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Automatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>___/6</td>
<td>A: ___/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEVEL E “Say October. Now say October but don’t say Oc.”**

FEEDBACK: “If you say October without saying Oc, you get tober. See how that works?”

E2 (Oc)tober _____ (umb)rella _____  
(fan)tastic _____ (re)member _____  

Basic Syllable Total: ___/10 A: ___/10

---

**II. ONSET-RIME LEVELS**

*Onset-Rime Levels (kindergarten to mid first grade)*

**LEVEL F (Deletion) “Say feet. Now say feet but don’t say /f/.”**

FEEDBACK: “If you say feet without saying /f/, you get eat; feet-eat, see how that works?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Automatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/f/</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>aim</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/i/m/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c/one</td>
<td>own _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEVEL G (Substitution) “Say done. Now say done but instead of /d/ say /r/.”

FEEDBACK: “If you say done and change the /d/ to /r/, you get run; done-run.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Automatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>run</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/s/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Onset-Rime Total: ___/10 A: ___/10

---

*There is no E3 line on Form A.*

III. PHONEME LEVELS

Basic Phoneme Levels (early to late first grade)

LEVEL H

H1 (Deletion)  “Say sleep. Now say sleep but don’t say /s/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say sleep without the /s/, you get leap: sleep-leap, see how that works?”
/s/leep /s/ → leap ______ /c/rane /k/ → rain ______

H2 (Substitution)  “Say bright. Now say bright but change the /b/ to /f/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say bright, and change the /b/ to /f/, you get fright.”
/b/right /i/ → fright ______ /p/lowed /k/ → cloud ______ /f/lows /k/ → clothes ______ ______/5 A: _____/5

LEVEL I

I1 (Deletion)  “Say went. Now say went but don’t say /t/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say went without the /t/, you get when; went-when.”
b/r/ead /t/ → when ______ /ran/g/e /j/ → rain ______

I2 (Substitution)  “Say went. Now say went but don’t say /t/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say went without the /t/, you get when; went-when.”
I1 /wen/t/ /t/ → when ______ /ran/g/e /j/ → rain ______
I2 whea/t/ /t/ → we ______ nie/c/e /s/ → knee ______ dri/v/e /v/ → dry ______ ______/5 A: _____/5

Basic Phoneme Total: ______/10 A: _____/10

Advanced Phoneme Levels (early to late second grade; Level M is early third grade to adult)

LEVEL J

“Say ran. Now say ran but instead of /a/ say /u/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say ran, and change the /a/ to /u/, you get run; ran-run.”
I. (use sound of vowel)  r/a/n /a/ → run ______ k/i/t /a/ → cut ______ h/u/ff /a/ → half ______
II. (use name of vowel)  b/ea/k /a/ → bake ______ l/i/ne /a/ → phone ______ ______/5 A: _____/5

LEVEL K

K1 (Deletion)  “Say bread. Now say bread but don’t say /r/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say bread without the /r/, you get bed; bread-bed.”
b/r/ead → bed ______ s/n/eak → seek ______

K2 (Substitution)  “Say crew. Now say crew but instead of /r/ say /l/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say crew, and change the /r/ to /l/, you get clue; crew-clue.”
c/r/ew → c/l/ue ______ p/r/oud → p/l/owed ______ s/n/eze → s/k/is ______ ______/5 A: _____/5

LEVEL L

“Say some. Now say some but instead of /m/ say /n/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say some, and change the /m/ to /n/, you get sun; some-sun.”
so/m/e /n/ → sun ______ rhy/m/e /d/ → ride ______

 LEVEL M

M1 (Deletion)  “Say ghost. Now say ghost but don’t say /s/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say ghost without the /s/, you get goat; ghost-goat.”
gho/s/t → goat ______ co/s/t → caught ______ ______/5 A: _____/5

M2 (Substitution)  “Say west. Now say west but instead of /s/ say /n/.”
FEEDBACK: “If you say west, and change the /s/ to /n/, you get went; west-went.”
we/s/t → we/n/t ______ cra/i/t → cra/ck/ed ______ dea/l/t → de/n/t ______

Advanced Phoneme Total: _____/20 A: _____/20

LETRS Phonics and Word-Reading Survey Administration and Scoring Record

General Directions: This survey should be individually administered. It is untimed but should take 5–10 minutes to administer. Do not belabor administration of elements the student clearly does not know.

The survey is a tool for identifying which correspondences and patterns the student has learned, and which ones the student needs to be taught. When patterns are learned, they can be read automatically, without guesswork. This survey can be used with students from the last half of kindergarten onward. The series of tasks is organized according to a progression of phonic elements and syllable types that increase in difficulty. The number of subtests given will depend on how far the student can go with at least some success. Closed syllables, which have short vowels, are by far the most common in English and are assessed before long vowel syllable patterns. Open syllables and VCe are the long vowel patterns tested first because they are typically taught before other long vowel patterns. The more complex—but still regular—vowel, consonant, syllable, and morpheme patterns follow.

First, ask the student to read the single-syllable words and nonsense syllables in each section. If they know at least some of the one-syllable patterns, ask the student to try the two- and three-syllable words. Discontinue if the student is having no success.

If the student makes a mistake but immediately self-corrects, count the item as correct. If the student makes an error, keep going without giving corrective feedback. Give neutral encouragement (e.g., “Nice job; you did just what I asked.”). Write down the student’s response so that types of decoding errors can be analyzed later. Encourage the student to move on (e.g., “Try the next one.”) if he or she cannot respond to an item within about three seconds. Discontinue the survey when the word lists become too difficult for the student to read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quick Tips</th>
<th>How given?</th>
<th>Individually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where to begin?</td>
<td>At the level where you think the student will be 100% correct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to end?</td>
<td>When the student becomes frustrated or makes many errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if a student corrects an error immediately?</td>
<td>Count the item as correct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if a student takes more than three seconds to answer?</td>
<td>Move on to next item, and make a note that he/she took too long to respond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LETTERS Phonics and Word Reading Survey

Letter Naming
Say: “I’m going to show you some letters in mixed-up order. Tell me the name of each letter as you point to it. Remember, tell me the name, not the sound.”

Uppercase
M  S  R  A  L  E  H  B  Q
T  G  F  J  N  Z  Y  W  C
K  D  U  X  P  V  I  O

Lowercase
o  f  e  d  j  n  k  h  l
c  i  t  w  a  r  v  g  u
s  b  x  m  p  q  y  z

Letter-Sound Correspondences: Single Consonants and Digraphs
Say: “I’m going to show you some letters in mixed-up order. When you see the letter or letter team (digraph), say the sound that it represents. Do not say the letter names. For example, if you see n, you would say ‘/n/.’ Point to the letter as you say the sound.”
m  f  t  s  b  w
k  d  r  v  n  j
l  g  p  h  z  y
qu  th  sh  ch  wh  ng

High-Frequency Words
Say: “Here are some words for you to read. Point to them as you read them.” (Encourage the student to try the next one if he or she doesn’t know a word within three seconds.)
see  my  have  to  she  all  some
was  of  any  where  put  for  are
they  over  what  would  these  which  your
every  once  things  does  right  because  answer
done  always  much  pull  heart  whole  although

Letter-Sound Correspondences: Short and Long Vowels
(Students recall the sound.) Say: “I’m going to show you some more letters. Tell me the short vowel sound each one stands for.”
i  u  a  o  e
Say: “Now, tell me the long sound for each vowel.” (If the student doesn’t know how to respond, tell him or her that the long vowel can be found in the letter’s name.)
i  u  a  o  e
(Students recognize the letter.) If the student has trouble, say: “Now I’m going to say a vowel sound. You point to the letter that spells that sound.” Exaggerate the vowel sound as you say the following words: /ʌ/ u – p; /eɪ/ e – cho; /ɔɪ/ o – ctopus; /ɒ/ a – pple; /ɪ/ i – tch.

i u a o e

—__/5

Closed-Syllable Words with Short Vowels and Single Consonants
Say: “I’m going to show you some real words and some made-up words. You can read the made-up (nonsense) words as if they were parts of real words. Do the best you can.” Tell the student that the second set is nonsense or made-up words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Real</th>
<th>Nonsense</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rot</td>
<td>lom</td>
<td>rabbit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wed</td>
<td>mis</td>
<td>unfed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bun</td>
<td>dez</td>
<td>picnic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lap</td>
<td>gom</td>
<td>napkin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>kit</td>
<td>jad</td>
<td>sudden</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sum</td>
<td>jun</td>
<td>cotton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Closed Syllables with Digraphs, Doubles, and Blends

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<th>Real</th>
<th>Nonsense</th>
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<tr>
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<td>twin</td>
<td>glint</td>
<td>skimming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>prep</td>
<td>clamp</td>
<td>backdrop</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stiff</td>
<td>smell</td>
<td>upswing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grunt</td>
<td>flunk</td>
<td>complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drop</td>
<td>shred</td>
<td>maddest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trust</td>
<td>chick</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
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</table>

—__/12

Long Vowel: VCe Words and Syllables

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<td>lete</td>
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<td>pruse</td>
<td>compete</td>
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<td>tune</td>
<td>wabe</td>
<td>implode</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>pire</td>
<td>unmade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>chime</td>
<td>throne</td>
<td>intact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whale</td>
<td>bline</td>
<td>commune</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Vowel-r Syllables

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<th>Real</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>fur</td>
<td>jer</td>
<td>setter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or</td>
<td>thir</td>
<td>doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yurt</td>
<td>zor</td>
<td>artwork</td>
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<td></td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>gurt</td>
<td>platform</td>
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<td></td>
<td>chord</td>
<td>sarm</td>
<td>surfer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tern</td>
<td>glers</td>
<td>starburst</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Vowel Team Syllables

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<td>keel</td>
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<td>turmoil</td>
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<td>mail</td>
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<td>cheater</td>
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<td>spout</td>
<td>cruit</td>
<td>coleslaw</td>
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<td>foal</td>
<td>plaud</td>
<td>soupspoon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flight</td>
<td>stight</td>
<td>snowboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—__/6

Complex Consonant Patterns: Hard/Soft c and g; -dge, -tch

<table>
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<td>gyr</td>
<td>price</td>
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<td>guard</td>
<td>trece</td>
<td>guard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sledge</td>
<td>woge</td>
<td>sledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clutch</td>
<td>datch</td>
<td>clutch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gem</td>
<td>zudge</td>
<td>gem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cyst</td>
<td>cim</td>
<td>cyst</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—__/6
Mixed Syllables with Consonant-le

bugle stable battle juggie steeple
boggle scrabble maple noodle shortle

Base Words with Inflections and Common Suffixes

mittens crushes puffed unknowing evenly
dodged poorly frighten breezes guppies

Compound Words: Varied Syllable Types

daytime blueprint cornfield deadbeat earthworm grapevine
butterfly matchbook playground roadway skylight whiplash

Common Prefixes, Roots, and Derivational Suffixes

informative disagreement enjoyable retract prediction express

Extension: Encoding (Use separate piece of lined paper.)

Say: “Write the alphabet in order. Use uppercase or lowercase letters.”

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Say: “Write the letter or letters that represent each sound.”

/sh/ /j/ /iy/ /h/ /l/ /d/ /ch/ /n/ /i/ /z/ /ks/ (x) /kw/ (qu)
LETRS Phonics and Word-Reading Survey—Student Pages

Letter Names

M S R A L E H B Q
T G F J N Z Y W C
K D U X P V I O

Letter Names

o f e d j n k h l
cl t w a r v g u
s b x m p q y z

Letter Sounds

m f t s b w
k d r v n j
l g p h z y
qu th sh ch wh ng

Words

see my have to she all some
was of any where put for are
they over what would these which your
every once things does right because answer
done always much pull heart whole although

Vowels

i u a o e

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Closed Syllables
rot wed bun lap kit sum
lom mis dez gom jad jun
rabbit unfed picnic napkin sudden cotton

Complex Closed Syllables
twin prep stiff grunt drop trust
glint clamp smell flunk shred chick
chonk th ramp spiz blung steck culf
skimming backdrop upswing complex maddest subject

Long Vowel: VCe
dome plate tune vote chime whale
lete pruse wabe pire throme bline
suppose compete implode unmade intact commune

Vowel-r Syllables
fur or yurt girl chard tern
jer thir zor gurt sarm glers
setter doctor artwork platform surfer starburst

Vowel Team Syllables
ray keel mail spout foal flight
voy fain loob cruit plaud stight
sustain turmoil cheater coleslaw soupspoon snowboard
Complex Consonant Patterns

price    guard    sledge    clutch    gem    cyst
gyr       trece    woge      datch     zudge    cim

Mixed Syllables with Consonant-le

bugle    stable    battle    juggle    steeple
boggle   scrabble   maple     noodle    chortle

Base Words

mittens   crushes   puffed    unknowing    evenly
dodged    poorly     frighten    breezes    guppies

Compound Words

daytime    blueprint    cornfield    deadbeat    earthworm    grapevine
butterfly    matchbook    playground    roadway    skylight    whiplash

Common Prefixes, Roots, and Derivational Suffixes

informative    disagreement    enjoyable    retract    prediction    express
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Skill</th>
<th>Targets for Instruction</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Naming, Uppercase</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Naming, Lowercase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter-Sound Correspondences: Single Consonants and Digraphs</td>
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<td>High-Frequency Words</td>
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<td>Letter-Sound Correspondences: Short and Long Vowels</td>
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<td>Decoding Skill</td>
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<td>Closed-Syllable Words with Short Vowels and Single Consonants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closed Syllables with Digraphs, Doubles, and Blends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Vowels: VCe Words and Syllables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vowel-r Syllables</td>
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<td>Vowel Team Syllables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complex Consonant Patterns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Syllables with Consonant-&lt;e&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Base Words with Inflections and Common Suffixes</td>
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<td>Common Prefixes, Roots, and Derivational Suffixes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension: Encoding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing the Alphabet</td>
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<td>Writing the Letters</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Instructions for Administration of the
LETTERS Spelling Screeners

Administration of a qualitative screener of spelling development is an efficient and valid way of
determining a student’s instructional needs.

The words in these screeners sample the student’s ability to spell regular phoneme-grapheme
correspondences and orthographic patterns. The sequence in which these features are generally learned is
reflected in the order of the feature categories from top to bottom in the first column on the screener. Each
feature that is correctly spelled is circled and given a point. If a word is spelled correctly, the student also
gets another point for the whole word in the Word Correct row.

Directions for Administering the Spelling Screeners

Use the Basic Spelling Screener for grades K–2. Use the Advanced Spelling Screener for grades 3–5,
or until students show that they can spell these words. For kindergarten, you will probably only dictate
the first 5–8 words on the Basic Spelling Screener. For first grade, dictate at least 15. For second and third
grade, use the entire list. Use the first part of the Advanced Spelling Screener for any third-graders who are
able to spell more than 20 of the words on the Basic Spelling Screener.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidelines for Words to Dictate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd grade, or younger students who spell 20+ words on the Basic Spelling Screener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are not to study these words in advance. Studying the words on the screener would invalidate
its purpose, which is to find out what concepts and orthographic patterns the students have internalized.
You can administer this same list of words three times—in the fall, winter, and spring—to measure
students’ progress.

The words at the top of the page are ordered from left to right in terms of their relative difficulty for
students in grades K–5. For this reason, you need to limit testing to the words that sample features your
students are likely to master during the year. However, it is important to dictate enough words (easy to
difficult) to give you a sense of the range of ability in your class.

Testing procedure. Dictate the words as you would for any test. Use them in a sentence to be sure your
students know the exact word. Assure your students that this is not for a grade but to help you plan better
for their needs. Seat the children to minimize copying, or test them in small groups (recommended for
kindergarten and early first grade). Say each word naturally; then use it in a sentence (suggested sentences
appear on the next two pages) and repeat the word. If you exaggerate the pronunciation to clarify the
identity of sounds or syllables, you are providing a scaffold that may not be available in natural speech.
If you ask students to repeat the word before writing it, you are also providing a scaffold that should help
students attend to and remember the sound sequence.

Scoring the test. Use a scoring sheet for each student and simply circle the orthographic features for
each word that are spelled according to the features in the first column. Remember to add an additional
point in the Word Correct row if the entire word is correct. Note that some words are scored for some
features and not others and the number of possible points varies by words.
Assigning points and analyzing the results. Total the number of points across for each feature and down for each word. Staple the student's spelling test to the individual scoring sheet. The total point score for features will give you a number that can be compared over time. The most useful information, however, will be the feature analysis. Look across each feature row to determine the needs of individual students. Transfer these numbers to a class composite sheet to get a sense of your group as a whole and to form groups for instruction. Highlight features where students are making two or more errors. For example, a student who gets four of five short vowels correct on the Basic Spelling Screener knows these vowels, although some review work might be in order. In contrast, a student who gets only two of the short vowels needs a lot of work on both sound identification and spelling patterns. Since the total possible number will vary depending on how many words you call out, the criteria for mastery will vary.

If X is the number of total correct responses, then X or X – 1 indicates good knowledge of that phoneme-grapheme relationship, while X – 2, or more, indicates the need for instruction. If the student did not get any points for an orthographic feature, it is beyond his or her instructional range and earlier features need to be addressed first.

**Basic Spelling Screener Sentences for Dictation**

1. mud       Don't step in the mud.
2. nap       I like to nap when I'm tired.
3. set       The sun will set in the west.
4. fog       It's hard to see in thick fog.
5. rib       The football player broke his rib.
6. life      Remember to enjoy life every day.
7. shack     A shack is a small house.
8. stone     Stone walls last a long time.
9. trunk     I keep all my toys in a trunk.
10. goat     A goat is a useful farm animal.
11. scrape   Did you scrape your knee when you fell down?
12. beat     Keep the beat when you clap to music.
13. champ    The World Series winner was the champ.
14. third    Third place is behind first and second.
15. drain    Water goes down a drain.
16. bridges  Two bridges go over the canyon.
17. crutch   If you are hurt, you can use a crutch to walk.
18. growing  We are growing carrots in our garden.
19. walked   I walked slowly to school.
20. born     The kittens were born yesterday.
21. spoil    Don't let the rain spoil the trip.
22. smiling  Smiling is easy if you are having fun.
23. slipping Our feet were slipping on the ice.
24. shouting My voice was tired from shouting.
25. higher   Eagles fly higher than most small birds.
Advanced Spelling Screener Sentences for Dictation

1. cap  My cap fits me perfectly.
2. chip  It is hard to eat just one potato chip.
3. shut  Please shut the window.
4. tent  I love sleeping in a cozy tent.
5. grain  I eat whole grain bread for breakfast.
6. broke  My brother broke my phone.
7. slice  Please give me one slice of apple.
8. trudge  I'll trudge to school with my heavy pack.
9. flight  My flight home was delayed.
10. dropping  Dropping eggs is messy.
11. gnaw  The squirrel will gnaw on nuts.
12. curved  A bow is a curved hunting weapon.
13. fewer  We had fewer rainstorms this year.
14. babies  My rabbit had five babies.
15. matched  Her sweater matched the color of her eyes.
16. known  I wish I had known about the party.
17. pattern  If you sew a costume, follow a pattern.
18. staples  We will need staples for the stapler.
19. radar  Airports track planes by radar.
20. except  I like all vegetables except broccoli.
21. treasure  The sunken ship still contained a treasure chest.
22. organization  Would you like to join our organization?
23. questionable  The results of the test were questionable.
24. obedient  An obedient dog follows commands.
25. resident  A new resident came to live in our neighborhood.
<table>
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**LETRS Advanced Spelling Screener (3+)**

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| Word Types | chip | sent | ham | graf | broke | slice | wedge | flight | dropp | gain | car | serv | ver | bale | made | know | pattern | staple | radar | buzz | treasure | organisation | questionable | objective | resident | Total |
|------------|------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|---------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Short Vowel | a    | i    | e   | o    |        |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Blend       |        |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Digraph, Magic | ch  | sh  |     |      |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Other Vowel |      |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Complex Consonant |    |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Initial Consonant |   |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Syllable Junction |   |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Unaccented Syllable |   |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Derivational Suffix |   |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Root or Base Word |   |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |
| Word Total   |      |      |     |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |     |       |     |      |       |       |         |        |       |       |       |

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